United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Edward Anders
February 28, 1997
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PREFACE

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EDWARD ANDERS
February 28, 1997

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is an interview with Professor Edward Anders, conducted by Randy Goldman on February 28th, 1997. Tape one, side A.

Answer: I'm Edward Anders. My birth name was Edward Alperovich. I was born on June 21st, 1926 in Libau, Latvia with the Latvian name of the place is Liepaja.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family and your life before the war.

A: Yes. Yes. My father, whose name was -- was Adolf, nothing -- no relation to the notorious Adolf, wa-was a businessman, he had inherited a grain export business from his father. And in addition to that he had a -- a partnership in a grain mill, and for awhile he also had leased a number of movie theaters, which was very nice for us because we could go to the movies for free. And he -- h-he was fairly wealthy, but the depression affected his business a lot and the income went way down and we found it necessary to move into a much smaller apartment, actually in the house of my grandmother. And so we had to live on a very limited budget for a number of years during the depression years. My mother was a v -- a very attractive woman. Her parents had -- well, her f-father was born in Libau, her mother actually came from Mitau, which was the capital of the former Duchy of Courland, and her family, I think, had lived in Latvia for quite a few generations. My mother was the youngest of three daughters, had -- they also had a son. Her father, again, was fairly prosperous before World War I, but then, with the German troops advancing into Latvia, decided to flee to Saint Petersburg, and somehow during the war and revolution, managed to lose all his money, so he came back almost penniless, and somehow the -- the family never recovered, th-they lived rather modestly. Okay, about my childhood, yes,

in the early years, we lived in a -- in a comfortable apartment, my brother and I each had a -- a governess, and as -- which was the custom in those days. Our family was somewhat Germanized, like many of the e-educated Jews in -- in Courland and sort of western Latvia. My parents had gone to Russian schools so they would often speak Russian to one another when they didn't want us children to understand. But the rest of time we all spoke German. And I never learned to speak Yiddish. My father could, my -- my mother could also speak it, but not quite as fluently. And we -- my -- my brother was t -- his name was George, was two years old than I. My father was rather partial to his oldest son, which of -- in the early years was a bit of a problem for me, but in -- eventually, I think shortly before he died, he began to treat us equally. Okay, maybe you can ask me another question.

Q: Did -- was your family religious?

A: My mother was fairly religious. We certainly observed the major holidays, usually went to our grandparents or had a Seder in our own house. Usually at the grandparents. My father, for some reason, had quit the Jewish temple, it -- it doesn't mean that he totally abandoned the religion, there -- I think there were some quasi-political differences. My paternal grandfather actually was a -- a gabbai of the local temple was apparently a highly regarded member of the congregation. And then when -- as -- as I approached the Bar Mitzvah -- both my brother and I had Bar Mitzvah and for me that's -- marked the beginning of a religious period, and I was -- was very religious, said all the prayers and did all the right things and so on. That process was s -- s -- stopped by the war.

Q: What was the Jewish community in Liepaja like? Was it -- was it a large community? Were you involved with it? Did you go to a religious school?

A: No, the community was relatively large, it was about 12 percent of the population of town, maybe se -- 7,000 people. I was v -- during my religious phase I certainly went to the temple on ho -- high holidays and possibly some of the lesser holidays. We also celebrated Succos, for example, and Purim. But I was too young to be involved in the religious life and my father simply wouldn't participate in it.

Q: I'm trying to get a sense of if your friends were Jewish, if your friends were mixed, did you go to a public school, and that sort of --

A: I -- the first school I went to was a German school. The -- at that time -- it was 1931, I think, the street signs in Latvia were still in three languages, Latvian, German and Russian and German was still -- a-and both German and Russian were still considered acceptable languages, although the Latvian government emphasi -- tried to emphasize Latvian. We went to a German school, and then [indecipherable] I stayed there until spring of '32. Hitler had not yet come to power in Germany, but it was clearly -- he was on the rise, and there was a perception that anti-Semitism was going to get worse in Germany, and in the German community, so my parents decided to take me out of there. They also decided to put me in a Latvian public school. I understand that only about 10 percent of the Jewish children went to Latvian schools, the others went to -- to na -- Jewish schools. I was quite aloof, found it difficult to make friends. I never had more than two close friends. Often they were -- were Latvian, because there were relatively few Jewish children in the school and I'm not sure I would have given them preference anyway. But in -- especially in -- in high school my -- the last two years that I went to school, my -- my best friend actually was Jewish. I should say something about him, per-perhaps later on.

Q: Did you have a lot of contact with non-Jewish Latvians, your neighbors, or -- I mean, did --

A: Yes, usually I had some Latvian friends and since I had very few friends, they generally were the close friends. So I did have a fair amount of contact with them. The neighbors again, I don't think we had any Jewish neighbors in the building, or perhaps there were some next door, but I -- I don't remember any. So we had contact mainly with -- with Latvians. But my father, of course, had a lot of business contacts with the local Jewish community and my wife -- my -- not my wife, my mother had s-some Jewish friends as well as a number of -- of Gentile friends.

Q: Were you aware of anti-Semitism as this point in your life?

A: I've sort of been giving myself a push lately to think about it and try to remember it. And the worst thing that I can remember happened to me in school, all the years that I went to a Latvian school, is that a few times one of the other boys would f-fold a piece of cloth so it remember -- resemb -- remem -- sorry, resembled a pig's ear and sort of pointed it at me as if to taunt me that I was a Jew and we were not allowed to -- to eat pork. And that was the worst thing that ever happened to me. I don't recall ever being called bad names, or getting into fights because I was Jewish. Children generally are -- tend to be fairly cruel and s-s -- I'm s -- tend to torment minorities, but I experienced very little of that. And my general perception was, a-again, in part triggered by Ezergailis' book, who tries to show that Latvia wasn't any more anti-Semitic than other European countries. Frankly, from all the details I remember, I must give him right. And one of the anti-Semitic actions I do remember is that my father's grain mill was nationalized with inadequate compensation, and I thought this was of an anti-Jewish act. Ezergailis points out that actually a number of non-Jewish businesses were also nationalized, and the intent was not so much to drive the Jews out of business, because in some branches the Jews were left unmolested. It's just that the government, which patterned itself Mussolini's Italy, wanted to sort of nati -- to get state ownership of certain branches of business and industry. And if there happened to be

some Jewish companies in the way, they were nationalized. And in other areas, where they didn't seem to care at -- at the time, they left the Jews alone.

Q: You're talking about the Latvian government?

A: The Latvian government, yes, yes, we're still in this, the pre-war era. So the anti-Semitism definitely was -- was not bad, and I think another fact is, of course that a number of German Jewish refugees came to Latvia and established themselves and felt reasonably comfortable.

Q: They came because of Hitler?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, so you had a fair amount of knowledge about what was going on in Germany --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- prior to his occupation?

A: We were quite well informed. We would regularly listen to -- to the BBC, to German broadcasts and we -- as long as it was possible we subscribed to a Swiss political weekly that wa -- called the [indecipherable], which at that time was quite famous for being anti-Nazi, and the editor-in-chief was very outspoken and very critical of Hitler and we sort of enjoyed reading his editorials just because he would mince no words. And I thought we were quite well informed, until 19 -- June 1940 when of course the -- the s -- Soviets took over Latvia and cut off the supply of foreign newspapers. We also subscribed to some German magazines. So I think we were well informed, but we heard only a few sporadic reports about atrocities, even after the outbreak of the war in Poland, and the famous [indecipherable] Kristallnacht, and of course that was supposed to be in retaliation for the assassination of a German diplomat, and we did hear there were excesses. But we didn't realize how many killings there had been, we heard about property damage and so forth. And we thought, well this is sort of an isolated incident, it's a

shame that it happened. But somehow we weren't prepared to change my family's and many other Jew's perception of ger -- of the Germans being basically fair. Maybe they were very strict with Jews, they were depriving them of some civil rights, but we thought that by and large there was -- you pretty much got what you deserved. We thought that they would be discriminating in their treatment of -- of Jews, Jews who in their eyes had conducted themselves badly, or had harmed German interests would of -- would of course be persecuted, and Jews that had been -- had not done so would presumably be judged on their merits. Th-That -- that was the notion we had, and I think there is perhaps another indication of that, that when the w -- the war broke out, and Germany attacked Russia, only about a quarter of the Jews from Latvia fled with the Russians. In my family, out of 27 people, only two fled. The o -- the others all stayed, which means they felt that th-the Germans were the lesser evil. So we -- there was just a further factor, namely the Latvian government was trying to keep good relations with both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, and this means that they purposely suppressed any kind of derogatory, unfavorable news about th-the Germans an-and the Russians, so we didn't learn as much about some of the atrocities were going on in -- say in Poland, a-as we should have. And -- but BBC again didn't report anything, so we -- we had the impression that there were just some small scale atrocities, but nothing major, and sort of isolated. And furthermore, the final solution had not yet started, because there certainly wasn't -- th-the systematic large scale killing of Jews only started with the attack on Russia.

Q: You started to mention the Russian occupation.

A: Yes.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit about that, your memories of what happened when the Russians came in, whether there was support for the Russians, whether there was local resistance, and what -- and how that changed your life.

A: Well, the first encounter with the Russians came on October '39, when under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, they demanded military bases from the Latvian government, including a large base in my hometown, which had been the principle naval port of the Tsarist empire. In fact, the Russian navy that -- th-the fleet that sailed around -- halfway around the world to fight the Japanese in the Russian Japanese war of 1904 started in Libau. So, they had a large -- established a large Russian garrison in -- in Libau and the town was full of Russian soldiers, and in the f -- as a kid, at first it's a little exciting to see all these strange uniforms and so on, but we soon learned that these were really quite unwelcome people. The population I -- I had a summer job at the time and -- at a carpenter's shop, and some of the workers were rather pleased, they were -- Libau was a somewhat leftist town and the workers, well [indecipherable] sort of glad that they now the -- the workers are going to own everything, and the government will -- will take from the rich and give to the poor and so forth. So a number of them were sympathetic. I met some of these same workers months later and they were furious because they realized that all these promises had been broken with -- they were -- for example, there were signs up in the streetcars, just, the streetcars now belong to you. Well hell, you still had to pay. And all -- all the other things, practically everything in the economy had changed for the worse and all these promises simply had not been delivered. And a large part of the reason for that was that Latvia was part of Europe and had a much higher living standard than Russia. And so when it was annexed to -- to Russia, they had to level everything. And the way they did it is they raised prices to s -- to Soviet levels and they raised -- which in some cases was 10 to 30 fold, and they raised wages maybe

double or so, but in -- in -- the net effect was still that the purchasing power, it was very much less. And in turns -- for the Russian soldiers this was still paradise. They would sort of -- crowded the shops and buy everything they c -- they saw for their rubles. So the disenchantment set in very quickly with many people, but there still was a hard core of Latvians, and I wou -- must -- must say also, a number of Jews who in the past had leftist political sympathies, either social democrats, who were, of course, banned at the time, or -- and were the enemies of both the Latvian government and the communists, or communists. Those people were glad they s -- their excuse was well maybe things are not working perfectly, cause we're building a New World order and -- and creating a new type of man, Soviet man and everything is going to be alright and it's going to be much better than you could ever dream of. So these people were still true believers, but a lot of people were disenchanted. And certainly we were, because we were the bourgeois, as they would call them, we were s-suddenly the enemies of -- class enemies. The Russians expropriated my father's business. He was a-allowed to keep his debts, but he -- all the assets were taken away from him. And in general there were lots of restrictions. For instance, they decreed that every person was entitled to only nine square meters of living space, with some sort of allowances for -- which means most people had to -- to sublet -- to rent rooms to their apartments. And there were some allowances made if -- if you rented or -- a room that was accessible only through another room, then this other room didn't count fully, you could still keep that because you lost your privacy, your roomer would always walk through that other room. So we were forced to rent our -- a couple of rooms in our apartment. And as it turned out th -- these were two people from the border guards, which was a branch of the Russian security apparatus that was not identical to but closely allied to the KGB, and they were later involved in deportation. One of the men was -- was actually a Jew, Kleinman, and he moved out after

awhile. And the other one was a -- an ethnic Russian from -- from Latvia. Sort of a young, rather innocuous looking man who sort of rent the apartment, and was just w-wearing civilian clothes and then one day instead of opening the door with his key, about a month or two later he rang the doorbell, and my mother opened the door and she saw this large man in a Russian major's uniform and at first she didn't recognize him, she was scared. He was proudly showing off his new uniform. Well, he is actually the man who saved us from deportation to Russia. What happened is that a week before the outbreak of the German Russian war, the Russians went to a number of homes in the middle of the night, sort of got the people out of bed, told them get dressed, pack your -- your bags, and come with us, get on the truck. And the next morning we found out that a lot of wealthy families, including a fair number of Jews had been deported. And so we thought, well, by class and so on, by our status, we were very likely to be included, and before long there was a phone call saying don't leave the house, pack your bags and wait, we'll come for you. So we -- we packed, we did as we were told, and of course we weren't at all happy about the prospect, and then we realized that our roomer had not come home that night, he was out rounding up people, he was one of the leaders in this aktion. So when he finally came home, my mother went to see him and asked if he could take us off the list. And he sort of joked and teased first, well don't you want to go to a sa -- to a great s -- Socialist Motherland, or whatever he called it, and my mother answered diplomatically, well it's interesting [indecipherable] we're quite happy here, we'd rather stay here. And so he did manage to take us off the list and so for the moment we were saved. But this, of course, this event, this mass deportation is what -- as the Germans subsequently exploited a lot to arouse population against the Jews, but I presume we'll come to that a little later.

