

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Per Anger
January 19, 1995
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PREFACE

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Per Anger

January 19, 1995

Question: Can you tell us what your full name was at birth, if it's different, and where and when you were born?

Answer: Well, I was born on the 7th of December 1913 in Göteborg on the west coast of Sweden.

Q: And your name was Per Anger then?

A: No. Per Anger, I got other names, which I had never mentioned, because that was my mother wanted that I should have named after our old relatives. So my name is Per Johann Valentine (ph). I never mentioned those other names because I don't think they are very pretty.

Q: Do you ever use them?

A: No, no.

Q: Mr. Anger, in 1941, you were sent to Berlin. You were a member of the foreign service at this point.

A: 1940.

Q: 1940. Can you tell us what that was like? You were a very young man.

A: This was my first post. I had applied -- see, I had applied for the foreign service already earlier, but I wasn't ready with my exam. And at Uppsala, I studied law, and in the meantime I was drafted; I was in the military service. So I had difficulty in finishing this, but I just finished in time in December 1939, when the war broke out between Finland and the Soviets at that time. A dramatic period. And the war had already started. And the beginning of World War II had already started, of course. So the Swedish Foreign Office knowing that I was applying for entering the service, they said, "Look, here. We have -- we need staff now. So we could present you as a trainee to Berlin in January." And so I just got out of the military service, and I just happened to finish my law exam. So I was sent in January 1940 to Berlin to help at the commercial department in the Swedish Embassy. So I was working there the whole spring and went home then in June, the same year, to apply and to go through the exam for the foreign service. And I managed to get through that and returned then to Berlin where I stayed on till summer '41. And I returned to Stockholm exactly the

day when Germany invaded, so in June, midsummer '41. So from there on, I stayed on another year in Stockholm. But in Berlin, it was, of course, for me, for a Swede never having been out in war and all that, it was quite a new situation, all that. And it wasn't so much all of the bombing and fighting, that didn't happen then because all over Europe was then slowly being dominated by the Germans. Not during the spring, but as you remember, in April they invaded Norway, Denmark in a big operation when they took over all of Europe. So during this first half-year when I was there, it was very, very little of wars, things which reminds me of the war. There were some British airplanes coming in now and then and dropped some bombs on Berlin. And so we had to go around in the shelters and so on. But it was, of course, hard to get food and it was also a very severe winter that 1940 and so on. So it was in a way then kind of a hardship for all the people in Berlin, all of them. But it was not destroyed and not -- those bombs didn't cause very much damage really. But it was a psychological thing, which is very interesting. There came one British airplane in during the night, say, at midnight and forced the whole population down in the shelters. And then Hitler was, of course, furious that the Air Force couldn't stop these people coming in. And so everybody was sitting there in the shelters. And then after an hour, they went up again to continue to sleep. And then after two more hours, another airplane came from Britain and started to drop some bombs and forced the whole population again down in the shelters. So that was a kind of psychological warfare, in a way, which was very frustrating for the people in Berlin. Then they started to know that now something is coming here, and this is only the beginning, which was the fact. But then, you see, slowly the Germans took over, and I was there -- I was there in April when we sent the first -- I think it was end of March, we sent the first dispatch or the code telegram to Sweden about the German planning. That was very -- I was there sitting in my room on a Sunday when they telephoned from the embassy. "Now, you have to come here because you are on duty, and you have to send a code telegram to Sweden, a cipher." So I came there and I remember still that was one of the more dramatic periods of my life at that time. I was waiting for that telegram to come, and my boss said, "Now, in a few minutes you will get the most terrible message you ever have met to send to Sweden." And that was the information we had got through the underground, _____ and

Kanaris (ph) and those people in Germany who were working against Hitler. And we got through them the whole plan that in a few days, they are going to invade Denmark, Norway -- we didn't know about Sweden, if they were going to touch Sweden. And that's part of a bigger plan to conquer the whole of Europe, including Britain, which they never succeeded. But the whole of France, Belgium, Poland and so on. So I got that in, and I started to put it into this mapping machine. It was at that time a very awkward machine, a modern thing. And I managed to get it through and I went to the post office and mailed that to Stockholm, and then I couldn't sleep, of course. My god, perhaps I had made the wrong sort of -- pushed the wrong button or whatever. So what happens -- what could happen now in Stockholm is that the Germans will invade Sweden tomorrow; and they will not be warned in Sweden because there was a sloppy sort of attache at the embassy who couldn't cipher, who couldn't send the right telegram to Sweden. That will be you can read it in all the history books about this man. It was a nightmare I had. And, of course, they could, and that is the interesting reaction then in Sweden -- "We think you have been nervous in Berlin. I mean, we can't understand why you sort of exaggerate things like that." And they didn't believe us. And then, not till a couple of days before, I would say five days before the invasion, we send a new cable. And then they understood that now, it's serious. Now, it's serious, but that was rather later. You know, we were not prepared at all to defend our country. And Hitler apparently thought that it wasn't necessary to invade Sweden because he could always do that later on. Sweden was always there, and we were delivering iron ore to him. And he was happy with that, and so on. So granted, they conquered Norway, Denmark, and the other countries. So I was then in that situation. Then, we were in administration, we were sitting in the embassy and didn't know from one day or the other if the Germans were going to include Sweden also in the attack towards Scandinavia. And then I also remember another episode which I very much remember is when the brigade or the army, whatever you call it, returned from France marching through the streets of Berlin and how the people greeted them and throwing flowers towards the soldiers and thinking that now, the war is over. And the war had just started, you know, which they couldn't understand that. The war had just started. And they marched, these troops marched up and lined up outside the big palace. The

Villa Platt (ph) was the name, and out on the balcony came Hitler. And he was greeted then by the masses saying "Heil, Hitler" and all of that. I was standing there and everybody did this, that salute, so I thought I better do that. Otherwise, I don't -- but I had forgotten one thing. I had still my hat on, and then a man right behind me gave me a blow like that so my hat flew away, I don't how long, because you shouldn't stand facing the Führer with a hat on. So that was that atmosphere, you know, of sort of he had more or less hypnotized the whole population. He was the -- I mean, the savior, the Führer and all that. So that gave me the first impression; I saw how terribly this system had infiltrated in the whole population. And then after that came also the persecutions of the -- the Jewish persecutions and all that and so on. One didn't notice so much of it in Berlin because they did it in a very clever, secret way. But I remember that I had a housekeeper, a Jewish lady, who came to -- I was a bachelor at the time -- to clean up my apartment. All of a sudden, or one day, she didn't come. She just disappeared. So they disappeared, just like that, and were brought to the extermination camps or whatever. Only at that time, it wasn't very much known in the world, I would say.

Q: Were you getting reports about what was happening in Germany and then what was happening outside in terms of the persecution . . .

A: Ya.

Q: . . . not just the war?

A: Yes, we didn't very much, say, in 1940. We didn't know very about it then -- or '41, I didn't know other than there was discriminations against the Jewish people and so on. But the first real report we sent -- I wasn't there then, I was then in Budapest -- was sent in '42. You see, there was the big conference in Wannsee in the beginning of '42, when the final solution was decided upon. And then towards the end of that year, the world started to know about it. I know that the Americans knew about it; also, the Swedish. The American government knew about it, the Swedish government and all that; because we had a diplomat at the Berlin Embassy, a good friend of mine, who on a train in, say, October '42 met an SS officer who came up and said, "I have to tell you. I can't stand it any longer." And he told him the whole story about the gas chambers. And that we

reported home to Sweden in '42. So, for sure, from the autumn of '42, the Swedish government and the Americans got the same report, and the Swiss and all. From that on, most of the governments in the western world knew what was going on. I think that is important to say because to -- knowing how little they did, or they did nothing.

Q: Did you know about the euthanasia killings in Germany?

A: About the what?

Q: About the euthanasia, when they were doing so-called mercy killings in Germany in the hospitals, in the mental hospitals?

A: I didn't know at that time. I think we got to know about that later. I didn't know anything then at that time, no.

Q: When you said you were in this situation watching the Führer and watching everybody respond to him and you almost raised your hand in a "Heil, Hitler," but, fortunately, you were stopped, what were you thinking? Were you frightened and thought you would have to do it because somebody . .

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A: Why, they would have killed me. Oh absolutely. There saying such -- what do I say -- excited, what you call, hypnotical (sic) situation. They were spellbound. They were spellbound by this man. So if you said anything against him or if you did anything to him, you would have been killed on the spot by the mass of people, by the crowd.

Q: When you met ordinary Germans during this period, did they -- were they hypnotized even outside of that situation when there were crowds?

A: Well, they -- not hypnotized, but they were all indoctrinated in a fantastic way. I mean, this Goebbels must have been absolute, remarkable professional in the way of spreading this information or indoctrinating people. Imagine, at that time there was no television. There was just the spoken word. There was the radio, of course, and the newspapers, but that was enough. I was living at that time at the pension, where I was sitting around the table with the Germans and old people and how the day after the invasion of Norway and Denmark were so happy. They said, "Look, aren't you happy?" Looked at me, "Why?" "Because we have saved, we have saved your

neighbors from being invaded by the allies, by the British. And now, they are going to be free people, and, of course, under our control. Anyhow, we have saved them from this imperialist sort of western powers." This whole attitude was so all over. There were no exceptions from that theory. And, of course, it was part of it and so forth that they were also perhaps -- even if they thought that it was absolutely the wrong, the right version of it, they were scared to say something against it. Because then they knew what was going to happen. So everybody was -- I mean, even the officials in the foreign service with whom I had to deal, they were all the same. They never doubted. When you came up to the foreign office, I was dealing with the commercial things, always the same salute. "Heil, Hitler," like that, you know. I never said, "Heil, Hitler." Never in my life. So that was the way of greeting people.

Q: What sort of an impression -- you were a very young person and certainly had not experienced this kind of form of government, this kind of oppression. What effect did this have on you in your mid 20s, late 20s?

A: Well, that's -- of course, it was very strange for me to encounter such a system. Of course, it was, but that is also very dangerous because without knowing if yourself, you get indoctrinated. If you every day hear the same thing in radio, read the same thing in the paper, hearing people speaking about the same thing, about how victorious we are and how we are going to conquer the whole world, and all that and so on, and Hitler is a fantastic man. He has given us jobs and all that and so on. So I sometimes had the impression that I have to go to Sweden now for some vacation to breathe, to listen to other opinions than this. I mean, this is remarkable how you can get influenced without knowing it yourself.

Q: Did you see any persecution of anybody? Beatings in the street or . . .

A: No.

Q: Nothing?

A: No, I didn't see anything like that.

Q: How did it happen that you were sent to Budapest in 1942?

A: Well, it so happened because I was then off to Berlin dealing with the Hungarian affairs in the foreign office with the commercial matters, and there were delegations from Budapest coming. And we were negotiating with them, and we saw that Hungary is a potential sort of delivery of our goods we need. Foodstuffs, and all that. Hungary was and still is an agricultural country, you know, so then they wanted to send someone who already got some experience in these negotiations. So I was sent to Budapest mainly because they needed someone for this job. So I was participating in the negotiations there. The Swedish delegation coming out, I was a member of that. And we tried to -- you know, that old system of negotiations about trade that if we give you some steel, you give us some apples.

Q: Bartering?

