Aliza Parker Transcript

Jayne Guberman: This is Jayne Guberman. Today is February 13, 2008. I'm here with Aliza Parker to record an interview about her life. We're here at her home in Brookline, Massachusetts. So, Aliza, I just want to ask you, do I have your permission to record this interview?

Aliza Parker: You certainly do.

JG: Great, okay. So, let's start with your name. As you told me, I have been calling you Aliza, but your name technically, legally, I guess, is –?

AP: Sandra Parker.

JG: So, what's the origin of your name? How did you come by your name? Are you named after somebody?

AP: No. I actually was named Sandra Mona Parker at birth, and my Hebrew name was Sarah Miriam, and I never used Sarah Miriam; I always used Sandra until I became an adolescent and joined the Zionist youth movement in New York, and of course, I made my way among three Zionist youth movements at that time. The first one, I guess I was still Sarah, and the second one was probably still Sarah. But at one of the movements, they had a lot of Sarahs in the group, and it became very confusing. So, they said, “Who would like to choose a name?” And so I chose Aliza, and it stuck. So since about the age of fifteen, people who knew me from the Zionist youth movement and anybody who met me subsequently called me Aliza. My family, to this day, those of them who still survive from that early period, still know me as Sandy or, given the fact that many of them came from Europe and couldn't pronounce the "A," called me Sandy. But basically, everybody else knows me as Aliza. However, I still sign my checks with Sandra, and my work professionally was always published under the name Sandra.

JG: But your colleagues know you as?

AP: My colleagues at Northeastern University know me as Sandra. It's interesting, but the Hebrew College people with whom I've worked and the Jewish world in which I traveled, and even people who were not Jewish who met me through associations with my husband and with friends, know me as Aliza. So, I have a dual identity.

JG: Yes. So, let’s start at the beginning, at least your beginning. So can you tell me

where and when you were born?

AP: I was born at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, New York in June, June 10th, 1932, and I think my grandmother always recalled that it was the second day of Shavuot. So, I have that as a recollection because Shavuot moves around, so we still observe the tenth, but she, during her lifetime, always remembered it was the second day of Shavuot because she had a niece who, over seventy-five years ago, was a law student at one of the New York Universities. She was due to graduate that day. My grandmother never forgave me because she couldn't attend her niece's graduation.

JG: [laughter] I'm sure she forgave you, eventually. When did your family and how did they come to the United States?

AP: They came to the United States – of course, my father much earlier, in about 1906, from somewhere in a small town outside of Warsaw [Poland], a town called (Brisk?). I don't know too much about that family because my grandparents died before I was born. When we were young, we were foolish and didn't ask the right questions, and then when we began to think about questions, there was nobody left to ask. So that was a problem with my paternal side. But my maternal family I knew a whole lot better because both my grandparents were alive, and they came from a little village in the Ukraine, in the province of Kyiv but not in Kyiv proper. They left like many Jews in that era because of the pogroms. My grandfather came to the states fourteen years before the rest of the

family came; he came to work and to earn money to send for them. He was here for fourteen years. He went back once to visit, and at the end of the fourteen years, there was a very serious pogrom. The Red Army and the White Army were engaged in conflict after the rise of the Bolsheviks.

JG: Do you know what year this is?

AP: 1921, I believe. I could check that out. It was 1921 or ’22, but we did some genealogical research, so my husband has the records. They came steerage, and they came after a number of pogroms. My mother tells the story of how she took her two-year-old cousin out of the burning house because the peasants had tied the windows shut, and the roof was thatched and set fire to the house. It was only because her two older siblings were studying at night; they smelled smoke, and they were able to save everybody in time. They were marauders. My mother’s oldest sister, who was at that time sixteen, was quite attractive, and people knew what would happen. So, my mother’s aunt, who was about twenty-six at the time and looked quite Ukrainian – was blonde – took my sixteen-year-old aunt to the local priest to see if he could put her up in the attic and help save her. He had an attic full of Jewish girls; he really had no more room, and they didn’t know what to do with her. So, my grand aunt, who I actually knew – was quite an interesting lady – took her and threw her into a pigsty and stood guard outside the pigsty because she knew quite well that the Christians would never look for a Jewish girl in a pigsty. The family awaited their arrival and, towards dark, almost gave up hope, but she did bring her back alive.

JG: My goodness.

AP: So, after that, they decided they couldn't wait for my grandfather to send any more money, and they hitched up a wagon and hid whatever rings and jewelry they had in the carved-out holes in the yolk of the harness. Of course, somebody told on them, so they were robbed en route, but they did get to the Romanian border and smuggled their way across.

JG: Who was in the group at that point? Sounds like quite a large group.

AP: It was a large group because my grandfather could have taken them piecemeal to the States, but he wanted to bring everybody. So, he had my mother and her three siblings; my grandmother, who was responsible for maintaining the family's survival and subsistence in Europe – she ran a grocery store, a little bit of dry goods, that kind of thing – buttons, materials – and her in-laws, my grandfathers' parents, and his sister, the one who helped rescue my aunt by putting her in the pigsty, and her husband and two children. So, it was a large group, and they went over to Romania. Once they got to Romania, they were able to notify somebody that they were there. My grandfather had, in the meantime, sent what he called the sheliah at the time with a thousand dollars, and the sheliah found them in Bucharest [Romania's capital], and that was, of course, a fortune in those days.

JG: Absolutely.

AP: So, with that, they were able to make their way to Holland, and they got a boat and went across steerage and arrived in the United States. My mother said she had typhus on the boat, and this aunt who had saved my aunt came with her two sons. At Ellis

Island, they were all inspected for conjunctivitis and lice and other things and went through medical, and they discovered scabs on my grand aunt's son's head. Unbeknownst to her, they were not willing to permit that child to enter the States. My grandfather came to meet the boat, and he got to Ellis Island. I have the grand-aunt on a tape recorder, by the way, as well, and she describes how my grandfather came, and he just cried and cried, and she couldn't get him to explain what he was crying about. He said that they would have to send her back with this young child, and they had to make a decision about whether her husband and the other child would go back or whether they would leave two here and go back. They decided that it was better for her to go back with one child because as long as her husband was here, there was a greater likelihood that she would be able to return, so they sent back – I think she just must have been twenty-six or twenty-seven or twenty-eight – back to Romania, which was not her home. They had smuggled into Romania. The only advice she got from anybody was [to] go to HIAS and stand in line and cry, and she did, and ultimately, she was able to return. I don't know how long it took.

JG: That's quite a story.

AP: So that was – yes.

JG: What year was that? That was in the early '20s, you're saying?

AP: ’21, ’22, yes.

JG: So they’re here, they settled, you were born, sounds like –

AP: In Brooklyn. At first, I lived in – the Bronx, and then my grandfather bought a two-family house in partnership with a niece in Bensonhurst in Brooklyn. They moved down, and this was like living in the suburbs. [laughter] That house remained in the family until quite recently. When my grandparents died, the children of the aunt took over the house, and they just sold it about two, three years ago.

JG: Is this the house you grew up in?

AP: No, that’s the house that sort of was headquarters for the whole family. My mother married. In those days, everybody lived very close by, so my father and mother had an apartment maybe five blocks from that house. My mother’s sister – she had two sisters who also when they married, lived in that Bensonhurst area. Her brother, who was the oldest of the four siblings – there was a family tragedy; he developed appendicitis, and there was no penicillin at the time. Periadenitis set in, and he died at the age of twenty-

three. So that was a tragedy. He had been something of a poet; he wrote in Yiddish, and in Russian, and in Hebrew, and he translated Turgenev and other people into Yiddish and Hebrew. He was a writer for the Freiheit, which was the communist magazine in New York at the time, and I have seen several of the obituaries when he died and several of the other writers who wrote tributes to him, and so on. So that was sad. My parents lived nearby. My father spent most of my early childhood unemployed.

JG: Can you just go back for one second? Describe the house that you grew up in. Who was living in the house? You have a brother.

AP: I have a brother. We had an apartment on Bay Parkway opposite a playground. Really, you can't call it a park, but it was a playground. It was a two-bedroom apartment with a living room and a very small kitchen, but we all ate in the kitchen. Until I got married, I shared the one bedroom with my brother.

JG: Was that usual, typical in that generation?

AP: I think it was quite typical. In fact, what was interesting is we have a lot of family pictures, and we have a picture of my husband's family, my husband's parents – his father and his father's family. What we see in the picture is a lot of people, and some of

them, most of them are siblings of my father-in-law's, but there were two people in the picture who were boarders because they needed money to support the family. So, it was quite common to have boarders, but if you didn't have boarders, you usually lived in that stratum of economic level – quite congested and crowded. So, I don't think it was very atypical. Today, my children would be scandalized. [laughter]

JG: Exactly. So, you were starting to talk about your father being unemployed. Obviously, in your childhood, the Depression happened. Could you talk about that a bit?

AP: Yes, he was the oldest of five children, and his father was a shechita, a ritual slaughterer, and he never really found any work. They lived in Mount Freedom in New Jersey before I was born [and] before my father married. My grandfather was killed in some kind of automobile accident. I never, of course, never met either of them, and the oldest sister and the mother ended up in some kind of sanatorium. I think one of them had tuberculosis. I'm not sure what the other was, whether – it was always very secretive, so I don't know whether there was an emotional problem or it was a physical problem. But there were two younger boys, and they were placed in an orphanage; there was nobody to take care of them. My father had to leave high school before he graduated. So, he had varying jobs. I don't know what he did before he married my mother. I know that my grandfather was in a meat business, my maternal grandfather, and a lot of the time, the rent was paid by my grandfather.

JG: What year did your parents marry? Do you know?

AP: In ’31, 1931. I was born in ’32. I remember, at one time, my father became a salesman for the Hoover vacuum cleaner company, and the only Hoover that he sold was to my mother’s parents. Then he became a motion picture operator, which really when you think of if they had given him an aptitude test, that would not have been one of the choices, but in those days, they didn’t know from such things. He was really sort of linguistically inclined and not mechanically inclined, but he became a motion picture operator, and there was a very small union that had very few theaters, so he didn’t work very often.

JG: So, he didn’t work in a particular theater?

AP: No, he didn’t have a permanent job. He would work when other people were on vacation; he would fill in. Then this small union was incorporated into a larger union in New York, and they thought things would get very much better, but his luck was not good because that was just at the time the television came out.

JG: When are we talking about?

AP: I'm not sure exactly, but probably in the '40. No. I'm just trying to think of when – probably in the late '40s. He came into the big union, but he, again, didn't have a permanent job, so there was a bigger list of people going on vacation. But it wasn't that he had – he would fill in, and sometimes he would wait to get to the very top of the list so he could get what was called a long-term temp, somebody who might be sick and was not going to come back so quickly or taking a very long vacation, but it was never a very steady life.

JG: Did you get to go to see films as a child because of him?

AP: [laughter] Well, he worked always – he knew which were the better theaters and where there might be a longer period. So, he used to travel a lot. We lived in Brooklyn. He very often would work in the Bronx. We didn't get to his theaters very often at all.

JG: I see.

AP: We had a local theater in the neighborhood, and one of the things I remember, of course, is I was always very tall. So when I was twelve, which is – up until the age of

twelve, you get in for a children's price, and after that, you had to pay [the] adult price. Well, I would get to the booth, and they would insist that I was much older than twelve, so they would ask me to pay, I don't know, a quarter instead of ten cents or whatever the difference was. And then, when you get into the theater, there was a matron to take care of the children; there was a children's section. So here I had an adult ticket in my hand, but they would always stick me in the children's section, and that infuriated me.

JG: I can imagine.

AP: [laughter] So anyway. Of course, in those days, people used the theater – adults – as a babysitting arrangement because you saw two feature films plus the newsreels, plus the cartoons, plus all the coming attractions. So, parents could go off for the whole afternoon and not come back until six, and they knew their children were safe and sound because there was a matron in the theater. It was a marvelous arrangement.

JG: I have never heard of that, [laughter] So, who would you go with?

AP: Oh, friends. We lived in an apartment building, and I had friends from school and friends from the building. It was sort of a vertical village; you didn't have to put your coat on to have playmates; you just took the elevator up or down.

JG: Sounds great.

AP: No carpooling. [laughter]

JG: What was the impact of your father's intermittent employment during this period on your life? What about your mother? Did she work for pay in any capacity?

AP: For short periods of time, she did some piece work, what they call it. There were some local stores that required people to do [the] finishing of blouses, so she would sew buttons and would put lace on things. She did do some work. It was intermittent; it was not easy for her. Her English was nonexistent when she arrived, and she picked it up sufficiently. It's just interesting what newcomers think about the English language.

JG: What I wanted to ask you just, in general, what languages were spoken in your family and in your home? This is a good moment for that.

AP: Okay, my parents spoke English to one another.

JG: English.

AP: My father was big on English. Actually, he came here – not all of his siblings were born in Poland. He came here quite young, and so his English was almost with – I don't think he had an accent at all. He wanted to be an American, and my mother learned English well. I think she didn't always speak it totally grammatically, but I think she had more problems with some pronunciation than she had with grammar. She basically spoke quite well. She overcompensated with the pronunciation. It was interesting. She knew that greenhorns and people who were not native-born Americans would very often mistake the W for a V and would say, you know, "vashing" instead of "washing." So, she overcompensated [in] the other direction. She would take V's and make them W's.

JG: For instance?

AP: So she would say something like, "It's wery good." She wanted very much to feel that she was not making mistakes. She had a gift for languages; she spoke beautifully until the day she died. She was at a nursing home in Coolidge Corner [Massachusetts] for about eight and a half years. Of course, we visited her daily, and we would take her out for a ride. Occasionally, it was in the springtime. And for all that, she never had a high school education. She would ride down Commonwealth Avenue in the spring, and she'd look up, and she'd say, "What a beautiful street this is; the trees are like a canopy over the street." I never knew where she got such language. Or she would go into a theater or something. [She'd say], "The acoustics in here are very good, or they're

terrible." So somewhere, she picked it up.

JG: With their parents and in their extended family, what languages?

AP: That was Yiddish. I heard a lot of Yiddish as a child, but they spoke English to me too. My grandfather – it's interesting. They spoke Yiddish among themselves, but they spoke English to me. I had some sort of, I would say, infantile Yiddish as a child that I knew and could understand. Naturally, they sometimes used it when they didn't want us to understand.

JG: And your brother, too?

AP: My brother, less so. My brother, there's almost [a] six-year difference between us, and you wouldn't know that we were raised in the same family. [laughter]

JG: Really? Because of the time lag?

AP: I think the timeline made a big difference. He had no associations with the Zionist movement. He was much more sort of highly identified with his American peer group than I was. I, through adolescence, was very much identified with Jewish things, and I think that may be because of my grandfather, my mother's father. He was a very unusual man. I think growing up, I had very – my fondest feelings and experiences and memories are holidays in their house, and I would sit to the right of my grandfather at Passover seders or whatever. But, in addition, I had an older cousin, my mother's older sister's son, who was six months older than I, and I don't think he had any Hebrew education at all. My mother's sister's husband was, I think, certifiably insane; his children would, I think, agree with me there, they're both alive, and I'm not saying anything that nobody else knew. I don't think that she had an easy time, so I don't think those children ever got any kind of a Jewish education, and I was the next in line. I was a girl, so I didn't need a bar mitzvah, and, in those days, I didn't need a bat mitzvah either, and my grandfather felt that sort of as a tribute to his son who had died who was a Yiddish poet, that wouldn't it be nice if his granddaughter went to a Yiddish school.

JG: So, it was your grandfather who was instrumental in making the decision.

AP: Really, I think so. My parents did not raise any objections. I don't think they had any affiliations with any temples or synagogues at that time at all.

JG: How would you say they did identify themselves or express their Jewishness or

Judaism?

AP: Well, I think primarily through – my grandfather maintained an orthodox home, kosher, and he didn't work on – well, maybe when he was younger, he did work on Saturday. I'm not sure. But when I was aware of it, he was not working. There was a local orthodox synagogue, and we would always go to visit them. I don't know that we sat there very much.

JG: Go to visit them –?

AP: At the synagogue, yes. My grandmother went as well, and we would come and sit with them and wish them a happy holiday or a gut yontif. We would climb up and down the fire escape on the outside, and we would wait for them to come finish their services and walk them home. The dinners relating to the holidays were always at their house, so my mother always relied on her mother for cooking. My brother and I joke that the oven in my mother's house was to store cold cereal; she did not know much about cooking. I mean, she fried things in frying pans. She used a broiler. She made stewed things on top of the oven, but she was not a baker or a roaster or any of that sort of thing. So basically, most of the holidays were celebrated at my grandparents' house. In those days, the Yiddish schools were local; they were neighborhood little storefront schools, and in the old days, it was five days a week, two hours a day.