Q: So during the Russian occupation, economic -- economically, it was disastrous.

A: Yes.

Q: What about were you able to continue school, religious practices, wha -- did any of that change?

A: At my level religious practices were not affected. I don't know whether any pressure was put on the Jewish congregations, but I wasn't aware of it. School, I was still allowed to stay, but certainly I was of -- invisibly marked in the eyes of my fellow students, I was a bourgeois. And w-we -- I had a compulsory political education class, and of course there were tirades against the bourgeoisie, Marxism, Leninism, all this garbage. But this didn't really affect the way my fellow classmates treated me. They sensed that -- well, they were for the most part unhappy with the Russians. We had one real communist in class, and the others were unhappy to varying degrees, and they realized that I was unhappy too, so we -- we made common cause, there was no tension, they didn't hold me responsible as a Jew f-for the communist occupation and so on. It -- it didn't really affect me.

Q: How long did this last?

A: Almost exactly one year. They marched into -- in Latvia fanned out from there and crossed the border in June of 1940, and then i -- i -- a year later almost to the day came these deportations and another week later the Germans attacked. M-Maybe I sh -- I should mention a little bit about these -- these days. I ha-had a summer job in the city construction office, a-and on -- one day before the German attack, I-I was working on some project, and I was told the morning by my boss, stop whatever you're doing, we have something very urgent and -- and I and some of the other apprentices who were working there, were -- were told then to run off as many copies as we could of some drawings for sort of air raid shelters, that were actually really trenches, very primitive, like the fallout shelters that were built in the U.S.. And a-all day there was a sort of

hustle and bustle with people coming and going and picking up copies. So apparently -- I realized the next morning when the -- we heard about the attacks on -- on the radio, I realized why I was made to work late that day and why we suddenly worked on these air raid shelter plans. That apparently the Russian sort of military leadership had gotten wind of the German attack because the Germans had, after all, massed three and a half million troops along the border, and there were a number of -- even some German deserters who crossed into Russia and warned them of the attack and they'd been warned from other sides. Stalin didn't want to believe any of this. His -- but his generals [indecipherable] tried to see him a week before the attack and warn him, they decided to go ahead on their own and -- and do -- make at least minimum preparations without telling him. But still, they were totally surprised. And then when -- when the war started [indecipherable] we were really elated, we heard on the radio that Germany had attacked Russia, we felt this was the lesser evil. We certainly had not sympathized with the Germans when it -- i-in their war against the west. There we certainly preferred the western allies, but we really disliked the Soviet regime intensely, not only because they had nationalized my father's business, but also because of the terror, th-the lies, the hypocrisy, the deceit. And I should say a word about the terror. One of the things that happened is they took over some of the biggest buildings in town as their police headquarters. Police, KGB, whatever. One of the first things that happened is the windows on -- on the basement level windows were bricked in. These a-afterwards became torture chambers and execution chambers and we suspected so much right away. And previously the Latvian police didn't engage in torture, they didn't have any need for this, and it just looked suspicious that suddenly the basement windows were -- were sealed off. So there were a number of things. One heard rumors from time to time about people

disappearing, and of course these -- these rumors then very soon became reality during these mass deportations the week before the start of the war.

Q: I'm going to stop you here.

A: Mm-hm. [tape break]

Q: Would you continue?

A: Okay. I understand that according to German plans they were supposed to -- to occupy my hometown the second day of the war because it was only 70 kilometers away from the German border. It actually took them a week, and there was considerably more resistance than they expected, both from -- from German troops, and then apparently from Latvian volunteers. As I said, Libau was a rather pink town, and a number of the workers and communist youth and so on got weapons and they tried to defend the city. So as a result we got considerably more bombing and shelling than we normally would have had, and especially the last night, there was almost nonstop bombing and a-artillery bombardment and in particular was rather heavy artillery coming from the sea. And so the center of town was pretty much in ruins, burned down. The standard lie that was s-spread immediately after th-the German occupation is the Jews burned down the town. They say -- they claimed in every city. In my hometown I can very definitely say this was a -- a -- a totally untenable lie because the buildings that had burned down were -- were very badly damaged. They were -- had been hit by bombs and by artillery shells, the walls had collapsed and so on. A burned out building normally is burned out, it's blackened by soot, everything combustible is gone, the roof may be gone, but the walls are still standing. So this was in -- in the case of Libau this was demonstrably a lie. Then the f-first few days with German occupation [indecipherable] nothing much happened, but the real jolt came, I think on July 5th, when suddenly there appeared signs of -- notices everywhere on the walls, regulations for Jews,

and there were a list of eight or nine things that Jews were supposed to do or not to do. I mean, obvious ones like turning in weapons, not so obvious ones as turning in all means of transportation, including bicycles. Then th -- they were not -- they were supposed to l -- to lee -- to step from the sidewalk in the gutter whenever they saw a German soldier approaching, have to -- to -- to pay their respect. They were allowed to leave their houses only a couple of hours in the morning, couple hours in the afternoon, they were supposed to shop only two hours in -- in the morning. The men were -- were supposed to report to work at seven a.m. in -- every morning, and so on. It looked Draconian but not disastrous. We had sort of expected we'd lose some of our civil rights, but certainly we had not expected any danger to our li-lives. And so re-re-reading these -- the -- these regulations I've -- recently I felt that they weren't all that threatening. They were Draconian, but they were not threatening, yet my father was quite concerned, and in retrospect I -- I think what -- what happened is the following. A few days after the Germans marched in, there was a massacre of some 200 to 300 Jews in one of the parks, in my hometown. I had not known about this until about two months ago when I read about it in Ezergailis's book. This was -- in that park some trenches had been dug, presumably the -- the Russian and Latvian defenders expected to fight s -- s -- s -- block by block, so to speak. And German army units -- the SD had not yet established itself -- well, apparently killed several hundred Jews and just dumped the corpses in these trenches. Allegedly the Jews were afterwards allowed to remove the bodies and bury them in the Jewish cemetery, which was [indecipherable] exception. I strongly suspect that my father had heard about this and that's why he was so worried, because these regulations at work and so on and not using the sidewalk weren't all that bad. And so he summoned us and said, things look grim, and I have the following suggestion. And he said, why don't we claim that my mother is not the biological child of her parents, but that she's an Aryan

foundling. Sh-She w-was f-found on the doorstep of her -- her parents in a little basket, with a note saying Erika, and then a cross, implying that she is baptized. And Erika was a very German name, so it was implied that she was a German child. And that would make my brother and me half Jews, and as such on-only second class citizens rather than total outcasts. And it -- it -- it left no escape hatch for my father, unfortunately, but th-the hope was that perhaps we could send -- he could go off to a farm, work for a farmer in som-some lonely place, and then sort of wait until the war was over. Because we had naively assumed that the war would be over within a matter of months, since it was only a matter of playing for time.

Q: I want to ask you a couple questions here. First, it was alw -- it's been my understanding that a half Jew under Nazi racial theory, is a Jew. Why did you think that this would give you a different kind of status?

A: In 1935 the Germans passed the so-called Nuremberg laws, where they defined the status of what they called mischlinga, or racially mixed people. And the -- the first level was half Jews, they were deprived of a number of civil rights, but they were still a lev -- a notch or so above Jews. And quarter Jews, again they were banned from certain things, like government jobs and so forth. But -- and anything beyond that was -- was not so bad. I-It -- they -- their -- the -- the rule was that you had to prove that all four of your grandparents were Aryan. For a quarter Jew, one grandparent was Jewish, for a half Jew, two grandparents were Jewish. They were --

Q: In 1941, this mattered?

A: We -- th-that was still the law. Of course, th-they could reinterpret the law and change it without telling us, but up to that time we knew that half Jews still were not as ca -- mi -- were not set equal to Jews. And so we thought that this -- this was about as far as we dared go. There -- there were all sorts of supplementary laws that -- that were Byzantine in their complexity. For

instance, there was some rule that half Jews normally could not hold government jobs unless they had held these jobs before August 1st, 1914. Which means these were old time civil servants from way back, or the exceptions were made if they had fought in World War I, and been decorated, and so on. So there were -- even among half Jews there were different levels. And mind you, until that time there had been no sort of program o-of mass killing of Jews, and therefore there didn't seem to be any -- any problem with half Jews. We certainly knew that they would not be treated as badly. And this was about as far as -- as my father dared to go. My best friend at that time in school, who was Edward -- no, George Specter, who was a -- his parents were German Jewish refugees, had come to Latvia, and they also had two sons George and Edward, only the age relationship was reversed. They played pretty much the same game, they claimed that their mother was Russian, not Jewish, and there was a grain of truth to it, I think she had a Russian grandmother, and -- but all the other grandpa -- grandparents were Jewish. So she claimed she was Russian, made her Gentile children were half Jews. And for awhile that was okay, but then they somehow felt sorry for the father, who was lef-left out in the cold, and they decided to try something new, and found an old woman who supposedly had worked as a cook in their household and she then claimed in a affidavit that the f -- the father was really an illegitimate child of hers, and since she was Aryan, that'd make the father half Jew and then move everybody else up a notch. And that was too much for the Germans. They didn't believe it and they f-found a -- a pretext, I believe the -- the youngest son had made some change in the father's passport, and that was document forgery, they arrested him, they arrested the family and of course they were all killed immediately. So what -- first of all one had -- could only go so far, if you s -- the story became too implausible, then you lost the whole game. And the -- the other thing was -- was that we didn't realize yet that not all Gentiles were equal in -- in the eyes of the

Germans. The Germans were the highest of the hierarchy, they didn't want to shed any German blood, even if it was only 50 percent, but R-Russians were only one level above Jews, and so they didn't much care for those. Is this about the time to flip the tape, or shall -- shall I go on? Yeah, so my mother quickly found a farmer who would t-take my father as an unpaid f-farmhand and so he went out in the countryside, and we just av -- sort of waited for -- for the war to end. And then, very soon, since we did not wear the yellow patch, of course we -- I th -- I think we may have been stopped by the police and we told them that we are half Jews, and they said, oh if -- if -- if you had -- if that's your excuse, you have to have it -- you have to go and clear that with the German SD, the Sicherheitsdienst. And the commander of that was Untersturmfuehrer Kügler, a f-fairly notorious man later, as it turned out. So my mother and my older brother went to see him. And my mother was a very attractive woman and a good actress and sh-she told her story with -- with great conviction and apparently impressed him so much that he promptly dictated some special passes for us at -- a-ag-against the -- the -- the German E-Erika Alperovich, and her sons, half Jews George and Edward Alperovich, a -- the regulations concerning Jews shall not be applied. And while this was being typed, he sort of grunted, th-the Jews always got the best German woman. Well, my mother sort of returned the compliment by when she left she raised her -- her -- her arm and said, heil Hitler. So she had fooled him. And we thought, great, well now we have these passes, they -- there was no time limit on them, there were no conditions attached to it, we thought, well we're home free, so all we have to worry about is my father. Is this the time to -- to switch, or we still -- we still go?

Q: [inaudible]

A: Yeah. Okay, so there were a number of cases where we were -- were sort of -- anti-Semites reported us to the police and say here are some Jews that are not wearing the yellow patches, and

we're summoned to the police and we showed our passes. And of course the -- the Germans were much higher i-in the hierarchy than the Latvians. The Latvians pretty well had to do what the Germans told them, and we had this official document with a s-stamp of the SD, and so they let us go free. It was still unpleasant for my mother because a lot of people in town knew her. It was an absolutely crazy story for us to start, it was extremely audacious. She had her -- her parents, of course, lived in town all their lives, there were lots of people who knew them. She had two older sisters that conveniently died in the 1930's and there were a number of people who knew that the three sisters looked pretty much alike, and so realized that she was the natural child of her parents. We're still -- and there was one woman in town who had given birth to a -- a child the same day that my mother was born, and in the same hospital. So here were these two women, my maternal grandmother and this other woman, both giving birth to a child, in same maternity ward, knowing of each other. So if tha -- that woman had known exactly what story we told the Germans, which most of them didn't know, th-they knew for some reason we are -- we are immune, she could very easily have refuted and that she knows my mother was the natural child.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is tape one, side B of an interview with Edward Anders on February 28th, 1997.

A: So, as I mentioned, it was a very audacious plan and we -- if we had any inkling that the war was going to last another four years, we never would have tried this plan, because this is a -- a lie that simply couldn't go on for four years. We were just playing for time. Well, it worked all right. The -- I didn't lose my summer job, they kept me there, although I was half Jew, somewhat questionable whether I was employable or not, neither did my -- my brother. But at the end of the summer both of us, of course, had to quit our summer jobs and we tr -- and we had to earn some

money because my father no longer had an income. And turned out nobody would hire us. The status of half Jews was somewhat indeterminate and most people just didn't want to -- to touch us. Also, the Germans, of course, were trying to -- to get control over the population, find out who the Jews were, so periodically people had to go to the police and re-register their passports, get another stamp and so forth. My mother -- this was in late September '41, my mother went to the police office, and the Latvian police official treated her with utmost respect and sort of said in almost so many words that he has high regard for her family, he's not going to do anything against her, and she's just going to renew her passport and no questions asked, which was another example that -- of some decent Latvians. There also were enough of the other kind. So, things seemed to be going along fine. We con-continued to look for w -- for -- for jobs, without success. My mother gave some private lessons to various people who wanted to learn German. Most of her pupils were serious. There was one rather peculiar young woman, who was interested only in the sp -- the specialized vocabulary, such as undress and underwear and so on. So anyway my -- my mother taught her whatever she wanted to know or needed to know for her profession, and didn't matter, she paid. Then in November, at -- at my -- the -- at the end of October, the -- this was -- was after harvest time, the farmer decided he no longer needed my father and so sent him home. My -- by then we had also realized very quickly what was ha -- ha -- happening to -- to the Jews that were ar-arrested. I forgot to mention that within a few days of the German occupation, once the Jews were marked with their yellow patches, that army trucks would cruise around the town and when they saw a Jew, they would stop, check to see his papers and then put him on the truck, and he was never seen again. Or, they would come to Jewish homes and again, round up the men, take them away, never seen again. And within a very few days there were rumors in town what had happened to them. Some people had actually seen that

they were just taken to the dunes behind the fisherman's wh-wharf, and were shot. Later they found -- the Germans found some -- an execution site farther aw-away in the restricted naval port area and so on, where there weren't as many witnesses.