A: Bargaining like that. Bilateral sort of trade which doesn't exist any longer happily enough. So that was my job from 1942 when I came in November '42 to Budapest onwards till, say, till '43, '44. Beginning of '44 and so on when it wasn't very much -- you didn't notice very much of the war then in Budapest at that time even if Hungary was an ally to Germany, you know. But the Hungarians, first of all, they didn't like -- of course, nobody likes war, but they were forced into this war. And it was also perhaps rather easy for the Germans to force them to get into the war on their side because this all goes back to the first world war, you know. The injustice of the first world war, which I think after the second world war, people had -- the western powers and learned much more how to treat those who have defeated. That after the first world war, they decided to more or less exterminate Germany, or they -- Germany, they put on the shoulders of Germany those enormous debts in all the war. And they on the map sort of drew up new lines, lines for new states like Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and so on. And they cut off then artificial borders, but they didn't think of that now, we are placing a great minority of people on the other countries, within the other countries' borders. So Hungary, they took away from Hungary two-thirds of their territory after the first world war and gave it to the neighbors. So that was still -- that was always in the mind of the Hungarians, this feeling of revenge. We have to get back our territory. And, of course, when they joined Germany in the second world war, that was their hope and that goes back, everything, which

doesn't prevent history to take it away again after the second world war. So that's how it went, you know, with those countries. So that was very sad that people who didn't understand the history of Europe and all that, the statesmen at that time, I think they caused very much all the reasons for everything for the second world war. All the fault which was made during after the first world war, more or less, caused the second world war, I think.

Q: What was your daily life like in Budapest during those two years before the occupation by Germany in '42 and '43?

A: Well, it was, as I told you, it was going on as usual. The Hungarians had, of course, participated in the war already, but they lost their whole army in the battle on the east front at the beginning of 1943. And after that, they said to themselves, "Never, we are not going to be active any longer in this war." So when the Germans -- and then during this period and when I was there, '42 till '44, when Germany invaded, the life went on more or less as usual. We had our trade negotiations with them, and Budapest looked rather peaceful. There had been no bombing to speak of from the Russians or from any of the enemies. And the Hungarians are people who enjoy life, and I was sitting at the cafes there and listening to the Gypsy music and so on and so on as it always had been in Budapest, this beautiful city. And then this situation, of course, completely changed in March '44 when the Germans decided to invade Hungary because of two reasons. The first was that they wanted to force the Hungarians to fight now more actively on these fronts against the Soviets. And, secondly, that they have to start off also with the final solution, which they hadn't done. There was, of course, anti-Semitic feelings in Hungary, as there had always been. And also part of the explanation that is also part of what happened after the first world war when -- you see, in Hungary to do business wasn't -- a gentleman couldn't do business. That was the Jewish people who had the business in their hand, they thought. They were sitting on their estates, you know, and had their castles and the upper class and all that is one. And they left all the business in the hands of the Jewish people, and also many Jewish people were then in those professions as doctors, as architects, and all those professions. So when Hungary then lost two-thirds of that territory, all the -- or most of the Hungarians were sitting out on this land which was taken over by neighboring countries.

They moved into Budapest to that center, and then they found that all professions more or less were taken by the Jewish people in Budapest. And so that, of course, increased the anti-Semitism in Hungary. But they never came to that extreme that they tried to exterminate the whole race in terms of to find a solution like the Germans had. So that led, of course, to the situation that the people, the Jewish people in other countries in Europe like in France and Poland and Germany, if they could, they fled to Hungary because they said, "Well, look, there is a country which is still is free." It was in the paper it was independent even if it was allied to Germany, but they knew, everybody knew that they hadn't come to any persecutions in that big scale as all that had been done in Germany and France and Poland and so on. So the population in Hungary increased to 800,000 people, living 600,000 in the countryside and about 200,000 in Budapest.

Q: The Jews, you're talking about?

A: Huh?

Q: Jews?

A: Jews, Jewish people. Jews. And so that was one of the purposes. The second purpose was then for the Germans to invade Hungary to force them now to bring the final solution to Hungary. That was the purpose.

Q: Had Jewish people's lives changed very much during the period of the alliance with the Germans?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did the life of the Jews change very much during the period of time prior to the occupation? Were there laws like the Nuremberg Laws for the lost professions?

A: They had some Jews -- discriminated the Jewish people, of course. They had, for instance, there were quotas for so-and-so many could only study at the university and so on. So there had already been -- those laws had already been introduced after the first world war and slowly increased and so on. But they were not sort of serious really compared to what happened then in Germany, but it was discrimination. Certainly, it was.

Q: Were there other groups who were discriminated against during this period of time?

A: Well, no. Really, it wasn't. The Gypsies, for instance, which the Germans also sent to the gas chambers and so on. But in Hungary they were treated like -- they were favored because they liked them. They played in the cafes and so on and so on. No, there was mainly the Jewish people who were discriminated. And all -- see, they didn't have these problems either with the minorities because all the people now within their borders were Hungarians. Contrary to today when big minorities are living in Slovakia, in Germania and so on.

Q: Were there discussions in the legation or between legations about the potential for more severe persecution in Hungary and some attempt to make preparations for that prior to the occupation in March?

A: No, not really. It didn't happen very much before the Germans came in.

Q: So there wasn't a sense that the Germans will probably come in, and if they do, the situation will get worse?

A: Well, what we discovered was, of course, was that there were some people in the government or in the departments, some high-ranking officials who were very anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic and so on, which then they came into power then when the situation had changed. So we knew there was a growing feeling among them. That, we knew; but they had no say because it was, after all, Horthy was a strange man anyway. He was the Head of State, of course, and he like all these magnates, all these upper class, they never sort of for persecution, but they didn't -- they were sort of anti-Jewish in a way that they didn't accept them really in society, if I may take that as an example and so on. It didn't prevent _____, for instance, to have a few Jewish good friends with whom he played bridge and so on. I mean, it was kind of a mixture of anti-Semites and after all, having good friends also among the Jewish people. It's a lot difficult to give you the exact definition of how strong these feelings against the Jewish people were at that time. But then, of course, when all the Nazi people in Hungary, when they came into power, or the pro-Germans came into power, but even so, the first government which came into power was kind of a --- Sztojay was his name. He was Ambassador to Berlin, and he was known as being very much pro-German, but they made a difference. And I think all of them kind of made a difference between people who were pro-

German and people who were Nazis in Sweden. For instance, the old Swedish generation, you know, military people and bureaucrats, they admired very much the old Germany for their efficiency and all that and so on. But when they were faced with this new situation with the Nazis, of course, they were all against it. So I mean, I think this Ambassador to Berlin, Sztojaj, was a typical pro-German Hungarian. And he came into power, and it's typical then how we managed to negotiate with him, with that government and how they approved those passports and all that and so on. They did. I mean, they would never have done that if they had been extreme Nazi people.

Q: Just to go back for a moment. You were married in 1943 in Budapest?

A: Yes. In Budapest. We were married in Stockholm, but we made our home in Budapest shortly after in June 1943.

Q: Can you explain a little bit your position? You were a second secretary in negotiation when you first came in '42?

A: The attaché is perhaps the name or secretary or whatever. It's the same. Today, we don't have attachés; we have secretaries. But we always called attachés because that was the first position we had abroad. And I was in charge of, as I told you, about the trade business and commerce and so on. But, you see, an embassy, a very small embassy like that, it was only the ambassador or you call it minister at that time because it was delegation -- we cannot forget about that. Say, the ambassador, myself that is next in command. We had a chancellor office. We had the two girls who were typewriting, and we had a coach attaché and a driver. That was all.

Q: Seven people?

A: Ya, that was the whole staff. Then, what did we do? Well, we had to safeguard the Swedish interests, of course. If there were Swedish citizens there, we have to protect them, and all the legal business for the Swedes, you know, and the trade and so on. Information about Sweden, the culture relations. We had so many cultural interests. It was rather strange when I think of it that in the midst of the war we had so much of exchange on the cultural side. We have Swedish opera singers who came. Jussi Bjorling, for instance. He came to Budapest, was singing there in the opera. In 1942, '43, those two years, we had nearly every month we had someone coming from the Swedish

Opera and all that. We had the Swedish language taught at the university and so on and so on. So the commercial and the cultural business and the political -- wasn't very much, of course. We didn't have any exchange in that field very much. Of course, we listened to what they said because they were, after all, allied to Germans, so we reported home about that. Some political dispatches and so on. That was all.

Q: Were you getting continuous dispatches about the war and about what was happening . . .

A: Pardon?

Q: Were you getting dispatches about the war in Budapest?

A: Ya, well, . . .

Q: What about the . . .

A: We reported what happened. We reported about the defeat on the east front, the German army or the Hungarian army and all that. About the feelings about the first bombings when the Russians dropped a few bombs on the city once, and the atmosphere and all that. We were reporting about that.

Q: Now, I also mean were you getting reports? Was Stockholm giving you reports about what was happening outside?

A: Oh, always, always. We always relayed reports like that between the embassies, you see. So we were aware of what was happening, of course.

Q: So explain what March 19th, 1944 was like. Where were you when the Germans came in?

A: Well, that's how I start my book. When I was awake in the morning on a Sunday morning when the ambassador telephoned me and said, "You have to come to the embassy now because the Germans are on the way to invade the city." And so I saw the German troops coming in with big tanks and artillery and everything through the streets and how people were scared and how people felt that now their independence is at stake now and so on. And above all, the Jewish people understood what was going to happen there. That's for sure, and the end. And to only a few days after to see every third person on the street wearing a yellow star and all that made me sick. I mean, how could one discriminate another race? How could one doom -- I mean, the doomsday for

Jewish people has come. How on earth is that possible to do all this? Even if I had known a little bit about it in Germany, to see it now in full development, see, that was terrible.

Q: How quickly did people have to put on a Jewish star?

A: Oh, that came like that. Rules were sort of issued immediately. And if you didn't wear it, you were punished. And they had already, you see, they had already information, the Germans about the -- now, this was about Budapest. I don't know about the countryside so much, but they had already information about the most prominent Jewish people in Budapest. So without we couldn't do anything because just the first days, they just arrested, say, a couple of hundred Jewish people. Many of them are best, good friends, really, and the only -- this is really strange -- the only family who managed to get out was the Manfred-Vice (ph) family. This was a big industrialist. They had the big factories on Säftele (ph). Säftele (ph) was an island on the Danube between Budapest, and they managed to negotiate and they were very clever. And one of them, one of the family -- the whole family was, with relatives, about 120 people or something like that. But one of them was taken to Vienna and tortured and all that, but he managed to say, "I want to negotiate." And he knew there were two that were -- there were Himmler on one side and Goering on the other side, who both wanted to have these factories. So he made a deal with one of them. I think it was Himmler, I think, who got it. Because Himmler knew that if he didn't play his cards, it would be taken all by the Goering family. So he managed to get free sort of traveling for the whole family to Portugal, plus an amount of money and all that. So those people were given false Portuguese passports and were all sent to Portugal. That's the only example I know of how at that time. At the very beginning, people managed to get out.

Q: What happened at the embassy? Were people immediately crowding around the embassy?

A: Oh, ya. The following days they were queuing up outside the neutral embassies. The neutral embassies at that time was the Swedish, the Swiss, the Portuguese and the Spanish, and also the Vatican had their representation there. They were queuing up outside our embassies in big numbers, and it was very, very difficult to know what to do really. And as I have written in my book and all that, we tried to improvise and we tried to find ways of bluffing the Nazis. And we

gave those people who had very close connections with Sweden, married to Swedish lady perhaps, or having their relatives in Sweden, or very, very close trade relations with Sweden, we gave them Swedish provisional passports. A Swedish provisional passport is a document which you, as a rule, can give to Swedish citizen or someone who says, "I am Swedish, but I have lost my passport." And, "Oh, here, you can have a provisional one. Go to Sweden and verify your identity there, and you will get an ordinary passport." Really, a traveler's document, you see. And so I took on me to give away a few of these without instructions from Sweden. I took the risk to be fired, but anyhow .

