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Ana M. Varela-Lago: Okay. This is an interview with Delia Sanchez. Delia, please, I would like to start by talking a little bit about your family. Could you tell me, how did they first come to Tampa? What did they do here?

Delia P. Sanchez: Well, my father came to Tampa because his cousins were here. They were working in the restaurants as cooks, waiters. And he was from Galicia, from a little village—near Santiago. And he came and joined his cousins who were already here. And he went to work in one of the restaurants—I don't know if you want me to tell you the names of the restaurants, or—

AVL: Yes.

DS: The first one was Requeira. That was a restaurant that was on 14th Street in Ybor City. And then he went to El Pasaje, which is—you may know—is, was one of the famous restaurants here; it has some historic background. Right now they have a restaurant there. I'm not remembering the name of the restaurant that's there now, but anyway, he was there for many years. My—he came in 1920.

My mother came, like, in 1922, I think. And she came because she wanted to leave—she was from Asturias. From a little village, La Castañal, near Pravia. In Asturias. And she came to join her brother, who was already here working in the cigar factories. She wanted to come because she wanted to leave the business of being working on the farm. And her parents were very upset; they offered her everything possible to keep her there. But she was bent on coming and joining her brother. She came and went to work, to learn how to make cigars. And worked in a cigar factory with her brother and his wife. But she lived with them, and things didn't go too well in terms of getting along with her sister-in-law and all that.

So she changed to become a housekeeper in the home of one of the—midwives, Maria Mesina,

who was a very well-known and famous midwife here that a lot of the people you are interviewing probably were born or either had children that she delivered. I happen to be one of those that she delivered. And so that's—she met my father because he used to walk near there, the house where she was working in Ybor City. And they then decided to get married, and they did. And then she didn't work anymore. He continued to work in the restaurants, like I mentioned to you. And another way they supplemented their income—I don't know whether you're interested in this or not—but, is that the cousins that he had here, who were living in different boarding houses or whatever, came to live at their home and paid rent and that kind of thing.

So that's, that was her way of working and contributing to the family income. And then, then afterwards, in 1924, I was born. And we lived in, they lived in Ybor City on 12th Avenue, across the street from the Catholic convent that pertains also to what's Our Lady of Perpetual Help [OLPH] today. At that time it was called, Our Lady—St. Joseph's—and then Our Lady of Mercy. And then Our Lady of Perpetual Help. And so they continued—he continued working in restaurants; of course we had the Depression and El Pasaje closed down. And then they, he just, he belonged to the waiters' and cooks' union, and they would give them, a week's work during the Depression. So they bounced around from restaurant to restaurant so they could all have, at least a turn, at working.

The Depression years were very hard—I'm sure that everyone has told you—for most of the immigrants that were here. Well, it was for everyone here, not just the, the cigar makers, the waiters, the restaurants, everyone. And then when I, I don't know whether you want me to interject anything about my going to school, when I was 5?

AVL: Yes, yes.

DS: Yes. So when I was about 4 years old, I, I was always begging them to let me go to school ’cause I—the school was almost across the street, even though it was on the next block—the kids would come by the house from school and I kept thinking that my parents were mean because they didn't let me go to school. Well. They didn't. There's a cute story; my mother got so tired of hearing me wanting to go to school that she took me one day to register me and lied about my age—’cause you had to be five—and so I told her, "No, I'm not 5," in front of the nun. "I'm not 5, I'm 4." She says to them, "She doesn't know what she's talking about, she's 5." So, I finally got into, into the school, to the Catholic school there, which was interesting because my father, as many of the men that, you know, came from Spain, had become very anti-church—well, anti-, the organized church; anti-cleric. They used to say "anticlerical." Anti-cleric. And yet, when it came time for me to go to school, that's the school he wanted me to go.

AVL: Why do you think—?

DS: —it had also happened, also, that I was baptized—because my father, when I was eight, once said to my father, "How come we have—" my, my mother, said to my mother, "How come we haven't baptized her yet?" And, the irony of it was that my mother was afraid to mention that she wanted to have me baptized because she knew how he felt. And yet it became important to him that I be baptized because that was the thing to do, I guess.

AVL: Were they married in the church? When they got married?

DS: No, they were married by a notary public. And in the home of one of their friends. And—

AVL: Was your mother religious, more so than your father, or—?

DS: No, she was—well, she was more, she was more of a believer, she was more—she didn't, she didn't go to church a great deal, but she would go. I think she would go—we lived so near the church that I have a feeling that she went. And then when I started going to school there, she then began going to church with me. Like, on Sundays—it, because it was a requirement that I had to go to church on Sundays. And we went to Mass every morning, too, at school. For 9 years I went to Mass every morning. Because before you went to classes, you went to Mass. And, yes, she was more religious, although not, not that—again—she wasn't one who was—in fact I don't think she started going back to church until I went to school.

And then she observed things very interestingly. For example, she didn't agree with the business of, here in this country, you didn't eat meat on Fridays. Well, evidently, by then, this didn't exist in Spain, I think, and she said, well, she was observing the rules in Spain, not here. But interestingly enough, later, when my cousin who was a priest in Galicia came, and he and she had an *empanada*, a meat pie, and it was left over and he says, "Save it for me, I'll eat it tomorrow." And she says, "No, tomorrow's Friday, you can't eat it." He says, "Oh, but we don't have that rule in Spain." She says, "Oh, yeah, but you're in the United States so you have to observe it," when she herself didn't observe it. But anyway, that's just an aside.

AVL: Why was your father so anticlerical? Do you think? Why did he—

DS: Well, I think he felt, I think it was tied up a little bit with the political story, I think, in that he felt that the church had a lot of control over people's lives, and that, and of course he, he, recall—he didn't recall because he wasn't in it—but, I guess from history where they had been, you know back in the, what do you call it? The—that age back in the 15-1400s or whatever when they—

AVL: Medieval times, or—?

DS: Well, when they had all those—

AVL: Inquisition?

DS: Inquisitions. And that, he didn't even live that, but I think they felt that they dominated the political climate in Spain, that it was not good for Spain. Also they dominated the lives of the people in the villages.

AVL: In what ways, can you—?

DS: Well, he felt that they, they affected, you know, one of the things that we used to say is that they used to take a lot from people who were poor. And really didn't, didn't give as the way that

Christ had taught. You know, he had that kind of thing. When I say political, it wasn't that he was tied up with anything relating to, necessarily an atheist doctrine like in communism or anything like that. Just his feeling about how they behaved. You know. And he came to realize that the Church here in this country operated very differently, really, than the Church in Spain.

It's like—I'm jumping a little bit, but—my first time that I went to Spain was in 1956. And they had a *Romería*, which I guess you would call a fiesta, in the village where my father was from. And the young people were very upset. And they boycotted that *Romería* because the priest there did not let them have an orchestra. Because it was too sensual. This is 1956. And so they went to another little village where that didn't happen; where the Church did not control where they—so the priest contracted a band. Which, you can't dance to a marching band, you know. And this was an aspect—I mean this didn't happen; he never told a story like this, about when he was growing up. But I suppose this is part of what he meant of how they controlled the lives of their people there. And I guess maybe affected the government, I suppose. I mean, I can't remember real well, but I think this is what it came from, that he felt that they were oppressive, that they were controlling, you know.