Q: Did you learn this at the time?

A: Yes, I knew it within a couple weeks or so. And th -- ma -- I -- I heard this from one of our neighbors who obviously was -- felt terribly sorry for the Jews, and he was telling us mainly to warn us. I mean, he -- I don't know whether he had seen himself, whether he had heard it, but it was common knowledge in town within a matter of days.

Q: When you were walking down the street, did you see any violence or brutality?

A: No, never saw any violence. I did see some Jews put on the truck, and I later, after the war, I was supposed to testify at the Nuremberg Trials of the German high command, because I remembered the license plates of those trucks. I knew that they had German army insignia and navy. And that -- after the war, of course, was fashionable to blame everything on the SS, but the army and the navy were involved. And then one day, standing at the streetcar stop, a -- a German sailor stood there and s-struck up a conversation, and of course he enjoyed it because I spoke fluent German. And he said, "Oh you have a lot of Jews in your town." I said yes. Oh, then he said, we have -- and then he made a movement of this trigger finger, pulling it several times. We have blank blank a number of them. In other words, executed. Now, he was speaking as a German sailjer -- sailor, I'm not -- one can't be absolutely certain by we he -- he meant w-we the navy, or we the army, or other and -- and the SS, but I think there is evidence that at least the early killings were -- were done with considerable involvement, if not exclusively by -- by the army.

Q: When -- when this sailor said this to you, what was your personal reaction?

A: Well, I mean, you just show a poker face, what can you do? I mean, it would be dis-disastrous if you made a long face and then sounded -- a-and -- and acted as if this were a -- a real shock to you.

Q: But did it scare you?

A: I don't think scare is q -- is quite the word because it may not have been quite the first such -- su-such news that I got. Even if it was, when you hear about something's happening to others, especially when you're a teenager, you think it can never happen to you. Drunk driving for example, or getting cancer from smoking. Teenagers think they're immortal. And that time we knew that while there -- some number of Jews were killed, well th -- let's hope it -- maybe they'll stop the killing. Maybe this was done just in the excess of the first few days of -- of the occupation or what. But in reality of course, there was lots of reason to worry, and some of our relatives disappeared, and -- and th-the pattern that developed in -- in my hometown was that -- I-I have -- course during -- at the time, I didn't have access to accurate statistics, but I n -- I now have seen some of the numbers and every week or two there were 50 or 100 Jews executed. They were rounded up in the streets. One of my older relatives, a woman, was picked up when she was standing in line at the only grocery store where Jews were still allowed to shop. And that was a convenient place if they wanted to harvest some Jews, they just send a truck over there, take the people standing in line, they won't need the groceries anyway. And so it happened on the -- in -- in a trickle, so to speak. My maternal grandfather was arrested on Rosh Hashonah, which was the September 22nd. He was 83, and he was a rather defiant man who decided since the temple was razed and he couldn't go to the -- to the temple, that he was going to stand at the window of his apartment with his tallis and pray. Of course, it was a provocation. Police saw him at the window, picked him up, took him away, Presumably they ki -- that -- checked the town rather

carefully that day to see if there weren't any other Jews that were practicing their religion. And I think there were 61 or so shot that day, he was one of them. Then there -- also the -- they -- the- these synagogues were torn down. None of them had been destroyed or set on fire by either the population or as in some other cities, by the SD, but they were just torn down, brick by brick. And then they of course took the s -- the scrolls, the Torah scrolls -- and I didn't see this myself, but I heard reports that they unrolled them in one of the squares of town and then forced some Jews to step on them, to -- to -- to march on them. And the same person who told me this said that the German soldier came along and he was careful not to step on it, he took a big step across and said, "Th-that's -- that's Holy Scripture." So there were certainly a lot of warnings things were infinitely worse than we had expected, and we -- we didn't realize at the time that this was -- or perhaps we did, this was a total change in policy, that's [indecipherable] the -- now that the Germans had entered the Soviet Union, they were going to kill Jews systematically. Now there's also something about human psychology. Although ther -- there were lots of detailed rumors circulating in town about the executions of Jews, there were quite a number of Jews who didn't believe it. There was -- people grasp at straws in such situations. There were occasional rumors that somebody had traveled along a country road, and he had passed a huge camp with lots of Jews working there. What they were doing, so on, is pure invention. Railroad traffic was still disrupted, so it -- there wasn't much traffic from one city to another, and there was a report by the occasional traveler, yes, he had seen such a camp, how reassuring. And yet, the truth was easy enough to find out, it's just a question of how much wishful thinking you want to engage in. Well, anyway, one day in the -- after my -- when my father was at -- returned from his farm, he realized that according to th-th-the law, he was supposed to register with the labor office, volunteer for -- or show up for work at s-seven a.m., but by then it was quite obvious what was

happening to men, especially, and so it would be suicide. And then the alternative then was to try to hide somewhere. So we decided to hide him in a s -- s-small sort of store -- storage room next to our kitchen, it -- really a little pantry. We put up a stack of f-firewood, and there -- there was enough space be-behind the firewood for him to hide, and we strategically placed some -- so-some stools and so on there so that it -- when the doorbell rang, the idea was for him to climb up over the stack and hide behind it, and only then open the door. And one day we weren't sure whether the doorbell had rung or not, m-my mother thought it had, and I thought it hadn't. I'm not sure what my brother said. So my father didn't go in his hiding place, he hadn't heard it either, and just then my mo-mother opened the door and there was a Latvian policeman and he said, I am looking for Adolf -- Adolf Alperovich, your husband. My mother realized of course is that we were in real hot water. And of course my f-father had immediately heard his voice. His retreat to his hiding place was cut off, so all he could do is -- he wa -- he was in the bedroom at the time, so he sort of climbed into the wardrobe and hid behind clothes. And meanwhile the policeman had entered the apartment, was standing in the kitchen and questioning my mother and -- yeah, questioning my mother, and she -- and meanwhile my father was trying to hide and was making some noise. And realizing that this was very suspicious, my mother decided to throw a sort of quasi-hysterical fit. Said, "I don't know where my husband is. You -- you people took him away. Tell me where my husband is!" And grabbed his wrist and began to shake him, and of course the policeman got quite uncomfortable and uneasy and with her shouting and so on, she masked some of the noises in the bedroom, and of course we -- we all could hear them, and I don't know how he didn't get suspicious of -- he was sufficiently flustered, when he searched the apartment he didn't happen to look in the wardrobe. Well, we thought, managed to survive this, we'll be a lot more careful in the future. But what we didn't realize is that there

were two people in the building who had reported what -- that my father was hiding in the apartment. One of them was the janitor, who was often in the basement tending to the boiler, we had a sort of ground floor apartment. And then the other one was a woman next door, and she could probably hear my father's voice through the wall, the c-common wall between the two apartments. And so they must have reported that my father is still there, he had a lower voice than -- than my brother and I, and they could probably hear it. So I was -- second of December '41, I was out looking for work without success and came home and as I opened the door I heard the crashing of firewood, and I heard a -- a German -- shouting in German, as -- at my father, like something I couldn't quite understand, then heard my father reply, "I am not a criminal." And these were the last words of my father that I heard. What happened is that this time 10 policemen, led by a German had come to the apartment, including the man who had searched for my father before and not found him. And they checked the whole apartment as thoroughly as they could and they were about to leave, and then the policeman, whose name was Sproigis, decided to look behind the firewood. The -- he is the one who had searched before and not found my father, and naturally found him. So they took him and my mother away, they left me and I just thought I probably won't see my parents again. My brother had found a job. He came home at night, I told him the bad news. Then, I think it was either that day or the next, the German policeman came back, escorted by Latvian, and was -- was very friendly and said, "Well, we just want to look around the apartment a little bit." And then he went, sort of looked the books, oh [indecipherable] novels and such things, not too interesting. Then he spotted the radio and said, "To whom did this radio belong, to your father, or to your mother?" And I said, "Actually to neither, it belongs to a former roomer." This was, of course, a -- an ext -- a lie. We Jews were supposed to turn in the radios, among other things. And he said, "Well, how long ago since he

was here?" "Well," I said, "he wa -- he was here in -- still in June." "Well," he said, "this is December. Isn't it strange that you haven't her -- heard from him all this time? I'll take the radio along, and if you -- this roomer shows up, tell him it's at the security police." And so he told the Latvian flunky who was with him to pick up the radio, it was a big, heavy model, and off he went. He said, "Don't worry about your parents, they'll be home soon." Well, half of what he said was true, my mother was released the evening of the -- the eighth of December, and sh-she had signed some waiver that she was never going to tell anybody what happened to her i-in jail and so on. But she realized that my father was in very serious danger. And so the next morning she dashed off to the police, the German police and asked them, I mean -- or tried to plead for my father's life, and they said it's too late, he was shot that morning. She claimed actually she had -- that on her way she had sort of approached the jail and she saw a truck parked there and she saw several people getting on the truck and she thought she recognized my father from a distance. So, he was shot on the ninth of December. And of course we were pretty shocked, but what -- what can you do, this had happened to a lot of people, now it happened to us, but at least we were still alive and we are still protected by these passes. Well that extra protection lasted exactly six days. Four o'clock in the morning on December 15th, I su-suddenly woke up, the light had gone on in my bedroom and I opened my eyes and I saw two Latvian policeman s-stand there -- st-standing there with rifles over their shoulders and is -- told my brother and me, get dressed, come with us. So what's -- what's the matter? Well, we produced our passes, showing that we are half Jews and they -- nothing -- that they should not -- we -- we were exempt from all the r-rules about Jews. They asked for my father and my -- my mother said that -- she had let the police in, they had been -- they had rung the doorbell, and they -- they searched the apartment for him, she told them that he had been arrested two weeks earlier. Well, he was still on their list and

then they -- they checked everywhere. [indecipherable] and when the finished searching the apartment they opened the back door and there was a policeman standing behind that, cut off any escape. So we asked them, where are you taking us? And they said, we can't tell you. And the na -- older policeman who had -- had a bit -- a touch of humanity left said, "All I can tell you is, dress warmly." So we dressed warmly and went with them, and we kept protesting. They marched us down a block or two and we protested that you have no right to arrest us, we're exempt from an -- any actions against Jews. And that -- they stopped at a building about two or three blocks from -- from ours, and this is where our great-aunt lived, and she was actually the dearest of our relatives. And a few of the policemen went in, and we saw the lights go on in one apartment, in the second apartment they had roused some Jewish families, tell them to get dressed. Meanwhile, th-the other police stayed outside, we had our faces to the wall, we were being guarded. And we had been arguing with them. So one young policeman was -- became absolutely livid with this insubordination. And so he went to his superior sergeant, whatever, and asked for permission to shoot us on the spot. And we couldn't hear the answer of the policeman, but anyway, he didn't shoot. I -- in Riga at the time, they actually killed -- out of 24,000 Jews that were taken to the execution, they killed about a thousand o-on the way, for not walking fast enough, for trying to escape, for talking back, for any number of things. And Libau for some reason, they did not want to -- to have corpses lying on the street, I presume. Maybe they did -- had orders not to do this, and frankly the logical answer would have been, what do you care, you know, a few hours later they'll be dead anyway. So we slowly worked our way toward th-the jail, stopping every block or so to round up another Jewish family. In one building a woman came out with her two children and then few minutes later she said, "Oh, I forgot -- I forgot to take your father's picture." The poor woman thought that they were going to be deported and it would --

would be nice to have the father's picture as a souvenir. Of course, they were all going to be killed. We knew it, but -- and our great-aunt knew it and she -- she just looked very composed, pretended not to recognize us, but she knew where it was headed. So the rest of us then -- all of us then slowly worked our way toward the prison. After -- as we approached the prison we could see there were similar processions coming from other side streets, always escorted by Latvian police, and we're admitted int -- into the prison yard. We were one of the last groups to -- to arrive. It was still dark, it was around seven a.m. or a little before. They -- there was a German policeman reading out lists and he had reached the letter K, I still remember, he was reading the name Katzenelinbogin, so we -- we were -- our ni -- name began with A, so our -- we had been called quite awhile ago. And since we were some of the last to enter, were near the gate, faces to the wall, the Latvian gatekeeper sort of snuck up to us and said, "Hey fellows, do you have any watches, or any jewelry with you? Your -- you're all going to be taken to -- to Germany, and there they'll take them away from you. Isn't it better to leave them with your fellow countrymen?" Anyway, we held onto our watches, didn't give him anything. And then f -- a few minutes later was -- was a commotion and we saw that my m -- my mother had managed to sneak into the prison yard with another group of Jews. She had first tried to join our group and they wouldn't take her, she was not on the list. And so, now since they -- or they knew who she was, she tried joining another group, but she was recognized, she was pushed out of the prison. And then, another couple minutes later, a German policeman appeared, approached us, and with two or three of the Latvian police in tow who had been -- who had arrested us. And he -- he a -- so he asked, what's your story? And so we showed him our passes and told him. And so he stared at us for about 10 seconds and then suddenly he motioned, go. Now, probably didn't hurt, all of us were blonde and -- and blue-eyed and didn't [indecipherable] hurt that some of my