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Q: Can you tell us about the first time you did it?

A: Well, it was one of the days just after the invasion when I was sitting at home, and then came one of my friends. He was Jewish head of one of the big Swedish companies in Budapest. He was coming and he was hiding his star with a portfolio like this (indicating). And he said to me "Per Anger, you have to help me." I said, "Is this a new situation?" I said, "We have instructions to help Swedish citizens, and we have no instructions to help any other nationals. That's against every international law and all that." So I don't know what to do, but after I thought of it for a while, I said, "I give you a provisional passport." And then not only to him, but to his wife, to his daughter, and to all the grandchildren. So the whole family got provisional passports, and I said -- I was waiting for some reprimands from Stockholm, but they, fair enough, they approved afterwards.

Q: Did you write a report to them to say what you had done?

A: Oh, ya. Certainly, I do that. I describe the situation and all that, of course. And then we worked in that sort of direction, more or less. We gave them -- we couldn't keep provisional passports too many, but we invented these certificates. We established sort of certificates saying that the holder of this certificate has just applied for Swedish citizenship, and until he gets that he is under the protection of the Swedish government. The document had stamps and everything on it, you see. And also, we got authorization from Sweden to give visa to people who could show that they had relatives in Sweden and all that and so on, and to them we gave this. Also, identity papers saying that the holder of this paper has got visa to Sweden. Until he is able to travel to Sweden, he's under

the protection of the Swedish government. I mean, a completely legal document according to international law, but the Nazis, you know, there were many of those Nazis who were illiterate, and they were very impressed by papers with stamps and all that and so on. So we got many examples of how those people -- many of those people were saved from being deported through showing these papers, so even to own them. We issued around 600, 700 of those papers and these people were saved. But, you see, the numbers of those people increased the whole time, and we couldn't cope with it. We were only, as I told you, a handful of people in the embassy. So that comes to the new situation; then we ask for more staff from Sweden.

Q: At this time, were other groups, were other legations, the neutrals, also writing out provisional passports like this?

A: Well, there was, of course, the Swiss already had the British interests. You see, in all the wars, the first world war, the second world war, both the neutral countries like Switzerland and Sweden have taken upon them to protect the enemies' interests. In other words, you can't keep your embassy in the enemy's capitol. So, for instance, in Budapest, the Swiss had the American and the British interests and to hold their buildings and citizens and protected them, you see. And we had other countries like Holland, Finland, we even had the Soviet Union's interests in Budapest and so on. So they were under our protection. Now, Switzerland had the British interests and the British had this old system with Palestine certificates which the Swiss took over, enabling people to immigrate to Switzerland -- to immigrate to Palestine. Afterward, Israel, but Palestine at that time. And that was, of course, very restrictive because the British were not very anxious to increase that quota because their interests, their relationship with the Arabs and all that. And so that's a long story and so on, but didn't prevent the Swiss from going on and issuing those papers. So I think that was the start for the Swiss, was the Palestine certificates, and if they then changed that into the same protective passport as we had -- I don't remember, but I think they did the same thing. Finally, they copied us, like the others, like the Spanish people and the Portuguese and so on. So I think they more or less followed in our footsteps.

Q: From the beginning, from March.

A: Well, that is when the _____. That's later on then.

Q: Later on?

A: At the very beginning, I don't think that they did very much because I don't think -- they couldn't do very much trying the same way perhaps as we did. I can't tell you how they succeeded because we were so occupied with our own problems. So we had -- from that time, I don't remember very much of what they did, just the first days.

Q: Were you -- do you know whether the legation or you yourself was contacted by the Zionist underground during this period prior to the deportations?

A: By the Hungarian underground?

Q: By the Zionist underground, the Zionist group?

A: Ya, so -- well, no, we were not. We were not. We had some connections later on with them and _____ had, but not at that time, you know. It became more and more important later on towards the end of the war, you know, when we were all in the same boat, you see, where we were all living underground after having been liquidated by the Nazis.

Q: Did you or any of your staff witness the ghettoization in April of 1944? Did you go to the ghettos?

A: In '44?

Q: Yes.

A: Ya, certainly. The Geneva Ghetto?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, ya, yes.

Q: Did you visit that ghetto?

A: Well, I went, I was there, of course. Not very often, but we had our ghetto, so to say. We had our own houses with the people with the passports and all that under our protection.

Q: No, I meant in April, prior to all the deportations and the safe houses. Like Liebau Ghetto was established in April. Did you . . .

A: Was it established that early? Well, no, I didn't see it then. No, no. I saw it later on, later on.

Q: So the situation changes again radically between May and July when these huge deportations begin?

A: No, well, you see, the situation was this: That when you come to July, then the whole countryside was evacuated and the 600,000 people were already sent to Auschwitz from the country. 200,000 people were still in Budapest, and then except for this Manfred-Vice (ph) family and a few others, what managed to escape, there were 200 people -- 200,000 Jewish people still in Budapest. So our concentration then when Wallenberg comes was to try to save those who were there in Budapest.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about a little bit prior to Wallenberg coming, a Mr. Langley (ph) who was in the embassy and connected with the Swedish Red Cross, what was he trying to do?

A: Well, he was the -- like I said from the beginning, the cultural attaché because he was teaching Swedish at the university and all that. So we appointed him cultural attaché at the embassy, and he was a very good man. Had a fantastic feeling for his fellowman and a great idealist and so on. He -- I would say that he was the man who pushed us very much to do something, because he knew, he knew much more than we did about the Hungarian situation. He had lived there for all the years, so he had a feeling more than we what was coming on. So he insisted very much from the very beginning that, of course, this is good what we are doing here, but we need more staff. We need more help. And why don't we ask Count Bernadotte (ph) to come to Sweden, to come to Hungary with a Red Cross delegation to try to do something? Now, that failed because Bernadotte (ph) never got visa to go to Hungary. The Germans refused to have a relative of the Swedish monarchy on the battlefield there. They couldn't see that, so that never happened. But we raised the question in Stockholm that we need more staff. And that's how -- and not only for that purpose, but also for safeguarding the other countries' interests, you see. So I went home -- well, I don't know did you say tell this chronological order or not, but Wallenberg comes first. And then I went home in August with my wife and our baby, left them home to get staff, more staff for taking care of these other countries' interests, you see. So this little embassy of five people grew to quite an enormous organization. We had the ambassador who was very loyal to this action and very -- I mean, for us it

was a great thing, and for Wallenberg also, of course, that he was staying on. It gave our embassy a prestige which the others didn't have. The Swiss Ambassador, when it started to -- the bombs started to fall, he went to Switzerland. The Portuguese left; the Spanish Ambassador left; all of them left. So the only one remaining was -- of course, the Vatican representative, he was there and our ambassador. So we could always -- we always had this base of a strong embassy with an ambassador and all that, which guaranteed legality of our existence and all that and so on. So that was how our situation was. And then I went home to get all these people for the special section for the foreign interests. So we had the original embassy, where I was sitting in the middle as a coordinator, more or less, to start with, to coordinate the enormous department _____ established. The Red Cross, which Langley was basing, was leading, we had the Save the Children, a lady called Asta Nielsen (ph), she was also in the Red Cross in a way or Save the Children Fund. That was the three, we had this big department for the foreign interests. We had one special section for buying all the foodstuffs and all that on the black market outside Budapest for the houses where we had all the people hiding and all that and so on. So this became really quite a big organization.

Q: Tell me one thing about Langley. Did this happen prior to the arrival of Raoul Wallenberg? Did he put signs on buildings that said, "Under the protection of the Swedish Red Cross"?

A: Uh-huh, ya. He was very well-meaning. He tried to help, and the problem with him was, of course, that he wasn't that well organized, so as soon one come and asked for help, he said, "Oh, here, you have a passport or Red Cross," and so on, and he took under his protection hospitals and churches and all that and put on the sign "This is under protection of the Swedish Red Cross." And, you see, this became kind of inflation of those papers, and so it became difficult for him in the long run to defend all these. So this was a headache for us very often to rush out when the Nazis invaded one of his hospitals, for us to rush out and try to stop these Nazis from doing something like that. But he helped many, and he saved many people, so he should have all the credit for that. But the problem was, as I say, that he never knew where to stop. I mean, there was also discussions I had with Raoul Wallenberg later on, "We can't give protective passports to the whole Budapest population because then they will have no value. So we have to hide ourselves behind a

bureaucracy." But we were able to show, the Germans could come in and look at our files and see those people had protective passports. Because this man has a cousin in Sweden. This person is married to a Swedish girl. This man is head of big Swedish -- so those criteria were very important to keep and to have as a kind of a protection against accusations that were going around. So it was a well organized bureaucracy which helped us.

Q: Let's stop now, so we can change the film. Thank you. It was a perfect ending.

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

Q: If you can, keep the chronology.

A: Keep the chronology?

Q: Yes.

A: I'll try.

Q: Okay. I'll try, too.

A: If it's possible.

Q: Mr. Anger, Raoul Wallenberg arrives July 9th, 1944, right? You knew that he was coming. You had been asked about him. What did you think about the presence of Raoul Wallenberg coming to Budapest?

A: Well, first they asked us. We are intending -- the foreign office cabled us, we are intending to send Raoul Wallenberg to Budapest in this one Italian mission. We didn't know the background then about the negotiations in Stockholm between the American Embassy and the Jewish -- well, congress on one hand and this foreign office on the other. But we only got the message "We are intending to send Raoul Wallenberg. We want your comments." And I said to the ambassador, "Of course, this couldn't be better because I know him, and I know he's the right man." So, of course, they would never have sent him if we had said, "No, for heaven's sake, don't send Wallenberg." But that was never the question, so he came as you said on the 9th of July to Budapest. Late, of course, too late, but that was not his fault. Nobody's fault. Of course, the whole countryside was already evacuated and so on. So once he was appointed, he traveled day and night to come as soon as possible to Budapest.

Q: What happened when he first arrived? What was your first discussion about?

A: Well, he came there to the embassy where we were in full work trying to issue those papers I told you about. The whole garden of the embassy was full of people who were lining up there. Who knows who they were, and trying to issue those different certificates and so on. And there he comes, and as I describe it in my book, he comes then with equipment rather odd for a diplomat. He's carrying sleeping bag and a knapsack and the revolver, and he was very proud to show me this

revolver. And, of course, I knew that everyone in the embassy had a revolver somewhere lying. But the man coming was like this (indicating) and he joked. He had a good sense of humor, also, Raoul Wallenberg. So you see, this only -- it gives me more courage to have this in my pocket. He never used it, of course, never. But he had it with him and so on. And the sleeping bag and all this equipment was very -- this came to use, of course, later on. Which he had this kind of a mission, of course, that he had been in the military service in Sweden like I, and we had met there, so he knew what it was to sleep under a tree and all that and so on. So he was perhaps thinking of a situation where we were going to be bombed out and all that and so on. So he had this sort of equipment with him, and then he saw all this activity around. He said, "What are you doing here?" I briefed him; I gave sort of a description of what we are doing, and he saw the documents. And that is typical for him with his inventiveness that he more or less on the spot said, "Well, it's very good. But I think of an idea -- I have idea one could perhaps make them more spectacular, these certificates." Same reading as I had once upon a time invented myself, but now a document with a Swedish emblem, the Swedish coat of arms on it in blue and yellow colors and the ambassador's signature and stamps and so on. It made it more like an official document, an authentic Swedish passport in a way. So that was his first -- the first action was to invent this. And then another quality he had was that he was very good negotiator. I knew that because he had been in Budapest before 1942, '43 negotiating for his firm in Stockholm about trade. And I followed him there to see how he negotiated about this quota of foodstuffs coming from Hungary to Sweden and so on. So I discovered there that he was a good negotiator. That also came to use because he then started to negotiate with them, the new government, about these passports. And he got the approval of, say, 4,500 passports. And also the approval to have these people living in houses under our protection. That was his first action, to say, and . . .