And yet, like I said, because he respected the kind of education that went on in Catholic schools, he still insisted that I go to a Catholic school. But of course he always—you know I don't know why I didn't come through with more, like I said, really being confused or something—he'd send me there, he'd want me to go there. And yet he'd always tell me and laugh, he says, "*Bueno*," I'm gonna say this in Spanish and then translate it: "*Te mandamos al convento para que aprendas, porque vas a aprender a decir mentiras como los curas*." He says that we're sending you to the Catholic school but we recognize you're gonna learn to be a liar like the priests, you know.

And of course that would upset me very much, because by this time I was very much into the Catholic religion and, you know, and was confused, you know, as to what my father said and what the school said. But, I think he evidently did influence me a little bit in terms of trying to be more objective about organized religion, whether it's Catholic or otherwise.

AVL: Now, did he belong to any other church, in a way, I mean—?

DS: No, no.

AVL: He did never attend—

DS: He hadn't—well, I think he probably didn't have use for any particular—sectarian, or organized religion, let me put it that way. Whether he had a belief, you know, in God, in that, I could never grasp; I can't tell you. But he certainly was very much against organized religion—and yet he didn't interfere with my going to church on Sundays and, you know, he realized that was part of the ritual of going to a Catholic school, so. It was okay.

AVL: Yes. Now could you, would you say the role of Catholic, the Catholic Church in Ybor City was—how would you define that role? Being, like, a Latin community like that, from Italy and Spain—

DS: Yes. I think that the Catholic Church was very influential—not very influential—I think that they were, they probably were the religious organization that dominated both the Italian and Spanish. And some Cuban. But the Cubans had, some of them were already belonging to Protestant groups—which, you didn't get the Spaniards so much.

For example they, very near to my house and very near OLPH [Our Lady of Perpetual Help], you had the Methodist church. But mostly Cubans were going to that Methodist church. You had a Presbyterian church about eight or nine blocks from there. And again, that was a mixture; they had some Italians, but mostly again I think Cubans. Somehow the Spaniards seemed to remain connected to the Catholic Church. But, you already had popping up these—oh and there were-no, and there was more than that, there was another Methodist church, again a Protestant group, that I can remember. There were probably more that I'm not remembering, but I can think of about four Protestant churches in Ybor City. Not big. But they had a church building and they had Sunday school, and they had—in fact the Methodist Church, not so much at the turn of the century in the '20s, but shortly after that, had a settlement house. Wolf Settlement. And the interesting thing that most of us that went to the Methodist settlement house were Catholics. Even though they had a lot of Cuban Methodist group.

The reason is that the Catholic Church never had activities. You went to mass, and you went home. There were never any activities for youngsters, for kids, or for young people. Whereas the Methodist Church had this settlement concept. And this, had this, big, and of course the church up North gave money to build this building, for example, that was a settlement house. I don't know if you're familiar with the concept of settlement houses. But up North, they're usually centers that have educations, at night for adults. They have recreational activities, they have the Girl Scout activities, they have sewing classes—a sort of a recreational center, an educational center. Especially for adults. But also for young people, so that a lot of us that were Catholics went to the Wolf Settlement as Girl Scouts and Girl Reserves, Boy Scouts. Because the Catholic Church did not have this.

So, I don't know if I'm answering your question. They were—I don't know whether to call them influential because they, they did the Cath—the Spanish, Spaniards did remain for the most part—the women—I think with the Catholic Church. And a few men. Same way with the Italians. And the Cubans. But again you begin to see Cubans joining the Methodist groups.

AVL: I see.

DS: I don't know to what extent, and many of them very devout Catholics probably either don't remember, or can't accept the fact that it happened, but it did happen. In fact, I remember that I was, what I call, well, and I don't—the word "ecumenical," the concept—I always tell my friends that I was ecumenical before it became fashionable to be ecumenical, because I continued to go to the Catholic Church. But Sunday evenings I would go with my Methodist—my Cuban friends—to the Methodist, young people's—and then I would go to the Presbyterian for some of the activities. But I never left the Catholic Church. I just thought it was okay. You know what I mean?

AVL: And there wasn't any conflict, in fact—?

DS: Between us, with those?

AVL: Yes.

DS: No, we'd just, each one went to whatever. And there didn't seem to be any conflict. There didn't seem to be; I don't know. If there was, I wasn't aware of it. In fact the only time I had a problem—I had a problem with it—and that was when I got to college in 1941. Where—I don't know if you want me to talk about this.

AVL: Yes. Sure.

DS: I—since I had belonged to the Girl Reserves, which is like the Girl Scouts at the Wolf Settlement, I had belonged to an organization that was called the YWCA, which is Young Women's Christian Association. And once a year we had—we didn't go there for much because we, you know, we were in Ybor City, we couldn't travel much downtown—but we would go to this once a year affair which is a candlelight ceremony and all that. Well, when I went to college, they had a YWCA, and they had a membership drive. So—a dollar—so I joined the YWCA.

Well, they posted all the names of the members in the main administration building. Well, I also belonged to the Newman Club—which was a Catholic Club. I don't know if you are familiar with the Newman Club on Campus, but every campus—almost every campus—USF [University of South Florida] has one. Or used to have a Newman Club, which is for Catholic students. And I was a member. So the president [of the Newman Club] came to see me at the dormitory and said, "You know, I noticed your name on the YWCA membership." And I said, "Yeah, I joined." She said, "You can't do that." I said, "What do you mean, I can't do that?" She said, "Well, you know that's a Protestant—" I said, "No, it's not a Protestant—it's a nondenominational group. And it doesn't make any difference what denomination—" It's a, it's a Christian group perhaps, but nondenominational. "Yeah, but as a Catholic, you know you can't—" I said, "Did Father Kelly send you over here to talk to me?" "No, but I know he would." I said, "When he comes over here and talks to me about it, we'll discuss it. But I'm not taking from you that I can't belong. And I will continue to belong. And if you want to make an issue and throw me out of the Newman Club, I'll come and defend myself. ’Cause I think you're wrong." So, she said, "Well, I’ll have to talk to Father Kelly." I said, "Be my guest."

So, I never heard from Father Kelly; she never came back. ’Cause I guess he had to tell her that that was nonsense, you know. But see, some of these people were so into the fact that, as a Catholic, you couldn't participate at that time—until we became ecumenical—you know, into the business of another religion, that she got all wound up. And so, back to your question—I don't remember. As I said, it's interesting the only conflict I had happened years later when I was in college when we should have been more, you know, liberal about it. But in Ybor City, like I said, I went—they knew I was Catholic, at the Methodist Church. They knew I wasn't gonna go there to join them. They just knew I was participating in their activities. Same way with the Presbyterian Church. Well, in college I even participate—went to some of the Jewish activities. So that's why I said, I was ecumenical before my time.

AVL: Before your time.

DS: I've really deviated in this interview, I think.

AVL: No, no, I really enjoyed your talking about all these aspects. Going back to your family, tell me a little bit your experiences about growing up in Ybor City. What do you remember of your childhood in that sense?

DS: Well, I remember a very close-knit community; a very close-knit neighborhood. You know, everybody knew each other. Down the block. Even today I can go back and think of the names of the families on the block and on the next block. We all played together. We went ice skating—I mean not ice skating—roller skating around the block. Or on the next block where the Catholic school was, 'cause that had a real nice sidewalk. We visited a lot back and forth in the neighborhood. We—we did—you know there was just a, what would you say? A feeling of neighborhood, a feeling—and also a feeling like helping each other.

