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Ana M. Varela-Lago: This is an interview with Mrs. Aida Azpeitia. Aida, I would like to start by talking a little bit about your family. Could you tell me, why did they come to Tampa, what did they do here in Tampa? Where did they come from?

Mrs. Aida Azpeitia: Well, my mother was from Asturias.

AL: Where in Asturias, do you know?

AZ: From—oh, my God! Now let me see if I remember—It was a little town near *el rio Nalón*. Near the mines. And—oh, my God! isn't it something?

AL: Probably will come to mind later—

AZ: —and her, they were country people. They had their goats. And my grandfather worked for the railroad. *Le llamaban caminero*.

AL: *Caminero*, right.

AZ: I guess that was—cleaning the railroad tracks, keeping them clean, and all that. And my mother—which her name was Pilar.

AL: And the last name?

AZ: Her maiden name was Menendez.

AL: Pilar Menendez. I see.

AZ: And, they sent her, when she was fifteen years old—in fact, she was fifteen years old on the ship, coming—and, it was a hard trip. She was so young. And she had these two young men that were supposed to take care of her, and she never saw them in the ship. They were gallivanting, having a good time. But when she got to Cuba, en Tricornia.

AL: Tricornia, right.

AZ: Well, her brother was supposed to pick her up, and he never showed up, to pick her up. So, they were going to send her back to Spain. And at the last day he showed up. And from Cuba they got a ship into Tampa.

AL: So she wasn't in Cuba really—

AZ: Just in the port of embarkation.

AL: Right.

AZ: Then she came in to Tampa, to her sister's home. And, the oldest sister was here. And the oldest brother. And they brought her in to my sister, my aunt's house. And there, in a week's time she was working in the cigar factories. At fifteen years old. And, she met my father at the factory. My father was, believe was nineteen years old.

AL: Your father was Gumersindo.

AZ: Gumersindo Del Valle.

AL: Del Valle. What factory were they working at?

AZ: They worked at, I think it's the, Regensburg, I think it was. I don't remember that. But, he was from Poreno.

AL: Poreno?

AZ: Um-hm.

AL: Uh-huh. That's also in Asturias?

AZ: Yes. Near Villaviciosa. My mother was from Villamarin! Now I remember!

AL: Villamarin.

AZ: Villamarin de Candamo.

AL: De Candamo, uh-huh.

AZ: De Candamo, now I remember!

AL: Okay. So they met here in Tampa?

AZ: They met in Tampa.

AL: Working in the factory?

AZ: Yes.

AL: How did your father come to Tampa?

AZ: He came through Cuba, too. Through Cuba.

AL: Did he come alone, or—?

AZ: Alone.

AL: Was the family there also in farming—?

AZ: He had—

AL: —a peasant family—?

AZ: He had a brother here. Two brothers came. One went back, back to Spain. He didn't like it here.

Pause in recording

AL: Okay. So we were talking about your father.

AZ: *La familia de mi padre*—

AL: (whispers) In English.

AZ: —*eran rubios todos*—

Pause in recording

AZ: *Dimelo, dimelo, porque*—My father's family were all blondes. Because everybody thinks that a Spanish person has to be dark. When they were all blondes, with blue eyes. Which thank God, my children are too. I'm not, but they are. But, my father came and went in to work at the cigar factory. And he was very active in the labor movement. To get the cigar workers going with a little more pay. Then when the war started in Spain, he came—right away he was very involved in the makings of the committees, and writing. He used to write a lot. And he made a lot of friends and they made this committee. Naturally, the ones that had a little more education got the higher-ups. But, like Manteiga,

who was from the newspaper, and a learned person, was in there a lot. But they all worked so hard. Everybody. And they were pretty good in unity, you know. They were united a lot. There wasn't too much bickering. When you have a lot of people working. And I remember them having a lot of stage plays too, fundraisings. And picnics.

I remember one picnic—they used to call it el Parque La Columna. Park. Which was out there on, where the airport is now, down that way. It was just a lot of acreage of land. But if you wanted to see people—there was wall to wall people there. Spanish people. And they had yellow rice and chicken and they served, I mean everybody, there was tables out in the picnic grounds, and music. Beautiful music. And dancing. And I remember my father, my father never drank. And he was a thin person. He was serving, he was so tired, and somebody came around and gave him a beer. And he drank. And it knocked him out. He was under a tree. And when my mother saw him, oh, you can imagine—they were young—and we were kids. But I'll never forget that. Mama got us kiddies, says, "We're going home! We're going home!" And then when we got to the car, there was, the car to take us home, there was a car in the back of us and one in front and we couldn't get out. But it was a beautiful day though. My father worked so hard for it, so. But, they had picnics, out in the open a lot. Now they have them in, like they have here.