blonde hair was sticking out from under my cap and so I looked sufficiently Aryan, my brother did too. Told us, g-go. Barely got out on the street, we almost bumped into my mother. She had, having been kicked out of the prison, she had rushed over -- well, she had previously, she had ru-rushed over to the German police, managed to see some -- somebody's -- some official, I don't know how high ranking he was, if he was not the top man, and said look what's happened, my -- my sons are half Jews, they're not supposed to be arrested, and they have been t-taken and can you get them out. And the man was sympathetic, but then he said, what time were they picked up? And she said four o'clock. He looked at the watch, it was seven. Sorry, he said, it's too late. Well, they had no walkie-talkies in those days and it was about a three or four hour march to the execution site, so in principle we would have been, if everything had moved as quickly as he thought, we would have been on our way by then, and they couldn't very easily send a car after us. But we weren't, things were moving more slowly. So she thought that if we were dead, then she certainly didn't want to live and so her only thought was to get back in the prison, join one of the other groups of Jews, and just be killed with everybody else. And so suddenly she saw us coming. And during all this to-do, as well, during the arrest and the arguments with the police and so on, we were absolutely calm. I think our mood can best be described as of re-restrained indignation. We were indignant but not to the point of -- of shouting or raising our voices, or th-throwing a fit. But now all of a sudden we began to shake, and -- anyway, the shakes lasted for awhile. We walked home, by the time we got home they were over. My brother had to go to work that -- that day, showed up about an hour late, and I'm not sure what excuse h-he gave. And so we realized we had survived it. Later that day I saw -- in town, I saw a group of Jews being marched across the bridge north of the city to -- to the execution site. And it's a ver -- a sad sight to realize that here are these people, we had all been arrested together, I got out, but they

didn't. And two months ago I learned in graphic detail what would have happened to me if the policeman had not said go, if he had said stay instead. And Ezergailis in his book has an accurate description based on court depositions by some of the Latvian henchman on just how the executions were carried out. And it's weird when after 55 years, when your life, you had reached a crossroads and you took a turn to the right and your life had evolved in a well known way and you were still alive, and you suddenly sort of get a flashback where you were at this crossroads 55 years ago and you suddenly realize in great detail what would have happened to you if you had gone -- taken the left fork instead of the right fork. Yeah, so it's -- I don't know if anybody else survived. There -- I think there was one Jew who had working papers, I think he would -- also had been rounded up, not in our troop, but I happened to notice there was another troop and he produced some paper. Jews in those days who had special skills, and it's very important to the Germans, were spared, at least for the time being. That included craftsmen. One of the wonderful oddities of the German SD in our town is -- was the German SD was in a building separate from that of the Latvian SD, and the Latvians were not supposed to go anywhere except the ground floor of the building. In the basement they had a number of Jewish craftsmen, watchmakers, jewelers, goldsmiths, this sort of thing. Now it's remarkable why po -- a police unit needs goldsmiths on -- on the side. It -- I -- I think nowhere in the U.S. is a police unit that has goldsmiths, and -- and watchmakers and so on. And neither do the Swiss police or any other I know of. On the other hand, th-the German security police was a rather special organization. So we were -- we were free, but then, couple days later we got a summons to go to the police and we as -- were to turn in our passes. And they said, well, this is now out of the security police's hands, mixed bloods are now handled by the civilian administration, the so-called kibice commissar. And you have to go to the office, there is a man named Butkarite who takes care of

such things. So my mother and my older brother, who was -- usually went -- I was considered too young, of the two of us he was a more obvious companion on such missions, went there, she told her story and he said well, we'll -- you'll have to do several things right away. First of all, you'll have to file for divorce from your husband. Then you'll have to get at least two affidavits from people that know you, that can prove that -- that your story is true. And then, he said, you'll have to produce a baptismal certificate. Okay, filing su -- for divorce was no big deal, she did. Then months or so later, a -- a -- a letter arrived from the court, saying that proceedings had been -- been dr-dropped, because the case was moot, since the state prosecutor had notified the court that my father had died on the ninth of December 1941. Well, this came in handy after the war when my mother was trying to get some restitution payments -- pension from -- from German authorities and they wanted to have some proof that my father was killed, and under the circumstances this was the next best thing to an actual death certificate. S-So I-I will actually deposit a copy of this with the -- with the archives. Then the affidavits turned out not to be a problem, and I considered it somewhat indicative of the fact that there still were a fairly large number of decent people among Latvians. We had moved into our building only two years earlier, and there was one -- the f -- of our neighbors there was one family who clearly were v-very troubled by the way we were treated, and they just -- at every opportunity they showed that their sympathies were the Jews. So my mother went to them and asked, could you help us? So quickly they figured out the best thing to do was the mother of -- of our neighbor would file an affidavit claiming that many years ago -- she was an old lady by then, that she had met, in going to the park with her own daughter and she had met th -- a sort of maid that was taking care of my -- my mother. And they'd often taken out the children for walks together, and then the maid told her one day, this is not the real child of her parents, it's a foundling, a Christian foundling and so

on. And so embellish the story [indecipherable] all well known. So that was affidavit number one. The other one was by a younger woman who again test -- testified that she had met my -- my mother oh so, 10 to 15 years before the war, they'd become friends, and then one day my mother again confided in her that she wasn't the real child of her parents and so forth. And then she went on to say, well we, together -- she really had a Christian orientation, together we attended services in Saint Anne's church and so forth. A -- a number of embellishments or outright inventions and so forth, then stressed that well, th-the children were brought up le -- no -- in -- in the [indecipherable] Christian spirit. That wasn't true at all, but th-they -- they went to a Latvian school, not to a Jewish school. At home they used the German language and so forth. So again, she did her -- her best to make the story sound as plausible as possible. One thing I forgot to mention earlier, that the first -- when we got our first set of passes, and my mother had practically n-nothing to prove her case. But for years she had been corresponding with, of all things, the Rosicrucian fellowship in Oceanside, California. They had a correspondence service in any number of languages, she corresponded in German. I'm not quite sure why she corresponded with them, in part because she wanted some health advice, in part because there were some strains in her marriage and she wanted some counseling and so on, and they basically level-headed people, gave her some good advice. And there were occasional references to Jesus Christ, and you know, praying to him and -- and all would be well. And those she was able to filter out, and she was concentrating more on some vegetarian or whatever recipes, some herbal teas and so forth, and some of the good, common sense advice about how to deal with my father. But this was helpful, this was obviously a Christian organization and it's before the war, before there was any si -- ca -- question of trying to h-hide your Jewish origin, she was -- obviously had a Christian orientation. And the U.S. at that time had not yet been in the war, so -- this was

before Pearl Harbor, so those letters came in handy. Now that the tough part were the baptismal certificates. We were told that the archives of the Baltic German churches had all been removed to what -- to Posen, which originally was a town in Poland, in western Poland, and of course they'd been annexed by the Germans. And they had settled a number of Baltic Germans there, and they clearly want to expand German -- ethnic German settlement eastward as much as possible. This is -- was already part of -- of Germany. So the church records were supposed to be there, and she was supposed to write to them. Okay, so composed the letter, sent it off. Fortunately, mail took one month to -- to Posen and then one month back. It was in early '42. Then, the first -- it turned out the first address they'd given us wasn't the right one, so th -- took another set of letters and by the time the three months were up, all she had is this first letter saying sorry, you wrote to the wrong address. So she went to the kibice commissar, Mr. Butkarite and said, well, I've -- I've tried to do what you told me, but it's taking awhile, and here is the st-story. So he gave her a three month extension. He wasn't totally happy about it. Then after three months, well we had another exchange and the people at the archives had misunderstood the question. They -- they said well, before we can do a search, you have to give the exact names of your parents and the date of your birth and the date of your baptism and all that. And my mother's date of birth was -- in -- in the records, was supposed to be the date when she was found, so she must have been born sometime previous to that. So, clearly they had misunderstood the question, this took another round of letters, and now Mr. Butkarite was getting impatient, he said, I'll give you one more three month extension, but that's going to be it. Three months were up and of course we didn't have anything yet. And as the 90 days approached their end, you know, you start closing your accounts with the world and just be -- be prepared that you will be taken away and you will be shot, like so many people before you. And my

mother went there with my brother and asked Mr. Butkarite and they said, oh no, he's no longer here. It's now Mr. Persil has taken his place. So my mother did some fast footwork and sort of backspaced a little bit and -- in the story and sort of took Mr. Persil to -- a few steps back from where we actually were, to gain time. Persil gave her the three months extension. And again, his patience gradually wore thin. And just when it seemed to be over, might have given us the final three months extension, once again he -- he was transferred, and in his place was a certain Mr. -- Mr. Gudschmidt. And well, meanwhile what been happening, it turned out that the church records were in Riga after all, they were not in -- in Posen any more. The Riga state archive was closed indefinitely and so that gained us some more time, but in then end it was opened. My mother and I went to Riga and looked the records, and lo and behold we found two girls were baptized Erika in the three months preceding the supposed date that my mother was found. Now the next step would have been to prove that my mother was one of these, which how do you -- do you prove that? I suppose you -- you prove that there was -- this person vanished without a trace. And Mr. Gudschmidt was no fool, he realized that as long as my mother was doing the -- this research herself, she could suppress any unfavorable evidence, and this could go on forever. And so he flatly refused to extend the passes. Well, we -- now we went home and we thought well, will the police come today or tomorrow? Will they come and pick us up at home or at work? And if at home will it be during the day or during the night? And no, we were prepared for the worst. Instead, nothing whatsoever happened. Well, one of the weird things is during '41 and '42, there were a number of anti-Semites who repeatedly reported us to the police, and said here are some Jews who are not wearing the yellow patch. And eventually they got discouraged, and one rumor that was -- was circulated in town was that we had connections to high places, specifically to Goering's staff. Well, I h -- wondered why Goering and I s-suddenly realized why

-- why they came up with this story. My mother had an office job in a tiny, little four person office. It had a very, sort-of pretentious name. It was the Ostland was in -- the name for the three Baltic countries, plus Byelorussia. It was Ostland Iron Trading company of the state works, Herman Goering -- in the name of Herman Goering. All it was is a small purchasing office that was supposed to negotiate exports of the products of a large metal working factory in Libau and have them shipped to Germany. And they would transfer the orders, negotiate delivery schedules and so on. Totally innocuous. But o-on -- on this street level, on th-the building, there was a plaque saying Ostland [speaks foreign language here] etcetera, etcetera, Herman Goering. Well, these are big words that the average Latvian probably had trouble figuring them out. The only thing that probably made sense to them was Herman Goering, and so they saw my mother going in and out of this building and they thought well, there is some office close that's close to Herman Goering and sh-she has ca -- she has access to it, and sh-she has some -- some dealings with them. Well, I wish I knew who started this rumor, because I couldn't have invented a better one myself.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: -- side A of an interview with Professor Edward Anders, on February 28th, 1997, being conducted by Randy Goldman.

A: Yes, well this sudden lifting of our passes occurred in -- of -- the early fall of 1943, and from then on we were without any protection whatsoever. We were fair game, but nobody came to shoot us. The ill-wishers who would have liked to see us six feet under had sort of given up because they thought that for some mysterious reason we are immune from any kind of per-per-persecution. The police chief, the Latvian police chief himself, who was in a good position to know that my mother was the biological child of her parents, because he had lived next door to them, again decided not to lift a finger against us. He said that he would not give me a -- a passport, which he would -- I -- I was required to have from age 16, but at the same time h-he wasn't going to do anything against me, which was -- left me in some kind of a limbo, but it turned out to be not such a bad place to be. A substitute that became increasingly important was, since I was not allowed to continue school, I enrolled in some correspondence course -- well, actually this was more of a home study course, with some so-called Rustian Institute in Potsdam, Germany. And they send you little booklets for various subjects, for -- depending on what program you took. There were different, many different programs. And the first thing they s -- they sent me was a very impressive looking I.D. card with my picture and a -- a big Prussian eagle. It wasn't the -- Hit-Hitler's eagle with a swas -- swastika, but it was still a very impressive bird. And so that was a very handy, official looking identification card, which I could use on -- on occasion. Th-Then w-we were so -- I should now take the story back to -- so -- a couple of weeks after we had been released from prisons, was -- was shortly before New Year's, 1942. The -- the --

Q: ’42?

A: Yeah, well -- yes. It was very late ’41, let’s say, after Christmas ’41. There were only about 300 Jews left in town. A few months later they were moved into a ghetto, Latvians were cleared out of some part of town and Jews were moved in. We had essentially no contact with the Jews in the ghetto. My mother would occasionally see some -- some Jews on the street, she would occasionally talk to them. Some of them were happy that we were spared. Others -- but they told us that others resented it, that how -- why do we go free, and why do they have to suffer? I should mention a -- a very minor incident. One winter night I walked past the ghetto, and I saw -- it -- there was light snowfall and I saw that somebody was signaling, presumably with Morse code from the ghetto to an apartment across the street, the window. So there was communication between the ghetto and -- and -- and Latvians living outside. There were a number of boy scouts in town, they’d all learned the Morse code, so this was not a bad way to communicate. The Libau ghetto lasted in -- I think until ’43, then the last few hundred Jews, mainly craftsmen and such, were deported to Riga, then they were put in the Riga ghetto.