You know, if somebody was ill down the street and you found out about it, if my mother was home she would tell the other lady and then if there was nobody else because her husband worked, they would take turns and go in, to see them, or taking them chicken soup, or, you know whatever. And there was always this feeling of helping each other. Of unity, I think. And I suppose this was the way with, with even other groups—it wasn't necessarily a Latin community—but it was very much, then there was also the feeling of belonging to these clubs. Also the fact that the clubs had these medical programs; you know the, the health—

AVL: Benefits.

DS: —program. Health benefits. I remember when I went to high school I was shocked. I took it so for granted as a child that whenever I was sick, or had a cold—whatever—I'd go to the clinic, with the *recibo*, that's your receipt that you paid every month, 25 cents or 50 cents. And the doctor would see me and would prescribe. Went to high school and the kids were very sick and I'd say, "Well, did you go to the doctor?" "Well, no, I can't—" it was right after the Depression—"we can't afford it." And this was at, I went to a high school—that's another story of my life—that was not the one that I was supposed to go to, as far as geographic area. And I'll tell you about that afterwards. And it's really, it's, be—Plant High School—which was always in the more affluent neighborhood in Tampa, which is South Tampa. But it still had the poor kids like from Port Tampa, and the outlying. And they were the ones who would tell me, "Doctor? We can't afford to go to a doctor. We don't have—" and I couldn't understand; it took me a while to understand how come I could go to a doctor. And my parents were poor, too, in a sense, although by this time my father was working full time, the Depression was kind of left behind. But still very limited income.

And again, there was that aspect, not only the social aspect of the clubs, which tied this community together—the Cuban, the Italian, the Spanish. But the medical thing, that they knew that, you know, they had hospital benefits, they had medical benefits. I think that was a unifying force and element with this community. I'm trying to think of what else I could tell you about growing up. Again, like I said, we were all friends as far as the Cubans, Italians, Spanish—next

door to my house was an Italian family. On the other side was a Cuban family. Two doors down was a Cuban "mulatto," we used to call him. A black family. There were very few blacks at that time living in Ybor City, up to 22nd Street. From 22nd [Street] on, it began to be a little bit more mixed, or integrated I guess—there wasn't a conscious integration, it just was happening. But again, as you probably have been told, the Cuban blacks were much accepted. They worked in the cigar factories. They couldn't belong to the clubs because of the state laws and all that but they, again, the people—the Cubans, and the Spanish, the Italians, looked at them as one of the other neighbors, you know, not—now, you may interview somebody who saw it differently, but in general this is the way we perceived it. We had some families in that block and in the next one and, you know, there was no concern about it.

In fact, the other thing that, during the Depression, I was taking music lessons—piano lessons—across the street with the nuns. And we didn't have money to pay for them, but what I did was to take charge of having the studio where the children came to take lessons, clean. And you paid 50 cents a week for your music lessons. Well, I didn't have to pay the 50 cents because we didn't have it. But if I cleaned the studio, kept it clean and kept it dusted, I could have my music lessons. Well, they had a young man that also came and did the gardening. Well, it turns out that he went to the black school—Catholic school—that was about ten blocks from there. And he paid for his tuition, at school—remember this is during the Depression—by coming over here to the nuns' convent which is across the street from my house, to do the gardening. Well, we became friends. Very good friends. And, as the years went on, then, of course, I went to high school somewhere else; I didn't see him. And then we met again, like, twenty years later, because of my being—well, because of a friend that was also a mulatto that was working for my cousin—and they belonged to the Martí-Maceo. [Sociedad La Union Martí-Maceo] And Manuel, my childhood friend that did the gardening, happened to be the president of the Martí-Maceo Club. You know, I'm getting so—

AVL: This is the Afro-Cuban—

DS: Afro-Cuban, yeah.

AVL: —Mutual Aid Society.

DS: —Yeah, I keep using the word "black" 'cause that's what we used to say and I should say Afro-Cuban, right? And so he was the president of the Martí-Maceo at that time. He still is a member; he's no longer the president. And of course we reminisced at that time when we first met again—so much about our childhood, you know—and of the good relationships that existed across the board between the different ethnic groups, including the Afro-Cuban. Yeah. Again, we didn't know—that I'm aware of—we didn't know any Afro-Americans, because they, they didn't, you know, they weren't in school, they weren't in the neighborhood. But the Afro-Cubans were. They were in the factory.

In fact, my father had, for two years after the, the Depression—from '39 to '41—he had a small coffee shop, in Ybor City, on 15th Street across from a cigar factory. And my parents would serve lunch for the cigar makers that came there. There were one or two Afro-Cubans. And, again, because of—not because the cigar workers didn't want them in the front part of the

restaurant—but because of the state laws and all that, he would serve them in the kitchen. And all the cigar—in fact the cigar, white cigar makers—came to ask us, Wouldn't we please serve the Afro-Cubans in the kitchen because they wanted to eat there. So my father said, "Sure." And, you know, that was another piece of what was happening. And again, in the cigar factories they, they did work. They probably in the cigar factories never moved up to the highest—you've heard about the levels?

AVL: Yes.

DS: The *escogedores*, the selectors, were the upper caste of the cigar makers. And that, they probably never were promoted to that area. But they did all the other tasks that any other person did in the cigar factory.

AVL: And how about the Americans? You mentioned that you went to this high school that was a little bit out of the Latin quarter?

DS: Right. Well—

AVL: What was your relationship with Americans while you were growing up, in that way?

DS: —I never felt—I really never felt any different—but part of it I think had to be with my, had to deal with my father's attitude about—for example there were about—I went to that high school. I rode in a panel truck that Latin, two other Latin students owned. And they picked up—I guess I was the other Latin—there were three of us Latins in there. And then we picked up three Anglo students along the way. And of course that was my first introduction to—well not, not to Anglo students ’cause I had 'em at the Catholic school—well in the Catholic school-well I don't need to go back to that cause you asked me about that high school. ’

My father always tried to instill in me the idea that—cause he'd always hear this, a little bit of the prejudice that we had as Latins to, towards the *Americanos*, or the Anglos. And he was always against it and he said, "You know, you put a chip on your shoulder and it's gonna get knocked off." He said, “So don't put that chip on that shoulder and you don't look at it. You're just as good as anyone else. And you don't, you don't allow yourself to be beaten down. But neither do you—with respect, you answer whatever you have to answer, and you still believe in yourself no matter what happens.”

And as a child, I can remember that back—and I don't know why the conversation started, with anything that had happened—but he was always telling me, when he would hear somebody be negative, he said, "We're in this country, this country has been good to us and no, we don't have to feel this hostility towards the *Americanos*." And if someone, if one of 'em is nasty, you just say well, sorry that you feel that way. And you keep on—you don't fight back with the same kind of hostility they're giving to you. And so I kind of grew up with that.

So when I went to Plant, I never remember experiencing any kind of attitude. And I mixed with, you know, with everybody there. Granted, I didn't—someone said to me one day—well, but you never belonged to the, can't remember the name of the club, they had these social clubs that were

very elite like, you know. And I said, "Hey, neither do the rest of the Anglos belong to it." Only the very, very wealthy students belonged to this. Look at all the Anglos that are at Plant, they are never asked to join the—that has nothing to do with Latins. But you had to have that attitude because if not, as a Latin you said, "Hm, they're not asking me to join." They're not asking all the other people to join who are not Latins, you know. It was a very selective kind of group. But I felt that, you know, that again. like I said, I rode in this truck and we all became friends with the other three or four students that lived on this side of, on the other side of the tracks, would you say. They didn't live in Ybor City completely, but they lived on the edge of Ybor City. We'd pick them up on the way to Plant. And we became friends; we are still good friends.