Q: Was that his idea, also, the safe houses?

A: That was his idea. That was his idea. Oh, yes, it was because, you see, there were so many empty houses because Jewish people had been living in their apartments. And then the first step was, of course, to put on the yellow star on your clothes, and the second, that you could be

identified. And then you had to go together in houses with the yellow star on it, and they had to leave their rooms, you see, and being concentrated in special houses. And the next step after that was, of course, to be brought to the general ghetto in the city, and from there on to Auschwitz. That was the sort of procedure in a way. But it's interesting then that prior to his arrival, I was in charge of the embassy one day when the cablegram came from the King of Sweden, the old king, Gustavus V, that he appeals to halt, to stop all these deportations. So I delivered that, and I remembered that my ambassador was on leave and I telephoned him, and he said, "Oh, I'll come with you, then." So we dressed up in morning coats, you know, that you have when you meet Head of State, as is rather peculiar situation in the middle of the war, you know. This long tails and all that and high top hats, and went to Horthy and presented the message from the king. And Horthy looked at it and he said, "Oh, this is terrible. I can't believe that my compatriots are committing themselves those crimes, and I'm so unhappy about all this and that." And he sent a message back to the king in Sweden, saying that he was going to do his best. And he actually stopped deportations from -- it was too late for the _____, but he stopped deportations from Budapest. They had just come to the surroundings. Several areas of Budapest had already been evacuated. I was myself there and saw it, but when it came to Budapest itself, it stopped because of all this intervention. So it's this peculiar situation when Raoul Wallenberg had then started off all this action to have people under our protection with passports living in these houses and all that, everything was organized. And he said, "Well, I've done my job, and no more deportations will take place. So I better prepare my trip back to Sweden." This was in August, the end of August, I think. The beginning of September, perhaps, when the new situation later on comes when after the revolution when the _____, the Hungarian Nazis take over. Then, comes the real job, and it's -- you think in terms of nine months when Raoul Wallenberg was there, from July to January, and of those nine months, he used the first month just to organize things. But the real rescue operations where he also went out to the railway stations and all that -- I was very often with him and all that and so on. It was a concentrated work of three months where he saves all those people.

Q: Let's talk about this period between July and October just a little bit. When he came, did he have a formal mission that he announced to you, or was it very clear what he was supposed to do from some papers that you had received before?

A: Well, he had a clear mandate from the foreign office. He had negotiated or had already started negotiating in a clever way with the foreign office, and got a mandate to operate quite independently, but under, of course, the cover of the embassy and subordinated, of course, to the ambassador. And in the case of the ambassadors delegating me under my sort of command in a way, but we were sort of equal and good friends so that was no problem at all. So the edict was quite clear that he could perform as he thought would be the most useful, most -- the best one to save as many people as possible. That he used then unconventional methods and all that, that was hard -- I mean, you see, it was in a way very typical situation was this: That I was sitting there at the Oder (ph) Swedish Embassy and everybody was sort of respecting an embassy and all that and so on. I was a diplomat; my boss was a diplomat, all that dramatic status. Raoul Wallenberg was a businessman, but he was also given diplomatic status, no doubt about that. So he had the same -- from the international law, from that viewpoint, he had the same status and the same protection as we had, but being more or less a freelance or having his own department and all that. We closed our eyes very often when he did things which a diplomat never does. Bribe people, like that, you know, to save people's lives or doing things out of the ordinary and so on. And we thought that was a good way of organizing the work. That he goes "Oh, look, here. With the embassy we are not doing that," and so on. And we don't know about anything illegal and so on and so on and so on. There you come to a question, which I don't know if you would like me to talk about now. And that is the relationship between Sweden and Germany. How on earth, why did they accept this, the Germans? That's a good question. Shall we talk about that? That is, of course, there you have a country or a city, in this case, completely under the command of the Germans, but having a puppet government. The German and Hungarian government who is in charge whom they could handle as they -- I mean, they could decide anything, the Germans. They could fire the government; they could do anything. But they let this government act because for the image of Germany it was in a

way good to show that we are -- haven't occupied Germany, Hungary to enslave them, to have them. They are a free country, and they have their old government, and they have all that and so on. That is their relationship between the Hungarians. Now, but how could they accept then that the Hungarians went on and made agreements with Sweden about the Jewish people who they liked to extinguish, to exterminate? And then comes this situation into the picture that Germany was very anxious, especially towards the end of the war, to have a breathing hole up in the north. Have a neutral country there with whom they could negotiate. They could have their spies there, of course, and all that. That was -- all the people, both sides, were happy to have Switzerland and Sweden because they could meet and they could -- sort of a country which was not involved in the war. And some authors, and I'm not quite sure that I share all this opinion entirely and so on, but the fact is that towards the end of the war the Germans tried, even first the underground in Germany tried, those people who were fighting against Hitler tried through our people in Sweden through the Wallenbergs -- that's the relatives of Raoul -- to get contact with the allies. Not with the Soviets, but with the others, with the British and the Americans. Tried to get contact with them through us to say this: That why couldn't we try to make a deal here now, and we will try to do something? And they tried to kill Hitler, but they didn't manage. And on the condition that we capitulate the Jew and that we could make a separate agreement with Jew. And we all -- and then Himmler worked on that. It's funny, but he also worked on that idea later on when he said to Bernadotte, I think, that we must all now stand up against this Communistic danger. They are going to invade Europe, and, you know, we all have to fight against the Communist. And why don't we now -- why don't you help us to make an agreement with the allies that we could stop the war with them and we all join force against the Soviet? Completely unrealistic idea, of course, because there was 100 percent solidarity between the Americans and England on one side and the Soviets on the other side to win the war against the Nazis. That was how it was. In other words, I think that this time then in 1944 when the war was coming closer to an end that they thought perhaps that it's good to have Sweden. You never know, perhaps we could have their help, I don't know, and so on. And by all means one shouldn't violate the diplomat relations between Sweden and Germany, and they respected us as

diplomats the whole time. Even Eichmann respected, in a way, Wallenberg even if he hated him. And they tried once to kill him in letting one of the big truck drive into Raoul Wallenberg's car, but Raoul Wallenberg wasn't there. And we reported that to Stockholm, and Stockholm instructed our embassy in Berlin to protest in the German Foreign Office. And they did, and the German Foreign Office got upset and they reprimanded Eichmann and said, "Why on earth do you do things like that? We have to respect the Swedes, the Swedish immunity, the diplomats and all that." And then comes this rather funny answer from him. You can find that now in the files which are all open now. Then he answered back, he said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I couldn't help doing this, trying to do this because Raoul Wallenberg used such unconventional methods." Imagine. So that explains, partly explains why they accepted Raoul Wallenberg. And they said after all a handful of Jewish people, if they can be saved just for our image towards Sweden, it's only good they -- perhaps that was what they thought. And there on one side of this, why, how did Wallenberg manage? And even I, when I spoke to German officers at the railway stations, opened these doors here. We have Swedish people there and so on. It's just because of this reason that they wanted to be correct, to say, towards us. And I had, of course, my connections with the embassy, German Embassy in Budapest was with the ordinary diplomats. And they helped me sometimes to get visa for some people and so on. But there was only a few cases, so we had these official connections with them. And it's interesting then when the whole comes to an end, when all the Germans evacuate from Budapest, there was a telephone call from the German embassy which says, "Could you take over our interests?" We had already the Soviets and the others and so on, and we got instructions from Stockholm, "By no means, no." But we made a compromise, so we told the Germans, "Okay, we will take over the keys to your building. We'll have that now." So I went up to the place up on the side where they have the embassy and met this terrible man, _____ was his name. He was not only ambassador, but he was the kind of a governor for this whole part -- a German governor for this whole of the world. And there he was standing very polite and gave me the keys, and that saved us in a way. Later on, towards the -- that's a long story -- how that saved us towards the Hungarian officers. Of course, then we got a paper saying that we have now the interests. We have

the interests of the German Embassy and all that. So when they tried to arrest one of my colleagues, Berg (ph), he managed to escape, thanks to this. He was -- it's a long story, when they invaded the - - when the Hungarian officers invaded the Swedish Embassy on Christmas Eve 1944, tried to capture us and we managed to escape most of us, except a few. The ladies, Asta Nielsen (ph) was taken to the -- first, they were going to shoot. They lined them up against the wall to shoot them, but they didn't do that. I don't know why. Then they took them to the ghetto and there with the help of the International Red Cross we liberated them, you see. I wasn't at the embassy at that time, so I was hiding in another place. But Berg's story, Berg was the head of the Department of Foreign Interests, so when he was captured he said, "Well, I have to go home first and pack." They wanted to take him away, all of us they want to take away to the western Hungary to where they were evacuating. And then he said, "No, I have to go home first." So they gave him a Nazi man with a machine gun in his car to go home to pick up his belongings. Instead, he went directly up to the SS headquarters, jumped out of the car and said, "We have your interests here, the German interests. And you have to arrest this man." And the Germans arrested this Hungarian Nazi and then they gave Berg a big paper saying that Mr. Berg from the Swedish Embassy was taking care of the German interests. He's under the protection of this close Deutch Reich of the big German power. And we duplicated that paper and I don't know how many copies. Each of us had this copy in the pocket and we saved us many times; we showed that to the Hungarian Nazis. It looks like a fairy tale when you talk about it, but it was the reality at that time.

Q: So in a certain way, the German Nazis were respecting this very strange set of behaviors going on?

A: They were. What I forgot to tell you was, of course, as far as Raoul Wallenberg was concerned, it was not only the fact that he was a Swedish diplomat, but it was, of course, also his personality, I mean, which helped a lot. Because he was the kind of -- which I forgot to tell you -- a kind of an actor in a way. He could change. Funny, to look at him when we were together, he was sitting, speaking in a soft voice, so he looked more like an intellectual, you know, like a professor. But when he met the Germans, he yelled and he used the same language as they and in a very sort of

aggressive way, and they were very impressed, very impressed. Not only was he diplomat, but also he speaks our language.

Q: Was that shocking for you? Was that a behavior that . . .

A: No, no. I tried to do the same thing (laughter).

Q: Let me just go back to something that struck me as somewhat funny. When you first produced, printed the _____, you discovered something funny in the coat of arms.

A: Oh, terrible. We put it in the wrong way. We put one crown like that and two under it; it should be the other way around, you see. But nobody thought of it at that time.

Q: So the first 4,500 were all . . .

A: Oh, yes. All of them, all of them. All the provisional passports had that funny emblem with the crowns put in the wrong way.

Q: And nobody noticed?

A: No (laughter).

Q: During these few months before October, before the Hungarian Nazis come in, before the _____ comes in, are you and Wallenberg both organizing the group of people who will be doing all the work, helping? There's a huge organization that he creates.

A: Ya, ya.

Q: Yes? About how many people does he bring in?