Q: Were you at all in a position to help people in the ghetto by sm-smuggling in food, or anything?

A: It would have been difficult, and for me it would have been fatal. I think even for a Latvian, this was a crime a-and I sa -- just looked here in the archives at some of the reports from Latvian police and so on. And certainly anybody who had contact with Jews, and so on was -- was in quite a bit of trouble, and since I was highly exposed already, this would -- would have been very dangerous for me. We did have contact with -- wi-with some -- very few people. One night th-the doorbell rang and my mother opened, and it was a Jewish woman, whom she knew. It must have been late ’43 -- late ’42, early ’43 perhaps. I’ve forgotten her name. She had been hiding in

the apartment of some Latvian family and from time to time she had to pay them rent, in quotation marks. She would -- generally gave them some -- some jewelry. And she claimed that she had to go out of the house to some hiding place and get the jewelry, actually it was all sewn into her clothes. Anyway, she had heard that we were still alive, and we were free so she had come to see us and we had a -- a talk with her. I think we saw her once or twice more. She said it was not easy, the people, while they were taking this rent from her, while they certainly did take on a risk in hiding her, they weren't especially nice. And there was a 10 year old girl, sometimes spat on her. So it was -- it was un -- certainly unpleasant. After the war we heard that this woman had finally been -- been found out, in -- probably in ’44, put in a concentration camp and people who had seen her in the concentration camp felt that she was already losing her mind. She was wearing some strange clothes in strange colors and just acting very strangely and so probably she did not survive the war, but she was one of the few people who didn’t -- able to hide until then. Okay, so backspace until -- to oh, right after Christmas ’41. We -- I finally found a job. There was a man in the state employment office who was very sympathetic to me. He knew, of course, that I was a [indecipherable] half Jew if he believed the story, and he was most anxious to place me and to help me. So he sent me on interviews, most of the time when they found out who I was they didn’t want me. But they then managed to get me a job as a messenger in a support construction authority that worked largely for the German navy. And so fine, I was hired there as a messenger, and they sent me on errands, and one day I was sent to the German security police, of all places, with some letter. So I handed it to some German official and said a few words in German and he replied, and I replied again, so he got excited when he realized that I spoke fluent German. And so he had s-said, “Well, wouldn’t you like to join the -- the Shutzmanshuf, the -- th-the Latvian auxiliary police?” And put me on the spot because you can’t say no, I don’t want

to. And I certainly didn't want to say yes. And so I -- I started yes, but -- and so he interrupt me in mid-sentence and said, that's wonderful. "Well we can so -- put you in uniform right away and s -- just ta -- fil -- take care of the papers and so on, start immediately." I say, "Well there's one complication. I am -- I'm a half Jew." Oh, the man was very disappointed. He -- this would have been supreme irony that maybe these people would hire me as one of them, but two weeks earlier they tried to -- to take me to execution. But -- but there were lots of absurdities.

Q: Wasn't there ever a point when being a half Jew wasn't good enough? I mean, it's just -- it's kind of amazing to me.

A: Well, it is -- we had a special status. A half Jew was neither fish nor fowl, and at least for a long time it was not counted as a fowl. I have been told that there -- on the internet there is -- is a website of Jews who sa -- served in the German army, it turned out that -- that virtually all of them were half Jews, or quarter Jews, whatever. And I understand that Hitler said at one point, I decide who is a Jew, and who isn't. And so they would make some people honorary Aryans, but of course the flipside of the coin was that you were made to serve in the German army. So it -- in Latvia -- you will probably si -- hear it during the rest of my story, much of the time people still weren't sure wh-what -- what rights I had and what rights I-I didn't. And some were -- were prudent and just didn't want to -- anything to do with half Jews, others would take a chance.

Q: Right, but you -- it sounds like, if I'm understanding you correctly, you were dealing with not only Latvian officials, but -- but German officials as well?

A: Yes, yes. Well, this German official's attitude was, the half Jew, maybe I was not bad enough to shoot, but I was not good enough to -- then to put on a police uniform. It wasn't [indecipherable] I was not considered reliable. So that was out, but he may have called my boss at the office and the boss then having found out that I was a half Jew, he fired me. Well, I wasn't

t-too sorry to -- to leave because things had become unpleasant at the office again, about the time that they found out. One day the -- the accountant started a conversation in a loud voice when I was in the room, telling one of them, do you know that we're now -- that we are now drinking the blood of the Jews? He said, when they were shot, he said, the blood seeped into the ground and now it's coming out as drinking water. You know, what do you s -- what do you say in such -- and of course he was staring at me and see how I would -- whether I would squirm and so on. Well, you have to -- you got to learn to keep a poker face. So I wasn't sorry to leave the -- the office, the atmosphere was less than congenial. But th-then I was sent to another office in a construction firm, and there the boss, although he was a Nazi party member, had what -- very sensible attitudes toward Jews. He hired me knowing who I was, he had previously hired my brother. And he tolerated us. He was a simple-minded man, he'd been a -- just a -- a carpenter and -- and in Danzig, Germany where the headquarters of the company was, and he was made the boss of the local company with some 80 workers. And he so -- he said at one point, to me this makes no difference. To him, Jews, half Jews, Germ -- Aryans, they're all the same, all of God's children, so to speak. Not that he was particularly religious or anything. A number of months later, this company was working for the German military and I had a construction project involving a German army construction battalion with architects and such people. And we were sort of liaison people, my brother and I, because we spoke fluent German. And the soldiers liked us, they were trained architects and so on. But then the major, the commander of the battalion one day learned that we were half Jews, and so he promptly wrote a letter to my boss, and said, I do not want these half Jews on my project. So when our boss got this letter, he [indecipherable] got quite indignant and said, that major seems to be a real nice guy, but he said it sarcastically. And he said, well to me it makes no difference. So he said fine, we won't put you on that project,

you work on another project. And it's a ne -- one of a number of examples of decent people despite his Nazi party membership pin. One -- one learns to be a lot more discriminating in judging other people when -- when you meet them as individuals. So that I ha -- I had a job, a st -- a steady job, and by and large there were no further problems. There was one strange person who worked for this company for awhile. He had been with the Latvian SD, and the reputation that he had was that he was involved in some of the killings. He was always quite sugary with me, of course I couldn't say anything what -- but my interpretation of his sugary attitude was that he thought, the dead Jews won't testify against me, but if I'm nice to some survivors, maybe if th -- as the war's over and if Germany loses, maybe they'll put in a good word for me. Th-That was an example of the other kind. Then, at these construction firms, since they did a fair amount of their work in the naval port, one -- they -- some of them actually saw the executions. One of them in particular, a t -- a teamster who had just had to transport building materials with his horse and wagon, told us how he had been sort of traveling along the road, and he saw at a distance, he saw a group of people lined up at the top of a dune. And then he heard a salvo and saw them topple over like bowling pins. And then, after awhile another row appeared, and again they fell. And this agrees completely with the description to Ezergailis' book, which was taken from quite another source, namely from some of the executioners themselves, later they would test -- they would give depositions -- they were in -- in Russian custody and they gave depositions for some German war times -- war crime trials. Then there were other rumors, which again turned out to be in -- very consistent with Ezergailis's book from other sources. One of them, for instance, was that the original orders to the executioners w-were to shoot -- to fire -- aim one bullet at -- at the head and another one at the heart. And then word came from headquarters, both bullets at the head. Then that is -- that they were getting whatever it was, half

a liter or a liter of vodka a day for the -- for their efforts, the executioners. And there was a fair amount of alcohol involved in -- in some of these executions. So, it was really common knowledge in town what was happening to a -- to a remarkable degree. I did not know exactly what the organizational structure behind all of it was. I didn't hear the word Einsatzgruppen until after the war. In retrospect, yes, I could tell from the uniforms th -- that the people involved in these were -- were a mixture. Some of them were the so-called SD, or Sicherheits Politsi, they had one kind of uniform. Some of them were of the Shutz Politsi which had a -- even a different shade of green. The ma -- the policeman who finally told us that we could leave the jail, he was a man of the Shutz Politsi, which was normally a -- an organization that was not so involved in the killings. But these Einsatzgruppen was a -- a mixture. They had assigned or recruited people from different branches of the German police and SS, so they had different uniforms and different positions.

Q: Was it your understanding at the time that the local population was also quite involved in a lot of these -- the killings?

A: The -- the population as such, actually was not. There were, probably in all of Latvia, I'm sure there were several thousand who were actively or passively involved in the killings. There were some executions squads. I think the most notorious one was based in Riga, the so-called Arajs Commando, several hundred who traveled in notorious blue buses all over the country to execute Jews that had been rounded up by the local police. There were others who were Latvian police who really just traffic cops and so on. They were assigned the job of rounding up Jews, as the ones who arrested us, but in just leading them to the execution site, or in Riga, driving people to the execution site. And th -- and there in Riga the shootings were done by Germans at the time that the -- the big executions. In Libau there were several execution squads, as I found out much

later from Ezergailis' book. There was one Latvian squad and a German squad and they would take turns. The Germans always tried to s -- to st -- to stress the local people's role in these executions. They would often take pictures only when a local squad was -- was doing the shooting and so on. Kügler, the -- the head of the SD, who had given us the first set of passes, apparently was a -- a passionate photographer and he went to every execution, even if it involved only few dozen Jews and always took pictures. And supposedly these pictures have been found in the -- apparently it's -- it's a well known collection. I don't particularly want to see it.

Q: When the Latvians worked as -- you know, administrators, or --

A: Yes.

Q: -- nestled couriers or guards, was it your sense that they worked with enthusiasm or that they in a position where they really had to follow the German directives?

A: Those that did the dirty work, from rounding up Jews and certainly those who did the killing, there was no indication of any touch of sympathy for the victims. Certainly it would not have been safe to show it, because even if a few of them felt some slight sympathy and said this -- well, this -- I'm sorry that I have to do this dirty job, there were others who were doing it with enthusiasm, like the young policeman who was prepared to shoot us on the spot. And if he had noticed that one of the other policeman felt sorry for us, that would have been a lot of trouble for them. But I was interested -- yesterday, in the seminar I read a short quote from the report of the German police commander. He issued sort of biweekly situation reports a-about all sorts of events under his jurisdiction, and always starting with, oh what's the mood of the people. And the report immediately after these mass executions of mid-December of 1941, he said there is widespread unease and disapproval among the local people about the execution of Jews. Many of them feel sorry for what happened to the Jews, and only a few have expressed themselves

positively. And in retrospect I can agree with that, because somehow when you -- when you're in the midst of it, what registers much more strongly is the occasional anti-Semitic remark or act. What registers much less strongly is the passive tolerance, and there were an awful lot of people that tolerated us, that could have turned us in and didn't. Occa -- some of them went so far as to say some kind words and express their sympathies and so on, and we t -- we quickly found out who they were an-and in retrospect, I remember quite a few of them. And others simply decided to look the other way, and not do anything for us, not do anything against us. So L-Libau was perhaps a little different in the sense that there was -- the population by and large was friendlier to the Jews than in so-some other towns, although it was -- I don't think it was that different elsewhere. They simply were not the so c -- the -- they didn't deserve -- the -- the majority of people weren't the stereotype bloodthirsty Latvian henchmen as th-the executioners were. There's no question that there were a few thousand involved in various capacities, who committed the-these atrocities, and did it with -- with -- with pleasure.

Q: Do you remember whether you felt a lot of stress or fear, anxiety, during this time when you were passing as a half Jew, but you weren't -- you weren't really in hiding, you were in public.

A: First of all, if you live a lie, after awhile you begin to believe it, almost. I was circumcised, and so there was a constant fear I would be in a situation where this would be found out. So that was the danger, but teenagers always think that they're invulnerable and immortal. And furthermore, life kept you busy. There were the problems of everyday life, I had a job, I didn't have that -- I worked six days a week, I didn't have that much free time, and then the routines of everyday life took time. I had some friends, Latvian friends and so on, who -- who were very nice to me and enjoyed associating with me and so on. So life was too busy to worry, and worrying is not going to change it anyway. I -- one of my favorite philosophers is Schopenhauer,

once said that when you are concerned about a calamity that may happen in the future -- there are really two kinds of calamities, there is the -- the calamity that you know it's going to happen, but you don't know when. The second kind is, it may or may not happen on a particular date that is already fixed. So in the first case, you should act as if this calamity was going to happen in the very distant future, so don't worry about it. In the second case, yes, the date's approaching, but let's hope for the best. And actually that's good advice, and so I pretty much live by that. So I can't remember ever being really depressed and so on, it was a game to survive and I f -- I felt that I was going to do my best and just hope I did the right thing each time when I came to some decision point.

Q: So there was a part of this that was almost an adventure?

A: Yes. Yes, in fact, this was certainly one of the stronger emotions the -- the night that I was arrested, that I felt this was an injustice, these people had no right to arrest me, I was a half Jew. I almost believed it myself. Chutzpah. Yes.

Q: Did you feel conflict -- conflicted at the time about friends or family who were taken away? You talked about how 55 years later you s -- you'd reflected on this.

A: Yes.