One of them that went in the truck with us was, I think she had retired and then died by the time you came, maybe, to Tampa. But the editor, the food editor of the *Tampa Tribune.* Ann [McDuffie]—gosh, I can't remember Ann's last name right now—she rode in the truck with us. And again we became friends through all those years, you know. And as I said, I never experienced this feeling because I was a Latin. I don't know if it had to do with my attitude, or whether people just weren't that hostile, or what. You know, I can't—

AVL: But talking about, now, other groups. Do you have the sense that Latins in general had problems with Americans? I mean that there was a confrontation between, kind of, the Anglo part of Tampa and the Latin quarter, or—?

DS: Well, I think—

AVL: —it wasn't like that—?

DS: —there must have been—see, it depends, again it's your perception, I think, of things. And I think that, that of course cause there was a time when they had these signs—you heard about them—the signs that they had out at Sulphur Springs, I think, and different places. And so Latins didn't go there.

AVL: Right.

DS: And the other piece of it is, that different today, if that were to happen—granted it's another world today, but—the clubs for example themselves would have gone downtown and said hey, this is not right, and would have fought it. At that time, I don't think they ever—they just let it ride, there was never any really protesting per se. I think that, I wonder what would have happened if we had really officially protested. I don't know. But yes, I think there was—there were some things that were happening—I'm not saying—I was describing, you asked about my relationships—

AV: Sure.

DS: —and I responded to that. I think that some things happened, but the other piece of it was, at the same time, you know there were—and then it depends on the time. You know, very few people know, and Armando Méndez, I think, and Arsenio Sánchez can tell you, one of the things that very few people know is that for example Vicente Martínez Ybor, who founded Ybor City,

was on the board I think and was on the council and all that—I'm sure somebody shared that with you. Well, they were Latins; they were Spanish. But that was at the turn of the century. I guess. But, yes, I think probably prejudice existed. We can't deny it. But it's how we dealt with it. You know. And some people in the clubs, I think—in the clubs particularly—I don't think they got into a knock-down drag out with anybody. And neither did anybody get into a knock-down—I don't think; I don't perceive it that way, but again some other people that you've interviewed may have perceived it differently.

AVL: Okay, we could start now talking about the war itself. The Spanish Civil War. I would like to know first, if you remember—when did you—how did you learn about the war? I mean, was there a moment in time when you were told there is this war in Spain, or was it more like it, you know—

DS: It just happened, the—

AVL: —you became aware of it—

DS: Yes.

AVL: —as people—

DS: I guess I just became aware of it—

AVL: How did the organization kind of start in support of the Republic? What your memories are—

DS: I really can't recall, other than somehow, I guess all of a sudden we were aware because our parents were speak, talking about it at home. Because I was about 11 or 12 years old. And I guess our parents were talking about it. They received some newspapers from Spain. They used to receive some of the, I don't know whether you call them newspapers or magazines. I can't even think of the names of them now. I can still see the magazine—it was a, like the same size of the tabloids now: And I can't think of the names of them. I can see them as good as day but I can't remember.

AVL: Was that like this Cuban newspaper, *El Diario de la Marina,* or?

DS: Well that's where the usual—

AVL: —the Spaniards, Spanish magazines, or—

DS: No, they came from Spain.

AVL: Oh.

DS: They were coming every week, so. But I don't think that was the only way we knew about it. I think we knew about it because of newspapers here must have been carrying the information.

Both the American newspapers and the Spanish newspapers like *La Gaceta, La Traducción-Prensa.* They must have been carrying—and the radio, we did—I don't think we had any—I'm not re—I can't recall that we had Spanish radio stations like we have today. But a lot of people had short wave radios. Not a lot. Some people. And I think they used to get—but I, really, there must have been something else that happened.

But as a child I can't remember how—all of a sudden we were into it. I mean, my parents were talking about it. We were involved with the—with the organization that was doing things for the Spanish Civil War. And I, I don't have a clear picture as to—you know how, other than that must have been the way we began to, to hear about it. And I suppose our families were writing from Spain. That was another thing, I think, the correspondence—

AVL: Did you still have family there?

DS: Do I still have family? Yes.

AVL: At that time, in the '30s?

DS: Oh, yes. My mother's—my mother's sister, my father's brothers and sisters. They all wrote, you know. And, my mother's side of the family were more vocal in their letters, I think. I don't recall too much about my fath—what my father's family wrote. But I'm inclined to think that they were probably more—they were from Galicia. And I have a feeling they were more into—well, of course Franco took over there faster than, than any place else, I think—I don't know about any place else but I know that they did. So that I don't think they really ever wrote too much. Either pro, against, or whatever, you know. But you asked me how did we hear about it. I, you know, all I can think of is that all of a sudden we were hearing about it at home. And my parents must have been hearing about it through the news media. Some radio, some correspondence. I think that's how they heard about it, how they got involved.

AVL: Now the Latin community organized this Comité Popular.

DS: Right.

AVL: Which supported the—

DS: Frente Popular.

AVL: Yes. Supported the Spanish Republic. Now, what things do you remember of this Comité Popular—the Frente Popular?

DS: Well, I remember that it was, the organization I believe was housed in the Centro Obrero, which was the Labor Temple. Which was the center that had the offices of most of the labor unions. You know the cigar makers, the cooks and waiters, the—I don't know—different kinds of unions. And that's where they had their center of activities. And we, my parents would go there. Mostly my mother because my father worked in the evening, but he supported the fact that she'd go, and they had activities. Like the women knitted, they, they did all kinds of—they had

all kinds of fundraising activities, and then I'm sure that, you know, in the cigar factories they had someone on Fridays, when they were paid, to collect donations every Friday. For the, *por la guerra civil*, for the civil war. There were many fundraising activities; there were picnics, there were dances, there were theater functions—

AVL: You mentioned the women. Do you have the sense that the roles of different people were different. I mean, I have seen in pictures that women and children participated a lot, it seemed to me. What kind of jobs did they do in the organization—?

DS: Well, as far as I recall, they did things like, you know, they collected the foil, they, I think they rolled bandages. I believe there was something about bandages. I believe that there was knitting. They were involved in the fundraising in terms of selling tickets. They were involved in organizing—a lot of the organization was the demonstrations, or the parades, or whatever you, you know—probably there were other things. I can't recall other things, but—I think the reason the women were more into it—even though women still work in the cigar factories—a lot of the women didn't work. So they had more time available to do some of these things than the men. Of course the men were into the organizational part—at night they would go to the Centro Obrero and, you know, have all their discussions. And also they would, they would sponsor, I guess, as you know, we had many of the leaders from the civil war come.

AVL: Um-hm. Yes.

DS: Like Fernando de los Ríos, Marcelino Domingo. Gosh, there were so many I can't remember. And they would speak at the Centro Asturiano. And, again, you know, you mentioned the media—the media that was most active here was *La Gaceta* in terms of Victoriano Manteiga who was the owner and the editor. He was a fantastic speaker and he would motivate—there was never a chance for anybody to fall down on the job because he would come to the meetings and to the Centro Asturiano even when they had a speaker—and he was such a motivational, motivating—I don't know how you would say it—but anyway, he motivated everyone. Even the most apathetic soul would have to respond to him, you know. He was such an eloquent speaker. I still get goose bumps remembering him, you know.