But here, the stage play in the Centro Asturiano—it was beautiful; plays and musicals. There was music, and young people singing, like myself, and—one time I was dressed as a Spaniard, with the comb in my hair and *la mantilla* wrapped around me, and I was singing. And this boy that was in the choir was making fun of me. And I started to get nervous. I couldn't sing. I forgot the words. Oh, I mean, *madre*, I couldn't. And you know he's a teacher, a music teacher now. Played beautiful violin. But just like kids, we were kids. We were kids, eleven, twelve years old. And you know, it's hard to handle. And this Victor Gonzalez, who had the orchestra La Sonora, he was in charge, he had the kids. And he, you know, trained them for music. Him, and another man from West Tampa—Salgado. He was, those two, they got the bands going and, so they could have music, you know, in all these stage plays. It was beautiful! Oh, the work, people worked, and the talent that was in the community of the Spanish people—there was a lot of talent!

AL: What kind of plays did they stage for the Spanish Civil War time, period? Were they written by the people, or were they already—?

AZ: It was written a lot from the people, but a lot of them were plays, Spanish plays playing, you know, like the operas, and, you know, something like that. And these actors that would act in there, like this lady here. [pointing at photograph]

AL: Carmen Ramirez?

AZ: Carmen Ramirez was in charge of the plays and the people. And those people had to work. They worked in the factories. And then at night they'd practice until all hours of the night. And they all had families. Carmen had about four, five girls. They all had families. So, it goes to show you that, what enthusiasm they had here. And, but I, as myself—being as young as I was—I had a, what you call a collector's route. And I went—and I

was a country girl—because where we lived, in this part of town, was not built up like now. The homes way out.

AL: Where did you live at that time?

AZ: And I used to collect—go to businesses to—for donations.

AL: I see. Did you go alone, or—?

AZ: Nobody. Nobody bothered me. Nobody; it's not like now. Everybody knew me. I'd go to the barbershop—to Joe. Joe is still there. Joe gave me my first haircut. The haircut the wind blows. All that.

AL: So what area? What was your route when you would go to do collection?

AZ: Well, it was right from 26th Avenue all the way to where Martin Luther King [Jr, Boulevard] is. Now that's, I had to walk a long way! But I was young.

AL: Did you go just to the businesses, or did you go also—

AZ: To the businesses.

AL: —private houses, or—?

AZ: No, to the businesses.

AL: To the businesses, um-hm.

AZ: Yes, this was a business collection. They didn't want—

AL: And, how often did you do that?

AZ: Every week.

AL: Every week?

AZ: Every week I went. Joe gave me a quarter. The guy in the grocery store gave me fifty cents. It was a feed market, feed store. No, it wasn't, it was a warehouse—grocery. And the man died last week. I thought he had been dead already but he died last week. And there was feed store in the corner. Then I used to walk—my God, to another—there was about three feed stores there. It was—country. I'd go over there too. They'd give me fifty cents. They—they were just as poor as everybody else. The poultry market—there was a poultry market where you got your, not like now, you go to the store, you went over there and got your fresh chickens. Alameda. And they used to give me a dollar. Oh, I was rich, with a dollar!

AL: Were these people, these business people, mostly Latin, or were—yes?

AZ: They were all Latin. Like the people from the poultry were Spanish. The ones from the feed store just half a block away from the place—a big feed company—they used to take food to the dairies. They always gave me five dollars. Oh man, I used to—be in seventh heaven! So, then we'd walk—my daddy and I—we'd walk all the way up here to Seventh Avenue—Seventh Avenue? Eighth Avenue. To the Labor Temple. That's where they had their office. And give our money out.

AL: Did you give receipts when you got the money? I mean, how did you go about that? You just collected the money and then gave it?

AZ: Just collected the money and, that I remember, just gave them. I don't know whether they gave a receipt to my daddy, because he was responsible, but he used to send me.

AL: I see. And you did that all throughout the war?