JG: What time would you go to school?

AP: After school.

JG: When was that?

AP: Well, those were the days where mothers were at home, so kids came home for lunch. So that meant that they go to school from nine to twelve and then from one to one thirty they would come home for lunch and then school ended at three or three-thirty, I don't remember. So, it would be four to six.

JG: And both you and your brother?

AP: No, only I went. It's very interesting. I think he started, but he gave it up very quickly. I had four years of Yiddish school, ten hours a week. It really was a storefront school in the true sense of the word. I'm not even sure that there were individual-there

may have been two classes, but there were whole bunches of us sort of – not whole bunches – maybe eight or ten of us bunched together in each class, and I'm not sure that we were all at the same level; I can't recall. In the back of the store was the classroom, and we had those old-fashioned [inaudible] desks, and there was a blackboard, but there were no embellishments of any kind that would give you a feeling that this was a lovely environment in which to learn. The front of the store was what would have been the showplace area for a store if you had dry goods or clothing, or – I don't know – shoes or something. So that area became the place where we would put our plays, and we would –

JG: In Yiddish?

AP: In Yiddish. We would have what we called [inaudible], which were usually plays and recitations, and we would invite parents and relatives to raise money. The poor teacher, the Yiddish teacher, was a much maligned, overworked, underappreciated, exploited individual.

JG: Man or a woman?

AP: Man. Mostly men. I remember there may have been one or two women. He not

only had to teach, but he had to make sure that the – such as it was – tuition was paid. Very often, parents couldn't pay tuition, so they would have what they called the [inaudible], which was a group like a school board, and they would tax the [inaudible] so that they could cover the rent, or they could cover the teacher's salary. I'm not sure he ever got paid on time. If he did, it was rare. The one I remember happened to live in the building in which we lived as well. He was a wonderful teacher, and I think that made a big difference. He would tell Jewish history by telling us stories.

JG: Was the lesson all in Yiddish, or would he also speak in English?

AP: Well, I guess he spoke in English at the beginning, and as we progressed, it became more and more Yiddish. But we might stammer and stutter, but we understood what he was saying, and if we couldn't communicate, we would resort to English. We had books. There were textbooks – this was the Workmen's Circle School, and there were schools like that all over the city of New York. [Editor's Note: The Workmen's Circle, now known as the Circle, is a nonprofit organization promoting a progressive Jewish identity through Yiddish language learning, multigenerational education, Jewish cultural engagement, and social justice activism, including civil liberties and economic justice.] And not only all over the city of New York; there were schools like that in Chattanooga, Tennessee and in Natchez [Mississippi], and in Atlanta [Georgia], and in Chicago [Illinois] – Chicago had a big Yiddish school system – and LA [Los Angeles, California]. Later on, when I did my doctorate – I did it on the Yiddish secular school movement in the United States – I found things written by children in Yiddish from the forties and fifties in children's magazines that were just astonishing. Brandeis has a collection. Widener Library at Harvard has a

collection. I used to have a collection, although I finally was convinced to give it away. Hebrew College has some of our books, and Amherst [College] has some of our books, but I had textbooks as well.

JG: Who were the other kids in this Yiddish class?

AP: They were local kids.

JG: Boys, girls?

AP: Boys and girls together.

JG: About equally divided, you think?

AP: Not sure, maybe a few more girls than boys. There were some boys. I tended not to know that I was being exploited, that I was going to school for too long [and] other kids

had more time to play because I went for five days a week for two hours, and that was okay. Then I had Saturday and Sunday off. But when I finished that school, which was the elementary school, there was a Yiddish high school. The Yiddish high schools did not have enough of a population to provide regional high schools. So there was only one high school, and that was usually – there were several from different movements. Now the Workmen's Circle had one, and the Shalom Aleichem had another, and I think the IWO [International Worker's Order], which was the more communist group, had another. [Editor's Note: The IWO was an immigrant fraternal organization providing high-quality, low-cost health and burial insurance along with other benefits for its members. The Shalom Aleichem Folk Institute was a Yiddish education organization establishing Yiddish schools for all ages throughout New York.] They were all secular schools. We didn't study – we're not studying Yiddish from a religious point of view. In fact, when I finished elementary school and I started high school, it was Saturday and Sunday. So, from the age of twelve to sixteen, I went by myself on the subway in New York, and we left at eight, and classes were from nine to one. We went Saturday and Sunday. Then we stayed in Manhattan, and we had lunch at Horn & Hardart, the automats, and we did other things which made it sort of a social group. But I didn't realize that I was being exploited, that most children didn't go to school seven days a week, and I did that until I was sixteen.

JG: What do you mean when you [say] that? It's a little tongue and cheek.

AP: Well, yes. I mean, I didn't know – when you're poor and you live among poor people, you don't feel poor. And when you're going to school, and you're going to school

for many hours a week, and everybody else is doing the same thing, you don't notice that it's a terrible thing to do. Parents today would be scandalized sending their children seven days a week to school. It was eight hours on the weekend. It was very intense. We studied history. At the high school level, we studied history. We studied literature. We read Shalom Aleichem in Yiddish. We read Sholem Asch. We read Mendele Mocher Sforim. We read a lot of stuff in Yiddish. I don't know that we ever read the full texts; I mean, some of them were pretty heavy, but I have – I just gave them away. I have Uncle Moses by Sholem Asch in Yiddish, and I think it was probably an abridged or somewhat simplified version for young adolescents. But all of these schools were secular. Some of them were not only non-religious; some of them were anti-religious.

JG: The ones that you attended?

AP: Well, no. The Workmen's Circle started out as anti-religious, and then it became – now it's not anti-religious at all. I mean, they're more traditional. They're still one or two schools around here in Brookline [Massachusetts] and maybe a few places around the country. But the one that was really anti-religious was the communist one, which was the IWO which was the International Worker's Order which became afterward the Jewish People's Fraternal Order. When I was doing my doctoral dissertation in '73, I went to visit some – there were still a couple of those schools left in New Jersey and a couple of other places that were – where they would rent space from a public school, but it was already way on the way out. Of course, given the fact that hours became more limited as people moved to the suburbs – you couldn't walk to school – they had to restrict their curriculum and what suffered most was the Yiddish language, of course. So, the people – the IWO,

the JPFO – started most quickly reducing the Yiddish, and they were mostly interested in social justice and the history and the ritual. But they produced some very interesting materials from a curricula point of view. The IWO had, I think, among the most interesting history texts for children. I remember one period, in particular; they were always trying to make the point that resistance against tyranny was not only a Jewish fight. So there was translation, for example, of Langston Hughes into Yiddish.

JG: What period was this?

AP: This was, I'd say, in the '50s. When I saw the textbooks, I was looking at them in the '70s. I mean, '50s, '60s, '70s, they were producing these materials, and then they stopped, of course. The fellow who was the director of the Jewish –

JG: Yiddish Book Center?

AP: Well, no, not [Aaron] Lansky, but the fellow who was the director of the Jewish People's Fraternal Order was Itche Goldberg, and he died, I think, about two years ago at the age of a hundred and two. I interviewed him both when I was doing my dissertation and subsequently – I think as recently as five years ago. He was an amazing man. I mean, they had to run for cover during the McCarthy era, of course, and it became

mostly a fraternal, cultural – I think the last name of the organization was Jewish Cultural League or something of that sort. [Editor's Note: The McCarthy Era refers to when Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin produced a series of investigations and hearings to expose potential communist infiltration in the United States government during the 1950s.] But they were adamantly anti-religious and, for many years, anti-Israel too. They've softened over the years, but those who are still remaining, I'm sure, are very pro-Israel at the moment. But they had stuff in their texts about how the Huguenots in France and the Jews fought together in alliance against the crusaders. Those were the kinds of pieces of information that they were looking for, so it was quite interesting. [Editor's Note: The Huguenots were French protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries who were persecuted for their religion.]

JG: What was your parents' attitude towards the education you were getting? It would be great if you could just talk for a minute about their – we were starting to talk about how they expressed their Jewishness.

AP: They were Jews in terms of celebrating Jewish holidays, [and] eating Jewish food – my mother had a kosher kitchen; she only bought kosher food until the day she died, but they weren't pedantic about it. If we mixed up a spoon or a knife in the kitchen, they didn't yell or scream. I think, basically, they were not terribly invested in differentiating among the various kinds of Jewish education that one could get. My brother had a bar mitzvah. I wasn't here for the bar mitzvah; I was in Israel. It was interesting. That was the year that Jerry and I were on a scholarship for Zionist Youth leaders. I'm not sure just how that went forth because I don't think his Yiddish or Jewish or Hebrew

background – but I'm sure he learned enough so that he performed quite adequately. He's quite bright; it's just that his life has taken a different direction. My parents were basically affirmative in terms of having us attend, but they were not overly enthusiastic about any given goal that they wanted us to acquire. I think that would be it.

JG: Yes. Do you want to say anything about any of the other holidays that were celebrated, either at your grandparents' home?

AP: Well, Passover was particularly important. I think in those days, Hanukkah was not as big a deal anyway. People observed the religious holidays, not so much the nationalistic ones, but I do remember – I mentioned my mother's sister's husband, and he was really a difficult person. He didn't tolerate his children terribly well. He didn't let them have friends come into the house. We always thought of him as a skinflint. I remember one Hanukkah – I couldn't have been more than three or four years old. I really vividly remember this. We all gathered at my grandparents' house, and the tradition was that people would give us a couple of coins for Hanukkah. My grandfather and my grandfather's brother would give us a whole dollar, and my mother's younger sister's husband would give us a dollar, so we felt pretty rich at that point. My mother's oldest sister's husband never gave us anything. That was clear. But this one time, he called me over, and he held out a dollar bill, and I could hear a gasp around the table. It was really quite amusing. So, I reached out. I had a fist full of single dollar bills, and he had a bright new single dollar bill. He was handing it to me, but what he was really doing is he was making an exchange. He was going to give me the new dollar bill in exchange for one of my other dollar bills, and I would not let go of either one. Finally, they made

me release the dollar bill he wanted back, but it was really a very funny situation. [laughter] I think it sort of remained a joke in the family. My aunt, after forty years of marriage, one day just walked out of her apartment in her nightclothes; she happened to have her machatunim, her in-laws – her daughter-in-law's parents lived in the same building. She walked out of that apartment in her nightgown to their apartment. This was after forty years of marriage. The children, the two sons, never forgave him. I think they had nothing to do with him, but a while for – in those days, people didn't divorce, and it took a while to kind of reach a point where nobody could tolerate it anymore. But that was my experience with Hanukkah. But basically, it was mostly the Pesach seder. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we would go to my grandparents' house for dinner, and we would also visit them at shul. We didn't really do anything in my own house properly to celebrate the holiday, but it was really like one house because it was so close. We were there a lot.

JG: Right. Do you remember preparations for Passover?

AP: Not in my house. [laughter]

JG: You know, in your grandparent's house.

AP: Oh sure, like a baby.

JG: The women's role.

AP: Yes, the women's role. They couldn't change dishes until that morning. Now you put stuff in the freezer, or you get a microwave, or you do something even if you're Orthodox. But she would start at five in the morning, and by the time the seder was ready, I think she was a ghost. I mean, she was really –

JG: Why couldn't you change things until that morning? Because you didn't have enough dishes? Is that it?

AP: No, no, because she couldn't make the kitchen –

JG: She couldn't kasher the kitchen.

AP: She couldn't kasher the kitchen; she couldn't make it kosher for Passover. So, she would start very early that morning. She, of course, did a lot. I mean, everything was homemade, and so there were various kinds of knishes, and there were soups, and there were this and that. She was like the color of the wall by the time the evening fare came. But it was very cheerful and very joyful, and my grandfather had a younger brother who came to the state also early who would come for the second seder every year. He had a big booming deep voice. He left Russia in about 1905 because the story goes that somebody, a peasant, insulted him, and he knocked him over. I don't know whether he killed him, but he certainly did him some serious damage, and he had to escape, so he left . He almost was drafted into the army, but he broke a finger intentionally so that he wouldn't be drafted. Well, when he came for the seder, you would hear him on the steps; he boomed up the stairs. Then the Haggadah was read. There was a race between my grandfather and his brother as to who could say these things faster, and I was trying to follow. I never could keep up with them, so it was a lot of fun. He died. My grandmother was a very sweet woman, but he was the more colorful of the two, and he was very much the patriarch of the family. He died of a sudden heart attack just about a week or two before I left for Israel in 1950. It was a real trial. They all let me go, but it was difficult. I came back a year later, in September. It was okay, I mean, I could deal with it between September and April, but when Passover came again that year, I had a very hard time. So, I attended the first seder with the family, and then I spoke to a friend of ours who now lives in Jerusalem [and] who came from Long Beach, New York. She and her boyfriend – her father was a shamus at this shul there, and I had been there before; they've always celebrated holidays beautifully. I said, "Judy, have [Sonny?] come and get me. I just can't deal with it. I cannot stay here for the second seder." So [Sonny?] came, and he picked me up and took me all the way to Long [Beach]. That was quite a trip from Bensonhurst to Long Beach. So I kind of divided the difference; I spent the first day with the family and the second day there, but it was difficult. So, I had a lot of years of affiliation not so much with Zionism but with Judaism and with Jewish holidays and

feeling very warmly disposed towards and highly identified. The Hebrew part of it came only when I was in high school.

JG: I see. I want to go back for one more sec before we move on and just talk a little bit about your general education. Where did you go to school as a young child and then into high school?

AP: Okay. That's interesting. I went to the local public school. I went to a couple of them. My parents moved around but within the diameter of maybe five blocks or something. I don't know whether there wasn't rent or the apartments were better, but I think we had three apartments from the time I was three until about the time I was ten.

JG: And the four of you lived in this apartment?

AP: Yes.

JG: Or there were more people?

AP: No, no, just the four of us. I lived in a section of Bensonhurst, which would have required me to go to Lafayette High School, which did not have Hebrew. It was interesting. I had never had any Hebrew. The Yiddish schools didn't teach any, but you have to make a choice about whether you're going to take French or German, and I had started French actually, but I had to choose a second language, and I decided that I wanted to take Hebrew. So, I left. I was in the rapid advance in junior high school, which was also very local, and they asked us to fill out the form. The choices were New Utrecht, which was in [inaudible] Bay Ridge, which was not a terribly Jewish area, or Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, which had Lincoln High School. So, I chose Lincoln High School, and that involved – I guess I was already accustomed to traveling the subway, so I began to travel the subway during the week as well as the weekend. I went from Bensonhurst essentially to Coney Island, and then I took another line back to Ocean Parkway.

JG: So, how long a trip was that in each direction?

AP: Well, I guess maybe forty minutes. I mean, it wasn't a big trip; it was all in Brooklyn. But Lincoln had a good Hebrew department.

JG: In the public high school?

AP: In the public high schools – and there were several in New York that had Hebrew – they had good teachers. This was my second language; I had French for three years, of which I know nothing and remember nothing except maybe reading a few words, but I did have two years of Hebrew, and that was a good foundation.

JG: Who were the teachers of Hebrew? What were they teaching you?

AP: They were teaching languages. Harry (Soshick?) was one – I remember his name – and there was a Hebrew club after school. I met a girl from Israel who I remained friendly with – and this was ’47, ’48 – who had come with her family. She was of Sephardic background, Sephardic Jewish background, [and] whose aunt lived in my neighborhood. So she came; she stayed with her. So that was, I guess, ’49. I graduated in ’49, I guess, and so the whole War of Independence – I was already through high school – the roads not taken. That high school had a lot of kids who were in Zionist youth movements, so I joined first Habonim and then – no, first Hashomer Hatzair, and then Habonim, and then I ended up in Hechalutz Hatzair. Those were all Brighton Ocean Parkway branches in New York. So I was going back and forth also for the Zionist youth movement meetings.

JG: Which we’ll come back to and talk about more. Right.

AP: Yes. So that's how I guess I got – because of the decision, which may have been a superficial decision. I don't know what made me decide to do Hebrew, but I decided to do it. That sort of changed the course of my life in terms of entry into the Zionist youth world or youth movement.

JG: Because your parents were not particularly involved.