AVL: In these speeches, I mean how was the war presented? I mean do you remember kind of the—discourse—?

DS: Not too well. I guess the fact that it was a matter of fighting for freedom and against Fascism is what I most remember. And then of course when Germany and Italy got involved then it was definitely the very strong thing about democracy and—the thing is that they were accused—the people from the Republic, the Loyalists, were accused in many places of being communist. And I don't think they were that much perceived—the people here were not communist per se. They were—they really weren't—they didn't belong to the Communist Party, they didn't perceive it as their being communist. They perceived it as a democratic group that wanted to fight Fascism and, at that point, it was more Fascism than Nazism as such—but of course it was Nazi Germany that, you know, they were involved with. Of course the hostility about that when they started bombing in Spain, you know, was tremendous. And again, this is how they perceived it, I think. I don't know if I'm responding to your question.

AVL: Yes, yes. I wanted to have a sense—you said that most of the speakers were very motivating—

DS: Yes, yes.

AVL: —and I was wondering—I mean, what kind of things do you remember they said?

DS: The thing I remember with Manteiga was—

AVL: —people who'd react, really respond to some—

DS: Yes, well they'd, they reacted with him, in terms of the anti-Fascist, anti-freedom, anti-liberty that this represented. That the Fascists and the Nazis represented, you know. And then with what they conceived as the atrocities and that they were doing which, perhaps they were probably on both sides, but they would present it more so as on the Fascist side, you know. And of course what happened in, it was, too, is that very—I'm sure that there were people here who did not support the part of the Republic. They were with [Francisco] Franco, but the movement in the community was so great and so intense for the other, for the Loyalist side, that these people almost remained underground—I mean they never really—now the few that did, they were, I can remember one or two businesses; like there was a photographer. Del Elmo, that was Italian. And it isn't that he really was participating against Spain, it was really that he was sending money and everybody knew it, or he would either talk about it, to Italy—and [Benito] Mussolini was in power—and there were already, that anti-Fascist thing from the Italians here that his studio was boycotted to such a degree that eventually I understand that that's why it folded up.

There was also one or two grocers that had grocery stores that the Spanish used to support, and then as they became more obviously pro-Franco, again, they just started boycotting. Boycotting—not in an organized boycott, just stopping, they stopped going to shop there. And, I don't recall organized boycotts per se, but the boycott was in practice and it worked. You know—

AVL: Do you have any memory of people organizing in support of Franco in any way?

DS: No, I don't remember any—

AVL: Organized any events, or—?

DS: —as I said, I had the feeling that they just didn't. Now there may have been, but I don't recall any. And I think it's because they just didn't dare.

AVL: So did people—

DS: I mean, when I say didn't dare, I don't know that anybody was gonna hurt them or kill them or anything, it's just that they couldn't I guess take the thing that would come up, you know. And

I did hear, once in awhile there would be, one or two of these people would be working maybe side by side in a factory. And then they would isolate them. I did hear it once or twice that this would happen. "*No le hables a ese*—" whatever. You know, "Don't talk to that so-and-so," you know. And so then people stopped talking to that so-and-so because he was pro-Franco. I remember vaguely this kind of thing. But not in an organized—well, and for them organizing, I don't, maybe it did; I don't know if you've received it from any of the people you've interviewed, but I don't recall any organization.

The only—well, it was an organiza—the, of course I think you've heard about the fact—this would have been in 1939, I think. Or 1938. I'm trying to figure out. Maybe 1938, I'll have to figure it out. The Catholic Church in Ybor City, one Sunday in August, announced that it was the next Sunday that there would be a special collection for the Red Cross in Spain. Well that was like a bomb had hit this community. Everybody got so upset because they said the, this collection was, the Red Cross meant Franco Spain. Not Red Cross as we think of it, as an international organization. So that Sunday most of these people did not let their children go to church. And two weeks later when we were supposed to go to school, the greater part of the students never returned; they went to public school. And, of course through the years they started coming back again. But that first year or two—

AVL: Yes, how big was the boycott in terms of numbers. How many—

DS: At the school?

AV: —children were going to school—

DS: As I recall, now there are different opinions on this. My recollection, or the way that most of us that were in it, is that there were about 900 students in the school, and it got down to about 90. Now, there are different opinions on that; some people say it was not that big a drop. I know in my class it was more than the half. For example, there were 10 students in my class—in ninth grade—and it came down to three. Now, as to how many, of what the relationship was in other classes, I can't tell you. But, you know, I'm sure that with some of the people you will talk, some of them will remember. Again, these figures may differ a little bit. But it was, it was tremendous, you know. If it wasn't the ratio that I remember, it was somewhere close in there.

AVL: How did the Church, then, react to this boycott in the way, did they—?

DS: Yes, well, I don't recall how they reacted. I don't know that there was anything they could do. I suppose that some of them, the priests must have talked to some of the parents, but they just didn't, they did not pay attention. They just stayed, and again, this was not Spaniards only; these were Cubans, Italians, and Spaniards, that dropped out of school.

AV: Yes, was that the first time that there was a confrontation with the Catholic church, or—?

DS: As far as I know the church had not gotten involved in all these activities. I mean I can't recall the church ever saying to people, "Don't go and participate in the Frente Popular," if they did, I wasn't aware of it. I can't tell you that it didn't happen. But I was going to church and I

don't remember any discussion from the pulpit. Now somebody else might, I don't know. I don't recall that anything happened until then. And I'm sure that the Church wasn't expecting this, you know. It was a real blow. Because, I think that by their designating it Red Cross, they never dreamt that it was going to be perceived the way it was and the effect that it had. Otherwise, I think they, knowing what the climate was in this community, I don't think they would have even have tried it. But somebody along the line wasn't with it, because, they had to know what the climate was. And unless they thought that the idea of the concept, the Red Cross, was going to, you know, color it differently, I don't know. But, it was bound for disaster no matter how you, how you sliced it.

AVL: You mentioned before that it was—

DS: Excuse me.

AVL: Yes.

DS: And I think it, you know, I think it really shows you—it's one of—there are other factors, you know, but I think that really gives you a feeling of the strength, you know, of the climate of this community. I mean other things—the fact that they raised thousands of dollars certainly is significant. But I mean that was another one. That without an organized—nobody went on a picket in front of the church, nobody went out and advertised—there was no, really, you know, media thing, boycotting, I think; it just happened. By word of mouth. So to show you the strength, the word of mouth with that, because it was really word of mouth. Not, you know, not a big boycott in front of the, or a newspaper ad or anything.

AVL: But people did eventually go back to the—

DS: Well, after the war was over and after two or three years, and—'cause not, not—

AVL: So it took awhile? Then. I mean—

DS: Oh, yes, and actually—

AVL: —so those children never returned to that, Catholic school?

DS: I think they're, well I think the younger students eventually returned. The high school students never returned, I think.

AV: And how about going to church again? I mean were you allowed after this—

DS: Yes—

AVL: —August sermon to go back.

DS: —you were, you were—but in my, you know, and several of us we didn't, they didn't go back for a good year or two. Yes. Which must have been very, a big conflict. You know. I'm sure

that it raised a lot of conflict in families with children and parents. You know. More so with the younger students than with, say high school, because adolescents are already at a point where, you know, they begin to have mixed feelings about organized religion to some degree. And you see it in the fact that even, with all the activities in the Protestant Churches, they couldn't always hang on—or even now, to the adolescents. So, part of it had to do with age, you know, what age group of kids came back, and part of it had to do, I guess, with whatever the family was saying.