AZ: All throughout. All throughout. I remember—they brought, I don't know whether he was Spanish, I think so, a violinist. He was alto, he wasn't that young. And we had this fund raiser at the Labor Temple. I'll never forget it, because I sang that afternoon. And being I was a young kid, twelve years old—not like now—that they allow them to put—they wouldn't allow me to put stockings on. I had to have socks on. And no makeup on. I'll never forget that. I had a white suit that I made. Mind you, I was just twelve years old. A white suit that I made out of the sugar—the sugar used to come in white sacks. White sacks. Beautiful material. We'd wash it and bleach it. Boil it. And I made me my suit. With a pink blouse, and pink socks—I'll never forget it. Oh, it was something to see! But I sang there. Some military song from Spain, I guess. And, but that man, I'll never forget the violin. It was just gorgeous. But we used to have fund raisers. I remember one, at, they used to call it Plant Field, it was a football stadium for the University of Tampa. We had a big—oh, that place was fall. And we had this Spanish singer that came. That was from Spain—she was traveling the world, and she sang.

AL: Do you remember her name?

AZ: I can see her face. She started to get hoarse because, you know, out in the open a singer—is very bad. But, we had a fundraiser there. And they work hard. Everybody. We used to have those fundraisers all over. I remember in Palmetto Beach, they have a clubhouse there. Like a park. They'd have a picnic there. And they'd serve food and music and collect money. We sent a lot to Spain from Tampa. And a lot of volunteers from Tampa went.

AL: Do you remember some of them? The volunteers?

AZ: I remember one of them. His name was Granell.

AL: Oh.

AZ: I don't know his first name.

AL: Jose? Jose Garcia Granell?

AZ: Jose.

AL: Uh-huh? What do you remember of him?

AZ: I don't remember much of him, but I remember his family.

AL: Oh, tell me about it.

AZ: His family, his brother, Vicente, was my father's best friend. And he had another brother, Gonzalo. And Vicente was very smart. And he was well-educated in Spain. And they would walk and collect and do anything for Spain. And we were so happy when we send those ambulances!

AL: Yes, tell me about that. There was a big picnic also for that.

AZ: Those ambulances—that was a big thing.

AL: Where was that picnic for the ambulance? Was that also La Columna?

AZ: I think it was at Columna.

AL: Uh-huh? And a lot of money was collected there.

AZ: A lot of money! When you stop to think that these people that were giving the money weren't making much money themselves. They were barely making a living. Barely making a living. Because the factories don't—they didn't give much out.

AL: How did the committee here decide—for instance, okay now we're gonna do a picnic for the ambulances; now we're gonna collect milk. I mean, how was the whole process—if you remember.

AZ: I can't remember. Because I wasn't allowed in the meetings, you know.

AL: Do you remember—yes—you didn't go to the meetings?

AZ: No. I was too young.

AL: How about your mother? Was your mother involved in this?

AZ: No. No, no. My mother was a sick person, and she was not active. Until, my daddy was so active that she had to be home. Take care of us and send us up to school. And go

to work.

AL: Now, was he also at this time, still in the union, working in the union and everything?

AZ: Oh, yes.

AL: What was his position in the union? Do you remember?

AZ: Well, he was one of the delegates. And when they—

AL: For the cigar workers?

AZ: Yes, for the cigar workers. And they worked very hard. And naturally right away they accused them of being communist. Well, they weren't communist. Any Labor movement was stabbed like that, but they weren't. So, he had a job. He worked. And also he was involved with the Centro here.

AL: He was a member of the Centro Asturiano?

AZ: Because the Centro Asturiano here—not many people know it—but the Centro Asturiano was not pushing for our side.

AL: You mean like the Board of Directors, or you mean—?

AZ: Yes. So, my father—he was a good speech maker—from the heart. So he got on that stage one day when they were meeting. And he told them. He told them. What they were and what they were doing, and all this stuff. And they all approved what he said. And that's when they started really working hard.

AL: I see.

AZ: For the fighting man. Oh, gosh. I had an uncle in Spain, he just died, that was in the war. Naturally, he was young. And he was a wanted man. And they got him as a prisoner. They got him. And he was in prison and he was going to be shot the next day. And he escaped into the woods of Asturias. My grandmother—who was an old lady—would fix him food; that she didn't have, her own, and she would walk the woods looking for him. To feed him. That was pathetic! The *fascistas* caught her. And she was quite old. They caught her. And they were gonna put her in jail, or do something to her. And this young man, from the other side, *un Fascista*, saved her. Then my uncle gave up. His beard was down to his knees and—you can imagine—he gave up. To the—back to prison. But there was a nice man there, that sort of liked him. And during the war he said he had saved his life. So he says, “You're gonna have to stay here for a while.” How long, he stayed five years—but he finally came out.