AP: They were not affiliated with anything. They were totally unaffiliated. But I was very – I was a very enthusiastic Yiddish student. I remember those plays in that front room of that front – we would reenact Sholem Aleichem's story about class, about kids who pedaled bug juice on the streets. [laughter] I guess that's what you call it in Poland. If there were sad things, we would recite the lines, and our tears would drip down from our eyes. It was a very moving – really kind of a momentous environment, which was very, very dramatic and developmentally, I think, very important. I was not one of those who hated Yiddish school. I loved it. I really did.

JG: Sounds it.

AP: Yes.

JG: Were there other subjects that you particularly liked in school?

AP: Oh, I was a history major in college for the first four years. I thought I was going to be an education major, and I couldn't stand the courses; I thought they were so deadly dull, so I shifted. But I always liked languages and social sciences.

JG: Even back into high school?

AP: Even back in high school.

JG: Right.

AP: They were good teachers, and I was a good student, so it was fine.

JG: Right. So, I wanted to shift a little bit and think about the fact that your childhood and your teens coincided with major world events.

AP: Yes.

JG: The Holocaust, World War II, the Zionist movement, the founding of the state of Israel, and talk a little bit about how all of that intersected with your life and impacted your life. So, I wanted to start by asking you whether you have any memories of the day Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941.

AP: Yes, I think I do. I remember.

JG: So, you were –?

AP: In ‘41, I was nine.

JG: Nine.

AP: Right. I remember the panic and people's shock and surprise.

JG: How did you learn that it had happened?

AP: I'm not sure. I think people were listening on the radio, and everybody was talking about it and so on, but I don't know that it really permeated deeply. I do remember '45 when we were already thirteen; the people got up on the roof, and they were banging pots and pans.

JG: When the war ended?

AP: When the war ended, yes. I remember that very clearly. I remember in Yiddish – [Recording paused.] school, reading things about the treatment of Jews before they knew that there was a systematic plan to exterminate Jews. There were stories about children

being treated badly because they were antisemitic – stuff was written for the level of children. I remember also reading some stuff where before, again, the proportions of the Holocaust became known, about German soldiers sometimes helping a child. This was particularly in the (JWFO?); there was a commonality of humanity, and people really do treat one another well. Of course, I was sixteen when the state of Israel was established. But before that, when I was in the Zionist youth movement, we had what we called a ken, which was a group in Brighton, and I must have been – in '48, I was sixteen. So maybe I was fifteen or fourteen and a half. We were the older group in the ken, and we had younger children, who we called chanichim, that were – we were their junior counselors, but then we had a counselor who was a college student. One of the things – since we were a ken near the beach, one of the things we decided – somebody decided to reenact the bringing in of illegal immigrants to Israel.

JG: This was still before the state?

AP: Before the state. Right. '47, it must have been – '46, '47. We decided one evening that we would do a program at Ocean Parkway near the beach. Somebody was going to get a rowboat. The little kids would be the Haganah accepting the people who were coming in, and they were only going to be – the people who were going to come in on the boat were some of us, our age group. It was really a terrible thing that happened. Our madrich, our leader, never got over it; I don't know what happened to him. About five of us got into this boat, and it was too heavy, so three of us got out, and the two who were supposed to go only to the edge of the key there never came back.

JG: Oh, my goodness.

AP: We never knew what happened. One set of parents were absolutely – I mean, they were – of course, it was a tragic thing, but they would have nothing to do with the organization again [inaudible]. The other group of parents were Zionists; they also were ethical culture people. We kept hoping that these kids might have been picked up by another boat. Somebody said, “Maybe they took the boat, and they went to Israel.” It was just dreadful.

JG: What is your assumption about what happened to them?

AP: They were drowned. I think they found both bodies ultimately over way out.

JG: I see.

AP: Our group left. We couldn't deal with the other family, with the (Bell?) family,

because they would have nothing to do with anybody. But the [inaudible] family welcomed – they felt that they needed the support and that we needed the support. So one of us went every Friday night for a year to have dinner with them, and their daughter was also very much involved in the Zionist movement, and she married – was it, (Gabriel Newman ?), one of the major figures in Zionist leadership circles in that period? But the fellow who was our group leader was – I mean, you can imagine –

JG: Just devastated.

AP: – the level of responsibility. To this day, there are a number of us who still see each other or have contact. That probably was the most tumultuous event of our adolescence. As I say, there were five of us; three of us got out of the boat.

JG: It's an amazing story. My goodness. Did you actually have any family or friends who were serving in the armed services during the war, or were you too little, too young?

AP: We were just in between. No. I do remember when news came of the Holocaust, and my grandmother had left sisters in the Ukraine. After the war, she started advertising at the UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] camps for refugees and displaced persons. She got a letter back from a man who said he was the

husband of one of her nieces, so she sent him some money and some package, and then she asked him for more information, and he never contacted her again.

JG: So, she didn't know whether the niece had survived?

AP: Well, she knew that they had all been – but she assumed that this guy could tell her something, but we never knew whether he was authentic or he was just a poor soul who was grabbing onto straws because he needed some help himself.

JG: Right.

AP: So that was the only thing. Then, my father had an uncle who was close to his age whose wife had left a whole family in Poland. A letter came from some survivor describing what had happened to them, and the family all said that Miriam turned white overnight just reading what had happened to her family.

JG: What happened to those letters? Do you know? Do they exist somewhere?

AP: Well, they may. The letters to this Miriam would be in the hands of her daughter, who lives in New York. I don't know. In terms of our family, there were some survivors. It's interesting. Jerry and I went to England in '77. I gave a paper at a conference in

London, and I said to him, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we visited the Soviet Union or the Ukraine?” So, I went over here to high schools at the end of the street, and I started studying a little bit of Russian, and I learned about five hundred words and no grammar. I decided I wasn’t going to study grammar, just vocabulary. [laughter] I didn’t have the patience for grammar – and the alphabet, of course, the Cyrillic alphabet. He said, “Well, tell them you’re coming if you’re thinking of coming.” I said, “I’m afraid I’ll get them into trouble.” So, he kept saying, “Tell them you’re coming. Tell them you’re coming.” My aunt, my mother’s sister, had been corresponding with – there was one element of the family that did remain in Kyiv, and I guess they found each other after the war and started communicating. So, I had that address, and I had those letters that my aunt had received, and they were in Yiddish; they didn’t say very much, just family things. Particularly during the Stalin era, they wouldn’t have said very much. [Editor’s Note: The Stalin era was when Joseph Stalin led the Soviet Union, and everything was controlled by Stalin and his state in the USSR.] In any case, we went, and I never contacted them, and that was during [President Jimmy] Carter’s years. Carter was getting into all kinds of trouble with the Russians anyway because he was big on civil rights and so on. At the time we were in Europe, an American journalist was imprisoned by the Soviets, and it gave me all the more reason to feel that I didn’t want to get them in trouble, and we decided we would go. So, we made arrangements through Intourist, and they ask you whether you have relatives in the Soviet Union. In those days, they defined relatives as parents and children but no distant relatives, so we had to say no. So, we said we needed a hotel, and we went from London to Amsterdam – flew – and then from Amsterdam to Prague by train, which was nutty; we were carrying heavy suitcases. We were younger then.

JG: This was what year?

AP: ’77. Then we went from Prague to Warsaw, and Jerry said, “They still don’t know you’re coming, and you have an itinerary for Kyiv, Moscow, and Leningrad, eight days in the Soviet Union.” So only the government knew we were coming. Finally, in Warsaw, I found a receptionist who knew Polish, Russian, and English. We sent a telegram in Russian – it was just forty-eight hours earlier – to say that we would be arriving, and the Russians were very controlling in those days. You couldn’t come in on any train; you had to come in on certain trains, and they gave you a certain seat, and you had to be sitting in that seat. They decided which hotels you were going to stay at, and when you arrived in Kyiv, the Intourist guy came up on the train and met you. Well, all the relatives had was the telegram, and they were all on the platform waiting for us, each with a bouquet of flowers in their hands, with the exception of the mother, who was home cooking. I said to this Intourist guy, “What are we allowed to do?” They said that they would take us to the hotel in a taxi and that after that we were free, but there was one city tour of Kyiv if we wanted to take it. So, we went to the hotel, and I think our relatives didn’t have much money. It was the first time they got into a cab. They took another cab and followed us to the hotel. We knew we had to stay at the hotel, but apparently, we could visit with them. So once we dropped off our things, we went with them to their home. On the table was probably a year's worth of food. They had caviar, and they had fish and chicken and meat and vodka. The father of the family had gotten up at five in the morning to go to a special bakery to get a special cake called Kyiv torte. I don’t know if you know what Kyiv torte is.

JG: No.

AP: It's meringue with cream and nuts and raisins and cherries, and it's big and round and crisp but very good. He said he had wanted to get two because he thought he would send one back for my mother and my mother's sister. I explained to him we were going from Kyiv to Moscow, Moscow to Leningrad, Leningrad to London, and we weren't going back directly to New York, so it wasn't such a tragedy that he hadn't gotten a second cake. So, we had that. Then he took us to Babi Yar by bus, and he would not speak to us [on] the bus because the only language we had to communicate with was Yiddish, and he did not want anybody to hear us speak Yiddish. [Editor's Note: Babi Yar was the place of one of the largest mass murdering of Jews in Kyiv, Ukraine, by the SS and the German army.]

JG: Now, did they speak Yiddish for any purposes other than to communicate with you?

AP: They spoke Yiddish – no. Their children understood Yiddish. Their children, by the way, are in New York City now, and I'll tell you about that in a little while. Their children understood Yiddish but didn't speak it. So what we did was we were silent; we just didn't speak on the bus. When we got to Babi Yar, we brought flowers, and as you probably know, the monument which had just been put up after all those years – it took Russians a long time to get to a point where they were even ready to put it up, but all it says in Russian is that a hundred – I think a hundred thousand citizens of Kyiv were killed here. That's all it says. I think [Yevgeny] Yevtushenko wrote a poem about it ["Babi Yar."].

JG: I think that's right.

AP: He was here in Boston, and we heard him at Sanders Theatre. He read it in Yiddish and in English. So that was that family, but they were the only ones who survived. They survived because the father was in the Russian army, and the mother, with her two children and her husband's sister, had to make a choice – there were several other sisters. They had to make a choice about whether they would stay in Kyiv or they would go East to Siberia. The rest of the family said that we've survived so many invasions, how could the Germans be any worse than any of the others, and it's cold, and we have no money, and so on, so they remained. The ones that remained were probably killed at Babi Yar. This particular family went with her two children and her sister-in-law, and they ended up – I don't know where. I used to know, but I don't know where. But anyway, it was terrible. The people in Siberia shared what they had, and so the children were wearing Red Army uniforms because there were no other clothes. To this day, this brother and sister have stubs for teeth because they were fed on animal feed. There was no food, but they did survive.

JG: And how did your family learn that this branch of the family had survived?

AP: After the war, my grandmother had been in contact with the family, and they had an

address, so they wrote, so this was the one group that did survive. This man who went to look for the Kyiv torte lived in another village, not where my grandfather's family was. When this pogrom occurred that I told you about with the pigsty and so on – before they left for Romania, they got out of that village, and they moved to his village. He took care of them. So there was that earlier contact. They were in contact with him. He and his wife both died in Kyiv, and then the son made some overtures to come to the United States, and he got to New York, and then he, I guess, wrote for his sister. So, his sister's family came. They're both living not too far from Ocean Parkway right now, as a matter of fact. [laughter]

JG: Really?

AP: We've been down to see them. They come up to see us, and so on.

JG: Amazing when families re-find each other in that way.

AP: Right.

JG: It sounds like there were no family members of yours who actually fought in the war. Do you have any memories of that period in terms of the impact of the war? How it affected your daily lives?

AP: The Second World War, you're talking about?

JG: Yes.

AP: Well, not the second World War, but I do remember prior to the Second World War – you just raised – something just sparked in my head. My father had these two brothers who were in an orphanage because their parents had died early.

JG: In New York?

AP: In New York City, and I guess as adolescents, nineteen and seventeen – this was in 1937, 1936 – they became very much incensed by [Francisco] Franco and the overthrow of the Republic. They signed up with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and they went to Spain to fight. One was seventeen at the time, and one was nineteen. The nineteen-year-old was killed there by a sniper in the Battle of the Ebro River. [Editor's Note: The Battle of the Ebro River was one of the bloodiest battles in the Spanish Civil War. Americans went and volunteered to help fight the republic of which Francisco Franco led the forces.]

JG: In what year?

AP: In probably ’38, I’m not sure.

JG: So, you were very young.

AP: I was five or six. But I remember because when Sam came back, he must have been all of eighteen or nineteen, the younger one.

JG: This is the other one.

AP: He came up the stairs, and he looked like a wild man; his hair was wild, and he just looked like nobody I had seen. He scared me. He really scared me, and I couldn't really understand. The other thing that he did, which scared me, was the only wine I ever had experienced was Manischewitz wine, [laughter] which, as you know, is very sweet and doesn’t really taste like wine at all. But Sam had a finer taste. He was a wine connoisseur, even though his life in Spain hadn’t been great. So he introduced the family to what he thought was real wine, and I thought it was terrible. I remember grimacing

and making a face when I tasted it. So we knew that. Of course, I think my father, at the time, when he heard that Alex was killed, wrote to Cordell Hull, who was Secretary of State. Now whether that helped get Sam out or not, we don't know because the brigades were decimated, and it may be that they just were sent home. Some of them escaped to France, but they had a hard time, those who remained in Europe because they were on the wrong side in Spain because Franco was victorious. When they got to Europe, back to their own countries, they were accused of communism, and very often, they were imprisoned there. So, the fact that he came back to the States was fortunate.

SG: Yeah, definitely.

AP: I remember that, but I don't remember details of the Second World War per se.

JG: You were young.

AP: I was young. I do remember the victory, and I remember seeing the parades through Paris and so on.

JG: Do you remember your family having any particular attitudes towards Franklin Delano Roosevelt or Eleanor Roosevelt?

AP: Oh, yes. Oh yes. They were the great saviors, and they actually were big supporters of Roosevelt, and they loved Eleanor. In ’48, I remember when this was after the war when [Henry] Wallace ran, and we all went to Madison Square Garden to hear Wallace speak. A lot of people were supporting Wallace as well. I remember Roosevelt’s death and how absolutely traumatized we were.

JG: Really?

AP: Yes. In ’45. Right before the end of the war, in ’45, I was already thirteen.

JG: How did you hear?

AP: I don’t remember. A lot of this stuff came over the radio, and we were big listeners to radio. As a matter of fact, as children, there were loads of programs on the radio – I Love a Mystery and [Mr. Keen,] Tracer of Lost Persons and [The Romance of] Helen Trent, and they were fifteen-minute episodes. If you came home for lunch, you could listen to numbers of them, and they were serialized forever; they went on and on and on. I remember Helen Trent. Can this young girl from this little mining town find happiness with a lord or somebody she married? Anyway, sometimes you’d fake illness just to stay home to see what was going to happen in the next episode [laughter] because you’d only

listen during that lunch period. There was “The Shadow Knows” [The Shadow], and there were a whole bunch of them.

JG: Did your parents listen to particular programs?

AP: I don’t know that they listened to those, but we were big listeners, and my brother – I remember when we went to Israel in ’50, and he’s six years younger than I – that’s why I missed his bar mitzvah. Occasionally, I would call from Israel, and the family had just gotten a television set, and he had complained that we were being discriminated against; everybody in the building had a television set, and he didn’t. So, my parents finally scraped up the money from somewhere and bought a television set. When I called, he would say, “Why are you calling now? Why don't you call during a commercial?" [laughter] So, I don't remember any details of battles or anything like that.

JG: Eleanor Roosevelt? Was your mother enamored of her?

AP: My mother was not a political person. We all felt very strongly that they were doing the right thing because we didn’t know until after the war how little Roosevelt did to help the Jews out of Europe. I do remember that there were a lot of antisemites who had said that Roosevelt was really Rosenberg and that he was Jewish. He may have been

responding to the fact that he was—they were suspicious of him, but we all thought he was great. We could find no fault with him, and everybody in the family thought he was great until he died because, of course, none of us – as with people who were born during the [President Bill] Clinton era or during went through Clinton and [President George H.W] Bush – they just never knew anybody else. We always felt that that was the greatest period ever. As you look back, there were a lot of things that were made available to working people that they never had before because of Roosevelt, so you have to give him his due, and she was a great humanitarian; there's no question about it.