Side A ends; side B begins

AVL: You mentioned before about the church—the response of the Latin community to this church collection for the Spanish Red Cross—that everybody was doing it, the Italians, the Cubans, the Spaniards. Can you tell me a little bit more about the, how the different groups responded to the war in Spain? Was, was this like a united response, or was there—

DS: Yes, well, I think that perhaps the strongest response would have been from the Cuban and Spanish. But also from the Italians because the Italians had two or three leaders—community leaders—that they respected who were really, probably they were responding to the civil war because it was the first, one of the things that they could respond to in relation to antifascism, which they were, they were upset about, that was taking over in Italy. I'd say that the Italians as a group perhaps were not as, I, that's my perception. I may be wrong. Were not as strong in their commitment, but they were there, there was a large group of Italians that were definitely involved in the Comité Popular, that were, at the cigar factories they contributed. You know. You don't get a feeling that that was as strong a group perhaps but it was there. Again, it really related I think more to their feeling of antifascism because of Italy than—naturally they didn't have the roots in Spain that the rest of us had, you know. But I think they were united, too, in a sense.

Not everybody agrees with this, but I guess perhaps the reason I see it is because we were close to a lot of Italian families—my family. We had the Italian family next door which was related to these, one of these leaders. And, again, they were, their children, in fact one of their children was the principal here years later and again was someone that was very strongly, you know, anti-Fascist. And again, of course he went into World War II and all that. But anyway, those families that we knew, that my family knew, you know, that were Italian, were very strong; held very strong feelings. And were very supportive. But I can't say that it was all 30,000 Italians or anything like that, and there wasn't the, I think when you went to the Labor Temple and saw the majority you'd see some Italians. I mean, you wouldn't see the numbers of Italians that you saw with Spaniards and Cubans. But, but they were there.

And they were certainly very vocal, because of the Italian leaders here were very vocal. They may just have been a handful, but they were vocal, they wrote in *La Gaceta.* And Manteiga, where you find some articles that Conigilio and some of his co-workers, that were Italian, wrote. I think they, I remember there being, in *La Traduccíon*, I think they used to write, yeah. And these were not, these were cigar workers themselves. They were not necessarily professional writers or professional people. They were people with very strong feelings, and beliefs about democracy, you know, and what they felt was right. So they ended up, you know, supporting the civil war because that was the first avenue that they had, and nothing was happening in Italy as a

revolt, you know. That's my perception of it. I don't know if that answers your question to some degree, you know.

AVL: Yes. How about news from Spain? You mentioned that there were all these Spanish newspapers. Did people have a sense that the American press was being fair in their portrayal—

DS: No, I think that people—I can recall—some of the, one of the things they resented, I remember that the *Tampa Daily Times* particularly, well, probably the [Tampa] *Tribune* too, I just remember one issue one day. And they would call 'em—but I'm sure this happened all over the United States—but you know, our world was here, so we saw the *Tampa Daily Times* and the *Tribune*—they said "The Reds have advanced," and they would call the Loyalists "The Reds" and the whole business of the Frente Popular resented it, because they felt "we are not communists," and they are not communists. And like, you know, my uncle used to say he says, you know, even when the Republic, when the government, there were only 18 deputies in the Parliament—did they call it the Parliament in Spain? That were from the Communist Party.

All the other umpteen hundred that were in the Congress were either, they might have been socialist, they might have been whatever the different parties were. But there were only 18 which to him was a handful of representatives compared to the rest of the Congress. He says it is not a communist government. Of course, you know, but then it would get tangled up with the fact that, if Russia was helping or not helping, or whatever, you know. And, they resented the American press because they felt that they were being biased and unfair in the way they wrote it, you know.

AVL: And how did the American press, as far as you know, portray the Tampa community itself-regardless of the Spanish Civil War—you know, the response of the Tampa community, or did, or did they portray that at all?

DS: Yes—I really, I really don't recall. I guess if we, if we searched in the, you know, in the newspapers, if we did research in the *Tribune* library or something we'd find—I, I can't recall what the response was. I really can't. I'd like to think that they couldn't deny it—deny the existence of it. Well, certainly—

AVL: But you think there was a sympathetic response in terms of the Americans here in Tampa? To what the Latins were doing—

DS: Was there a sympathetic response?

AVL: Yes.

DS: I think that, I think that there, my feeling is that there was, in relation to some of the business people and some of the—I wish I could relate to what the media did, the press, but I can't remember, you know, how they responded. But I certainly think that, I think I seem to recall that they even contributed. And I can't tell you what companies did or didn't. But somehow I think I remember that they did solicit funds from some of the American businesses and they did contribute and they did support. Is what I recall. But I couldn't, I couldn't remember. Exactly.

AVL: Were, were they, were there events also outside of the Latin quarter, so to speak? Outside of the Centro Asturiano, kind of, to bring—

DS: No, not that I'm aware of—

AVL: —the Americans—

DS: —there could have been but I don't remember, yeah. I think that—again this is what—I think that maybe if they were involved they came in, and joined the Latin. I'm not aware that they would—there could have been, I just don't recall. 'Cause again, because of my age, I think I might not have been as tuned into it, you know. But there could have been, I don't know.

AVL: Yes. Now when you participated in some of the events—like I have a picture here of you with a group of other teenagers at that point—if you remember, I mean, what was your sense of what you were doing, here, if you know what I mean—

DS: Well, I think it reflected a little bit about what we heard our parents say. I mean, we were influenced by our parents' philosophies, and attitudes, that this was something terrible that was happening in Spain and that we, you know, that we didn't, we were very much supporting it because our parents were supporting it and that we thought whatever they said was right, I guess.

AVL: Was that part of your life, in the sense that, did you, did you as teenagers, talk about this thing going on in Spain, or it was more like, well there is this event, we go, but it didn't—

DS: No, I think—

AVL: —really affect your life, your daily life. I mean, how would you—?

DS: No, I think it, well, for some of us, I don't know. Yeah I think that the feeling was very strong, and we felt—because we still, you see, we had cousins there, we had family there, and we related to it that way. And we felt we wanted this for them. It's true that it reflected our parents' attitudes and our parents' philosophies, but I think we, we were emotionally involved, I think. I think when we did the foil business, or whatever, we felt we were really contributing to something. I'm not saying every teenager that's in that picture, or every teenager, but for a lot of us. I think that it depended on the kind of influence that your parents had in helping you develop a political philosophy or a political—I think. You know.

Because we were, I think we were emotionally involved—it wasn't just we're going to this theater, we're going to this—we wanted to go because we wanted to help. We wanted to help our, our cousins. Everybody else was over there in Spain. We wanted Spain to have—we were much more identified with Spain as a country than we are today. For example than my own children perhaps—my own children, I only had one child—although it so happens in my case he is, because we really worked at it a little bit; but I don't think that if it happened today, this generation of adolescents is as involved as we were. And part of it had to be because, you see, we had grown up, granted, in the American society, but so close to the clubs, to the Centro Asturiano, to the Cuban Club, to the Centro Español. And, so, that we were more emotionally

involved in this, than just a superficial thing, I think.

AVL: And, as the war was progressing, and obviously the Republic was losing ground, what do you remember the feelings of the community were, in terms of, you know, how Franco was winning the war? And also the role of the United States in—a lot of people criticized the neutrality of, of the United States. Do you—?