Now, this story is pertaining to the war. A neighbor of ours here, Veronda, went to Spain

after the war, and all that. Went to Spain. And they were having a big get-together, the families. And he said, “You know, I would like to see this family, because they are neighbors of ours, and I would like to see their brother.” And he said who he was, he says, “Well, we'll invite him.” So they invited Alberto, was my uncle, the one that had been in prison, to the get-together.

Well, in the meantime this young man that had saved my grandmother was the nephew of this man from Tampa. So when they got there, and they started to talk about this and that. And they realized that this was the one that had saved my grandmother from being in jail, or killed—because you know they were, especially these films that I have seen—honey, they killed—what atrocities! But, they met there. And my uncle appreciated and thanked him for saving his mother. But he was such, this Veronda said that that was the biggest thing that he had ever seen. That reunion of these two opposites. But appreciated for what they had done. They were young men. My uncle worked in the mine, in the steel mills in Aviles. Yes, he lived there. But, the war was hard on everybody!

AL: How did you keep informed about your family during the war? Did you receive letters, or— ?

AZ: We did receive some. Not much. But we did receive this, Alberto, he would write. Oh, God, he would write!

AL: Yes. Is there anything your family could do from here? You felt that, you know, they could try to do?

AZ: No. We couldn't do nothing. It was terrible! Besides that, there was another brother who was wounded in the war, Bernardo. And, there was another sister. And her husband was in charge of one of the big brigades. And he lived, he lived through the war. But it's amazing. What these people went through. Because what we saw, my brother and I in those films, oh!

AL: Where did you see those films? What films are you referring to when you say—?

AZ: It's two cassettes.

AL: Oh, these, more recent, films?

AZ: I don't know where he found to look for them. There's two cassettes. It cost him, I don't know if it was sixty some dollars or something like that. And, they're about six hours.

AL: Do you remember watching films when you were young? At this time of the war, here in Tampa? Films about Spain and what was going on there?

AZ: I don't remember. I don't remember anything like that. I remember the people working. The men. Like Martinez. The one that you see, Jose Martinez. After the war and

after everything, Martinez and my father, they had something going for them in Spain. That's where they brought all these people out. And he was always communicating from, in Spain. Martinez was much a worker for everybody.

AL: Did your father help organize this Junta de Cultura Española? Do you remember anything about that organization?

AZ: I think that was, I think this was something like, maybe Martinez's job.

AL: It was organized after the war to help the refugees from Spain.

AZ: That was Martinez's thing. That was his thing. Oh, yes. Martinez and my father worked together in the same office.

AL: Do you mean in the union? In the Labor Temple?

AZ: No, in La Fraternidad.

AL: Oh, I see.

AZ: It was a medical thing. My father was secretary there, I mean, he kept the books.

AL: So he left the cigar industry?

AZ: Yes, my father did.

AL: Oh, okay.

AZ: In 1937.

AL: In 1937?

AZ: No, '37.

AL: '37?

AZ: When Social Security started. Never got any Social Security. Yes, he left it, he couldn't tolerate it. Because he was so outgoing, he couldn't tolerate the abuses. So he left it. And he worked at anything he could find. And then he finally finished after so many years. He worked at Fraternidad, did book work, and then when they started getting their social security check, well, this Vicente Granell that I told you about, they used to split the salary that they got there—which was nothing, really. But Vicente—my father would go in the morning, open the place up, and stay until about twelve o'clock. Vicente would come in, and work from twelve o'clock, or one o'clock, to about five. Isn't it—? They were two good friends. So they could be working, and supply their little money they had.

AL: Right, sharing.

AZ: They both shared their salary. Not many people would do that. And they both worked there, and kept the books and kept everything going. But, it was hard for them, with this Spanish war because they suffered so much. Then with the defeat, and seeing the Germans. Like in the films that I saw, those German planes coming in, the Italians, the Italian Army that they sent over there. You were born after that, weren't you?

AL: Yes. What do you remember, how did people get news from Spain? Do you remember? How did you know what was going on?

AZ: I don't know how we, I mean I'd—

AL: Did you read newspapers, or did your family? You said—

AZ: Well, I think—the news must have been coming in from somewhere. Like France, coming in through France. The Spanish people there, you know, sending news out. There was always somebody. The underground sending stuff out. There was a lot of underground.