A: At the start, you mean?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, the first people were those whom I had given these provisional passports or these certificates, that was the base, so to say. Now, there were perhaps 20 people or whatever to start with, and then it increased because we had given them many more. But then -- and they organized it. They were very good organizers, those people. They were heads of Swedish companies. They had great experience in dealing with people and all that and so on. So they knew how to organize an office. So he had lots of offices, though. One office, say, for administrating the houses. One office for scrutinizing the applicants, the applications for passports and so on and so on. And one

part was for the provision of medicine and organizing the medical help to these houses, and one for providing with food stamps and all that and so on and so on and so on. So towards the end of this operation, I think that he had about 400 people, Jewish volunteers who were all working.

Q: So it's a good bureaucracy. I mean, that had to be very quickly formed.

A: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. Oh, yes.

Q: I'm not sure that most people understand how complicated it might be to administer this.

A: Oh, yes. Very, very, very much.

Q: And was he the one who actually administered -- I mean, was overseeing everything or was the people that had volunteered at the top, they were doing it and he was doing very particular kind of things?

A: Well, he did both. I don't know how he had time for both, but, of course, he had a kernel of people who he relied upon to start with, a handful who is his closest collaborators. You see on that picture where he sits at a table and is surrounded by about six or seven people. Those were the key people who had different offices under their command, so to say. So he delegated, of course, very much to them, but he supervised himself everything as much as he could.

Q: Is there any such thing as extraterritoriality? When you created these safe houses, is there any international law that really allows for this kind of creation?

A: It's very -- it was a big bluff, the whole thing. I mean, how can you -- I mean, you see according to international law, there is different degrees of extraterritoriality. The 100 percent extraterritoriality is the embassy itself. They have the building where you are sitting and working and the ambassador's residence. Then comes, say, my residence, sort of second degree, and then you have perhaps some offices for issuing passports. Another third degree, or whatever it was, but in sort of putting on a label on a house saying that this is under our protection because, I don't know, we own it or whatever. We created that ourselves and in all this mess, in all this confusion and with the Germans in a way tolerating it, it worked till the real Nazis, the Hungarians, took over. Then we had great difficulty in defending our offices and which culminated on the day when they invaded the embassy itself. Because that was for us never heard of in history. I couldn't remember anything

when I studied diplomatic history once upon a time that an embassy has been invaded by the government's troops in that city where they were located. So when we were warned then, Wallenberg and myself, on Christmas -- the day before Christmas Eve that they said, "Now, you have to come with us, evacuate from here." And was told that the Germans remaining in the foreign office in Budapest, and they said, "Well, if you don't fall out, you have to take the consequences." Well, we didn't think very much of it. Of course, never on earth are they going to attack the embassy. They might attack Raoul Wallenberg's offices, I don't know. But our embassy, which has 100 percent extraterritoriality, they won't, but they did.

Q: Prior to October, prior to the Hungarian Nazis coming in, do you know whether Raoul Wallenberg was in touch with the underground organizations, with the Jewish Counsel in Hungary? What sort of contacts he was making, was he telling you about this?

A: Well, with the Jewish Counsel, we always had contacts, because that was an official institution, as you know, which the Germans had all over the world when they had invaded a country. That was for them a very convenient, practical way of dealing with the Jewish question. To channel it through the Jews themselves which they did then, of course, in Budapest. They had a Jewish Counsel to whom they always said, "Look here, if you know, be quiet now and tell your people that nothing is going to happen," and so on and so on. They are just going to move you to another camp and all that. Through these organizations they managed -- they had a very clever way of these deportations, you know. They got, of course, experienced during the time how to do it. So they made it, did it step-by-step like that, very often with the help of the Jewish Counsels who were in good faith and thought that this was going to be only moving us to another place and so on. And we had contact with them and Raoul Wallenberg. When he came, he had already a list of people not so much underground, but social democrats people and party people who were against Nazis and all that. That, he had and so on, but the real contact with the fighting underground, I don't think that he had that from the beginning. I had it then later on when it was the question about defending our embassy. We foresaw the situation when the Germans who after all were a guarantee for our protection, when they evacuated and an interval until the Russians would come, when the criminals,

the Hungarian officers would come over and there would be no rules whatsoever for diplomats, you see. We foresaw a situation like that, and so I contacted then the underground, and they had promised to put people to our disposal for defending us. And we ourselves bought weapons on the black market, machine guns, to protect ourselves. Now, this situation never came about. They persecuted us and we were hiding, but it never came to fightings between us because when they were starting to persecute us and we were hiding, the Soviets arrived. So they had no time for this period we had thought was coming.

Q: In an interview that you gave at Uppsala, you said you never took risks. Do you agree with that, that you never took any risks? I want to ask you about a particular situation with a George Libnik (ph).

A: Ya, Libnik (ph).

Q: Libnik (ph), where you went in a car with him and loaned him your car at some point. Is that true?

A: What did I do?

Q: You gave him your car so that he did some things by himself.

A: Oh, yes. Oh, well, he was in all secrecy -- well, he was my official driver anyway, but I knew that he was the underground _____, so I said, "You can have my car during the night, I don't care." And I never asked him what he did. But afterwards, he said, "I was just blowing up the munitions storage for the Germans," and all that, of course. That would have been sort of a great risk for me in my situation towards Germans, so I -- but we saved -- together we saved his father-in-law, the Nobel Prize winner, Szent-Györgyi. That was the big thing.

Q: What happened October 15th when the change really comes, when the Hungarians come and the Germans have left?

A: Well, that was a chaotic, chaotic day. I was -- it so happened that I was at the railway station to send off the remaining Swedish colony, the Swedish ladies with their children and all that. And when I had managed to put them in the train -- it was a train with German troops, but we had managed to get one part of it for our purpose. When on the station in the loudspeaker you all of a

sudden heard that now, Hungary is free and Hungary is going to -- is leaving the war, making peace treaty and here and so on. So there's not going to be any more fightings for us and so on. And everybody started to wonder what is happening now. That was the attempt by Herr Holte (ph), you remember, to jump the ship and he was immediately stopped and they shot his son, Nickolas Holte (ph). And after a while came a new message from the loudspeakers saying well, this was a complete mistake, what you just heard. It's going on, the war's going on. And I said to myself what am I going to do now with the Swedish transport? And the Germans said, "Oh, now, there will be fightings during the way here and when we leave here, and there will be bombings," and all that. So I faced the situation either to send off these people or to stop it. And it was a terrible responsibility, but I said to myself I don't think it can be worse, after all. I think it would be worse to stay on, so I gave the signal to leave and then I couldn't sleep, of course, that night. But after a while, I think some days, I heard that they had safely arrived in Sweden, all of them and so on. And then the whole situation in the city was then the Nazis had taken over everything. Salinger had been appointed the new Prime Minister, and they canceled officially all the protective passports and they started to attack, invade all the Swedish houses and so on. So that was the worst day of the whole -- during this whole period, I would say.

Q: At this point in September, Wallenberg is in Pest?

A: In Pest, ya.

Q: So that you're not as close geographically as you were before.

A: Well, we were -- well, the whole thing was as before was the bridges were still there. We communicated every day with each other and so on. So the difference was that the Nazi government had taken over, you see. That was the situation.

Q: Approximately how many people at this point in October had protective passes insofar as you remember?

A: Well, we had about, say, about 20,000 like that. We had the official permission for 4,500, but in all secrecy we were hiding three times as many in these houses.

Q: And at the same time, the other legations, the other neutral . . .

A: They also had a great number.

Q: So there were many, many thousands of people under so-called protection?

A: Ya.

Q: So immediately these undermined by the . . .

A: Not all of them. Of course, you don't do that quickly, you see. It takes time. So the first thing which happened was -- which was very critical situation also when they later on invaded the Swedish Red Cross, Langley's office and sort of stopped the whole Red Cross activities. And then our negotiations with them, with the Nazis, was that if you go on like this, we have to leave this, cut off the diplomatic relations with Hungary, which in a way they didn't want. That was the only card we had to play, could play, promising the whole time that one day we will recognize you here and you will be -- I said to the Foreign Minister of the cabinet, you see, "You'll be the first Ambassador to Stockholm, of course. You are so respected and so clever and so, you know." And he was sort of very happy with this idea to be an ambassador in Stockholm after the war had been won. They still thought that the Germans were going to win the war, you see. That was the card we play against the instructions from Stockholm. Said that never, ever will be recognized, this government.

Q: I'm going to go a little bit outside the particular situation. What is it like for somebody to negotiate with people with whom you have so little respect?

A: You have to mobilize all your efforts and you have to try to copy him in a way of some brutal sort of -- you shouldn't say that and be polite and all that. Like Wallenberg did, of course. He used the same hard, very hard language and said as I did. I negotiated with him. Of course, this was how we divided the work, that Raoul Wallenberg, he went and saw everyone. I mean, Eichmann, and all those people. I tried to follow the diplomatic rules only to have the contact with the front office. So I negotiated quite often with Kamienna (ph) about this, and he was not a normal person really. He was a fanatic and so on. Raoul Wallenberg had another advantage because he knew his wife who had once upon a time approached Raoul Wallenberg to ask him, "Can I help in a way?" and so on. So he used that channel more; I didn't do that. But I negotiated with him officially from the Swedish Embassy which had the effect he over radio announced; then later on, that it was a mistake.

The Swedish protective passports are still valid. That was the Raoul Wallenberg's sort of -- the result of his efforts.

Q: You smiled when you mentioned the Baroness Kamienna (ph). There were rumors that they had some sort of a relationship, she and Wallenberg.

A: Of course, it is very easy to draw that conclusion, but, of course, I didn't know how Raoul Wallenberg acted on his private hours and so on. But I'm quite sure that that never happened, anything more than she wanted to help, and he used her as a tool towards her husband. So that's -- but it's interesting how in the film with Richard Chamberlain how -- this Hollywood film -- how they developed that a little bit more. That he went to the railway station to say goodbye to her; that is true. That he did, and he also went there with flowers to say goodbye. That he told me. When she was leaving for Italy, she was expecting a child with Kamienna (ph), and she wanted to have that child born in Italy. She left and he went to the station to thank her for all that she had done to help and gave her some roses. In this film, I don't know whether you saw it, but it's very interesting to see how Raoul Wallenberg comes to the station and he's standing behind a corner and look, when Baron Kamienna (ph) says goodbye to his wife and then he leaves, and then train starts to move and Raoul Wallenberg jumps up on the train, comes in with a bottle of champagne and the flowers. "Here, are you going with me to Italy?" "Oh, no. I have bribed the people in the next station and they're going to stop the train next station. I wanted to say goodbye to you." Typical Hollywood sort of product, but it was very amusing to see this. No, she's -- and there's a beautiful British actress who plays her role in this film, and I asked this Mrs. Kamienna (ph) once, "What do you think about the film?" "Well, it was a good film, but, you see, I was much prettier than that girl."

Q: There were forced marches from Budapest east -- west to the border. You and Raoul Wallenberg went with a driver in a car. What did you see?