DS: Yes. Well, well, I think it—

AVL: —Remember, I mean, debates in the community about this?

DS: Yes. Well, the fact that I think that people were really angry, you know, and had strong feelings about the neutrality. And very, it was very unfair, you know, and especially when, you know, because of the bombing and everything that had happened by Germany and Italy and all that. And of course then when World War II started, they, everybody was chanting and talking about the fact that, that we allowed part of this to happen because we had allowed—I mean that was the feeling—that we had allowed Germany and Italy to participate; that if we had been, the United States and England had had a different attitude, they wouldn't have had it in their own backyard. You know they could have, they seemed to feel that they could have stopped—I don't know that they could, but you know—that they could have stopped the—in Europe. Had they stopped the—particularly the Germans.

Because by that time I think Italy had just practically gone down the drain, maybe, but. They had, they were very hostile—not hostile, that's a very strong word, but—they were angry, you know, about the neutrality and about the role of this—and you know during the Civil War I think there were a lot of letters written to Washington. And a lot of protests written to Washington, you know, protesting the whole attitude and the whole business of the neutrality; you know, it wasn't just that they felt that way afterwards. But I mean they were already protesting during that, and trying to get Congress and everybody else to react to it differently.

AVL: What do you remember of when the war actually ended. I mean, how was the reaction of the community here, the Frente Popular, what happened afterwards?

DS: Well, I, somehow I don't—

AVL: Do you remember a day when you knew the war is over, and—?

DS: Very vaguely, I just—I kind of remember that at home we were, my father was very sad and very upset, you know. And—although he saw it coming, you know—because you begin to see what was happening, you know. And he was very, very sad. And I think the community was sad, but I don't know, and I can't seem to recall a specific day or such. It's almost like a few days where we were almost into mourning, like, sort of thing. You know, like you were, like they say in Spanish, *de luto,* almost. You know that, this thing, they couldn't believe that this finally happened. Even though they saw it coming. I mean you saw it coming for a few months in terms of losing ground and all that. It was just, it was more a process of grieving. Kind of, I think, you know?

I don't remember a specific—well, I think that each day when something else happened, and happened, you know my father would come home and he would be so upset. I wouldn't say he cried, but you know it was almost a very emotional—and my uncle, an uncle that I had here, too. They were very, and I think that, I'm relating to my family, I think that that's probably what was happening in these other homes, you know, and in the community.

AVL: Did you have the sense that Franco winning the war changed the lives of these immigrants, in the sense of how they looked at Spain, now, in terms of do I want to go back there, or what that meant for your family, for all families?

DS: You mean, in terms of going back to Spain, or—?

AVL: Right. To say, well, now there is this person, this—

DS: Well, I think what happened for many years is that the Spaniards here refused to go back to Spain. I don't know if you are aware of that, that it's been discussed or not. Yeah, I think people'd say they weren't going back until Franco was gone. And then a lot of people didn't go back 'til Franco was gone. You know, it's like, I think, some of the artists and some of the people who were in exile. You know.

And, that was a feeling, that, it changed their feeling of—and the irony of it was that financially they were better able to go back now. That, back in the '30s when nobody had a penny, you know. And now when they could, you know, in the '4—well the '40s, we had the war. You know they had our own, World War II. But, then after that there was still a lingering feeling for a lot of families—I'm not saying for all—that they would not go back. As long as Franco was there.

AVL: I see.

DS: Now I'm not saying that, you know, that that permeated the entire community. But I would say that there was a large portion of families who were saying it. And it eventually died down; people did go back before Franco died, you know, but not in the numbers that then went later. You know. But I'm not sure that it always related, I mean they had been saying that about Franco—some of it may have related to their own circumstances here in terms of raising kids and, you know. But again, at least they were verbalizing—they were saying, you know. And again, I want to make clear that I'm not saying that the whole community was reacting that way, but there was a reaction of that kind.

AVL: Now, was there any hope when World War II started that maybe there is a second chance, if Spain gets involved again in, in the war, that—

DS: If Spain gets involved in what?

AVL: In the war. There is this feeling that when World War II started—

DS: Yes?

AVL: —if the Spanish Republic had been able just to hold on enough—

DS: Yes.

AVL: —maybe, Franco wouldn't have won. In a way. So I was wondering if the community here had the sense that, when the Second World War started, and America obviously became involved, that it was this, kind of, second chance. Like, well, let's see if we, we can now, recuperate—

DS: Yes. Get rid of him, yes.

AVL: Get rid of him, you know, and just establish the—I mean, do you have a sense that, people, of course, were very involved with World War II?

DS: Right.

AVL: But do you have a sense, in that involvement, that there were still people thinking about Spain or, Spain, it was an old story and this, we are now Americans and we are defending our country? I think that's what I'm interested in.

DS: Yes. I think that for a few people, the older, the older generation, you know, this was probably still there a little bit. A little. But I think that as you had the younger generation that was going to fight and all that, I think the identification was really more with, you know, with our, our role in it; not so much with—but I think that yes, for the older generation, for some of them, they still saw it as a possibility.

AVL: But in terms of activities of the—

DS: No.

AVL: —Frente Popular—

DS: No—

AVL: —all that disappeared—

DS: No, I think that, all that was gone.

AVL: —after 1939.

DS: Yes. That was, that was gone.

AVL: There was nothing really to keep the movement—

DS: Yes, no. But it was more a philosophical hope, you know, than, than an activist kind of

thing.

AVL: Right, there weren't kind of, collections—

DS: No, no, no, no.

AVL: —or anymore, or any—

DS: You collected for the Red Cross and for the Americans and for—yes.

AVL: I see. Okay.

DS: As far as I can recall, now.

AVL: Okay, let me just ask you this last question. What would you say that the impact of the war was in the Latin community? Or in your life?

DS: The impact of World War II?

AVL: Of the Spanish Civil War.

DS: Oh, the Spanish Civil War?

AV: Yes. Do you feel it had an impact on your personal life? I mean, on your family, and how so?

DS: Well, I think the impact was more, again, perhaps in terms of, again, a philosophical thing for democracy and in growing up with a more—at least for me, anyway, more awareness of what can happen, and that you really need to, to think about, you know, really being concerned about democratic principles and about what can happen. And the fact that you have to be aware, you have to be—looking at what's, what's happening so that some of those same things don't happen here, you know. For some of us, I think that's what happened; that it—it was like a consciousness raising of, of taking a look at, you know, what's important in terms of, political life and a democracy again and, I'm not sure that it permeated all the young, with all the young people, but I think for some of us, it did affect, you know, because I think of other young people our age who weren't involved—not the Spanish, but—that they never had the same intensity of feeling, I think.

Now, of course, I'm generalizing, and I'm limiting it to my, the world of people that I know. But, for example, when I was in, I'm saying that for us here, and yet you know when I was in college, it had affected people who were not Latin. I ran into people in college that had, that very much remembered the civil war in Spain and I was surprised—I guess in my world I thought I had like tunnel vision, that it was just here in Tampa, that we had this, see—I had a roommate, of course, she was Jewish, and she certainly had the relationship to what was happening with Germany, but she very much was aware. Her family had been very aware of what was happening in Spain. And she grew up with this attitude about how important and how, and strong feelings about

democracy and the fact that you have to be aware and listen and look. So that we don't have these things happening here. I don't know if that answers your question, you know.

AVL: Yes, yes. It's interesting.