AL: Do you remember any of the Republican speakers who came to Tampa to speak? I know the ambassador came here several times, Fernando de los Rios. I was wondering if you would remember any other—

AZ: I remember Fernando de los Rios. I remember him. I don't remember anyone else. I was too young and had other things on my mind—it was just—the whole thing.

AL: How about the things the women did? Because the women had their own committee also. Do you remember that?

AZ: Well, the women, they had their own, and they would do a lot of collecting and, like in the factories. They'd go to the factories and collect in the factory and they'd get out there in the doors and collect. They also were arranging all these picnics and things together. They worked very well with the men. Very well with the men. Which was very good. I remember Violet. [looking at photograph] She was sort of a secretary. She was one of the smarter ones.

AL: Do you remember when this photograph was taken? You are there with the rest of the women. Do you remember the visit of this General? Santiago Philemore? He was representing the Red Cross, I believe.

AZ: No, I don't. I have a hard time remembering that—

AL: How about the people here in Tampa who supported General Franco? What—how did the community react to that?

AZ: There weren't many. And if they were, they kept quiet, because they were afraid, I think. You know, I don't remember. I don't remember. Really. In the community.

AL: And, people from the other immigrant communities, like the Italians and the Cubans, how did they—?

AZ: They supported us. Oh, yes.

AL: No problem, at all?

AZ: They supported—

AL: Because the Italians were, as you mentioned before, helping Franco—

AZ: Oh, my God.

AL: —in Spain, so was, was there any bad feeling here against the Italian community?

AZ: In that film. In those films, this, my brother, my youngest brother, Angel, he says he's got to see it three or four times. Because he wanted to see, because how he was so young, he wanted to see, you know, the how and the why and all that. He says, "Man, that was something!" Oh, yes. Mussolini giving the speeches.

AL: So, but that didn't affect really relations between the Spaniards and Italians here?

AZ: No, they related with the Italian people. Because, you know, they worked with the Spanish people in the factories. So they were friends. And you didn't see this, you know, rivalry and, you know, they didn't see that. They sure didn't. Which was good.

AL: And the Cubans also helped the Spaniards?

AZ: Oh, yes.

AL: Yes.

AZ: The Cubans. You see women there [looking at photograph] that are Cuban. Oh, yes.

AL: And how about the Americans? How did the Americans look at this Latin support for the Spanish Republic?

AZ: They really didn't interfere.

AL: Did they participate? Do you remember them—

AZ: Not much.

AL: —helping out, or—

AZ: Not much.

AL: —organizing events?

AZ: —that I can remember. Maybe the older ones would remember. It's a shame that you could not have done this, oh, God, ten years ago. When all these people were alive. Because—well, there is not one left, of these groups. There's no one left that I know of. Gee whiz.

AL: Did you go to any of the demonstrations, Aida? The demonstrations.

AZ: Oh, yes.

AL: What do you remember of that?

AZ: Oh, why, it's fun to go on demonstrations and parading, and I thought I was a big woman!

AL: Were they big? I mean the—

AZ: Oh, yes. Very big.

AL: So where did they start? I know one started at the Labor Temple. How many—?

AZ: At the Labor Temple, usually organized there. Start at the Labor Temple, you know, up.

AL: So, what would people do in these demonstrations? I mean, they would just walk quietly, or would they chant these songs, or—?

AZ: Walked quietly, and—or sang, or they had banners, you know.

AL: Were there speeches also then at the end, or—?

AZ: Oh, yes. I think they would speak before this, but, it was hard. With me being so young, I, a lot of it was fun for me. Not realizing, really, what was in back of it. But—

AL: Do you remember the relations between the Latin community here and the Church? Because in Spain the Catholic Church was very supportive of Franco.

AZ: Yes. Well, I'll tell you the church here didn't—that I know of—didn't interfere. At least the church here in Ybor City, I don't think they interfered. People would go pray and all that; I don't, they didn't interfere.

AL: So there weren't any conflicts between the community and the church?

AZ: That I know of. I don't remember any conflict with the church.

AL: And how were the people feeling as the war, you know, went on and General Franco was winning and the Republic was losing. Do you remember?

AZ: Well, they were downhearted. But they kept on. I mean, I didn't see, they stopped when they couldn't send anything else over there.

AL: And what did—

AZ: They were, they were very upset when America, the United States didn't support.