JG: Right, right. So, before we sort of move on from your youth activities, I just want to make sure we've talked enough about your involvement in the Zionist youth movements because they were so important, obviously, in these formative years of yours. I'd love it if you would just say again which particular organizations you were involved in and talk a little bit about what their goals were, what kind of activities you were involved in, and what you were thinking about. I mean, how were you caught up in Zionism?

AP: Well, I remember in '48 sitting near the radio and listening to the vote in the United Nations, and that was really – the world stopped for us. [Editor's Note: This was the vote of the UN to partition Palestine from UK rule and make independent Arab and Jewish states, the Jewish state became known as Israel.] We were listening to how Uruguay voted, and every vote came across; it was just wonderful. We were all planning to go to Israel to live on a kibbutz. I mean, that seemed to be – and when we got married, we didn't want any material gifts. We told people to give us money because we were going to –

JG: So, back up for one second and tell me – did you meet Jerry in this context?

AP: Oh yes. I graduated from high school at the age of seventeen, and I went to one year of Brooklyn College. By that time, I was already the secretary of this Zionist organization that I belonged to, Hechalutz Hatzair. There was an institute for Zionist youth leaders that gathered leaders, Zionist youth leaders from all over the world, and provided them with a year's scholarship in Israel. Six months of it was spent studying in Jerusalem and then three months on an established kibbutz, and then three months in a new settlement. So, in 1950, the organization asked me if I wanted to go to represent Hechalutz Hatzair, and nobody in the family had ever flown before. But my parents were – in retrospect, I think they were remarkably tolerant because I think if I had had children at that time and nobody had flown before, I don't know that I would have agreed so willingly as they did. They seemed to be okay with it, and I think again, my grandfather probably was very proud, and he probably was also quite persuasive, and my father had relatives in Israel.

JG: What were your families' attitudes towards your involvement in Zionism at this point?

AP: They were okay with it. They didn't like the fact that I didn't wear make-up; they thought it was sort of a little bit marginalizing me from the mainstream, but they didn't

object strongly. They just didn't seem to –

JG: Were they supportive of the idea of your moving to Israel, making Aliyah?

AP: Oh, well, at that time in '50, that was just a year's study. That came much later. They were not, but I know that – I had several friends with whom I still am friendly from Lincoln, from those days whose mother was a widow, and she absolutely forbade (Elke?) to participate because she had this fear in the back of her head that ultimately she would be off. I don't think my parents saw it in that sort of – the fact that my father had relatives in Israel and that it was considered sort of an honor. They were very impressed with the honor of it, that it was a full-year scholarship, all expenses paid, and it was an opportunity. That was fine. So, Jerry came from the International Zionist Federation of America, I[Z]FO, I think it is. Anyway, he came from the Boston area, and there probably were maybe sixty of us on this year's course – every year, there was a new program – and they had a building in the German Colony in Jerusalem, and it was a full six months of very intensive study. One of the things that happened to me was that a Sephardic friend of mine, who I had met in '48 in Bensonhurst [and] who also went to Lincoln high school – she was back in Israel by '50 when we got there.

JG: So, you were eighteen?

AP: I was just eighteen when I went. Right. She came to visit me once at the Machon when I first got there, and we had been asked to write a composition to evaluate our Hebrew ability so that they could place us in appropriate classes. Shoshana took my essay, and she edited it a little bit. [laughter] So, when I gave it in, I think they [thought] I knew a whole lot more Hebrew than I did. So instead of putting me in classes where I would study the Hebrew language in Hebrew and get lectures in history, geography, Jewish folklore, [and] all the other stuff in English, they put me in a class where I got everything in Hebrew.

JG: Oh, my.

AP: Well, for a while there, I was really in a soup. I couldn't take notes and listen. I didn't understand half of what was going on, but it was actually, in the long run, an amazing advantage that I had because ultimately, even though I had only had a puny two years in high school, I actually managed to get much more out of this thing than I would otherwise. The other big advantage was – whereas Jerry came with Americans from the Zionist youth, I was in Hechalutz Hatzair, which was a much smaller organization, and the kids who were with me were from other places in the world; they spoke no English. So, after six months in Jerusalem, when I went to the kibbutzim, there was a whole group of them from South America who only spoke Spanish. They knew some Yiddish, but that would not have worked, and then there was a couple from France who spoke French. So, the only language of communication we had was Hebrew. So consequently, I probably ended up the year with much more Hebrew than he or most of the others did. It stood me in very good standing because when I came back here, I ended up, after we

got married, teaching Hebrew in the Hebrew schools locally. So that was good. But I'm getting away from the question you asked. You were asking about my activities in these organizations. Well, the first one met at a cellar on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, and we would have evening or weekend meetings. We would study Zionism, the history of Zionism, [and] Jewish history. We would do folk dancing. We sang songs as we became more involved in the organization. We also worked with the younger children and did things with them. We attended the summer camps of the Zionist youth movement – they were usually in the Catskills up above New York City – and met some very interesting people. Andre Previn's sister (Lea?) [Leonore] was a member of Hashomer Hatzair, and she was really quite an unusual person. She died unfortunately very young, but she was in one of those summer camps; she came from LA years and years ago. Some of the other people ended up teaching at Amherst College. It was a nice group of very intellectual people. I forgot to tell you, but when I went to Yiddish school, I also went to Yiddish camp in the summertime.

JG: Did you?

AP: It's very interesting. The fellow who was the dean at the Heller School, what was his name? Anyway, he wrote something, and he said somewhere that he had gone to Camp Boiberik, which was the Yiddish camp of Sholem Aleichem schools. I had started four years in the Workmen's Circle elementary school, and one of my friends decided to go to the Sholem Aleichem High School, so I switched. [laughter] I tended to wander around. We wanted to be together, so I moved from the Workmen's Circle High School to the Sholem Aleichem High School. From there, I went to Boiberik, which is the – and the

reason it's called Boiberik is Sholem Aleichem wrote a story called Boiberik, so the camp was Boiberik.

JG: What does Boiberik mean?

AP: I don't know. It's a fantastic fairyland that has that quality. Anyway, the dean of the Heller School wrote that his most intellectual experiences were at Boiberik. I thought that was very interesting. When you leave, I'll remember the name, but I just don't remember it now.

JG: Okay.

AP: Anyway, nice and interesting people, and this is what we did. We would meet once a week on the weekend or twice a week, and sometimes we would have leadership meetings where we would discuss what we were going to do with the younger children and so on.

JG: What was the goal of these organizations, these youth organizations, at that point?

AP: Well, they were basically hoping to keep kids highly identified so that when they got into college or before they went to college, they would end up going to the kibbutzim and setting up new kibbutzim. The one from Hechalutz Hatzair, the organization that I attended, actually had a group – I don't know whether it was only Americans; there probably were people in that group from other places as well – set up kibbutz Kissufim which was on the Gaza strip. When I went for the year to Israel as part of the Institute for Zionist youth leaders, I spent three months – after the six months in Jerusalem, I spent three months at Alonim, which was a kibbutz in the Emek, which was an established kibbutz even when I was there in the '50; it was already thirty or forty years old. Then, for three months, I was at Kissufim, and when I got to Kissufim, it was just tents and a barbed wire fence and no water.

JG: How many people?

AP: Well, we got there – some of the boys were there; they were preparing the fields for plowing. I don't know. It was sand. I don't know what they were preparing, but there were some pipes that were going to come in, and they were going to set irrigation pipes, which by the way, many of those pipes were stolen because they would cross the border from Gaza and steal the pipes and go back. That's an interesting story. I had forgotten about that one. At the age of eighteen, I went to Kissufim. So, the girls came later, and we were supposed to sort of help out. There was really not much to do because there may have been thirty or forty of us, and there were some kibbutzniks.

JG: Thirty or forty people from your leadership group?

AP: No, I think I was the only one from that group that was at the kibbutz because it was the American group, but the members, older members of Hechalutz Hatzair who had already made Aliyah were there, and they were establishing this kibbutz, and there were also some non-Americans. So, I think I was the only American from that institute group. There was really not much to do. We helped in the kitchen [and] a little bit in the laundry, but there was no laundry because there was no water. We would work during the day and get all dirty, and then we'd get on the tractor and go to the next kibbutz, the nearest kibbutz, which did have water, and then we would shower and get back on the tractor come back just as full of sand as we had left because we weren't protected from the sand. We would brush our teeth with water from the [inaudible] – from the water tank because that's the only water we had. But the most interesting story about that is how I almost sold the state of Israel to the Arabs because they put us on night guard. Because the boys were working all day in the fields, it would be hard to be on guard at night, and there were these thefts, people coming across to steal equipment.

JG: So, when you say they put us, you mean the girls?

AP: The girls, right, and there may have been two or three more newcomers because

basically the girls—they gave us about three-quarters of an hour training with a stun gun. Then they said, “You stand here at this corner of the fence, and you stand there.” They said, “The Israeli army might be coming through sometime during the night, so be careful; they’re doing field operations just for practice.” There was one person who really knew what he was doing; he was the person in charge of this guard group. So, at about two o'clock in the morning, I heard some noise, and I didn’t know. They said if you feel that there is something dangerous going on, take your gun and shoot in the air, and I thought I could kill somebody. So, I looked around for this fellow to see what he thought I should do, and he wasn’t around. So I asked where he was, and they said he’s in the kitchen having coffee. So, I did the very worst thing that you possibly could do; I left my post and went into the kitchen to ask him what to do, and by that time – fortunately, it was the Israeli army. They set up flares in the sky, and the dogs were barking, and it became really craziness because – the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] had a meeting with the head of this kibbutz – they may have been all of twenty-three years old at the time. They said never to put newcomers on guard at night in such a dangerous place. There was occasionally a – somebody would steal across the border and steal equipment, and they would shoot. They could see just trails of blood; they actually had hit people who were trying to get equipment and maybe even enter the kibbutz. So that was Gaza in ’50.

JG: What was the established kibbutz like, and which kibbutz was it?

AP: Oh, that was Alonim, and that was very civilized. There were houses, and we shared rooms, and we ate in the communal dining room, and there were showers and toilets in the buildings. Rows of houses. There were gardens in front of the houses.

That was quit –.

JG: What did you think of kibbutz philosophy and ideology?

AP: We liked it a lot, and both of us at that time thought that we would maybe come back and go to the kibbutz.

JG: And were you an established couple at that point?

AP: No, Jerry was in Galilee at Yiftah, which was the new kibbutz. We each had that double experience. He was sent to Ein Gev, which was an established kibbutz at that time, so we actually didn't see much of each other in Israel; that relationship developed on our return to the states.

JG: I see.

AP: Yes. We were different movements. There were a lot of things that kept us from being together. We were in different classes, even in Jerusalem. He was studying everything in English, and I was struggling to study everything in Hebrew, so it was different.

JG: Right, interesting. So, what were you thinking at the time as this year was evolving?

AP: Well, we became a very close – those of us who had come from the States became a very close-knit group. I remember most of us went back by boat in ’51, and there was a big boat in the Haifa harbor. Of course, that was the year when there was almost nothing to eat in Israel. In fact, there was really – people thought there was nothing. There was almost nothing to eat because they were accepting so many immigrants, refugees from Europe. When I came in ’50, I had those relatives in Israel, my father’s relatives, and that’s a story in itself. They took me to their house from the airport.

JG: Say again how they were your father’s relatives?

AP: The grandmother of that family and my paternal grandfathers were brother and sister. So, they were actually first cousins, and they had left Europe and gone to Israel. The son of this woman – (Hika?), I think, was her name. She was very old in ’50; I think she was in her nineties.

JG: What was the family name?

AP: [inaudible] She had a son and a daughter. Her son studied accounting. When I arrived in ’50, he was already an established successful accountant, and he had bought a piece of land which was a sand dune in [inaudible]. He built a house for himself, and he planted grapefruits and oranges all around. I had never seen a grapefruit plant tree or an orange tree before in my life. I grew up in New York. I don’t think I even saw a chicken or a cow because I had never left the city, so it was really quite a change for me. Anyway, he had done quite well, and then he had a landscape architect come in, and when his sons got married, he tore down some of the orange and grapefruit trees, and he built two houses. Each of the houses had two bedrooms, a large living room, dining room, a small kitchen, and one bathroom. That was it, but it was beautifully landscaped. There was a lily pond, and there was a sukkah, little, I guess, pergola over the pond, and it was several – the garden was on several levels, so it was really quite attractive. I was just gaga when I arrived at eighteen. But the story of that trip was also very interesting. We were all scheduled to leave from New York from what was then Idlewild [Now John F. Kennedy Airport], and El Al [Airlines] existed, but it only had one plane, and Jerry was coming from Boston to go off on this plane, and I lived in New York – I was fortunate. Well, you know planes are sometimes two hours late in leaving, ten hours late in leaving. This plane was two weeks late in leaving because they were waiting for medical supplies and for other things. If you have one plane that belongs to the government – so Jerry kept going back and forth. Poor thing. Finally, a cousin of his who lived in the Bronx said, “You might as well stay with me because this is crazy.” So, we finally got off; we got off on a Thursday. Of course, nobody delivers telegrams on Friday afternoons and Saturdays. So when we arrived at Ben Gurion Airport, there was nobody to greet us, and they didn’t know what to do with us. So, they did the stupidest thing possible. We were

supposed to go to Jerusalem. They put us on a big El Al tour bus, and they sent us to the El Al office in Tel Aviv. Everybody on the road looked at us because you may not recall, but the Egged buses in those days were very tiny. Tall people like Jerry and me couldn't stand up in those buses, and we couldn't get our feet in between the two seats. But this was a tour bus. It was very elegant. Everybody around [inaudible] early Sunday morning. They dropped us off at the El Al office, which was open because it was Sunday morning. We just so happened, by some coincidence, that my relatives, this accountant, and his family, had an office in the same building as the El Al office. They kept calling the El Al office because my father had written them to say that I was coming. They called and said, "Where is the plane?" They said, "Well, they just arrived. As a matter of fact, the bus is pulling up right now on the street." So, they ran down to get us, and they said that they would arrange to have a bus take everybody on the bus to Jerusalem, but they were not letting me go because nobody in the family had seen any member of the American branch of the family for about sixty years. So, it was just before Sukkot. They said, "There won't be any school anyway and until after the holiday. We'll get her back by special cab to Jerusalem, but she's coming with us." So that was what we did. Jerry, being the oldest, was already – he had been in the American army, so he was in charge of getting everybody – they got a bus, they put him in charge, and he got them back to Jerusalem. I went to visit this elderly aunt, and they sat me down in the dining room – and you asked about conditions in Israel. They put one egg in front of me. I didn't realize when I was eating it that that was the egg for the whole family. Food was rationed. We found the rationing books in the cellar here; just the other day, we were looking through stuff. When we came back at the end of that year, the women had gained weight because we were eating a lot of starch, but the boys were working in the fields. Jerry's mother barely recognized him because he had gotten so thin. He was quite robust and strong.

JG: And strong, probably.

AP: But that continued because they kept receiving immigrants from Europe. I remember in ’57, when we came back, Jerry was teaching at the Technion [Israel Institute of Technology], and I was teaching English as a second language at the Technion. I had a [inaudible], a woman who took care of Jonathan, who was less than two at the time, and she was living in a refugee camp in a tin hut. I mean, they were still – in ’57, there was still stress and strain and scarcity, but not the way it was in '50 when we went. In fact, David's mother sent us – she wanted me to take – she wanted Jerry to take stuff for Naomi and what we ended up – is that right?

JG: You mean my husband, David?

AP: Yes, your husband, David. Your husband, your mother-in-law.

JG: Yes.

AP: She said that Naomi didn’t have enough food in ’57, which was not true; she was

worried, and so she said the things we had to bring powdered eggs, and we went all over Boston looking for cans of powdered eggs, and we found them. When we brought them to (Ashkelon?) to Naomi, she looked at us and said, “we were raving maniacs” [laughter]. We had loads of eggs. We may not have other things, but we have loads of eggs. So that was the story with the eggs. But things were tough in '50 because the country was just awash in immigrants and there just wasn't enough food to go around for everybody. So, they were very, very – and I mean, we ate eggplant in all forms. For years after we returned, I couldn’t stand eggplant.

JG: Had you eaten eggplants ever before?

AP: No, but we had sliced eggplant, chopped eggplant, and fried eggplant because there really wasn’t much else. It was difficult.