DS: Again, to what degree this, this happened here, I don't know. But—but I think with, for some of us I think it happened. I mean I look around the group that comes here and I can think of several here that were impacted that way. You know. Their attitudes about democracy and some more liberal leanings towards, you know, having being aware that the government can become, you know, can become Fascist and can become Nazi, you know, are probably stronger for some of these people that are my age now. You know, and I think it was as a result. Of course it could have been a result of our upbringing with our parents. Maybe—I'm not sure it would have been as, as intense though if we had not been involved I think in this. You know, and as I said, even though I thought it was just here, I was surprised that in other, other young people had been impacted to some degree. They had been aware of the civil war and what had happened and all that. Not, you know, I'm talking about small numbers; I'm not talking about.

AVL: Yes. Why do you think the response of the community here was so overwhelming, I mean, in support of the Republic? In such great numbers. I mean it seemed that they sent to Spain almost a quarter of a million dollars. During the years of the Depression.

DS: Right.

AVL: And, four ambulances and—

DS: Yes.

AVL: —food. I mean it was a day-to-day; it's one thing to say, Okay, they—

DS: We're gonna support it, yes.

AVL: —there was a meeting, that's what they gathered, some money, they send it and let's move on. But you know, every week, I mean—what held the people together, to such a degree, would you say?

DS: Well, I guess that in a sense, this is a community that was already to—in a way—together, in terms of identification with Spain. One, through their clubs. One, through maybe the unions? The Labor unions, who also were fighting oppression in different ways. In terms of labor and economics. So, because, again, that element was there, I guess. There—

AVL: Was, was there a lot of joined support in the Sense of maybe Labor Day parades, also being used to, to support? I mean was there a lot of labor involvement?

DS: Well, I think there was—

AVL: Is that something you remember?

DS: —in the sense that, you have to remember that even, either symbolically or just plain structurally, you know, we met at the Labor Temple. All those unions, they rented a little office space to the Frente, Comité Popular. But there were all, you know, again, their principles were in relation to fighting, you know—things that had to do with—you know, things that were antidemocratic. Of course, some people saw some of the unions as being communist, but again they were split, they kept, they keep claiming that they weren't. And for example, you know again back to the communist thing, some, there was a Communist Party here in Tampa. As you are aware of.

And for example, one time they went ahead and threw stones at the Catholic, OLPH, where I was going to school. And, again, this group condemned the—the Comité and everyone else—condemned their activity. You know. The fact that they had done that. And again, I think the labor unions, I'm sure that within the labor union organizations there must have been some who felt communist and some who didn't. But in general they denied, they felt that this was not their principles. So again I think that labor was involved, and to a degree the labor organizations because they were right there. You know, in the middle of it. So, and of course in most of those labor organizations, they were made up of Spanish and Cubans and, and Italians. More probably Spanish and Cubans. Although cigar makers were—unions—was full of Italians too.

AVL: Now that you mention that event, were there on, were there any other attacks on the Church like that? I mean I, I never heard of that.

DS: No. It wasn't the Church, it was—you never heard about that incident? In fact when they, those windows remain, never got repaired I think, on that side of the building. They were a little, you know, it was—

AVL: Was that on spontaneous, I mean, by people who were—?

DS: It was spontaneous, and they didn't even claim it until later. I mean, they, I think they suspected. They weren't sure. But then some, some little communist group of somewhere—I don't know if it was the Party per se, but a group, maybe, said, Yes, they had thrown the stones. But, I don't think, I'm not sure that the Communist Party itself claimed it. But that they were communists that had said they had done it. And then, as I said, I remember that it was condemned by the community. And said, you know, there were children there, they didn't need to be hurt. They weren't, nobody was hurt, you know. I think it was, probably it was a bunch of crazies, it maybe, maybe they were from the Party. But it wasn't the Party as such, I don't think—now there maybe, again—I bet if we researched *La Gaceta,* there must have been some report of the incident. One incident, one time, that's all.

AVL: Yes, so there weren't many other confrontations like that.

DS: No, because they never got any support or anything from their own Party, probably.

AVL: I see. Well, just to end the interview, is there anything else that you would like to add or some aspect that you think we haven't dealt with that you would like to include in the interview?

DS: Well, no, I'm trying to think. I, you know, we didn't deal with it but I think that we did say that, in terms of one of the things that were unifying, too, the cultural activities that were held by these clubs, like the theaters, the music for the youngsters. You, you've heard of the fact that we had a *Estudiantina*, for example. That's one of my pets, so I always have to name—I can't leave the interview without mentioning, which was during the Depression. And most of the other children in the community had no access to having music lessons but, the clubs, like the Loyal Knights, the Centro Español—the Centro Español had started with it way before the Depression; I mean they had always had a *Estudiantina*. Which is a string and, I guess you'd call it a string ensemble. Because it's all strings, there's no piano, no trumpets. It's all violins, guitars, mandolins, maybe one bass, something like that.

And this, again, was something that held families together because their children—and at a time when they needed this so badly—it was during the depression and yet their children, for 50 cents a week or something, could take music lessons and participate. And the Centro, the Centros would have the theater. And again, all the cultural activities—also the, another thing that they brought together enrichment in their culture is things that many of these people would never have had. They came from little villages in Spain where they had never been to theaters and had never been, you know.

The other thing that, you know, I didn't mention but I know it's been mentioned to you in many interviews, the—I left it out in terms of the media—you know, the *lectores* that were in the factories were great contributors to the fact of unifying, they were bringing news from all these newspapers about the Civil War. And again they also brought the business of culture. That held this, sort of, a little bit of a glue that kept this group, this community, together, I think. The cultural activities—besides the fun dancing business of picnics on Sunday—they had some of the best opera companies, some of the best theater companies, some of the best, you know, the opera stars that were from Europe, sang here at the Centro Asturiano. And again I think this was—this cultural force was another unifying thing in this community. I had failed to mention that when we were talking before.

AVL: Yes, now that you mention about that, do you remember like, films about the war? Now that you mentioned other aspects of coming to the theater or theater plays, or films? Either documentaries about what was going on in Spain itself, or just—

DS: Yes.

AVL: —Hollywood made pictures.

DS: No, I know we saw them but I'm very vague about it. You know. 'Cause I'm sure they had, I think they had films at the Centro Obrero. You know. At the Labor Temple. And, but I can't remember anything specifically. But I somehow remember sitting there perhaps and looking at films. Not here at the Centro Asturiano. Here there were more plays, that were produced here locally. And maybe people that came, you know, some company. But there, I sort of remember seeing films about the war, you mean? And, but again, nothing specific that I can remember.

AVL: But you're right, the community really held together through the—

DS: Yes, I think, there was another thing that—you know, and the fact that, and then this is about the *lectores* and the factories that brought 'em news from a lot of newspapers; they—they probably read it, not only about the Spanish newspapers here in Tampa, but they would have access to a Spanish newspaper in New York, for example, that had a lot of news. And even some of those Spanish newspapers that came from Spain. You know, so that actually, even if they weren't subscribed, they heard it, every day. And this was an all-day affair at the factory. You know they, they were reading almost all day, as I understand it. I mean they had a few breaks, but—

AVL: But that was the way to get news—

DS: Yes.

AVL: —at the time.

DS: Yes. So. Yes, I don't know, I can't recall any other things that I could tell you about.

AVL: Okay. Well, this concludes our interview. I want to thank you very much for participating in the project.

DS: It was a pleasure to do this and I hope it will be of some help.

AVL: It will.

End of interview