Q: On had you taken a different path. At the time, did you think about that at all?

A: I thought about it. A number of our relatives were in Riga, so we only had indirect information. There was one postcard that came from my aunt saying that her husband and son were in the countryside. She believed it, perhaps, or maybe this was her code word, but this was clear they'd been rounded up within the first few weeks of the German occupation and shot. And I suspected so much at the time; by then we knew what the game was. Those in -- in Libau were mainly elderly relatives. My grandfather, of course, war arrested on Rosh Hashonah. My

grandmother, who was also in her 80's was put to work cleaning the mortar off bricks from bombed out buildings. But -- but she was again arrested in this mid-December action and she was shot, my great-aunt, and -- and so they were picked off. There weren't all that -- that many of them, but they were picked off one after the other, the men jun -- in July, and the women, at latest, December. And I understand that the others did too. One of them after the war, I found out, was still alive as late as '44, but then died in concentration camp. And so I -- I didn't really know about some of the individuals, especially in Riga, but I pretty well expected that few, if any, would survive. And there was nothing I could do for them.

Q: Just must have been an odd feeling at the time, to see other people taken out, or -- you know.

A: Yes. I -- you can't let the, sort of emotions and so on, really overwhelm you. It is very sad, but somehow you -- you realize that your primary task is to survive in spite of it. A-And, I mean, do the best you can and just try to rise to each challenge. Yes, it's a -- it's a great injustice that the Jews are being killed, but the most constructive thing I co -- I could make -- I could do is try to survive myself. And if there was an opportunity that -- certainly I would have bi -- would have liked to help them, but it was -- was dangerous.

Q: Do you think there is something about the way you were raised, the way your parents are, that enabled you to pull this off in a way that other people might not have been able to? Are there certain qualities?

A: The most important thing probably was not to look Jewish. This was always a ve -- almost a -- a joke among relatives, friends and so on when they first met us, they -- they said, well, they -- they don't look Jewish, my brother and I, and so on. Well -- and at the time it was of an oddity, but i-it -- it was -- was no practical consequences, but suddenly the consequence became very

important. They were -- alright, I'll probably come to that a little later. Do you have another question that you want to check?

Q: It seems that in a way you had a sort of contradictory approach in terms of dealing with the Germans.

A: Yeah.

Q: On one hand, you followed through on whatever you needed to, you reported when you had to.

A: Yeah.

Q: At the same time, you said you were a half Jew.

A: Yes.

Q: So i-it makes me wonder when you would report for -- or when they were interested in inducting you into the military.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you expect to be rejected by saying you were a half Jew? And if you hadn't been rejected, did you think about what that might have involved?

A: Yes. Let me take up this whole complex of military service. In -- after Stalingrad, Goebbels gave a famous speech in Berlin, s -- asking the audience, carefully handpicked audience, do you want total war and they all shouted yes? And then he said, yes we'll have total war and it means such and such, and yes, it's total war. Well, one of the consequence of total war is that the Germans suddenly decided that they were going to get -- they ca -- whatever help they can get from whatever quarter. So they established a draft in Latvia, set up a Latvian SS legion. Previously they had organized only police battalions which were used in some fairly low level capacity fighting guerillas be-behind the front lines, so -- but these were going to be combat

divisions of the Waffen SS. And they -- I think they said that there's six years, around 1919 to 1924, wherever that went out, to report to military for -- were going to be inducted. And it took several months for them to set everything up, so my brother's turn, he was born in 1924 came in about November of 1943. And it -- he was summoned by the military authorities, he passed the physical as anybody would have, and he was sent off to Latvian police battalion in Riga. They had organized a special company called the labor company there, and this was a gathering place for racial dregs. There were some surviving Gypsies -- majority of Gypsies had been killed, he the half Jew. There were some Latvian ethnic Poles because normally the Poles were just one sn -- notch above Jews, and some Ukrainians, and whatnot, I mean -- so they were put in this special unit for basic training and one day they got a pep talk, and they said, you will be sent to the toughest combat. Those of you who prove themselves, will have a place in the new Europe, which was Hitler's slogan for what was going to come after the war, and those that don't, well, beware. So, what choice do you have? But then i-if -- few weeks later, the -- they s -- the German liaison officer apparently decided that it wasn't right that a half Jew should be wearing a German police uniform, and so he s -- ordered that my brother be dismissed. He -- my brother wrote a petition which I still have, asking to be allowed to fight against Bolshevism, which was terribly important and so forth. And the co-company commander, Latvian approved it, the battalion commander, also Latvian, approved it, the German liaison officer rejected it. Supposedly he said he knew of one place in Germany where some half Jew with some particular merits was allowed to st -- to stay in the German police, but lacking these special merits, my brother didn't qualify, so he was sent home. And he had to -- barely arrived home than the draft board got after him and said, well you'll have to come for another examination and we will just draft you in the Waffen SS. And my brother said, well the police didn't want him, oh the Waffen

SS is different, they're not as choosy. Well, before he could appear there, he got sick with -- with typhoid and diphtheria, was put in a hospital. My mother visited him several times and she felt that the personnel were anti-Semitic, maybe they had seen that he was circumcised, gave him very bad care, and he died. A day or so before he died, he told her -- he was already in -- in fever, he told her that he had to [indecipherable] he had a -- a bad dream that he had to climb su -- a mountain of death, which is strange that -- this premonition. And the next day he died. So this was a very hard blow for me because we had become very close since -- at the time we -- I had one or two other friends, but we were much closer, very reliant on one another. Was nothing to do, eventually my turn would come, I was two years younger. And realizing that my turn would come soon, I thought, well anything was better than serving in -- in the ground forces. Air force was the lead unit, it was out of the question. I tried to volunteer for the navy, and they said, well sorry, we can't take half Jews. Then there was the German labor organization, but normally they took people at 17 f-for [indecipherable] anything to gain time, that may -- may be better than military service, again they wouldn't take me. And then, at the end of July '44, they -- a notice appeared in the paper that everybody born in 1926 was to appear for induction. And the Russians had been advancing with giant strides into Latvia, at the rate of, you know, sometimes 30 - 50 miles a day, and at that rate they would have been in my hometown within a few days. The result is that of some 500 young men of that age group, only about eight showed up for induction. Two half Jews. Me, and the real one, his mother was Greek. We did not dare take any chances, cause if the Russians weren't there the next day, or in a few days, if we hadn't shown up for induction this would have been a wonderful excuse for them to kill us. The Latvians could play games, they could hide on a farm and so on. We didn't have these connections, we couldn't have done it, so nothing -- no, we showed up for induction. And then they were ready to draft us, but then we

said we are half Jews, oh well, that shouldn't be much of a problem. And I said, well my f -- my brother was in -- inducted in the police battalion, then he was discharged a half Jew. Oh no, no, the SS is different, but to be on the safe side, we'll check with headquarters, and they gave me a temporary deferment until further notice, and also the other half Jew. And -- well, again, play for time. Just about the same time, since the Russians were advancing very quickly, a lot of people were afraid that the Russians would take my hometown, and they would be under the Russians again and by then the Germans were sufficiently indebted to the Latvians that they decided that Latvians could, in principle, seek refuge in Germany, but subject to political clearance, that they were reliable. So we felt that it was a question of a mount -- Mohammed going to the mountain because w-we could have sat there forever waiting for the -- the western allies to come to Latvia, it wasn't going to happen, that we had to move west, and this was our chance. So it turned out that , well the -- the first thing to do was to get this political clearance. And I had to go to the very same police that had wanted to arrest me and -- and shoot me a f -- a few years earlier. Filled out the form, and then every hour a policeman would come out with a stack of forms that had been at -- ei-either accept or rejected, and he would call out the names, and so I had to -- took time off from work, just stand there and wait, because I didn't want my name to be called every hour because there would be enough people to -- who would recognize it, and I might be in deep trouble. So, as soon as my n -- my name and my mother's name was -- was called, I promptly got the slips, looked at them, and they were both stamped okay, approved to emigration. I don't know what files they checked. We were on their death list a couple of years earlier, and now all of a sudden we're kosher again. Was absurd. Th-The tape --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, yeah. So they -- there was a notation on my sl-slip saying that for the time being, is not permitted to leave because I'm a man between 16 and 60 and they have to be kept in Latvia. Well, my mother, in her usual way said, I don't want to go anywhere without you, let's drop it. I said, no, no, no. Let's try to get some papers for you. The next step was to get an I.D. card, and -- to emigrate into Germany. And I had -- my mother's passport had a couple of very serious handicaps. One was her Jewish first name, Rachel. And I had taken that out with sodium hypochlorite [indecipherable] a budding chemist, and there's some -- still a nice stain on the passport, showing where that was. And the second one, her m-maiden name was Scheftelovich, a very Jewish sounding name, and Leventhals, which -- which, come to think of it, Leventhal is also a Jewish name. And these -- these double names have a strange origin from Tsarist times because in the Tsarist days when -- when somebody was drafted into the army, that was for 25 years, which means you can just say goodbye to a normal life, no marriage, no children and so forth. And so the game was to avoid military service at all costs. I don't know exactly how the game was played, but apparently one of the tricks was to find some childless families that would sort of pretend that your child was theirs. And so that my grandfather's children were all farmed out to different families and so each t-time, each such incident gave rise to another double name. My mother ended up a Scheftelovich-Leventhals. So we had to go to the -- again to the kibice commissar's office, and apply f-for -- and se -- an I.D. card for my mother. And standing in line, I looked over the girls that were taking care of these applications and I tried to pick the dumbest one. She was mentally slow and seemed confused. Anyway, when my turn came, she was -- was bewildered by these multiple names, and so, on my mother's passport, and she was quite happy to let me dictate to her what she was to write. So first of all I told her to write just Leventhals. The Latvian spelling didn't look -- to a German eyes, didn't look too obviously like Leventhal.

And -- but -- and Scheftelovich was completely edited out this way. And then she said, what nationality? I said, write Volksdeutsche. German. So she did. Fine, but then she had to take it into her boss to -- to sign, and the -- the boss saw Volksdeutsche. Are you registered with Miss So and So, who apparently was the person there that kept track of all the -- the ethnic Germans. And I said no. “Oh, then you can’t claim to be Volksdeutsche.” So he told the girl, “Why did you write Volksdeutsche? Cross it out, and write Latland” -- Latvia. That -- yeah, that -- okay, that meant -- he didn’t say to write that she was Latvian, she just had to write Latvia, the country. But -- and although Volksdeutsche was crossed out, it was still legible. And this was just good enough, when we got to Germany later to pretend that she was a Volksdeutsche from Latland, which is the somewhat quaint way of -- of saying that. So we had Aryanized her by another couple of -- of steps.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is tape two, side B, of an interview with Professor Edward Anders, on February 28th, 1997.

A: I have to give you a name.

Q: One question that I wanted to go back to. In your efforts to get inducted into the German or the Latvian military, at the same time saying that you were Jewish, or part Jewish, did you expect that that would disqualish -- disqualify you, or had you -- was your intention really to become part of the military?

A: I most certainly did not want to be -- to join the military, because this was the last year of the war, and the conditions were pretty grim. Being in an SS uniform, of course made you much more likely to be, sort of, killed if the Russians succeeded in capturing you. And conditions were

very rough at the front, so I certainly didn't want to serve in the military. But I also had no realistic way of -- of dodging the draft. Latvians could go and hide on a farm, they could disappear in the woods and join some of the small guerilla units. I had no such option. And of course the f -- the farther -- th-the longer those -- the war lasted, the more conspicuous were a young man of military age who were not in uniform. So I was prepared to take my chances. I certainly had to tell them sooner rather than later I was a half Jew, but if they had said, that's quite alright, we'll draft you, I would have had no choice, would -- would have put on a uniform and been gone wherever they'd sent me. And I am very glad it never came to it.

Q: By saying you were a half Jew, did you think at some level you would be disqualified?

A: Well, from my experience -- from my brother's experience, he was disqualified for a police battalion, but not for the Waffen SS. At least that was our understanding at -- at the time he died, that they would have been glad to draft him. And maybe the rules had changed, so I s -- half expected to be drafted, but I hoped I wouldn't.

Q: Did you think about what you might have had to do if you had been drafted?

A: Yes, the Waffen SS, it's sort of an oddity of German military organization, that they put the so-called Latvian legionnaires into the Waffen SS. They could just as well have put them in the regular army, because they had essentially no connection with the SS, and the atrocities that are associated with the s -- SS. For some reason they organized these foreign legions, so to speak, as part of the Waffen SS, which was an elite organization and -- but without all the connotations that go with it. Naturally, among the Latvian legionnaires, there were a number wh-who were, especially among the officers [indecipherable] had been involved in killing Jews and so forth. And other were anti-Semites just from way back. But by and large it was a -- sort of a fairly average bunch of Latvians. They -- if taken prisoner by the Russians -- of course, since these

were nominally Soviet citizens as far as they were concerned, of course they were all likely to be treated very badly, possibly killed or sent to the gulag or whatever. But th-that's something you pretty much had to accept in those days. It's just that I had no real alternative, and as a -- as a half Jew, I could not dodge the draft.

Q: Okay, you had -- you were talking about the fact that you and your mother were cleared, politically to go west --

A: Yes.

Q: -- into Germany. And I'll let you pick up your story.