JG: I wonder whether you had any feelings about the gender differences in terms of what girls and boys, young men and women were doing, what their jobs were, what their roles were on the kibbutz and elsewhere?

AP: Well, the theory was, the ideology was that everybody was equal, and girls would have the same jobs as men and so on, but as boys and as women as men. But in fact, it

didn't work out that way; the kibbutz was pretty gender – I think there was discrimination in the sense that the theory did not jive with the practice.

JG: But did you experience it as discrimination at the time?

AP: No, because we took it as – we took it as a given, but the theory that we had read about before we went – it was about women driving tractors and women working in the fields. We*ff* did work in the fields a bit. I mean, in Alonim, I remember we went out and weeded, but we didn't do any heavy work. The women were primarily in the kitchen, in the laundry, and childcare. Those were the three predominant areas that women were working in.

JG: How did you feel about working in those areas?

AP: I learned. It was hard at the beginning; we came from a very soft life, and all of a sudden, your fingers are calloused, but we didn't do the really hard work. I mean, Jerry really worked in the fields. That was really hard work. We worked with grapes in the vineyards. It was more delicate kind of work, never worked with bananas or any of those things. I think because this country – we had come from a country where women graduated from high school, and it was clear that, as a woman, I would become a teacher

or a social worker. I didn't have aspirations, although, as I told you before, my grandmother's niece became a lawyer. I didn't know anybody – other than this Sophie that I grew up with, I didn't know anybody else who had jumped to that level from the kinds of positions that women were accustomed to taking.

JG: I thought we could actually end this first session with just reflecting on those kinds of issues exactly, and I'm wondering what you were thinking really at this moment in your life. You're just becoming a young woman; you're eighteen, nineteen. What did you think you wanted to do in the future? What did you think about careers? What did you think about marriage and motherhood, and where did you imagine your life was going at that point?

AP: It's interesting. We came back from Israel – I was thinking about that a moment or two ago – very closely bound to the group that had spent the year there. One of the girls who was on the Machon with us was the maid of honor at our wedding. Jerry just turned eighty; she came to New York from Connecticut for this little celebration. One of them lives in Jerusalem, and she's the one whose father had the Pesach seder, and I went out there. We're still in contact. When they come to the States, we see them. We felt, [when] we came back, that the world didn't really understand us, and certainly America was not going to be something that we understood. We were sort of committed to working in the Zionist movement, and we really did think that we would go back to Israel to live on a kibbutz, so we were not really thinking ahead beyond that. Now when we got married, which was two years after we came back.

JG: So, fifty –?

AP: ’53. We came back in ’51. We got married, we had a two-week honeymoon, and then we went to the Catskills to run the Zionist youth camp for Hechalutz Hatzair. We ran it all summer, Jerry and I. I was busy. I was also going back to school. He had a big conflict because he had committed himself to working in IZFO, which would have meant traveling around the country to go visit various campuses. The fact that he went back to school was a big trauma for him; he felt almost as if it was a form of betrayal because – I mean, they understood, and it was okay, but it was that level of commitment. We came back thinking that – and I remember when we left on that boat in the Haifa harbor – I started to tell you about that – there was all this huge amount of food, these big meals we couldn’t eat. We were literally physically ill because we had come from an environment where there was eggplant and more eggplant and more eggplant and one egg a week, and here was this boat which seemed to be from another planet providing so much excess that it was –

JG: It felt like excess.

AP: Yes, it felt like degeneration of the worst kind. How could this kind of abundance be sitting alongside a world where people are struggling to make refugees welcome and

sharing what they had at the same – so we were really at that point much – we would visit each other back and forth. I think that's when Jerry's relationship with me developed. He would come down to New York quite frequently, and Alice, this maid of honor, was in New York working, and Judy was in New York, and Judy had not married yet either. She had this young man who ended up teaching at Columbia, and then he was the dean of liberal arts at the Hebrew University. She told him he either had to become religious, which her family was, or he had to agree to make Aliyah with her to Israel, or she wouldn't marry him. So that was the level of our commitment, and we didn't think that was at all strange; we thought that was quite a [laughter] reasonable thing for her to say.

JG: And did college figure into this worldview for you at that point?

AP: See, I had an easier time because Hechalutz Hatzair was headquartered in Borough Park, so I could continue with my commitments to the movement and still go to school because I was going to Brooklyn College. There was no problem. Then when we got married, I had just finished my junior year, and we moved up here, and then I had to find a school. In those days, colleges wouldn't accept you if you were only coming in for one year. So, Radcliffe wouldn't have me because I was already going to be a senior, so I ended up doing my senior year at BU [Boston University], and Jerry went – he had gone to the University of Texas before we went to Israel. He finished up his last year at Northeastern.

JG: So, what brought you to Boston?

AP: Well, we got married, Jerry.

JG: He was here at that point?

AP: He was here, so I came up here. So that was it. We got married, and then we lived with my mother-in-law for about a year in Winthrop. I met all that lovely family. [laughter] That was very nice. So that was it. I finished BU; he finished Northeastern, and then we stayed in Boston. We went back to Israel any number of times; we really were back and forth. We never quite could decide whether we had one foot on this side of the ocean or one foot on the other side of the ocean, and then later on – I'll probably tell you next time.

JG: Yes.

AP: Our life in Israel for two years.

JG: Right, okay, so why don't we stop here for this time, and we'll pick it up the next time we meet?

AP: That's lovely. Thank you.

JG: Great, okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

JG: So, this is Jayne Guberman, and I'm here with Aliza Parker again. This is for the second session of our interview together. Today is Friday, March 28th, 2008, and we're here at your home in Brookline, Massachusetts. So, Aliza, last time when we ended our conversation, we were talking about your commitment to continue working in the Zionist movement, Hechalutz Hatzair, and your early college years at Brooklyn College, which were coinciding, and your marriage in 1953 to Jerry Parker, subsequent move to Boston, and you lived with your mother-in-law in Winthrop right at the beginning of your marriage while you were finishing school. So, I just wanted to take a step back for one second. Just tell me a little bit about your wedding. We talked a little bit about your courtship, but what was your wedding actually like?

AP: The wedding was in New York in Brooklyn, as a matter of fact, at a wedding hall, and it was a large wedding for our family. My father was off-and-on very much unemployed, but I think my grandmother and grandfather helped him pay for the

wedding. I think it was like seven-fifty a plate at that time. A lot of relatives came down from Boston. It was very nice – the whole Parker family and friends and so on. Some of our friends who had been in Israel with us during the year in Israel came, as well. My father was somewhat horrified, I remember, because among the Israeli friend guests – Americans who had been to Israel, who I call Israeli friends – some of them actually now live still – went back and lived in kibbutzim –was a young man who was a terrific singer and dancer. He was from Bnei Akiva, which in those days was, I think, more liberal than it is today, and he came in the summertime. He was very inappropriately dressed; he came in shorts and in sneakers to a wedding that had a white gown and tux and people dressed up, and my father was horrified, but he was really the life of the party. He organized all the singing and dancing, and it was very, very gay and cheerful, and all of us had a good time, and it turned out he was most appropriately dressed because the air conditioning broke down. We had a temperature of about ninety. During the ceremony, it was beastly hot.

JG: What was the date?

AP: June 21, 1953. Once we got up to the reception and the dinner, it was much better, but in the first part of the event, it was really very uncomfortable. So, we had a good time. Then we had a two-week honeymoon; one week was spent on our own. We drove up – took the family car away from the family and my father-in-law's partner. Two families shared one car, and we took it for our honeymoon and drove up to Canada to attend another wedding of friends from the Zionist movement and visit with some other friends. We went to the Laurentians after that for a couple of days. But the second half

of our honeymoon was spent as directors of the camp of Hechalutz Hatzair. So we came back to the Catskills, and we started the summer by running the camp. This is during the second week and for the rest of the summer. It was a very interesting camp. We had kids who were adolescents for whom the movement was primarily geared, but there wasn't really enough money to run a camp on tuition from adolescents, particularly adolescents whose parents were not so eager for them to participate. So, they all had to receive either partial scholarships or full scholarships. In order to run that camp, they decided to take in young children as young as five and six for overnight camp, which I thought was a little strange. I didn't know why parents would agree to that, but those children paid full tuition and carried the older ones. We needed somebody special to take care of those children. We had a number of [inaudible] from Israel, a couple who were really very high-powered philosophers. But the wife had had some early childhood experience, and her English was superb because she had done a lot of reading but not too much speaking. [laughter] We had a very funny incident where she was supervising these five-year-olds, and one of the children threw a ball, and it got thrown into the grass or into the bushes, and he couldn't find it, and he was distraught, and he cried. She said to him, "Do not weep. I will fetch it for you." So we always remember that story because her Shakespearean English did not go over too well with these young children, but the camp was an interesting one. There were a lot of lectures and singing and fire – not fireplaces, but bonfires and games that were calculated to increase interest and enthusiasm for Israel. I think the summer went very well. We received a lot of subsidized food from the government because it was a non-profit camp. In those days, the government was giving out peanut butter and turkey in large amounts. Those poor children in the camp ate turkey in every shape, form, and configuration. The Israeli [inaudible] who ran the kitchen had no idea what to do with peanut butter at that time, so we told them you use it like butter. Well, one day, we came into the kitchen, and they were frying fish in peanut butter. We had a lot of memories, little anecdotes of this kind, where two cultures meet, and you think that the cultures are fairly similar, but it turns out

that they're not at all similar; there are many, many basic differences. So, we spent that summer there, and then we came back to Boston. I had to finish one year of college. I don't know whether I am repeating myself. Anyway, I attended BU [Boston University] because most of the other colleges in the area required at least two years in order to get a degree from that university. We lived with my mother-in-law in Winthrop and father-in-law, and then we moved to Somerville, and our son Jonathan was born in Somerville.

JG: When was he born?

AP: In '55. We were about – we were still thinking about going back to Israel, and Jerry was offered a job. So we did go back to teach. He was offered a job teaching at the Technion, and we went back in '57. Jonathan was, I guess, less than two at the time, and we schlepped him all over Europe on the way, and we lived in Haifa. I ended up teaching English as a second language at the Technion, so I was also on the faculty, and we lived in a housing project for faculty on top of the Carmel. It was a lovely place; they were Swedish prefabs, and they were terraced, and there was a lovely gardener, and they took very good care of the place. It was a very international kind of environment [with] people from all over the world who had come to either settle or to visit Israel. We were there for two years, and then we came back when I was pregnant with Ryah, but it was a big decision. We were torn between staying and going back, and we did come back. Jonathan was, I guess, less than four, but at the time, he was quite bilingual; his Hebrew was, I think, better than his English, and if we would ask him to speak English, he would say in Hebrew, "They only speak English at the Technion." [laughter] This was his constant answer. His little playmates in the area had parents who had been educated

at Oxford [University] and so on, but when their friends came into their houses, they would banish their parents to the back room because they thought their parents didn't speak Hebrew well enough. So, it was a very Hebrew environment, and the kids were not having any part of English, and Jonathan picked that up as well. But it was a very nice life on top of the Carmel. We had a biologist among the residents, and the children would go out picking flowers – this was before the Carmel was all populated with high rises. They would pick flowers, and they would pick mushrooms, and this microbiologist always told them, "You bring the mushrooms to me before you take them home." So, they did. Jonathan was really among the youngest, but the older children were very nice to him; they always took him flower picking and mushroom picking, and that was very pleasant. We had some very good friends that we still maintain a relationship with over these many years. When I became pregnant with Ryah, I was teaching a course at the Technion, and it was really hot. We had only – Jerry had a jeep from the Technion; he went out and did various things with water and sewage and so on. But getting from one part of the Carmel to where we lived was a trek; there was no direct transportation. So, with my big belly, I would stand on the road and hitchhike. The professors were very nice; they always picked me up. There was a particular professor I remember who was very charming, a physics professor who drove a Messerschmitt. A Messerschmitt is a car with three wheels, and the front wheel and the steering wheel are aligned, and the door opens in the front. So, when you open the door, the steering wheel goes out with the door – it's attached to the door – and it's just a two-seater. He invariably picked me up – he was very nice. When we got back to the States, we discovered that he had been put in prison for spying, and we couldn't figure it out. He was such a nice person. The only thing we could figure out is that in those days with the Cold War and so on – he came from Prague or from someplace, and we had the feeling that he may have been intimidated because of the family that he had left behind. I'm not sure what kind of secrets he had that he betrayed. I don't even remember whether he stayed in prison very long, but it came to me as a shock that this should happen to somebody I knew fairly

well and who I liked very much. So those years went very nicely.

JG: Tell me a little bit about – just thinking back to the very beginning of your marriage, and then here you are – we're talking about four, five, six years into your marriage. What were your expectations in terms of your role, Jerry's role? What was it like to be a young mother, and on top of that, here you were in Israel with a very young child?

AP: Well, it's very interesting. I think Israel has many strata of economic, social, and economic divisions. I think my life in Israel was very good and very easy as a woman working because Jerry grew up in a household where he was one of three brothers, and his mother could not get any help from her husband. He was a very nice man, but he couldn't boil water and make tea out of it. So, she actually taught her sons a lot. At some point, when she went off to Florida to recuperate from gallbladder surgery, she left the three boys in charge, and they cooked, and they did dishes, and they cleaned, and it has stood them in very good stead, so I never had a problem that way. Jerry is very helpful, but in addition, I had help in Israel. I had this wonderful woman named [inaudible], who was a Romanian immigrant, and in '57, there was still what they called [inaudible], which were these metal huts that sort of looked like barracks they had tents for immigrants because there was no housing, and they always had these metal all I can think of is barracks. She lived in one of those metal communities on the Carmel, and she was very happy for the work. She was a lovely lady. I thought of her as old, but I don't think of her as old anymore. I think she was probably in her mid-fifties or early sixties, and she came every day at noon and picked Jonathan up from his nursery school, fed him lunch, put him down for a nap, cleaned the house, and sometimes made supper. So,

life was much easier there than it ever was in the States when we came back. We really had a very nice life. She loved him, and we knew he was being very well taken care of.

JG: What was your day like then?

AP: Well, I would leave in the morning early. Of course, as a professor, I don't think I taught every day. I taught maybe three, four times a week. I had one group of mathematics students that I taught English, one group of architecture students, one group of physics students, and one group of engineering students. Some of them came after – I may have worked some late afternoons because some of them came after work, and they were the students who were least able to cope with extra burdens of work. But they were very bright and very engaging and very enthusiastic, so that was a pleasure. I usually got home about three in the afternoon, three [or] four in the afternoon, so I had the remainder of the day. You could order food on the telephone and from the grocery stores in Haifa, and they would deliver; you didn't even have to go and pick out the stuff that way. I mean, you can do it now with the computer; you can order from Peapods [an online grocer]. But in those days – this was before there were even calculators – everything was written down by hand by somebody at the other end who answered the telephone. Of course, there was a greengrocer and a grocery store and a butcher and a flower store – everything was very separate. We lived up the hill from Ahuza, so you could walk, but it was hilly. We would order, and they would deliver. They knew that if the Israeli government was buying a ship or an airplane that the faculty at the Technion might not get paid that week, so they were very nice with credit; they never pushed. Everybody knew that everybody was not getting a salary that week or that month until it

all got sorted out again. Milk was delivered to the door in a big can. Very often, when we went to the grocer to get bread, the bread would come frequently unwrapped on shelves in the back of the truck, and some of it would fall off on the street. It was a little shocking to us, but we got used to it. We learned that it was better to order chicken because they didn't really know much about cuts of meat, and they were always pretty awful. But it was a very nice environment because you really felt the sabbath. Friday afternoon, everybody went and got flowers, and people came home early, and everybody would take a nap. There was a certain style of life that I think partially was the country and partially was the socio-economic stratum. I don't think that the people who worked manual labor necessarily had it quite as easy as we did.

JG: So, who was your social circle?