AL: Right.

AZ: And they let those Germans—that's where the World War II started! That's where it took hold. And Franco didn't want the Americans in Spain. Because during World War II, my husband was in the Ferrying Command. They're the ones that take the planes over, and the food—whatever the Army needs. He was in that, was dispatching in charge of that. And, he was to go to Spain. To the new base. And Franco wouldn't let him in. And my husband waited in England. And waited in France. And then they finally sent him on to Italy. And he worked from there. But they wouldn't let him come in. To Spain. It was a secret, and all that stuff and—he would not allow the Americans in there. And now they're in there. For business. They bring a lot of money.

AL: Do you remember what people felt about Franco, as the years went on? He stayed in power for a lot of time. Were feelings somehow changing?

AZ: A lot of people never accepted him. Never. No, the people that worked here that I know of, nobody accepted him. Nobody. And it was, I was looking at La Pasionaria in that film. Talk. And she died a little after the film was made. But, oh, no, Franco was never accepted. My brother went to Spain after the war, my youngest brother, with a cousin from Argentina. He went back to Spain. And he went to see where my parents were born. And would you believe that my father's home was sold. And they were fixing it; painting it and fixing things. And there was a pile of trash right next to the house. And the man said, "Oh, they were supposed to, excuse me, because they were supposed to burn that today." My brother went to the pile. When he did, he saw a picture. A frame. He looked at it.

AL: It was your father?

AZ: And it was my father's communion papers. The diploma that they gave, when he was a little thing, in perfect condition. He brought it here, and I have it in my house. And that was amazing. He also brought a Catholic symbol that is put on the door, that my grandmother had put there. And he brought that. He brought it for one of my cousins

who's very, very religious and gave it to him. But that picture—I show it to everybody and they cannot believe it, because it's beautiful and it's all in gold, you know, made, and beautiful. But. And he took pictures of the house inside. It's beautiful. Poreno is beautiful country.

AL: Did you ever go to Spain?

AZ: I never got to go. Because my husband died. We had planned to go. Before that. Our children had paid our way. But he wanted to wait until he was retired. But, by the time he was retired, he was a very sick man. And he died. Died a year after he retired. Me, in the condition I am, with my legs and all that. And I lost my heart when that uncle of mine that was in prison died.

AL: Oh, he died?

AZ: Because he died. Because that's the one I wanted to see. Because he used to write to my father. Oh, about the war. He told him everything about the war and what they went through and all that. And you sort of feel like you knew the man. So it's—

AL: Your father never returned, also, to Spain? Or your mother? None of your parents visited?

AZ: No, we—I have an aunt here, the youngest one, and she, I have the cousins in there. She has three boys, and my uncle had three boys. Would you believe that there are, there were 34 grandchildren. And one granddaughter. And I'm the only one. And I got two grand—two child—two boys. It's all that means!

AZ: Is it finished? [the tape]

AL: No, I need to—

Side A ends, side B begins

AL: You told me before, Aida, that your father at some point had considered going to fight in Spain?

AZ: Oh, yes.

AL: That was early on in the war?

AZ: Early in the war. He was, had considered. There were a few of, in Tampa, that he knew were all going. Oh, he was ready to go! And, that's what I told you about my mother telling him, how about the children? He decided to stay.

AL: Were people here in Tampa in touch with the families of those who had gone to fight?

AZ: Some of them. Not too much. You couldn't get mail through. And we used to send, they used to send, the women were in charge of collecting clothes? And there were certain clothes you could send, you know. And we'd send clothes to Spain.

AL: How did you collect those clothes? Did you go house by house—?

AZ: Well, some people, you know, they knew about that. And yourself—like us, we'd send clothes too. From my brothers. And when my brother went to Spain, and he saw these two cousins, and they, one of them said, "Hey—" because he's a, my brother's a hefty guy, he says, "Many good clothes that I wear—" He could see now why—because the other guy was hefty too. But it's like everything else. Not everything got there, because they would steal it. They do every place. So. But a lot of clothes were sent, oh! I remember the clothes that was sent, the food that was sent, shipped over there.

AL: Why do you think, Aida, that the people here in Tampa supported the Republic so strongly?

AZ: I don't know. I think about their families that, back there that were, you know, supporting it too. But nobody liked Franco, for one thing. And they didn't like the King. Because 99% of them came here to avoid serving the King.

AL: Did your father do that to avoid conscription, and—?

AZ: To avoid—.