A: Yes. So at th -- at this point we had a new I.D. card for my mother, which was significantly Aryanized, and we -- but we didn't have anything for me, and I was not allowed to go. The Russians had stopped their advance temporarily, but then came September they were advancing again, and th -- th-they -- before long, in -- in early October, they al-also managed to take Riga, and the Germans decided that they were going to make my home province of Courland into a -- essentially a fortress. So everybody who was not working was then pressed into service to go out in the countryside and dig trenches all day and come back late in the evening. My mother and I had to do that. After a few days I had developed some serious problems with my ankle, and some young German medics decided that I was not suitable for hard physical work, and he gave me an exemption so I could stay home. There were very frequent air raids. I stayed home and sort of cooked meals and so on. My mother went out to -- to dig trenches, and my principle in those days was never to wash the dishes until evening because you never knew whether the house would be destroyed by bombs, in that case why waste the effort of washing dishes first? So this -- we somehow managed to last through September, and then in early October the Russians managed to -- to punch through to the Baltic in -- somewhere in Lithuania, and -- effectively

cutting off what was left of Latvia. At that point, apparently, for a few days the Germans decided that things looked a bit risky and they had better evacuate those civilians who were friendly to them. So all of a sudden this restriction that men were not allowed to leave was lifted, and I got the green light. Of course, we promptly signed up to leave, and managed to get on a ship, and were taken to Danzig, arrived there in the middle of the night. I produced my I.D. card from this home study institute and it was duly stamped by -- with the immigration stamp with the official German eagle, so it ha -- I now had an I.D. that at least had semi-official status, thanks to the immigration stamp.

Q: How many were on this -- this boat with you?

A: Probably a couple thousand people. It was a fairly sizeable freighter and it was full. They -- they took as many people as they could possibly put on it. And of -- the military situation again was quite fluid, there were frequent air raids on -- on Libau, and one never knew whether the Russians wouldn't manage to -- to take the rest of -- of Latvia in the next few days. As it happened, that part of Latvia remained under German rule until the end of the war. They finally surrendered after the -- the armistice, and then the Russians occupied it. So we got to -- to Germany, and were put on the train and ended up in the Stargard transient camp, which is -- is a camp that probably metamorphosed several times from concentration camp to camp for foreign laborers, and then for friendly allies and so on. And within a few days I came down with diphtheria. I was put in the hospital ward of the camp, and my mother had a great fear, having lost one son already to bad medical care by anti-Semitic personnel, she didn't want to -- to leave me there, so she managed to, by a little bit of bribery and fast talking, she managed to find a place for me in an auxiliary hospital in -- in town that was a special diphtheria hospital, which was endemic at the time. Th -- mainly children, but also a number of adults. It was run by some

sisters, the M.D.s were a couple of Italian prisoners of war, and I checked in and stayed there for three weeks, and was discharged more or less cured. We didn't want to go back to the camp. We had, meanwhile, taken up contact with a German family in the Sudetenland in Kometau. It was the family of a railroad man. He and his wife had lived with us for a number of months i-in -- in -- in our apartment. And we had been nice to them, and they said, well, i-if you ever want to come to -- to Germany, then let us know, we'll be glad to -- to host you. So it was very important at this stage, if you want to get out of that camp, to have a contact, have an invitation. So we managed to secure the invitation, we were al-allowed to leave. We checked into a hotel, again through some bribery. The hotel, of course, you promptly had to fill out the police registration form. I began to fill it out and I came to the question whether we were half Jew or quarter Jew, and I was about to check myself off as a half Jew, and then suddenly I realized that it would be crazy to do so at this late stage. Certainly the Jews and half Jews had been deported from -- from Germany, and it would be very dangerous for me to admit that, and I also realized that here I was in -- in Germany, nobody knew me. I had no reason to tell them the truth. So I just wrote down Volksdeutsche, and that was fine, but now wa -- we had carefully saved all this wonderful correspondence with the various archives about my mother's baptismal certificate and so on. So we went through our documents and tore up everything that in any way i -- i -- i -- hinted at -- at the status as -- as -- as a half Jew, and my mother being sort of a probational -- an Aryan -- tore up all these hard won papers, tore up family pictures of my grandfaren -- parents, who looked Jewish. Anything that was incriminating and the -- we had to dispose of these papers in the toilets down the hall, so every little while we went to the toilet, there was big flush. So, anybody who was watching us would have thought that somebody must have, you know, dysentery, going to the toilet this often. Anyway, we got rid of all the -- the papers and we felt we had a new

identity. And then was just a matter of taking a train and going to our fi -- this -- our family F-Fisher in the Sudetenland.

Q: Now just before you move on --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- I want to ask you a couple questions --

A: Sure.

Q: -- about Stargard.

A: Yes.

Q: It was a transit camp, and where -- where did you say it was located?

A: It was lo-located -- the town of Stargard is fairly close to the -- what s -- used to be called Stettin, is now Szczecin, a large city. Stargard itself was a picturesque small German town, with maybe 30,000 population. I think it was fairly close to the center of town, or it wa -- the whole -- whole town wasn't very big, it was on the outskirts.

Q: Were all of the other people in this camp in your position, or were there people who were there under more forced --

A: No, at that time, as far as I could tell -- that the -- the camp had very light security, and so these were, for the most part, friendly allies, refugees from Baltic countries and those that had no better place to go, had no invitation, were sent to -- to Posner, to some other place, and others were allowed to go and see their respective hosts.

Q: And how long were you there?

A: In the camp probably, officially I was presumably still registered at the camp when I was in the hospital, but let -- let's say I may have been there four or five days before I was put in the hospital, at most. Maybe not even that long.

Q: So you could -- people could come and go from the camp, you weren't concentrated there?

A: No, well you -- you could check out of the camp if -- provided you had an invitation to go someplace else. But you were -- you could certainly go into town if you wanted or -- or f-f-for a few hours, go to the post office, and so on.

Q: As you get out of Latvia, got into Germany, did you learn more about what -- what had been happening during the war, about the concentration camps, or --

A: I didn't know of Auschwitz, of the death camps until after the war. I-I had known about concentration camps like Dachau and Buchenwald for -- for years, and I thought these were something com -- comparable to penitentiaries elsewhere. I didn't think that there was a lot of killing going on, certainly it was no Hilton, but I was totally unaware of the death camps. On the other hand, I talked to some Germans. I -- later, in -- in Kometau I sort of dated a -- a -- a German girl a few times. Was a very sensible girl and -- and she realized the war was lost, and she said, I would fully understand if we were treated the way we have treated the Jews. And it was clear from the way she said that, she knew that lots and lots of Jews had been killed. So fr -- fr -- at least for -- all those who had -- didn't deliberately shut their ears as information was available, it was widely available. But there were other people who didn't want to hear. Soldiers were -- officially were not allowed to -- to tell tales out of school, so there were rumors. And you could choose to believe the rumors, or not. Now if you had a relative that was -- had been at the front and knew about these atrocities and decide -- decided that he could trust his family when he was on home leave, and tell them the truth, he would. And then, from then on the family knew, they had it from a reliable source and if they want to take chances, they could pass information on to friends. But it was dangerous. If this sort of information eventually reaches the police, they

can trace it to their source, and you can all be in deep trouble. So, but it was certainly the thinking Germans, for the most part, had some idea of what was going on.

Q: We'll let you continue.

A: Yeah. I should sort of inter -- interpolate briefly, that I met a very outstanding German, who was just a private in the army, he was a -- an architect working in a construction battalion, who empathized very strongly with Jews, to the point where h-he gave six-sevenths of his weekly bread ration to Jews. And at his -- well, he -- he had occasionally had the opportunity to go to a place where Jewish workers were employed, and he would generally give them a signal and so that he'll leave a loaf of bread in some mutually agreed on place so that two minutes later they would stop by and pick it up and hide it. And so he had only one-third of a loaf of bread for all -- for the whole week. The -- his comrades -- he also re-refused to use the sidewalk, since it was forbidden for Jews to use, he always walked in the gutter. His comrades knew it, they teased him, said oh, Miller is making a long face, he must have seen another Jew. But it was good-natured teasing. Their own sympathies didn't go quite as far, although -- but at the same time these were basically decent people as far as I could tell. And nothing happened to him. It was perhaps significant that although the man was a -- a -- a-a architect's diploma that he was not an officer, but just a -- a plain private. So there were some decent, idealistic Germans. I met some others. We -- for a short while one of our roomers during the war was a Latvian former diplomat. And when we needed -- who was originally from Riga and then he went back to Riga. And when we needed to go to Riga to the archives, we needed a place to stay, we wrote him, and he said, we'll be very happy to have you stay with us. So he treated us very nicely. He knew our story and he could very well see through it, he was smart enough for that. So when we were there, he had invited some of his friends, and -- including a German soldier who had learned Latvian, and

they were so -- outdoing themselves, including the German soldier, in making derogatory remarks about Hitler and the Nazi regime. And these were Latvian intellectuals, and they certainly were nice to us. They could easily have done us in just on the basis on their suspicions, and they didn't. And yet it was also quite clear that they were not in sympathy with the Nazis. So they were decent people and those people were critical of the regime, but what should not be underestimated is how difficult it is to rise against the police state. Okay, shall I continue with the story? Well, we got to the -- to Kometau, and arrived at the -- the home of our -- our prospect -- the Fisher family. We had with us a sort of a s -- a small bag with five pounds of Latvian bacon. Of course, they were starved for anything like this, and they all ate to their hearts content and got sick to their stomachs, but I mean [indecipherable] used to such rich fare. We had went -- s-spent the night waiting in the station, there was no local transportation, we didn't know where to go, so we had a sleepless night, and only had to wait until daybreak before we could visit our hosts. So we arrived there midaft -- mid-morning, and anyway by -- sort of shortly after noon we decided we need a nap. The family said, why don't you go to our bedroom, and just stretch out and sleep. Aft -- and we left our -- our bags downstairs. Afterwards when we came down I noticed that my mother had not locked the bag, and in her suitcase the uppermost item was a Jewish prayer book, which she had taken with her and had put in the most accessible spot in an unlocked suitcase. I do not know -- these people were rather nosey, I do not know whether they ever opened the suitcase, whether they saw it. The prayer book was in German, this was for people who, like many Jewish women of the time, didn't read Hebrew, and it was quite obvious what it was. If they had looked, they didn't breathe a word to anyone, which was rather characteristic of many people. Their -- I don't think they were really out of sympathy with Hitler but they drew the line at not really wanting to be involved in any -- anything hostile -- a -- any

hostile actions against Jews. There were Sudeten Germans, not all Sudeten Germans -- Schindler was a S-Sudeten German too. Not all of them were -- were as decent as Schindler [indecipherable] these -- I don't think these people were anywhere near it. But it's another example of people who could have done us in and chose not to. So anyway, we were welcome to stay there only as long as -- as the bacon lasted. When that was eaten up it was intimated to us, well you better find yourself some housing. We went to the appropriate office, and was -- appeared there as Volksdeutsche and at first they weren't too re-responsive, but my mother began to [indecipherable] and was very good at making a good impression and before long she had persuaded them that they should get us a furnished roo -- room somewhere. And they had -- it turned out they -- they had room that was ostensibly reserved for somebody else, it was in a very nice part of town in a very nice apartment, and they probably didn't want your average, sort of eastern European refugee there, but after looking my mother over, and me, we looked respectable, so they as-assigned that room to us. Well, there was actually -- there was no furniture, but then they gave us special permits to buy some very cheap, sort of very e-emergency, essentially unpainted furniture. Some straw for straw mattresses, little stove, just the bare necessities. This was late '44. Large parts of Europe were certainly living under quite difficult conditions, but the Germans still managed to look after their own. We were now considered their own, so we were able as -- as refugees, were able to get at least the minimal necessities for life, as well as [indecipherable] halfway adequate ration cards. Well, the next problem of course, was that I was 18 years old at the time, I was not in uniform, I [indecipherable] this was most unusual situation. The German army should have come after me, they never did. But f-fortunately, something prevented me from -- fr-from being put in uniform. Now, we -- my mother and I sort of had to go shopping until we got settled, and I kept telling

her, please don't walk so fast. And the problem wasn't that she was walking too fast, it was just that my heart was giving out. This is a complication that often happens when adults get diphtheria, that they get myocarditis, which is an inflammation of the heart muscle. So, before long I was in bed, and one of our neighbors was a doctor, she came up, listened to my heart, shook her head and said you better get yourself to a hospital. So I was in the hospital for two months, bedridden with myocarditis. And meanwhile the labor office had decided that they couldn't put me in the army, but somehow it didn't seem right that an 18 year old should not be in uniform, and they had just the ideal job for me. I was to be a -- a guard at a -- a factory, guarding prisoners of war and forced laborers. These we-were armed guards with -- with rifles, and who were -- whose job it was to get the last ounce of effort out of these poor, undernourished people. And a number of them were killed after the war. So while I was in the hospital, I kept getting one summons after another to appear there, and to b-be sort of signed up for this par-paramilitary unit. I always write them, sorry, I'm still bedridden, still in the hospital. Soon as I got out of the hospital they again want to put me in that -- so -- in that unit, and I said sorry, but I am s-still quite sick and I c -- I'm not yet ready to work. So they sent me to one of their doctors who told me just to -- to do a few bends and then checked my pulse, which was well over 200 by then. So he said okay, you -- you're unfit to work, I'll exempt you from work until May 15th. Well, the war ended on May eighth, very conveniently, so I had no further trouble from that source. And while I was in the hospital there were several air raids, one was in our -- our town, but the others were generally to other cities. And I was there the night that Dresden was bombed, and it was an air raid, we didn't hear any bombs falling, or any anti-aircraft artillery, so we just stepped out on the street to look, and we saw flashes of light at the horizon in the direction of Dresden. And there was a mountain range between us, so we couldn't see too much, but we saw