A: Well, we saw all these terrible marches. You know, people were taken -- it was the time when all railway transports were impossible because the city was cut off and they were bombed -- the railway connections were bombed and all that. So they took the people as they stood and walked in the street, took them and pushed them. That was the -- also, Hungarian soldiers were mobilized for

that, marched this whole way from Budapest to Debrecen (ph), and that is the border station between Austria and Hungary, about 200 kilometers or whatever it was. It took a week to march this, and they died on the way, many of them. There was snow and it was cold, and they had to spend the night in the open air and all that; it was terrible. And we had with us some foodstuff we were distributing and so on, but the main was that when we came to this border station, we or Raoul to get back quite a few of them who had Swedish passports or he bluffed and got them back anyhow. There are so many stories about that, it would take too long to tell you all these different situations and also showing his inventiveness and all that. But typical is one which a Jewish survivor told me once, and that is when they were standing, a group of about 50 students, Jewish students, waiting for being handed over to the Germans. Raoul Wallenberg approached them and said, "Are there anyone here who -- or is there anyone here who has a Swedish passport, protective passport?" And there were only two came forward. But then he said, "Well, but you must all remember that the other day the authorities confiscated lots of your passports, and don't you remember that?" Oh, yes, they remembered, and the whole crowd came forward, and we then organized transports back to their houses with them. And there were the Germans, and, of course, it was a combination of our status and all that and that he also had some bottles and things with him, and he sort of distributed -- let his drivers distribute little gifts to the Germans around.

Q: When were these marches occurring? It was after October?

A: Oh, yes. It was in December. In December.

Q: And what did you do, I mean, when you went with Raoul? I mean, do tell a few incidences of when you were with him and what you actually saw and what you did.

A: Well, I helped him as much as I could, and, you see, prior to that I helped him, also, as often as I could in spite of other jobs I had especially to coordinate, you know, all these actions, also headache with Langley and with our foreign interests and the Soviets. We had Soviets and citizens there and Soviet prisoners of war and so on. But I remember one day, I remember when I was writing my book, I sent the manuscript to my publisher and he said, "Ah, I think it's good. It's a good book. But I refuse to publish this book if you don't say anything of what you did yourself." Well, I said, "I

haven't written this book for writing about myself." "Well, you have to." And then I didn't know what to do, but all of a sudden a friend sent me a book called "When Six Million People Died." And I looked in the index and found my name, and he related an episode when Raoul Wallenberg telephoned me and said, "I'm so busy now, I'm going to run that place to save people. But I know that now at this and that station, there is a train leaving and there might be Swedish people there. Please, can you take over?" "Of course." And I went there and used the same language as Raoul, and there was a German officer and I said, "Open the doors," and all that and so on. And I came into the car and there were about 100 people there, and I said, "Those who have Swedish passports, come forward." And there were only a few of them, one or two or three -- I've forgotten now. And then I said, "But I know that I recognize you here. I have seen you in the Swedish houses, and have you forgotten your passport? What's happened? And don't you have any paper that you can show that you have had a pass?" "Oh, yes." They took and showed Hungarian papers, driving licenses, and receipts or whatever in Hungarian language which the Germans, of course, couldn't read. "Oh, that proves that you have a Swedish passport. Come. Come with me." And they came out, all of them, and then I had as my help a Hungarian officer, a police officer was in our service in a way unofficially and his two dogs and in full uniform. And I said, "You take care of these people." And the Germans thought that he was going to take them to a Hungarian jail or something, but he marched away, straight away to the Swedish houses and put them in there, you see. That kind of bluff, I learned that from Raoul, of course. It wasn't my invention at all, but you asked me about if I did anything and that is an example. I said if that has been described in one book, why couldn't I relate it in my own?

Q: Was it frightening to do this?

A: No, no, no. I had also a certain experience to talk to Germans because of my previous assignment to Berlin and all that. I spoke their language.

Q: But when the _____ was in, when the Hungarian Nazis were in, certainly you had to be taking more and more risks . . .

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: . . . for your own life.

A: Oh, that was, of course, a different situation. Absolutely.

Q: Is there anything between October and December when you get the cable from Stockholm that you want to talk about that's going on? Is the situation now just becoming more and more chaotic?

A: Ya. Also, that was slowly, it was deteriorating and the bombing started, of course.

Q: When did the bombing start?

A: Well, the bombings of the allies, the air force and all that was going more sporadically to start with, but it was then concentrated very much towards the end. And then when the Russians were surrounding the city, they were shooting artillery into the city and all that. And the worst -- absolutely the worst situation was, of course, when they took to the Pest side first, and we were then separated from Raoul Wallenberg. He happened to be on that side when they came, and we were on the other. We never knew, you know, where the Russians were coming first. It looked as though they were going into Budapest, the Buda side, they were first. Because they came to surroundings of Budapest, which stopped the Nazis for a while to persecute us who were on that side. On the Pest side, nothing had happened, but always it was kind of surprise they attacked Pest first in the beginning of January and went through the underground to cellars and caves and come in the back of the Germans and all that, and the Germans then panicked, tore for the bridges and tried to get over to Buda where they were sitting. And that remains then in the German hands another month till they then attacked us. But during that time, it was the most terrible time from the viewpoint of the war because then the Soviets put on their artillery on the Pest and shooting direct fire up on us and destroying the whole Buda, the royal palace and all the other houses. And we were sitting -- if you stay first in the first war, you move down and you ended up down in the caves where we were spending our last time.

Q: Where were you getting food from?

A: Well, we had some stored tins and sort of foodstuff, but we lived the last time up in the Buda side on a, say, one potato soup a day. Everything was gone. The electricity, the water, nothing exists any longer. So we put on all -- we took a stove from a cave and put it down on the courtyard

and had some wood, and we were making fire in them. We had to pick up some water from a dam on outside in the open which was really useful if there were wood, fires and so on. That was yellow stuff, water which was not very tasty. And we cooked those potatoes and had a meal every day of potato soup. It's interesting how man can survive.

Q: When you received that telegram when you talked about everybody standing and saying that they would stay, when Stockholm thought that you were risk, there were two women -- no, actually, three on the staff. Two secretaries and Asta Nielsen from Save the Children, yes?

A: Yes.

Q: And were they involved in this discussion?

A: Certainly, all of them. And they were -- Asta Nielsen was, of course, she was in charge of this saving children and all. Absolutely, she was staying, she said. And the two other girls, we told them that you have to leave. And one of them said she was engaged to be married to a Hungarian, and we really didn't need the girls any longer, and we understood that they were going to take great risks when the Russians were coming and all that.

Q: You mean, as women?

A: Ya, ya. So she said okay. She accepted then to leave with the last transport we had. We were driving over in the car to Vienna in December, in the middle of December just before the city was closed. But the other girl, she started to cry and say, "Oh, you don't trust me, and why should I leave here? And I want to be with you and help," and all that. She was Marguerite Ball (ph) was her name. So we couldn't convince her to go home, so we said, "Okay, you stay." So she was staying with us.

Q: And did her work change? I mean, obviously, with the situation deteriorating everybody is doing . . .

A: Ya, she was still helping to send cables to Sweden. We could communicate with Sweden till Christmas when we were then invaded by the Nazis, and they cut off all our communications with Sweden. So in Sweden, they didn't know what happened to us from Christmas '44 till the end of March. We completely disappeared. The Soviets never communicated with Sweden about what

happened to us. Raoul Wallenberg, they told Sweden that Raoul Wallenberg, he is under our protection and nothing is going to happen to him and so on. So in Sweden they were very concerned what had happened to us. With Raoul Wallenberg, oh, he is safe and he is coming home one day, which he never did.

Q: Okay. Let's change the tape.

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

Q: Let's talk about those last few weeks a little bit more. Were you able to see Wallenberg pretty much every day?

A: Not every day, but we tried to have a contact to eliminate the risks for the whole staff, for him, for us. We were never staying, all of us, in the same place. And we were moving very often from one place to another. We never -- tried to never spend every night in the same place, so to say. And there he was, of course, with his knapsack and his sleeping bag. He had a greater advantage to move around in there, I mean in that respect. So, but we had a kind of communication, so to start with he tried to come over to our part. And he knew day-by-day where I am going to stay, and I knew where he was going to stay pretty regularly. And I went over to Pest now and then and so on, and then, as I say and I write in my book, the last time he came was the 10th of January 1945 when he comes up to the Buda side on the hills. And it was a situation where the bombs were falling down all around and all that, and we were going to see a general, an SS general, who was sitting deep under in the caves. You know, from the historical time, once upon a time, long ago when the Turks were dominating that part of the world, they had sort of big underground caves which were in existence. So I remember from our small cave we had in the house where I was staying for a while, you had the connections you could go further down. There was, for instance, the International Red Cross had a hospital there, and that is the place where tens of thousands Hungarians took refuge. They went there the day when the Russians were encircling the city, and the final fightings were starting. And thinking that they were going to sit there a couple of days; they were there three weeks. You see, you can imagine the situation among those people. I went down there down then and saw it, without food and everything. They had some perhaps some water to drink and all that and so on, but most of those people survived after all. How they looked when they came up to the surface is another question. So there were all these people underground in those caves sitting there waiting for the Russians to come. And there also the Germans had the commandos, so there was an SS general sitting there with his staff. And Raoul and I went to him because we wanted to have some more -- some guarantees from the Germans that they, after all, should try to help to protect our

houses, you see, and all that. That is the situation when this German says to Raoul Wallenberg that "You are our greatest enemy ever, and you are hiding in your house one of the underground fighters, Hungarians. And how could you do that?" And then Raoul Wallenberg answers that "I don't do that. I have never been hiding someone." His name was Deuschufee (ph). He was a journalist and he was underground fighter and all that. I knew him very well, so I said to this general "Well, look here. I can guarantee that he's not there. We are never hiding anybody." And that was our principle, we were never hiding anyone in the real embassy building or in our private homes because we didn't want to risk our own existence, of course. If they discovered that, we would have been deported ourselves. I mean, to be able to continue our work, we had to respect those kind of rules. So the people we were hiding were all in the protective houses, you know. And he said, "Well, look, I know better." And that is the strange story that when I meet this man again, Deuschufee (ph) was his name, in Cairo when I was posted there and he was then in the government, the liberal government for one year after Russians took over, 1946, '47, and he was one member of the government. So he came to a big conference in Cairo, and we were sitting together one evening, and I told him the story about this absurd story. And he started to laugh and say, "Well, of course, I was there the whole time, but you didn't know it. I was hiding in one of the rooms there which you didn't know about. I knew this old house, I knew it very well. So I was hiding in the one room there, and I so very often saw you and Raoul sitting having dinner there over the courtyard. But I never told you." And it's strange then that this German knew it, but he didn't dare to go into that building because it was Raoul Wallenberg, it was a Swedish diplomat's home. He never violated that. That was a typical example of this German sort of -- this correct sort of attitude they tried to maintain with every Swede.

Q: And Raoul didn't know it either, Raoul Wallenberg?

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. So that is when I said to Raoul, "Now, you have really -- now, you have done the job here. Now, you have to think of your own safety absolutely because the whole situation is completely hopeless as chaotic and all that," and so on. And that is when he says, "But you see, I can't stop now any longer because I can never return to Sweden without knowing that I've done as

much as I can to save as many people as possible." That is his last word to me, the 10th of January. Then he returns to Pest. The Germans withdraw, blew up the bridges, and Raoul is arrested by the Soviet troops.

Q: Did you try to convince him after he said that to stay?

A: Oh, yes. He didn't listen. You can only speculate on what could have happened if he had stayed on with us.

Q: He had and showed you plans for the rehabilitation of Budapest or the helping of people after the war; is that right?

A: Ya.

Q: What did this entail?