AL: Being drafted?

AZ: Being drafted over there. Now you see this, the King that's ruling now, I think a lot of them would have agreed, because—he changed a lot. They'll fight, anyway.

AL: So your father was never a monarchist, really?

AZ: No.

AL: So, was he happy in '31 when the Republic was proclaimed—? Do you remember anything about that?

AZ: No.

AL: Five years before the war started.

AZ: I don't remember. But I saw that in the movie—Oh, what a, it was a lot of divisions there; I mean, too many factors. One pulling against each other. But, they didn't have a chance. With those Germans coming in and the Italians coming in. It didn't have a chance. And, they brought the ones from Morocco. But, it didn't have a chance.

AL: I heard that some people—and you said that before—that some people thought that people who supported the Republic were just communists, or reds. Was that a—

AZ: Oh, that's a—

AL: —feeling that was widespread?

AZ: That's what they say now. In our time. When they were fighting, I didn't remember seeing, seeing people saying those things to us. No, I don't remember that.

AL: No?

AZ: Now everything is that. You know? And the world doesn't realize that, now we support the communists. We are over there in their country, helping them out. Why the big Soviet Union and not Cuba? That little old island that you can throw a bomb and it'd disappear. All this stuff, it's just pettiness. Just pettiness. Oh, well. I gotta be quiet, what I say around.

AL: There are divisions also here in the community, I guess?

AZ: Yes [sigh].

AL: Okay, I wanted to ask you just once more about the—you mentioned the underground and how after the war people here in Tampa were helping some of the people to leave the country?

AZ: To leave the country.

AL: How did they actually do that? As far as you remember.

AZ: I really can't tell you much of it. How they got here. But I know that the committee that was in charge of that—

AL: They would come through the Port of Tampa, or they would come through—

AZ: I don't know how in the world—

AL: —other parts?

AZ: —they got in. But, I know how they got out.

AL: Yes, so what happened once they got to Tampa, I mean, what—?

AZ: Well, they were hidden. They were put away where nobody would—and then, what they did, they worked on the—

AL: For fear of the American authorities?

AZ: Oh, my God! If they were caught—

AL: Because they weren't legal—

AZ: —they would have been sent back to Spain, they would have sent my father back to Spain.

AL: So after awhile, what happened to them. They went to—?

AZ: Well, they fixed papers for them. Passports and all that. I do not know that they were legal or illegal but they got them out that way. They got all of them out. A lot of people.

AL: Were there a lot of people, do you remember?

AZ: They were men only. And they were sending them to Cuba or to South America. Different countries in South America that would accept them.

AL: For how long was this going on? As far as you can remember.

AZ: Just a few years.

AL: After World War II, or—?

AZ: Well, after the World War II, before—

AL: Before. So in-between you figure, the end—

AZ: Between.

AL: —of the war in Spain—

AZ: Yes, between, or before, or—it was done.

AL: Right.

AZ: Oh, yes.

AL: So after the—

AZ: Especially this fellow here.

AL: Yes. We have the photograph there.

AZ: He was a good looking man. Smart as could be. You know what happens? Because, to get the name—all these people are dead, that's what I mean. All these people are dead. And their wives are dead. Even his daughter, that was a young woman, is dead. So, where are you gonna get the information? At the dairy—where they were hidden—the man's dead. Sacramento, he's dead. And there's no dairy anymore, and his son—of the guy in the dairy—Sacramento, that knew about it, is dead. The daughter-in-law is still living. Wanda. But I don't know if she knows anything.

AL: That was during the war? Do you remember the date, approximately of that picture, you think?

AZ: I really don't know.

AL: So after the war ended, then people here—I mean the Frente Popular—disappeared as such. And people kept sending money to Spain, do you think, or, how did they—?

AZ: I think for awhile they kept sending, you know, like food and stuff, like that, to the families. But I don't remember. Well, they were so defeated and so disappointed. And you know it's hard to collect anything after the war is over. You go over there to ask for money and they say, What for, you are gonna put it in your pocket? It's hard. So. That's about it.

AL: Okay. Aida, is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't talked about, and maybe you would want to make sure is included in the tape? Some topic we haven't touched on? No?

AZ: Not that I can remember.

AL: Okay. I want to thank you, Aida, very much, for participating in this project—

AZ: Well, I mean, it's nothing, I really didn't tell you—

AL: This concludes the interview with Mrs. Aida Azpeitia.

End of interview