AP: Well, we had a lot of friends in the shikun, in the housing project. It was a couple from England who had five children, and (Gela?) was Jonathan's age mate, so they played a lot together, and we would get together. They would have New Year's parties, American New Year's parties, for example, that Israelis don't usually celebrate quite the same way, and they were usually in the shikuns in somebody's house. I remember that one year, Jonathan must have been about three – just after we arrived – the party was in somebody's house, and (Gela's) mother (Rena?) was not going because she was very pregnant with the next child. So she stayed home, and because we were in the shikun, we thought that we could check back every once in a while, and the children would be fine. So, we left Jonathan in the apartment, and at some point, somebody came to get us and said that Jonathan was in (Rena Minkoff's?) bed. This was our friend who had not

come to the party. He got up, saw that there was nobody around, climbed out of his bed, and the thing that was so breathtakingly frightening was that these Swedish prefabs were built on terraces, and there were no banisters and no railings, and at midnight, this little tike was walking along a narrow, brick path, could have fallen into the Mediterranean Sea, and he didn't know where to go. So, he went to his friend's house, and Rena said, "Just a minute. You stay right here in bed. I'm going to go get your mother." But he was pretty self-sufficient. He would go every morning – because there was no real refrigeration, the kids would take these water bottles around their necks filled with tea. In this country, you have cocoa or milk, but that wouldn't have tolerated the heat of the sun. So, they had these bottles with little caps, and off they went. They trudged to their nursery school. I was cleaning up the bookshelves the other day, and I found a children's book for preschoolers that had been given to him by his classmates when we left Israel with all the names of the children in the gan – in the kindergarten. So that was very pleasant. Then we had relatives in Israel; I had relatives in Tel Aviv. Those [inaudible] that I mentioned the last time who were very, very devoted. In fact, we're going to Europe in May, and on the way back, we're stopping in London. The granddaughter of that family is on a three-year scholarship at Oxford finishing a doctorate in Roman coins of some esoteric particular era, and she and her husband are there. So her father and mother are going to come to London to join us because we have been very close over the years. So, we can see them. So they would come to Haifa to see us, and then would often come – I don't know if I mentioned it last time or not, but they came to Haifa to invite us in person to things like Passover and so on. Then I had a more distant relative from Argentina. They were young at the time. They came from Buenos Aires, and they settled first in a house on a sand dune and now live in Kiryat Bialik, and their children and grandchildren are there. Then we had all these friends from the year when we were on the Machon, on the institute, and new friends that we made, so actually, when we left, people said, "Why are you going back to the states? You have more friends and relatives here than you possibly could have in New York or Boston."

JG: So, what were your expectations at that point? Let me ask you one other thing, so you can sort of respond together, which is that, if I'm correct, I think you had, before you went, completed a master's at (the Ed.?) school in '56.

AP: In '56. Right.

JG: So, what were your expectations around career?

AP: I had planned, I think, to teach, and I felt that when I came back – I didn't think about going to school in Israel because I really didn't have adequate language. I can and do converse conversationally, but when it comes to reading a book, I read in English. I can read the newspaper but not with ease. I can sit through The New York Times much faster than I can get through Haaretz [Israeli newspaper]. So, I didn't think about going to school there, and I think we came back because there was the family tug, and at that time, we just didn't know what we were ultimately going to do. Now, Jerry was offered a job in Israel later to come back to the ministry of health, but at the time, we were still in flux, and he was going to get another degree, and I was going to get another degree, and we thought we would come back and see. He actually, when we came back, he came back to a job in Cincinnati [Ohio] with the federal government, but when he went out there, he decided after we got back that it was not what he wanted to do. So we actually

– he came back to work for the State Department of Public Health here in Massachusetts. That was, I think, a fortunate thing because we knew Boston well; it had many, many more educational opportunities for both of us and career opportunities. We had a sense of comfort here that we probably would not have had in Cincinnati nor even in New York, where I had grown up because everybody there had moved on; they were no longer – things don't stand still, so it was a different environment in New York. We did get to New York frequently to visit my parents and my mother's sister, other relatives, and so on, so.

JG: So, what would you say ultimately was the tug that pulled you back here after all those years of being involved in the Zionist youth movements and then being there?

AP: It's hard to say because we were so torn when we left. It was not an easy decision. I think when we left, we thought that it would be a temporary decision and we might come back. We constantly maintained contact, and we did go back a number of times after we returned for fairly lengthy visits. I think we waited too long to make that decision to go back. Jerry was offered chief engineer of the Ministry of Public Health, and we went that summer to try it out.

JG: What summer was that?

AP: This was the summer of sixty – oh, let's see. It was, I think, '67 or '68, maybe. I'm not sure. No, he was older. It was '72 because he [Jonathan] was going into his senior year in high school, and he was a very good student. He is very bright, and his Hebrew is really actually very good. There was something subliminal about his knowledge from the early years when he was there between two and four. He also went to Hebrew school at [inaudible] Israel, which was a ten-hour-a-week program in those days, and although he gave the teachers a lot of grief and spent a lot of time in the hallway, he seemed to absorb through his skin, and to this day he speaks quite well. He doesn't use it, but he knows it, and he has a good ear for languages. His French is very good; he took two or three years of French, and he can converse in French, and he goes to movies without subtitles. There is some gene that's working that I don't have. [laughter] Anyway, he was very upset; this was really the wrong time. We waited so long, and they told him that he would have to repeat a year – I don't know whether we pursued an American school or not, but it was a very serious decision. We really went with the intention of staying, and Ryah was sort of his shadow; whatever he said, she agreed to. So they were involved in Italian strikes all the time – they're not going; they're staying home, this kind of thing. So, it was very difficult. But I think when we were there in '68, they enjoyed it because we had a summer in Jerusalem, and they would walk to the wall [Western Wall] for Simchat's Torah on their own – there's kids going. Those were the days when that was possible in '68. So, they had good memories of Israel when they were older, but I think the notion of being pulled out of high school before, it just was too much, and we couldn't hack it, so we came back, and as I say I think probably it's because we waited too long to make the decision. It's not a good time for children. It's one thing if you're taking them when they're third graders, fourth graders, even seventh and eighth graders, but high school period is very traumatic, so I think that's what happened there.

JG: So how was that for you, making that decision?

AP: Well, we have to this day regrets, and it's hard. We used to visit Israel very frequent – we haven't been there recently. The last time we were there was in '99, which is a long time ago. But we were there in '90, Jerry and I. I had been working with Hebrew teachers and Hebrew principals here in Boston first for Dr. (Schafler?) at the Hebrew College. All the afternoon principals wanted to participate in something, and we ran a year – and then it moved into its second-year – program for Hebrew principals. There was one for Hebrew principals and one for Hebrew teachers. At the end of the second year, we took all the Hebrew principals to Israel for two weeks, and we went through all of the educational institutions, not all of them, but many of the significant ones in various segments, some religious, some secular, and it was a very interesting trip. The principals liked it so much that they started a third group for a third year and a group of teachers, but then it petered out. I think we probably exhausted the population. [laughter] So that was very nice. The kids, when they were still in high school, would go with us. At this point, it's very hard; they're here, so our decision, I think, is pretty much made for us, but we get back and forth. The same [inaudible] family came. Jonathan called them and said, "Just send Aliza a note. She's going to be seventy-five in June," this last June. The grandfather of this girl who is in Oxford, who had lost his wife the year before – she didn't make it to her granddaughter's wedding; she died of cancer. He was really very destitute and down; it was a very hard period for him. He had really not moved out of the house. But when Jonathan called, he said, "I'll do one better. I'll come." So, he took his granddaughter, or actually, she took him because they were afraid to let him travel on his own, and she left her husband. The grandfather and the granddaughter came here in June, and they spent about ten days with us for the party and for the period afterward.

JG: Oh, that's lovely.

AP: It's the father and mother of this young woman, and she and her husband that we're going to see in London. The grandfather I spoke to just last Friday, and I said, "Come, too." He said, "Not until you come to visit me in Israel." [laughter] He said, "It would be no problem to come to London, but I saw you in June, and I'm not coming to see you until you come to see me."

JG: So, the ties are still strong.

AP: The ties are still very strong. Right.

JG: So, let's go back to the period after you came back to the States, and it's the late '50s, '60s.

AP: You mean after the first – the Machon? The institute?

JG: Yes.

AP: Yes, we came back in ’59.

JG: ’59. So let’s talk just about the beginnings of your work life here as well and your decision ultimately to get a doctorate and what your interests were as they were developing and emerging at that point.

AP: Well, it’s very interesting. I had not touched Yiddish for all the years that I was involved in the Zionist movement, and my master’s degree was a general degree, study of curriculum, in general. But as I approached – I finished the master’s program, I started to look into and become interested in what I had experienced in the Yiddish school movement and what was still going on. Of course, there was much less going on. I felt as if I didn't tap into it [that] it would soon disappear; it would be nothing left. So I got involved with looking at – I had a lot of stuff in the house in terms of textbooks that were very old but not as old as the ones that I had used when I was a student all those years back. I started thinking about working in the area of the Yiddish schools and their curriculum and what it was that, for me, seemed to have been so positive and why these kids held onto this in the years that I was there and maybe even afterward, even though it was a voluntary program. It takes much greater skill to maintain continuity in a program

where people can say, “We don’t like it. We’re not going to do it anymore.” There are also increasing numbers of seductions from other areas: the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, ballet, soccer, all the things that we didn’t have when we were growing up, which children in the ’60s, ’70s, ’80s, and ’90s had to look at it and say – they weren’t saying, “I’d rather do Yiddish instead of ballet or soccer.” So, it occurred to me that it should be something that should be looked at before it totally disappeared. I had very good advisors at Harvard. I started my master’s degree there. There was Dr. Israel Scheffler, who had a joint appointment in philosophy and the Liberal Arts College and also an endowed chair in the School of Education. He really bridged both worlds at a very high level, not just the hands-on kind of stuff, which made me crazy when I started my undergraduate degree at Brooklyn College, and I told them I was going to be an education major. I took two courses, and I had to opt out because it just absolutely made me throw up; I thought it was absolute nonsense. I ended up as a history major. But at Harvard, the courses had much more heft to them, and I found the philosophy interesting and even the methodology interesting, which I had found absolutely zany at the undergraduate level. So, I worked with him and with some others on the master’s level, and I did some work in the public schools at the time. I worked on the Norwalk project with Robert Anderson, who was looking at education in terms of a system where there would not be a hierarchy – sorry, there would be a hierarchy among teachers rather than everybody earning the same amount of money. There would be different kinds of responsibility that went with these varying degrees. They tried several projects in Norwalk [Connecticut] and in other places. I would get the minutes and the notes of the teachers, and I did some analysis of that. So, I had some contact with curriculum and with methodology and teacher training even before I began teaching at the university, and I also became a teaching fellow at Harvard. So, I went out for Harvard to supervise teachers, and it was a Harvard-Newton program, also through Anderson and a couple of others. It was a program that had teachers get a master’s degree in one year.

JG: This is the MAT [Master of Arts in Teaching]?

AP: Yes. No, it was the (AMT?), I think. No, it wasn't. It wasn't liberal arts; it was education. But the interesting thing about it was there was a heavy emphasis on in-class functioning so that each student was paired with another student. For six months, one student took courses at Harvard while the other one was in the Newton public schools, and then they flipped – or the Brookline schools. So, I didn't do the teaching, but I did the supervision out in the school. That was very, very interesting to see how children adjusted to two different personalities in the same classroom and how a teacher who had a good head but no theoretical training would do directly with children and only get her or his theoretical training afterward and what happened when the reverse was true. I remember there was one pair that I had here in Brookline, and the young man was – his name was (Larry Zuckerman?) I think. He had long hair down to here, and he wore dungarees, and he drove the principal of that school bananas. He called Harvard, and he said to the fellow who was in charge of the program, "Get him out of my school." He was one of these people – he had been a sportsman. I don't know what he was teaching, physical education or something. His notion of a well-run school is everybody rows, and everybody does the same strokes; everybody is doing the same thing all the time. Now, this was a young man who could sit with a child who needed reading help for two hours. I'm exaggerating a bit, but a long time, and there would be other kids waiting. The other kids knew that when their turn came, they would get the same attention. He tried everything. He'd say, "If you could read this paragraph or this sentence, I'll give you ten M&Ms," which I thought was horrible at the time, a sort of behavior modification. But he was so jovial and congenial that he made them feel that they were motivated more by

him than I think they were by the M&Ms, and they produced – the other kids did it as well, but the principal was incensed. So (Sperber?), who was superintendent of schools – lived across the street from us here – was called, and he knew that I was in the school. I said, “Bob leave him alone. He’s doing a great job. He’s doing a terrific job.” But he went back to Harvard. He was there first, and then he went to take the theoretical courses. This middle-aged woman who also lives in Brookline and who was something of a neighbor here – I don’t know where. I knew her from some other context, so it was a little awkward to have her, but she went into the classroom. She was smart about getting the kids to express how they felt about the change, but she was horrified because some of these little second and third-graders wrote, “You’re very nice to us on the outside, but you kill us on the inside.” [laughter] So, she knew that there was some shift there that just wasn’t working. Anyway, these were very interesting experiences that I had here. So that was my master’s degree, but when it came to do the doctorate, Scheffler encouraged me, and I decided to try to work. I had a lot of good sources. Widener Library at Harvard is marvelous; it’s a treasure trove of material in Yiddish as well as in Hebrew, and I had a carrel at Widener, and I could close the whole world, leave the world outside, and just spend hours on children’s journals and textbooks and that sort of thing. I use YIVO [Institute for Jewish Research] in New York. There was this wonderful Dina Abramowicz whose father had saved the YIVO library in –why am I blocking? – in Vilna [a former Jewish ghetto, modern-day Lithuania] and brought it to the States. She died a few years ago, but she helped me a lot. I used the American Jewish Historical Society at Brandeis.

JG: So, what was the question you were researching?

AP: I was doing a – I was analyzing the Yiddish secular school curriculum in terms of what they did to foster a sense of identification, a sense of continuity, and how they differed among them. There were four different movements; one was, so to speak, apolitical – social, liberal, but apolitical. One was Socialist, The Workmen's Circle. One was Labor Zionist the Farband. And one was this Jewish People's Fraternal Order, which was Communist. Originally, there had just been The Workmen's Circle, but the radical group broke off from The Workmen's Circle, and they started the JWFO. So they had different textbooks. They had different goals. They had different agendas. When Yiddish became a language that they could not really depend on, they couldn't teach in Yiddish because the kids didn't understand. They couldn't really teach Yiddish literature in the original. Three of the movements resisted translation. They insisted that no matter how meager and how limited, they would continue to do Yiddish. The most radical group translated into English, and at some level, their materials were, therefore, better. They also, depending upon what the political orientation was, in the literature books that they had for children, some of the – Workmen's Circle less so, but the Jewish People's Fraternal Order had literature from around the world, so they had Langston Hughes in Yiddish. They had other things that were part of just general world literature. In their history books, they would point out times when there were alliances between Jews and non-Jews when the Huguenots during the Crusades joined the Jews in defending themselves and defending each other against the Crusaders. So it was very interesting to see how these movements developed and what they did with their material. But of course, as Jews moved to the suburbs, and Yiddish became less of a home-spoken language, it was not heard, you didn't see it, and there were other claims on the children's lives like the things I mentioned before, they had to keep reducing the numbers of hours because kids couldn't get a distance to a Yiddish school as it was in my day when I walked two blocks to a storefront school, and it was in the neighborhood. So, there was the lack of language exposure, the geographic distances, and the competing activities that took children's time. So it was really a downhill battle. It was interesting to

see how each of those movements coped with that downhill battle and what kinds of compromises they were willing to make and what kinds of compromises they were absolutely unwilling to make. So, it turned out to be an interesting thing to do, and it was very nice; I enjoyed it. [laughter]

JG: Had you started teaching at Northeastern during the same period?

AP: I started at Northeastern in ’67, and I had not done my doctorate. I may have finished my special qualifying paper, but I hadn’t – and I tried – and I was still taking – no, it was before that. I was still taking courses. I didn’t [inaudible] working here in the house, so I would try to take courses at Harvard that matched the children’s schedule. So, I was forever looking for courses in the morning instead of in the afternoon.

JG: The children were how old during this period?