A: Well, you see, this also I think contributed to the suspicions, the Russians' suspicions because he very proudly he told them the story about the future here now will be that I, Swedish diplomat and all that, I am going to stay on and I am going to reorganize this humanitarian action. I'm going to see to it that the family will be reunited. That the property is put back to the Jewish people, and all that and so on. And some author has said that he was politically naive. And my answer to that is weren't we all very naive, the whole western world? I mean, we accepted the Soviets because they helped to defeat the Nazis. And when I came home to Sweden, when I told the people that I'm completely convinced that the Soviets had arrested Raoul, that how could you say things like that about the Soviets, our great helper? They have helped us to defeat the Nazis, the Nazi system and all that and so on. And the whole western world said the same thing till 1948, at least, until Prague situation then. So we all thought -- we thought ourselves as soon as the Soviets arrive, we will reestablish our embassy here. We will continue our work. Never happened. They didn't want any foreigners to remain on the territory which they were going to occupy. So all the embassies were taken away like that.

Q: Let me go back a little bit again. Between October 15th and December after Christmas when it becomes really impossible to do very much except to save oneself, how is it that you or Wallenberg

find out that a particular action is going to happen someplace and that he goes to try and save people? I mean, how do these messages get transmitted so that you know where to go?

A: Well, you know this big organization he had was, of course, consisted also of younger sort of boys, whatever, and were running between the different offices. And they had the information from -- we -- I am sure that Raoul Wallenberg had that. There weren't so many of these railway stations; there were one or two only. I am convinced that the -- and yes, I know that he had some people there who observed the situation and reported immediately to him. So that wasn't such -- Budapest isn't that big a city, so they could bicycle back to him or whatever. It wasn't complicated, no.

Q: Were things like this done once a day, more than that when he would go out? I mean, what kind of situation are we talking about when we talk about not simply saving people by giving them the passes which are obviously very significant, but also going out and doing something, which was what was unusual, when you and he went out or he went out?

A: Well, it was all certainly a combination of all this that he -- first, we had the protective passports. The people lodged in our houses, that's one thing. But once that was done, it was the question to try to save more people than that. And also to find if by chance some people without a passport had been deported or were on the way to be deported, you see. So that became a routine in a way to check on that when the trains were leaving for Auschwitz or the death marches later on, of course. So that was complementary to this first more or less organized sanction by the government and all that; that was one thing. The other thing was to try to -- I had hoped to help people who were on the way to be deported and then comes, of course, the big risky operation which Raoul Wallenberg didn't form himself, but indirectly through his presence. You see, it's also interesting with Raoul Wallenberg which is very well described by Levi in the first book which appeared just after the war. He says something like that Raoul Wallenberg became the observing eye, so to say, which -- the conscience. He became kind of a something which the Nazis feared in a way that his mere presence stopped them from going still further in a way sometimes. And an example of that is, of course, that when one of the collaborators, I don't think that Raoul Wallenberg was present himself, heard that the Hungarian officers were going to blow up the whole, so to say, international -- our houses in

their desperation because they couldn't deport any people any longer because, you see, they were just being encircled by the Russians. Then he took upon him to say in Raoul's words that Raoul Wallenberg is sending a message to you, General Schmitthuber (ph), who was the last remaining army general. I mean, not SS, but the army general in Budapest. "If you don't stop this action which the Hungarian offices are planning, I'll see to it that you will be hanged as a war criminal after the war." And then the general stopped this action; 70,000 people in the ghetto.

Q: What do you think they were actually intending, machine-gunning people or bombing it or does anyone know?

A: Well, there were both, I think. Putting the fire and then shooting them.

Q: So this was an intermediary who called this general and said this?

A: No, no. So that -- in Richard Chamberlain's film, they have -- it's more dramatic, of course. Raoul Wallenberg is running to Schmitthuber (ph) and telling all that. It never happened, but anyhow it doesn't make a difference because the people were saved thanks to his name.

Q: This is rather extraordinary that one person would have such an impact. When you knew him as a younger man, would you have been able to predict that he would have such ingenuity and initiative and a kind of fearlessness in such a difficult situation?

A: No, I don't think so. I think he grew with the task, as we all do, I think. That he -- I'm not astonished at all that he became that kind of a person. He -- we all came into a situation where we thought that this is going to be a fowl couple of months and kind of really had a cross section of people we saved and so on. I don't think that we ever thought of -- first of all, we never thought of the danger we were in. And the second thing is we never thought of the dimensions -- the enormous dimensions it would take; I mean, the magnitude of this operation. We were not dreaming of that. Raoul Wallenberg in a way was forced into an operation which became much bigger than he ever thought of.

Q: Did the other legations -- because other legations ran safe houses also -- did they also have such a large staff, do you know?

A: No, they didn't. They had also Jewish volunteers and all that. Of course, the Swiss were the next biggest, but the other were the small actions, the Portuguese and the Spanish and so on.

Q: Did you know Györgyi Polaska (ph) from the Spanish sector?

A: Well, I don't know -- well, I heard his name many times now and so on. And he was the Spanish sort of chargé d'affaires, they called him. He called himself an ambassador, I think. Like Hungarian Count Pongras (ph), whom I knew very well, he called himself Ambassador of Portugal. Of course, when those ambassadors left, they gave over everything to locally employed people, which they knew, so they took over. And it's interesting to see how in the documents which also are produced in Levi's book when we made joint interventions for the government, they were signed by _____, my boss, by Lutz (ph), or Feller (ph) was my opposite, a young _____, Count Pongras (ph) and so on, Ambassador of Spain. And so there were always a sort of a joint -- very often joint interventions from the neutral countries.

Q: Can you explain what that means for people who don't know what that means when you say "a joint intervention"?

A: Well, that we all go together. I mean, that we go together, the four or three or four or five, the neutrals presented -- go together to the foreign office and present a paper signed by all of us that we protest against this action you have taken against whatever, our nationals or against people under our protection and so on.

Q: In those situations, you present a document?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q: Is there then a discussion or is it simply a formal presentation and then . . .

A: Oh, well, it could be followed by discussions, of course, at the same time. Yes.

Q: But a very formalized kind of . . .

A: Well, Raoul Wallenberg was often initiated to this, of course, and so on.

Q: So he sometimes was part of the discussions in the interventions?

A: Oh, ya, ya.

Q: And did he act differently than the rest of you in those situations?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Did he act differently in those situations or was he acting in a diplomatic fashion in those interventions?

A: No. Well, it was different depending on the situation, you see. There was no special -- you can't say there was any special rules for how to act. You always had to adopt yourself after the situation and improvise and all that.

Q: Talk to me a little bit about neutrality and what that means and what you felt given all that you saw about your government's own neutrality.

A: Well, you see, the neutrality is a concept which has been very much discussed, of course, especially now in Sweden in this completely new situation today. But neutrality for us during the war was, of course, that we tried not to take sides, not to be in the middle. A very egotistical sort of policy that you try to save your life, your own country. That's perhaps quite natural in a way, and so on, but neutrality speaking of the time during the war, of course, if you are smart and you have adapted a little bit, changed it a little bit. So I think that the Swedish government was very anxious towards the end of the war to be more pro-allied than they were just at the beginning of the war. And that's no longer, I'm not -- no one should be astonished about that kind of a situation. So from having had given in for the Germans in the beginning when we didn't know if they were going to invade us or not, it was permitting trains with soldiers through Sweden, German soldiers and all that, and delivering iron ore to them and so on. At the time we diminished all this like that, so towards the end of the war we didn't give the Germans any favor whatever. We were more favorable towards the allied countries and so on. And I'm sure that that was also part of our -- well, the political, it was. Of course, humanitarian. Of course, this was help for the Jewish people, but I think it was well in line with our policy towards the end of the war that we show up. Look here, what we have done for you. We have helped the Jewish people, and we have been fighting against the Germans, the Nazis in Hungary, and all that.

Q: Were you ever upset that your government had not done more for rescuing people? In other words, do you think there was a time that they might have?

A: Ya, I think so. And that is very well illustrated by a friend of mine. His name is Steve Koblik. Perhaps you have heard about him; he's a historian, Jewish historian at the university in Los Angeles. And he wrote a book, first in Swedish. He speaks Swedish like a Swede because he's married to Swedish lady. And it appeared a couple of years later, the same book in English. It's called "If the Stones Cry Out." It's from the Bible, that if you are silent -- you can't keep that silent because the stones will cry out, is from Jesus, sort of a chapter in the Bible. And he wrote that book and that is just about the Swedish situation towards the Jewish people in Sweden between 1930-something when the Nazis started off in Germany till the end of the war. Where he tells us who doesn't know it -- I knew it, of course -- and the Swiss were in the same boat. How we had no visa with Germany. The Germans could freely come to Sweden without visa. And then the Swiss government and the Swedish government asked the Germans, "But how do we know if there are any Jewish people among those people?" "Well, we'll see to it that they put a J in the passport." And those people were stopped at the borders of Switzerland, the borders of Sweden, because the Swedish trade unions, the Swedish doctors, one special one person in the Swedish government was anti-Semitic. They said we -- and the Jewish people themselves and that is terrible. The Jewish people in Stockholm said, "Don't let any" -- quoting him now the whole time, as you understand, in his book. They were saying according to his words that "For God's sake, don't let any Jewish people come into Sweden because there will be a Jewish problem in Sweden." You see, that reflects the whole atmosphere in Europe or in the United States or wherever you are in the world. I mean, in Israel, In Palestine, they know pretty well what's going on. Six million people at Auschwitz and all that and so on. And they had in Israel the problem to create the state. To create the State of Israel, they wanted to be on good terms with the British, and the British were in the dilemma that they didn't want to have too many Jewish people coming to Palestine because there would be conflict with the Arabs. This is policy the whole time, the whole time, see, which stopped the possibility of taking in more Jewish people at that time to Palestine. So if you ask and I'm quite straightforward to you in this question, because I think that the whole world, the whole world is guilty in this situation. And how then he describes then how we comes further in this situation.

When the war breaks out, Sweden was in a very great danger to be occupied by the Germans. 1942, when we reported that the gas chambers existed and when Roosevelt got the same report in America, there was great anti-Semitic feelings here, so there was not published at all anything from the government about these gas chambers. Sweden, the same thing. But if I talk about Sweden, I think we could have sort of brought out this to the public in, say, in 1943, when you could see that the war is not going to be won by the Germans, and after Stalingrad and all that and so on. And as Koblik says in his book, he means that if Sweden, a neutral country, or Switzerland, a neutral country, would have published in big headlines what's going on, it would perhaps have given the Germans second thoughts. That they would have not stopped, but slowed down this whole action. And above all, he says in his book it would have given the Jewish people an information from neutral countries, where they must tell the truth, after all, about this and would perhaps have given the Jewish people a more feeling to resist. You might take all this what I have told you now, I'm not saying that it's my opinion at all like that, but I think it's very interesting that an American author, an American historian puts forward all these arguments here against the whole world which did nothing to help.

Q: Did you think there could have been more Jewish resistance in Hungary?

A: If there could have been?

Q: Could there have been more Jewish resistance? Were you . . .

A: I mean, I don't know. In Poland they were fighting towards the end. There might have been other situations, I don't know. That's only very political. What would have happened if they had attacked the ghetto in Budapest like they attacked the ghetto in Warsaw? Would the Hungarians have made the same resistance there? I don't know.

Q: You've probably heard the debate about bombing Auschwitz.

A: Ya.

Q: Do you think that had Auschwitz been bombed, that these Hungarians would have been killed in Auschwitz? I mean, what did you think about the argument about that?