AP: Well, Jonathan was born in ’55, so he was probably eight, something like that, and Ryah was four. I had a babysitter. I did teach Hebrew. I didn’t drive. I taught one year before Jonathan was born at Temple B'nai Moshe in the afternoon two days a week and Sunday morning. I also taught at Temple Israel. I also taught at Ohabei Shalom, but I was offered a job in Swampscott, which paid much better than any of these jobs, but I

didn't drive. So, my arrangement was I would only accept a job if they could provide me with a chauffeur, which they did. There was somebody else from this area who was going, and he – Leo and I – trudged off to Swampscott two days a week and Sunday morning. On those two days a week, I had a babysitter. But it didn't work quite as easily as it had worked in Israel. I mean, it was a good arrangement. I think the kids were well taken care of, but it was not the same kind of thing. So, I did that, and then I started taking courses at Harvard. I took them, as I said, in the morning because Hebrew school was in the afternoon, and it was a lot of juggling. Then I decided after I had taken the courses and I had finished my qualifying paper that there was no way I was going to finish if I were to – I was teaching '67 to '68 at Northeastern, and I decided that I had to take a year off. So, once I finished the qualifying paper and I started working on the dissertation, I took a year off just to work on the dissertation. I had an arrangement with myself that I would work at home unless I needed to be at the library, but if the phone rang, I did not answer it until the kids came home at 2:30 in the afternoon. It was hard at the beginning. I was eaten up with curiosity – who's calling? Am I missing something important? But I decided it was the only way I could handle that, so that's what I did. So, I finished. That was fine. I got the degree in '73, I think. Am I right?

JG: Yes, I think so. I wanted to ask you – 1963 – this was a very interesting period we're talking about here in the world and for women, and the kind of issues we're talking about. 1963 is when Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique came out. [Editor's Note: Betty Friedan was a well-known feminist, and The Feminine Mystique describes women's dissatisfaction in American society post World War II along with how it is assumed that women can be satisfied simply by housework, children, and marriage.] I am wondering whether you read it, whether you were involved in a world where it was being talked about, and whether it resonated with you in any way or during that period.

AP: I was aware of it, but for some reason, I've never had the feeling about myself that I was sort of – in retrospect now looking backward, I think certainly I was involved on a personal level with those struggles and with trying to juggle all the things, but it wasn't as if I was making a calculated decision in advance as some women did not have children and then they would work. I mean, I already had the givens, so I had to juggle what I was dealing with. But I didn't see myself as part of a movement or part of a category; I was just sort of trudging along doing what I had to do. I don't remember feeling particularly identified with what she was saying, although, in retrospect, I should have identified because I was dealing with some of the very problems that she was describing. It was almost as if I was too busy to think about it in theoretical terms. I was really mostly –

JG: In the end, you weren't actually a suburban housewife –

AP: No.

JG: – who didn't have other interests, and you always were involved working and in the juggling that is actually characterized as a very contemporary – women's lives today.

AP: Exactly. I didn't feel put upon. I also didn't have a husband who expected dinner to be on the table regardless of what else was going on in my life. So, in fact, he was very helpful with the dissertation. This table – he was collating, and he was typing, and he was editing, and he would say, "I'll take the kids, go ahead, work for two hours." So that was very helpful. I was not seeing the patriarchal, paternalistic model that some women had to deal with living out in the sticks and not being able to move around. We have a lot of common interests, too; the things we did when we were free, we did together.

JG: So we'll come back to that because I'd like to hear more about it, but I'm curious while we're on this other topic whether your friends and the other women you knew who were in your basic age cohort, give or take, were also similarly to you working and doing this juggling, or did you know many women who were basically housewives?

AP: Well, a lot of our friends were Israelis that were students. They were here doing pretty much what – when I was doing my doctoral dissertation, my friend (Carolyn Escher?), who ended up as the first scientist for the Department of Education in Israel, was doing a doctorate at Harvard in mathematics curricula. At four o'clock in the afternoon, I would call her, and she would call me, and she'd say, "How many pages did you write?" [laugher] I'd say, "How many pages did you write?" She had grown up in the city, in Tel Aviv, and went to a kibbutz, married somebody from Hashomer Hatzair, and had two children. The kibbutz movement sent the two of them here to work in Hashomer Hatzair, and she was introduced to us through a mutual friend who had been very active in Hashomer Hatzair. She wanted to know whether – she had never finished her undergraduate degree in Hebrew University, so she wanted to, perhaps, start at

Northeastern. I was already there. They told her she had to take this, that, [and] the other. I looked at her resume and what she had done. I said, “Don’t bother with Northeastern. Go to Harvard.” They took her without her undergraduate degree, and in no time, she was working on her doctorate as I was. There were other Israelis, and they were all kinds of women who were involved with working and raising children. I had some friends who were not, who were at home. But also there was some level of economic necessity, too. It wasn’t that I was doing it only because I was delighted to be in the work world. Jerry was working for the Department of Public Health; the salaries were not great, and they’re probably not great anyway even today, and so we felt that we really needed not two incomes because I wasn’t working full time at the time before I took the job at Northeastern, but that we needed more money. So, it wasn’t really a question of choice – shall I stay home, or shall I not stay home? I did both because it was interesting and also because it was necessary.

JG: Let’s talk a little bit about what life was like as a woman on the faculty at Northeastern and how that was at the beginning and how it changed over time.

AP: As you know, in education, there were many women. The department of education, when I joined the faculty, had, I’d say, about forty percent women, maybe fifty percent women, and they had varying backgrounds. We never felt that Northeastern was giving education sufficient credit. In other words, the salaries were not standardized across the university. The people who were in computers and in business and in engineering were getting much better salaries. We also had the impression that the women were getting less than the men in our department, but it was never really absolutely clear that that was

the case because it was always a secret; no one said. In the ’60s, there was a movement to unionize the faculty, and BU succeeded. They have a faculty union. At Northeastern, the administration said that we were part of management, that we were not employees; we were part of management. For some reason, when the vote came down to it, by a very small – I don’t know – percentage, a very tiny percentage, those who said that the faculty was management eked out – not a majority but enough so that they carried the day. So that was the end of that. There was some effort later to complain, and I remember signing a petition, but it didn’t take us very far. Somehow, the whole thing dribbled out, and it was nothing. We worked quite hard. Northeastern was on a quarter system, and so we essentially – the term sounds like we're doing sausages. We processed fifty more students, really a hundred percent more students, because everybody else at BU and everywhere else had two sets of students a year. We had three sets of students a year. We went from September to – and the class size was the same, and the number of hours was the same. So we were very busy because you had to get into a quarter of what everybody else got into a semester. So, it was midterms, exams, and finals. I found it very – one of the reasons I retired was not because I didn’t like the work, but I found I was spending infinite numbers of hours making notes on other people’s papers. I wrote more in the margins than they wrote in the body of the paper, and it was crazy. I also was a little disturbed by the quality of the students and what was acceptable as passing work. I didn’t get the feeling in some instances that I got support. So, there was an instance just before I left where I had a graduate student in a course who submitted a paper to me. He had been a very poor student throughout, and he submitted a paper to me that I thought was beneath contempt. Of course, a B-minus is failing. I gave him a C. No, B-minus is passing if it’s matched with – if you get a B-plus, then it sort of – but you have to have a B average, and he was furious. I thought to myself, “Is he only poor in my class? Is it something that I’ve done, that I haven’t reached him?” So, I asked the chairman of the department if he knew this student, and he said yes, that he was in his class. I said, “Can I see some work that he’s done for

you?" He showed me the paper, and strange to say the paper that he had written in this course on reading was almost identical to the one he had submitted to me, and that paper was marked [as] an A-minus. So, I was very irate. I said something to the chairman of the department, and he said, "Well, they're different subjects, and maybe he wasn't addressing your assignment, but he was addressing mine." The student came to me, and I said I wouldn't change it; he would have to take the course all over again; he was going to fail. He said, "I'm going to take it to the dean." I said, "Go ahead." So, he went to the dean, and she called me. She was the associate dean. I sent her a copy of both papers, the one that I had [inaudible], and she said, "Forget it."

JG: Forget it, meaning what?

AP: Forget it. Don't worry about it. He's not going to get a grade for this. But I don't know what happened. I left about six months or eight months afterward.

JG: What year are we talking about?

AP: This was in '99. I don't know what happened with that young man. There was a lot of stuff. We had some students who – when I supervised student teaching, I had some student teachers here in Brookline, one of whom in a school that my children went to was

in a class with a very poor teacher, and the student was being given more responsibility than she should have had. She was paying tuition for a learning experience that she wasn't getting, so she complained. I went in to see what was going on, and I went to the principal. I said, "I'm pulling her out of this class, and I'm sending her to a teacher who I know is a good teacher in Boston." Boston has a very poor reputation, but there are teachers and teachers everywhere. So, I said she was going to go there. I said, "I solved my problem, but you haven't solved yours because your kids are still facing this very weak teacher." I didn't hear what happened until afterward, but this teacher's husband was offered a job in Texas, and she asked people – she was going to apply for a job there – if they would write her recommendations, and I was told that some of them wrote her glowing references just to get rid of her because it was such a difficult thing. So, there was that kind of thing and students who were sometimes passed when they shouldn't have been passed, students who I thought were not going to be a credit to the profession in terms of helping kids learn, one of whom turned out – was accepted as – he's now the reading supervisor. I had to have him redo student teaching once. I felt that the quality of the people we were sending out into the field was not adequate. It's interesting. You asked about the women. I think the women in the department, at some level, had higher standards than the men in the department, and it may be because the men were working in this field because they were not acceptable in other fields. I just don't know. It seemed to me that the women in the department were brighter and that they held their own, and they established higher standards for students. A lot of it was, at the end, very frustrating for me. So, I decided I really didn't have – I was there almost thirty years, about twenty-nine and a half years – that it was enough, and I have not looked back. I really don't feel that – I feel more of an affinity with what I did at Harvard than what I did at Northeastern because I think now they're raising standards. It's interesting. I've heard that it's become a very attractive place to go to, the co-op program is very successful, and it always has been. That was the good part of it. But because more people are interested in going to school in Boston and it's now a semester program,

not a quarter system, there is a huge interest, and many, many students are applying. Therefore, they can raise standards, so maybe things are better now. I'm not sure.

JG: It sounds like it was a really significant frustration.

AP: It was a very significant frustration. My women friends in the department and I had one, in particular – we used to spend a lot of time discussing the fact that we felt that the administration – and this was in the years where people were not coming to study education because there were no jobs. So they were taking people – we used to say that some of our students – they accepted them if they had a pulse. [laughter] There were no standards applied. I once said to a group of my students – I was teaching a course in, I think, Analysis of the Instructional Process. I said, "Tell me, all of you, what you can tell me about Abraham Lincoln, and don't stop until you start repeating yourself as a group. Let's see how much you know." They said that he had been born in the log cabin, and he walked three miles or five miles to return a nickel, and he wore a top hat, and he was tall, and he was assassinated, and he freed the slaves, and that was pretty much it. I said, "Well, this is your collective knowledge as a group of twenty-five people. Don't you see something amiss?" I said, "It would be very wise of you to educate yourself better before you plan to teach because, at this level of knowledge, you're telling me what children in the second or third grade know about Abraham Lincoln. In order to teach, you have to have much more background in any given subject than what you're going to impart. You're not there just to tell whatever you know. You're there to pull from what you know, what you think is most significant."

JG: Given this perspective, are you a supporter or not of standards and tests or testing for teaching?

AP: You mean this teach-to-the-test kind of program?

JB: Yes.

AP: It's a mixed blessing. There is a certain level of need for standardization, but I think that what has happened is that the testing has become kind of crude so that it's not information that is generalizable or [applicable]; they can't take something specific from one instance and apply it in a new situation because they haven't learned it that way because they're busy studying for the test. So, I think it's important to have standardization. I was once horrified – just before I retired, a colleague of mine who was a history specialist was supervising students in West Roxbury High School, which is a relatively new school, I'd say, fifteen, twenty years old, a big school with a lot of students mostly Black, Hispanic, new immigrants, fairly modern school. He had some surgery. He asked me to go in and supervise. I usually did elementary and early childhood, but I did go in because I have a history background as well. I was astonished. There were about six different teachers of American history, each of which – there was no chairman of the department. Boston obviously doesn't have a standardized curriculum, so the class I attended had a teacher who was a military buff. So, the student-teacher that Paul was supervising was busy teaching about the names of battles, the dates of battles, and who were the generals and who were the winners and who were the losers. Next door was a woman, who was a women's-libber, and she was doing women in the Civil War. God knows what the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth teachers were doing, but it was total

chaos. So, there is a need for standardization but not at a level which is just gimmicky and where you don't get larger ideas and generalizations from the specifics. Otherwise, the specifics are – it's like learning the word "parler" in French; unless you know that "parler" is a conjugation that is going to give you access to a whole array of things that fall into the same category, it's very limited information. So those were the things that were my frustrations.

JG: Given all of that, what would you say were the highlights of your almost thirty years at Northeastern?

AP: Northeastern, in the days when I was teaching there, had very poor students, and they had some terrific students. It was just delightful to deal with some of the better students. I mean, they just were amazingly good. For them, it was a subway school. Their parents didn't have the money to pay for room and board at the school. They really didn't live a campus life, but they had really great ability and skill. To watch them develop – I still have some of their units of work; I've never thrown them away. They're really terrific. I enjoyed teaching. I really did enjoy teaching. I know that some of them thought that I was a hard taskmaster, and I probably was, [laughter] but I did enjoy it, and I kept some of the materials that I've worked with. I enjoyed some of the people that I worked with; they were good people who had good standards and good objectives. I think I enjoyed academic life. I enjoyed the conferences. I enjoyed doing the writing. I always felt that – we belonged to a bible study group, which is now almost – we're the new kids on the block, and we belonged for over twenty-five years, but it went on and on and on. Originally, [Leonard] Leibel and Zelda Fein – Zelda just died. Leibel, of course,

is no longer a member. The Epsteins – there was a whole bunch of people. It was once a group of twenty-two; it's now down to a group of about eleven. But we used to meet once in two weeks. Now we meet once a month. Every time we met, a couple or a person who was single would present. The group would meet at someone's house, and then after you presented, you would host the next time, and somebody else would present. We learned a lot, mostly from the presenting. When you listen, it's not the same as when you study; you get much more out of it. Although we used to complain and gripe – oh, it's too much work, every two weeks. You have to present twice a year, and now we only present once a year. But actually, it was fun to dig up some material on a subject. I think that part of the academic thing was interesting, too, both to hear new information and to dig up stuff on your own. So that was enjoyable.

JG: Tell me what the subject matter was that the study group was involved in.

AP: Well, we started out as a Bible group study group. Before we joined, they were doing the Bible chapter by chapter.

JG: And who were the members?

AP: Zelda and Leibel Fein, Mary and Pablo Epstein, the (Resniks?).

JG: So, it was a group of Jewish couples, basically?

AP: Couples, yes. They were mostly from Brookline and some from Newton, so it was very convenient. It's not like New York, where you have to go – or Washington DC – great distances. The last meeting was this last Sunday night; it was around the corner on Filbert Road, so it's great. We would have a potluck supper, and we still do. The host makes the main course, and then the rest of us bring stuff. Before we joined, I think they went through the Bible once and a half or twice, and then we came, and they started skipping around because some of the Bible is very interesting and some of it is very difficult, and you really need, I think, somebody who is an expert, and we resisted getting experts in; we wanted to do it ourselves. Then we decided about four years ago, five years ago, that people were tired of the Bible as they had already been through – you can't say you've been through the Bible. I mean, superficially, they've been through the Bible three or four times. We decided to do Jewish history, but had a problem because whereas the Bible kept you with a structure because of the sequentially of the chapters, Jewish history was not like that; it was sort of all over the place. Some people did a good job; some people did not do such a good job. Some people are born students; some people are more recipients than they are participants. So, we did that for a couple of years, and then we stopped and went back to the Bible. It didn't work out quite as well because there were fewer of us, and it was hard for some people to get a hook into whatever it is they wanted to do. So, I suggested last year or the year before that we do Jewish communities around the world that we know nothing about. So, we've been doing that, which is sort of interesting. What was it like to live in Alexandria [Egypt] in the whatever? Somebody did something on Majorca [Spain] and the Jewish cartographers in

Majorca. We've done Jews of China and Indian Jews and Iranian Jews. In fact, Zelda White – she's no longer Fein – just before she died, she presented here on Iranian Jews. She had terminal cancer; it was very difficult for her to get up the stairs, but she was determined, and she did it. She took a lot of painkillers, but she did it. We did something on Egyptian Jewry. It's our turn next, and I don't know what we're going to do. [laughter]

JG: Do you get to choose the person?

AP: Yes, we get to choose. Somebody said, "Why don't you …?" We're involved now with possibly selling the house, and it's very busy. They said, "Do something about Yiddish." So I may very well do that. [laughter]

JG: Very nice. Is there anything else you want to talk about regarding your career at Northeastern?