A: I think that's -- it was the Head of the War Liberty Board who initiated or proposed this. And not only bombing, above all bombing the lines between Budapest and Auschwitz, so he was very active in suggesting this. The answer was and that is, of course, very much because of the Soviet attitude because the allies were very -- there was a great similarity with the Soviets because they were, after all, helping to -- they were saving British or American lives in putting in so much force themselves. So if the Russians said no, we are not in war just to protect the Jewish people, we veto that. And we have no time, we have our airplanes for other purposes, namely, to kill Germans, and that's not at all for this purpose you suggest, they told them, see. And I think that's a terrible thing because it wouldn't have cost them more than one or two bombs to throw down on these connection lines. That would have stopped, at least they would have saved hundreds of thousands of people just stopping that deportation. So that's terrible, but it's very easy also, of course, afterward to sit down there and say you should have done that and you should have done that. One really has to also try to see it how was the real situation and so on. So it's very difficult to judge, but from the outside like this, I think it was a great mistake not at least to bomb the connection lines within Budapest and Auschwitz. I think that would have helped a lot to save many people's lives.

Q: You, in an interview at Uppsala, commented on a question that a filmmaker had asked you that had one of you returned from Budapest, not just Raoul Wallenberg, what do you think would have been the feelings, the understandings of what everybody did? I think the question has something to do with when one person is taken and other people who have also done many things came back, does that enlarge the reputation of Raoul Wallenberg, because he was the one who obviously suffered after the war in a way that the rest of you didn't.

A: Well, I think that the mere fact that we all stood up behind Raoul Wallenberg, and even if we were not -- every person were not engaged 100 percent like Raoul Wallenberg in saving people like that, at least at the beginning we had so many other things to do, and we were working day and night, especially before he came, of course. But after he came, for me, the main task was to keep this together. I mean, it could have easily ended up in a big catastrophe if he made mistakes which would have, after all, frustrated the Germans that much that they would stopped everything, you see.

So there was a balance the whole time, and I think because that we had this big organization, because we had an embassy with a reputation of being correct and that and having the relations with Germany and all that, Raoul Wallenberg with all what he did and so on, he could never have acted on his own alone, never. So even if he and every person didn't do the same job as he did, the mere fact that he was there, that the embassy was there, that was the whole base for his action, you see. So we both helped each other in one way or another as much as we could. So, I mean, did the question you asked was -- I don't . . .

Q: Well, I think what the filmmaker was asking was if all of you had been caught by the Russians, as you were, you then were sent back. If all of you had been caught and not sent back, would everyone's reputation have been different? Would there be this -- in other words, there is a way in which people understand the situation in Budapest as one hero, and that's clearly not how it was. Because alone Raoul Wallenberg could not have possibly have done what he did, right? So I think his question to you has to do with the reasons why the reputation is so much larger than other people's.

A: Ya. Well, I think I understand what you mean. And, of course, suppose that nobody had come back. Of course, still Raoul Wallenberg would have got most of the credit. Of course, he did the job more than we did, but I think that we would have been recognized also for being his supporters and the base for his action. I think especially in the perspective perhaps not the first day after the discovery, but in a perspective now with all historians looking to this, I think they would have today to say that today we would still be there somewhere or killed or died. Today, they would have analyzed the situation, and they would have come to this conclusion, as I told you.

Q: Were you a balance for him, both as a person and as representing a more -- well, the Swedish Embassy because he was not trained as a diplomat? He wasn't coming there to be a diplomat. Was there a way in which you . . .

A: Ya, of course, that was part of my job to balance between -- of course, when he came first, the other staff, I mean, the other people in the embassy, for them it was a very strange situation. Here's an outsider coming and he takes over and he acts on his own, and this is being an arms operation

and what's going on here? I remember when I came back from Stockholm in August, I'd been home with my wife and all that and came back with some more people, _____ and so on for helping, Asta Nielsen. Wallenberg had already been in action then for a month when I came. And the whole embassy building was filled with Jewish applicants in the garden and all over, and he was distributing passports to all of the people. And the staff were upset, and I said, "Now, take it easy, take it easy. I'll talk to Raoul about this." And when he heard my arguments, he understood completely what I was aiming at; namely, that if we now established a big rescue operation in the embassy here along those lines you are thinking of, we will not have any possibility to act as an embassy any longer with our ordinary work, and we won't be recognized any longer as the Oder (ph) Swedish Embassy. We will be a big rescue kind of station here, so, please, now, you have to organize this another way. And he understood immediately what I was aiming at. So he had these volunteer people and they established his office on the Pest side and so on. So the whole situation calmed down. And then after that, the whole staff completely understood the situation and especially when I continued my discussions with Raoul and said, "You have to stick to these criteria the whole time because we have to have vis-à-vis the Germans a correct bureaucracy for what we are doing. And we can't give away protective passports to anyone like that, at least not now in the beginning when everything is comparatively calm here and we can work in all quiet," and all that and so on. Which didn't prevent him, of course, towards the end when everything was falling into pieces and all the bombing and all that that he could distribute protective passes to anyone he wanted to help. That was the next situation when you couldn't lose anything on doing that. But the whole start, it was absolutely necessary to make that along as corrective lines as possible. As correct as possible.

Q: And he had no trouble understanding that there had to be . . .

A: Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no. He understood it completely. So, but that was a part of my diplomatic training, and he being a clever businessman making business and all that, you see, in his way of acting.

Q: How did you understand his passion for wanting to come over to Budapest to save Jews? Did he ever explain what -- it's not the most usual decision to make.

A: No, I understood it in a way. I understood it because I knew from years before in Stockholm when we were both young and all that that he always stood up for young people who were badly treated by their comrades and all that. And in the military service also, we were together there. He always stood up for weaker people, and he also had this kind of enthusiasm for helping and ideas and inventiveness and all that. So from that I understood in a way -- understood it, perhaps not 100 percent. That I understand now much better when I'm reading -- I read the letters between him and his grandfather where you see how his character develops and how he comes here to the United States and he studies at Michigan University and how he wholeheartedly accepts the American way of life, the freedom, democracy and integrity of man and all that. And with those impressions, he then comes to Hällefors where he meets the first Jewish refugees, and I'm absolutely convinced that when he saw this, that they were unheard of stories, that he said to himself, "I have to do something. Absolutely, I can't be passive. I have to do something for helping." And then it so happened that he comes to Stockholm and works with a Jewish businessman there, and he gets the story from Budapest what's happening there and so on and so on.

Q: When you helped Mr. Wall (ph) who came to see you that night, would you say that your -- not appreciation of the problem -- but your decision to help came from him coming to that door, and then you -- sort of the door would not close anymore in a certain way? This was not a plan in your head that you were going to go out and save the Jews either?

A: No, because it came that early, so I hadn't faced the situation really. But he described it to me, of course, and the following days we saw it. We saw how they were queuing up outside. We saw that this is very serious. Absolutely. So that's no doubt how you get more and more involved in this, how it grows and all that. And I was asked in Philadelphia when I was there in November, we discussed at the symposium or whatever what characterized a humanitarian. That is really not an easy question to answer, you know. So I could only exemplify it by telling the story about Raoul Wallenberg and saying that I think in Raoul Wallenberg's case, he was born humanitarian in a way,

because he had these feelings for always helping in schools. He helped the weaker children there who were terrorized by the stronger ones and all that, and it's also interesting that this one man who was with him -- his name now was Pleti (ph) or something -- who was with Raoul Wallenberg in the car when they were going to _____ and Raoul disappeared. And he said just as they were leaving "Oh, no, I can't follow you because I don't know where my parents are now. I have to find them." So he left the car and saved his life, of course, in doing that. And he told the story that they met, they knew each other from the beginning from prior years in Switzerland where they were studying at the same school and this little Pleti (ph) was a small little boy, Jewish, weak, and how the older people, the stronger boys, they were terrorizing him. And then Raoul Wallenberg went straight up to him and said, "Don't be afraid. I'll protect you." So he protected him against the others, you see. So having heard all these stories, I came to the conclusion that he was born the humanitarian in a way, and I told the audience that. And if you apply that on other people on myself and so on, I don't call me humanitarian. But if you would call me humanitarian, I would say that I became that when I was facing the situation. That I didn't have sort of -- I wasn't born that way, I don't think so. I can't judge myself, but we all who have faced the situation like that, how could you have done nothing? I mean, you had to, you had to.

Q: When you went back -- you were kept for what, a month, two months by the Russians?

A: Ya, we were kept, say, from the beginning of February till the beginning of April.

Q: How were you treated?

A: Well. Correct. And that was also the peculiar situation that the Soviets had two armies. One army occupied Pest, that was the Marshal or General Maddenowsky (ph) and conquered Pest in one month before they took over, the Russians took over Buda. In Buda was another general, his name was Turbuchon (ph), and they didn't see eye-to-eye; they were rivals. So they never communicated between themselves, see. And on the Buda side, we had no signs of being out helping Jewish people. We had no houses with Swedish flags on and all that. But Maddenowsky (ph) when he came to Budapest, every second house were hanging a Swedish flag, and people going around with Swedish passports. So apparently he became first very, very frustrated and annoyed about all this

and so on, and he said the Swedes must be very suspicious people and all that. So he never communicated to Turbuchon (ph) and say, "Look, here, if you see any Swedes there, take them. Arrest them." Because -- and at our side there were no signs that we have done anything but being a Swedish Embassy. I think that explains perhaps why they didn't bring us, take us to prison. They arrested us, they interred us, and they had us under a guard for a couple of months. But then they decided to send us home to Sweden contrary to what happened to Raoul.

Q: And the response of the Swedish government in trying to get Raoul back?

A: Ya. Then, of course, they lost so much time when they thought the whole time that Raoul was under their protection. And this is also an interesting story how coded documents which have not been found, you know, tells the story how he was arrested -- no, first of all, how the foreign office in Moscow according to instructions which all foreign offices in the world were following; namely, the Swedish government had before the war, before this happened in Hungary, given a list to the foreign office with all our names. And saying if you meet these people, take them under your protection because they are Swedes, Swedish diplomats. So immediately when the Soviet army found Raoul Wallenberg, according to the instructions they reported back to the foreign office. And so they called for the Swedish Ambassador and they ticked off Raoul Wallenberg, he's safe. He is? Oh. And then they were happy, but they had not heard a word about us, you see. So in Sweden they started to wonder and asked, "What has happened to the others?" They thought one day Raoul Wallenberg would come back, but the others? Not till we came home then in April they understood that now something must have been happening here to Raoul, and they started to ask and so on and that. Then it's interesting to ask the question how on earth could they report they had found Raoul Wallenberg and tell him that he's under good care and all that and the same time arrest him? And that is the lack of communication then between the Soviet Foreign Office and the KGB. Where the KGB had decided to arrest him, but they hadn't told the foreign office about that. And they became furious, of course, when they heard that the foreign office had already told the Swedes that they had found Raoul Wallenberg because the following day, they arrested him. We got the message on the 16th of January, and they arrested him on the 17th.

Q: Did you think that the government of Sweden did enough to try and get Raoul Wallenberg back?

A: Not the first -- I would say, as I say in my book, the first two years are the lost years. Well, of course, they should have acted in much forceful way. They could have -- I mean, they had, after all, got the message that he was there, that they had found him, and they should have pushed that. And they should have demonstrated that, should have used much harder language and so on, but they didn't. They didn't. And that is very, very sad story, and that is also part of foreign policy and all that. The Soviets had won the war. They were now going to dominate the whole Baltic Sea, and we had come closer to them as neighbors than before. And one should not do anything to irritate them.

Q: Makes you angry, yes?

A: Pardon?

Q: Makes you angry?

A: Oh, yes. To say the least.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say about that time?

A: I think we have talked now for a while, and I'm thinking of the speech I'm going to make tomorrow, so I will try to say my words.

Q: Well, then, let me thank you for being here today and for what you did.

A: Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

Conclusion of interview.