AP: Not really. I just hope that they're doing better with better students. I mean, I really was very discouraged at one point and just discouraged by the level of people we were producing and sending out into the field; that was my primary concern. I knew that I wasn't getting as much money as I should and certainly not as much recognition, but I was really concerned. That used to frustrate me and make me very angry. I still see a

lot of very poor teaching going on, even in the best school systems. Some school systems have wonderful PR [public relations], but when you get down to the nitty-gritty, it's a lot of smoke and mirrors.

JG: Right, right. So it's had its challenges and its rewards, it sounds like. I wanted to turn back for this next section here and think about your married life. You've been married over fifty years. Is that right?

AP: Fifty-five years in June.

JG: Fifty-five years in June. So, I wonder whether you can talk a little bit about how your marriage has evolved, whether it's evolved as you would have expected in terms of how your roles played out. How has the world changed around you, and in what way that's affected the two of you? I'm sure some of that has to go into some thoughts about what makes for such a long and rich relationship with a person.

AP: We actually, the two of us, came from very similar backgrounds. Our parents were born and grew up in areas that are probably within the same province in Eastern Europe, so there were a lot of assumptions that were the same – the same food, the same practices, the same holidays, but still, growing up in New York and growing up in Boston

are very different. I had, first of all, a much more secular background, Yiddish background – Jewish background but secular. Jerry grew up in a much more traditional household. I mean, his mother was kosher. Well, my parents were kosher too, after a fashion. [laughter] Mostly, my grandmother was kosher, but they did observe. But they never were affiliated or identified. My in-laws were highly identified Jews. My father-in-law was a member of the Farband, and he got some of the Yiddish newspapers. He attended Temple. Not that he was religious, but he was traditional – and in Somerville. They knew the rabbi intimately. My parents were removed in that sense because my grandfather and grandmother were involved with the synagogue, but only as prayer – as people going to participate in the services; they were not active. My mother-in-law took care of the Torah boys on Sunday morning. She handed out coffee or bagels and that sort of thing. She was busy with the women's auxiliary of this and the [inaudible] of that and pioneer women. So, it was a different kind of environment, but I had the congestion, the intensity of New York Jewish life, which at some level does not really require organizational contact; there just were so many of us in one place in New York that you breathed and you ate, you streamed, and you lived Jewish life. You didn't have to make a Jewish life because you were in the minority. At Brooklyn College, my first year that I was there – I may have mentioned it last time – in December, the loudspeaker played one Christmas carol and one Hanukkah song all the time, and everybody knew that the schools were closed for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana. It was just a different – it was, at some level, like being in Israel; you didn't have to announce your identification because it was part of the given. So that was different, but we had a lot of commonalities. Although we came from different Zionist movements, we both came from Zionists movements. So, we didn't have different sets of friends. I'm just trying to think about what you're saying. We had the same sets of friends right from the beginning, from adolescence on. That made a big difference. While we were both working, we had different meetings to attend to and that sort of thing, but our extracurricular stuff was very much common. Jerry didn't go to play poker with the boys, and I didn't go to do knitting

or whatever. Whatever we did, we did together. We spent less time together. Now we're together almost all the time because we're retired. But we attend lectures at Harvard. We go to a lot of concerts at the conservatory. We were yesterday at Temple Emanuel for a lecture by Daniel Gordis, which we were disappointed in, by the way. We travel to some extent. We've done less in the last year or two. We get down to see the kids in New York. We have friends who have two apartments in New York that they don't use, so we use them, and they're right near Lincoln Center. Our kids enjoy our friends, and our friends enjoy our kids and their kids. Jerry's brother is in Tennessee, so we don't see him a lot, but some of their children [of] his older brother who died is a doctor in Barrington, Rhode Island, so we see him, and one of his sons is studying at Brandeis, so we see him. My brother lives in California, but he comes east. They're very mobile all the time, so they were here – we were down in March in New York; they came to New York, so we see them. We've had our ups and downs. We sometimes fight, but we seem to resolve the arguments such as they are. They're usually about small things rather than large things, as I think about it – things about – I would not have said that to somebody that way; I would have said it another way, that kind of thing. I think we have pretty common objectives, which have stood us in good stead over the years. I think probably if I think back about why we left Israel, I think Jerry would have tried it even with the kid's resistance and stayed on a little bit. There have been those kinds of things where we might have varied. We now have this house that he would like to get rid of. I love it. But he does all the work. It's a multiple dwelling, and he's tired of being a landlord, and I can understand that. I don't know where we – actually, we don't even know where we're going to go. As a matter of fact, when you leave today, a broker is coming over, so it's very much on my mind – should we rent? Should we buy? Will we ultimately end up in New York because that's where the kids are? All of those are questions that are pressing on us now. Sometimes we get hot about it, and sometimes we realize that there is no absolutely hundred percent right answer, [and] that every one of those answers has some drawbacks with some disadvantages. You just don't know

what to do. Maybe staying put is good, maybe not. So all of those things are issues. The children, at the beginning, got very involved. They thought we should come to New York, and they thought we should set a deadline, and now they say – the expression in Yiddish is Fardrai zich dem kop. Drive yourself crazy. When you decide, let us know.

JG: So maybe there is a philosophy in here that has stood you in good stead over all these years. Is there a secret of what you think makes for a good and long-lasting marriage and relationship?

AP: Well, it may be that you have to tease out and remember that the commonalities are more pervasive than the differences and that a certain amount of disagreement or discussion or upset is probably par for the course, and you have to go with it. Jerry once heard that somebody was divorcing, and when he asked why this young couple was divorcing, they said that they had had an argument, and he said, “Is that a reason?” [laughter] You have to look at it over a long period of time and see whether the arguments are more prevalent than the agreements and the enjoyment and the things that make life worthwhile.

JG: And how would you think about that in regard to being a mother because you've been a mother for many years at this point?

AP: Well, I think I'm less bossy than I used to be, for one thing, because I think the kids got annoyed with it. After a while, they said, "We're grown-ups, too." Now they tend to – they almost infantilize us sometimes. We begin to say – In fact, Jerry just turned eighty, and we bought a new car last summer, and they were hoping that he wouldn't drive anymore. [laughter] So, we said that we shouldn't drive to New York. It's hard on Jerry. We pointed out that, in some ways, it's easier because you do door-to-door, you don't have to drag to the train station to the airport, and we pointed out that all our friends are still driving. It's not that we, at the age of seventy and eighty, are suddenly doing something unusual. I think [they] got the point. They've stopped insisting. I think one or both of them said, "If you drive to New York, we're not going to see you." But we know that they mean well. It's just that they're getting too intrusive as we probably became too intrusive with them and other things. So, I try. Jerry is better. I tend to be an Olympic-style worrier, so sometimes I get into trouble, but the kids have been – they're great kids. I mean, they both do well personally, professionally. Their judgment is good. They seem to have good values. Ryah is more active, more like my mother-in-law. She's involved with things. Jonathan is more introspective, but he is very efficient. He could run General Motors. Whenever things get out of hand, she'll say, "Don't talk to me about it. Let him do it. He does it much better." So, they're arranging this trip that we're going to take in May.

JG: Where is the trip to?

AP: We're, after many years of resisting, going to Germany; we're going to Berlin. I still am not totally comfortable with, but we're going there during Holocaust something, and

there are museums that they've set up. The Germans have been much better than the Austrians, for example, about confronting what they did. As a matter of fact, there is a professor of physics at Northeastern who is not Jewish – [he's] German, and he has spent the last – since the Second World War ending in contrition for what happened. He looks like he doesn't eat or sleep. He gives everything that he owns to support Jewish study groups and Jewish film festivals, and Jewish this and Jewish that. So, I always remember him and try to compartmentalize my emotions about it all. Anyway, we're going to spend four days in Berlin, and then we're going to Krakow, and we're going to Auschwitz. Then we're going back to London for four days to meet family and to see some friends who are there.

JG: That's [inaudible].

AP: But it's sort of interesting. Our kids are both really very bright. Jonathan was in the Advanced Placement course here in Brookline, and then they said it was too elitist. It's funny what you remember about your kids. When we came back from Israel in '59, he was three years and three-quarters. We got off the plane at Idlewild. We got into a taxi to go to my mother's house. He looked around as we were driving from Long Island to Brooklyn at the apartment buildings and the tall buildings – and remember we lived on the Carmel – and he said to us in Hebrew, "What a strange place this is; there's no air between the buildings." He was three years and nine months. [laughter]

JG: Very perceptive also.

AP: They both went to Yale, and we own several bricks at Yale after all those years of

tuition paid. Anyway, she was co-chair or chair of this program called Big Brother, Big Sister. She's, by the way, a big women's-libber, very big. They had these kids from the inner city that they were taking care of. Then when she was about to graduate, she got, I guess, what you call – it was a scholarship to do the Yale-China program, which is a two-year program where you teach either in Hong Kong or in the mainland, depending upon how much Chinese you know. So, she told these children that she was going off to Hong Kong. They said – this one little girl, in particular – "Where is Hong Kong? How far away is it?" Ryah decided that it would be a good idea to take these little disadvantaged kids on an airplane ride to show them how far. She does things with a broad hand – to show them how far you can go in a half-hour. She conned some businessmen in the New Haven community into underwriting a half-hour trip in an airplane for a bunch of these disadvantaged kids, and she took them up in the airplane. One of the mothers wrote that this is an experience that will live with her for the rest of her life, and she now understands that Ryah is going far away. Ryah does this sort of thing. She writes with a broad stroke. He is much more of a detail person who gets things done [inaudible] effectively.

JG: They sound wonderful, and part of what they've done and are doing is doing this oral history interview to honor your seventy-fifth birthday. So, I think, for this last section of the interview, it would be a wonderful occasion just to look back and reflect a little bit on some broader themes. So, I wanted to ask you what your main concerns are about the future as it relates to the United States, Israel [and] the world.

AP: Well, it's a very crazy world. I don't know. Maybe people during the plagues in

Europe or the Second World War or those who lived during more trying times – I'm sure those periods were very trying, but there is something almost totally out of control that I feel about the world today in the sense that I don't trust our leadership anywhere, not in Israel, not in the United States. I don't know whether they could be doing a better job than they're doing or things have gotten so out of hand that it's not controllable. Certainly, the people we know are not doing a good job, and there seem to be so many issues that are simultaneously troublesome. I was a little girl during the Depression, in the '30s, so I don't remember very much. Of course, as I told someone, you don't feel – you're not aware that you don't have things if everybody around you doesn't have them, so you don't feel poor or whatever. I'm sure that I didn't have much in the way of clothing, and we didn't go to restaurants at all as far as I could remember. I was the first one to travel when I left for Israel at the age of eighteen. No one had a car in the family. My grandfather helped pay the rent. My father was unemployed for a little, but it didn't bother me because I didn't see very much difference around me. But I think at the moment I just don't see that – we always had the feeling, I guess – I'm stopping in mid-sentence – that the world would be a better place for our children than it had been for [us]. Certainly, that was true for us; we have a better life than my parents had, but I'm not so sure about that for the future. The combination of economic uncertainty, political uncertainty, financial uncertainty, social changes that are not under control, and at some level, a lack of regulation, a lack of constraints on some things that have gone haywire. I don't know. People say that this is a recession. It could get much worse, and I don't see that anybody is putting a brake on anything to make it better. The talk seems to be trivial in comparison to the needs – what people are promising in terms of what needs to be done. Not that I think I'm so smart that I know what needs to be done, but I feel that it's something other than what people are talking about right now. If things were to change in the right direction, it seems it would take so long to make the changes that maybe they'll come too late even if they come. I guess that's one thing. In terms of – we've been pretty lucky with our health, the two of us. I hope that that continues that way. Our

kids are very edgy. They want to carry our suitcases, this, that, and the other thing. But basically, we're pretty much able to handle things. I think this transition from this house somewhere else – we're very comfortable in the Boston area; the only thing that's missing is the kids are somewhere else. [laughter] So that's a problem, but I think that probably we will choose to stay here, at least in the short term. People have said that since it's in the short term, maybe you should rent rather than buy because, on the other hand, the dollar seems to be losing value as we speak, so we sell the house and get dollars that keep evaporating. Anyway, that's not a major thing, but it's just that it happens to be a thought for today because the broker is coming. I think that we want to make sure that the kids are happy and that they're doing what they enjoy doing. Jonathan has been working the same [inaudible] for many years and is very successful, and we hope that the field he's in will continue to be successful, although Bush is doing everything possible to reduce the impact of labor unions. Ryah has chosen to be a consultant, which is in keeping with her personality. She likes to write with a big stroke, and I hope that that will continue to be successful. She has done some interesting things in that area. The two of us, I think, live a pretty good life. We're in a very fortunate position because we are in a place where we can do and reach things easily. We can be in the symphony. We can be at the theater. We can be at Harvard. We have our friends nearby within ten minutes, and they're very devoted people, so we enjoy them. We have some relatives here. So, I think, on the whole, we're not doing badly.

JG: What do you think have been the greatest advances you've seen in the world over the course of your lifetime?

AP: I think our health is better than our parents'. Maybe I'm being – and Jerry too – we sometimes say, "Eighty is now seventy or sixty" [laughter] because we seem to be moving around better than they, and we can enjoy things now. Knock wood. [laughter] I think that technology has made it very interesting to live in this era. You can put your children's pictures on your telephone, on the cellphone, you can communicate. I still haven't gotten used to it. I keep thinking that I [inaudible], and I belong in an earlier generation or an earlier century. I was at Northeastern before I retired, and I had to present something at a committee meeting, and I left the notes for the committee meeting at home. I had about three-quarters of an hour before the meeting started, and I said, "Oh boy, I could get home." So, I ran to the car, put the key in the ignition, and I thought, "Fool, what are you doing? Jerry is at home. He can fax you the material." Because I still am not equipped and totally acclimated to utilize what is available, but I think it's terrific that it's available. Of course, the little ones, the preschoolers, the early childhood, and the elementary school kids take it as a given. I remember we were once flying to Nashville, Tennessee, for a nephew's bar mitzvah. I said to Jonathan, "Here we are on this plane, and fifty years ago, my grandfather was tramping through the Ukraine with boots and mud up to his knees." He looked at me – the fact that he was flying didn't have any impression on him. He said, "Well, what are you? Overly impressed with the television series Roots?" He just couldn't fathom that I thought this was a novelty, whereas he was taking it for granted. So I think that the medical, the technological advantages have been – on the other hand, I don't know whether – I think privacy is an issue sometimes. There are issues now with intrusion on your privacy, time to think, and be alone. Sometimes this whole business of identity theft – but it hasn't touched us. It's touched a lot of others, but I don't think it's touched us. I think that we have been lucky. I think that we've been lucky.

JG: Any fervent hopes when you think about the future?

AP: I hope that we'll stay well for as long as possible.

JG: Amen.

AP: I didn't use to think about health. My mother-in-law and Dora and other people would say, "Oh, it's another year. Be healthy for the coming year." When you're twenty or thirty, you think you're going to live forever, and you're invulnerable to anything. So those are important factors – and happiness and pleasure in our relationships, which I think are the source of well-being with family and friendships and opportunities to do this, which has been very exciting for me and very interesting. You've been a very good interviewer, really. I've enjoyed this a lot.

JG: Well, so have I. Maybe we'll do it again in another ten or fifteen, or twenty years.

AP: Oh, terrific. That would be lovely.

JG: We can make a date.

AP: Yes, that's wonderful.

JG: That sounds fun. Anything else you'd like to add before we stop for now?

AP: No, I think your organization is terrific. I think that it's a great idea to gather these things because a lot of the things that I have thought about I've not thought about in years and years, and you've raised them to the surface, and that's terrific. It's wonderful to experience again things that gave pleasure and, to some extent, some things that gave pain but a lot of things that gave pleasure in the past, which I probably would never think of unless I flipped through a photograph album or found a letter from somebody that you have helped me put together in a very interesting way.

JG: Well, that's wonderful. I hope your children will enjoy hearing your voice and listening and reading your words for many, many, many years to come.

AP: I want to thank them for the tremendous opportunity. I think without this ingenious idea that they had and the fact that they were able to find an organization like yours. I don't know how it all got put together; that was never explained to me, but it was really a very ingenious, gracious, generous thing for them to have done, and I thank whoever and however this all got put together. It's wonderful.

JG: Your children have been calling us at the Jewish Women's Archive for a couple of years, and I think it's wonderful that they appreciate and value your story and want to hear it. So, thank you very much. To be continued at some point in the future.

AP: Absolutely. It would be my pleasure. Thank you so much.

JG: Thanks.

[END OF INTERVIEW]