these white flashes, then gradually they were replaced by a red glow which rose higher and higher in the sky. And realizing what was happening there, it was rather scary. And of course, afterwards, you know, that night 60,000 people got killed in Dresden. The Germans still feel this was a war crime, it was done with the British and the Royal Air Force. So we were not in great danger, there were a few more bombings, in one of the [indecipherable] towns 500 people got killed. There were also bombings in Libau, but the closest danger was that once or twice a bomb fell within about a hundred meters from us, but they were small bombs, and other than breaking windows, nothing much happened. Well, we were just listening to the -- to th-the radio and managed to get the BBC, and we knew pretty well what was happening, and our German neighbors also realized what was happening, and -- and by April they -- they knew the war was lost and they were sort of wondering how to prepare themselves for the next [indecipherable] change that was emi -- imminent. They -- one sort of triumph that came our way is that the neighbors on the ground floor were perfectly decent people, but since they lived in the ground floor apartment, it was their duty to -- to hoist the German flag on official occasions, and they decided at this point that this flag with a swastika was s-somewhat a incriminating material and they want to get rid of it. They decided to burn it, but they couldn't burn it in their own apartment because people could have looked in through the window. So we were on -- on the second floor and they asked if they could come and burn the flag in our stove and we were absolutely delighted. Something else that I -- I me-meant to mention is that -- is that living in the si -- in constant danger and not knowing exactly when the police would come to take us away and what would happen after that, we thought it was a good idea to prepare ourselves and get some poison. So, as a budding chemist I found a recipe for making potassium cyanide and I cooked up a batch for myself and my mother and we carried it with us until sometime after the

end of the war, until we could get out of the Russian occupation zone. Fortunately we never had to use it. The stuff is vile tasting and it's a bit ironic that as far as taste is concerned, the -- the gas, hydrogen cyanide at Auschwitz is -- is less disagreeable than -- than swallowing potassium cyanide, but the difference is, if you decide to kill yourself with potassium cyanide, that is preferable to being killed against your wishes. And so to us this would have been definitely the -- the lesser evil. Then we f -- about a week before the end of war, we heard that American troops had -- were within -- within about 50 kilometers of Kometau where we lived, and the Russian troops were still 300 kilometers away, and we knew nothing of the Yalta agreement. So we thought that the race goes to the swiftest and expected the Americans to show up any day. And then nothing happened, the Russians kept advancing and the Americans were standing pat. So it was once again a case of Mohammed going to the mountain. Suddenly the war was over, it was Mar -- M-May the eighth. M -- in the last few days of the war we had seen long processions of people on foot, m-most of the time from the east. It was a strange mixture of people, the occasional concentration camp inmate in striped garb, the occasional SS man, guarding him, or just looking out for -- for his own interest. I particularly remember one Jew who -- who really looked pretty awful. He was clearly undernourished, but from his face you could tell that the man was close to losing his mind. I don't know what became of him. And it was pathetic. There were some others that didn't look quite so bad, but this was a s -- a very sad case.

Q: So what you're describing is death marches from the camps west -- going west, or --

A: It was -- it was a mic -- a strange mixture. There were a lot of civilians, there were some s- soldiers in uniform, and then the occasional camp inmate. Presumably he wasn't free to go where he wanted, there was -- was a guard nearby, but these weren't large contingents of refugees, this was not one of -- all of concentration camp inmates. This was not one of the main routes of the

death marches, but there was just a sprinkling of these people. I -- I don't know where they came from, so on. Well, came the -- the eighth of May. Of course we had been delighted before to hear that Hitler had committed suicide, although that's not the way the story was told. But then, on the eighth of May the ma -- the war was over, Germany had surrendered, my mother went out on the street, and an -- an old lady asked her just what is all this commotion about? People are so fa -- hustling and bustling. And ma -- my mother said, "The war is over." "Oh," this lady said, "wonderful. So we won." "No," my mother said, "Germany lost." "How dare you say that? I'm going to report you to the Gestapo." Well, it's remarkable that on the eighth of May, that there was still a German woman who didn't realize that the war -- that they were losing the war. That in itself is a -- is an interesting topic, how a number of people clung to the hope that they might still win the war. Course, Goebbels had all this propaganda about these secret weapons, that he had -- one -- he said at one point that he had seen the new s-secret, retaliatory weapons and they made the blood freeze in your veins. Well, it was a complete bluff, there was no such thing. After the V-2 they have nothing more. But now the problem was the war was over and there was still no sign of either Americans or Russians. And then we realized the Russians were advancing and we had better get out. And in place it was -- where the Americans were supposed to be with Karlsbad. So we went to the station and -- just to see what kind of transportation there was, and lo and behold there was a Red Cross train with so-some French prisoners of war, a former Lithuanian p-prime minister who had been kept political prisoner in some castle, the Belgian priests, the Crown Prince of Montenegro. So, a weird assortment. Anyway, we s -- my mother so fast talked her way onto that train and we were allowed to get on. And so the train traveled a few kilometers, stopped for a few hours, travel again. One station on the way I saw an SS man in full regalia, marching, parading up and down. The war had been over for two days but this was still

unoccupied territory, and it was scary to -- to see this man still completely self confident, as if he were on top of the world. Anyway. Then, a few kilometers further the train stopped and then there's -- I forget who it was, came and announced that all civilians and so on, refugees, get out, you have to get off the train. Only the people who are authorized by the Red Cross can stay. So we were 10 kilometers from Karlsbad, took our suitcases and just walked the last 10 kilometers. It was not a very good thing for my heart because turned out that I had a good relapse at the time, so -- which kept me bedridden in -- in Karlsbad for a few more months. But we got to Karlsbad in the afternoon, walked around town, saw an American Jeep and were delighted. Went to bed, and we managed to find a refuge with -- with our neighbors who had taken us there, they had some friends, we managed to sleep in someone's kitchen. Thought the next morning, we must go to the -- find the am -- American whatever, military office and sort of report there and say who we are and just ask for protection. The next morning we were just -- we walked downstairs and a woman stopped us in the stairs, hey you people, you better hide your watches, the town is full of Russians. The Russians were great watch collectors. Some of them would wear as many as five wristwatches proudly on the wrist. So what had happened is that [indecipherable] the Yalta agreement, the town was divided between Americans and Russians at the time. We were on the wrong, sort of, bank of the river, th-the Americans were on the other side. It's -- few people managed to swim ashore during the night. We -- I was in no condition to do that. The soldiers that we had seen in the Jeep the night before, they were just having a joyride through the -- what was to be the Russian sector of the town, and th-they have then returned to their own sector. We did manage to get across the American sector and talk to a major who heard me out and said well, why don't you wait a few days until we -- we have established control over the -- the town and then come back again. Well, it turned out there was no coming back because they pulled out

the next day. They turned out the -- turned the whole town over to the Russians, and so once again we were in the clutches of the Russians. And once again it was a great convenience to have -- to be sick and not being sort of fit to be transported back to l -- to Latvia. Well, I should really stop at this point and maybe go back to the war time experiences, because we are now in the post-war era. The only thing that's left of the post-war era would be the Nuremberg Trials, or trial.

Q: Okay, what would you like to --

A: Yeah, I can perhaps backspace --

Q: -- s-speak -- s-speak about now?

A: Yes. Okay, in 1948 I was a student in Munich, and somehow I saw an appeal to --

Q: Okay, well so you -- so you are going to continue on?

A: This was -- will only deal with the --

Q: Era?

A: -- with the -- with -- no, with the war time -- with the -- the hike -- German high command trial, Nuremberg Trial because th -- my other --

Q: Okay, why don't you -- in d-do you --

A: I-If you want me to I can talk about the -- the other stuff but th-that's our post war experiences, little dangers to life or limb.

Q: Well, I just -- I guess, you know, up-upon the point at which you felt truly liberated and safe.

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: You know, what -- what kind of decisions did you make, how did you make them, where did you go?

A: Yeah. Alright, until I got to the American zone i-in Bavaria, yes, okay that's a couple more minutes, tiny bit more maybe. Alright, so I was in Karlsbad, once again bedridden, unfit to be shipped back to Latvia, and therefore safe. I-I sort -- registered with the -- with the Czech police and -- and registered as Jew, f-first time in years. The Czechs were quite chauvinistic. They had four levels of ration cards, the largest food rations were given to Czechs and Slovaks. I think the second category was to friendly aliens, and this included Jews. The third one was for Austrians. They still had some soft spot for their former Austro-Hungarian masters, and the lowest one was for Germans. So we were still qualified for num -- for number two treatment. Well, it was fine, it was a relatively a com -- relatively a comfortable place to be in. But then, since Czechoslovakia had -- was supposed to become independent and the Russian a-and the American troops were supposed to be withdrawn, by October the Russians were trying to round up their nationals and ship them back and my illness was -- had regressed far enough that it was no longer an excuse and we realized that we would be in trouble if we didn't want to go back to Latvia again. So, we didn't quite know what to do and then fortunately we met a Romanian Jewish woman who was a lot more worldly than we were, we were really quite naïve in spite of all these experiences. And she told us, look, there is -- the Americans are in Marienbad and there's train service available, why don't you just get on the train and go over there? And so we did, first as reconnaissance and it was relatively simple. The train stopped at one point, the Russian guard came on board, check everybody's I.D. card and then the train moved on a couple hundred meters and then an American came on board and ch-checked people's I.D. cards, and a Czech policeman also came. So we quickly realized that the smart place to be is in the farthest corner of the car where it was hard for the -- for the guard to take a close look at your I.D. card. So I had got my old school I.D. card that you just saw, because Latvian has the same diacritical marks as Czech, so to the

Russian this looked like Czech, to the American it probably looked like Czech, and to the -- I don't know what it looked like to the Czech, maybe he didn't have 20/20 vision. So we managed to get through without any difficulty, trying to keep a poker face as usual. We got to Marienbad, found where the -- the American sort of -- the sa -- sa -- military commander was, went to his -- his office. They had -- shall I stop? Yeah.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is tape three, side A, of an interview with Professor Edward Anders, on February 28th, 1997, conducted by Randy Goldman.

A: Okay, so we went to the American military office. There was a German interpreter whose English was more fluent than mine. He had a hammer and sickle in his buttonhole, was obviously a German communist, or at least [indecipherable] this would make him a little more acceptable to the Czechs at the time. We told our s -- our story to them, and the American officer shook his head and says, I'm sorry you're -- you're living in Karlsbad, that's under the Russians, there's nothing we can do for you. So we had long faces, and went out in the corridor and the German communist came after us and said, look, people, there's an easy solution. Why don't you just come here again, check into a hotel, then you will have established residence here. And we have a standing rule that any foreigners not wishing to return to their home country will be taken to the U.S. zone of Germany. And so all you have to do is check into a hotel, and come back. Good advice. Went back to Karlsbad, packed up our belongings, took the same train back, got into a hotel, appeared there and things worked like -- like a charm. We were now under American jurisdiction, supposed to be shipped off to Germany. We were then told that the very next morning we were to appear at eight o'clock someplace, and we would be put on a truck and taken to -- to a transient camp from which we would then go to Germany. So we appeared there at -- and we were the first ones in line and the line formed behind us, and I then, looking around to the -- the other people, everybody had baggage tags with their names, only we didn't. I thought, well, it was a smart idea, you can become separated from your baggage and this is an easier way to trace it. I better go and get some baggage tags. So I went looking, stationery stores and so on for baggage tags, and since I could only speak German to the Czechs, they didn't

really want to sell anything to a German, so I was -- they shook their heads and sent me from -- I went from store to store. By the time I finally got these tags and came back, a big trailer truck, U.S. army trailer truck had arrived. People were being loaded on it, we'd lost our place in line. We were just about the last ones to get on, in the very back. Well, turned out this once -- once again saved our lives. We were then -- truck went on its way, on the road to Pilsen. Was a light rain and the road started getting a bit slippery, and the driver was going a bit too fast. And I stood up in the rear of the truck and just enjoyed the feeling of sa -- wind in my face, and suddenly I -- something hit me in the forehead, it was an overhanging branch of a -- of a tree. And I promptly sat down and then the woman looked at me and started screaming, because blood was pouring down my face. I had a deep gash in my -- my -- my scalp. And before we could do anything about it, suddenly the whole truck sort of overturned; hit a tree, overturned, and I had wonderful sensation of being a tennis ball. I just flew through the air, landed in the grass, one of my suitcases beside me. I knew right away where I had some emergency bandages, so I got the bandage out, got myself bandaged up. Turned out that four people who were at the very front of the trailer, where we would have been, had -- were all killed. And there were a few more people who were injured. Before long an ambulance appeared, took me and two other people to the hospital and I was sort of st-stitched up by the Czechs and they weren't too happy about doing this for me, it wa -- they asked where I was from, and they became a little friendlier when I said I was from Latvia, I was not German. And then they want to know whether Latvians were a Slavic people, so for once I made the Latvians into Slavs and say yes, we are Slavs and [indecipherable] I got -- got treated well after that. So we got to this camp in Pilsen and before long we are shipped across the border. We arrived in the U.S. zoned in Bavaria and yes, for the first time we felt free. It was probably that time that we threw away our potassium cyanide, which was a -- an

-- an important symbolic act showing that we now felt that we were safe. So I'll s -- really like to sort of skip ahead, unless you want me to go through the rest, and just go on to 1948, when a -- I had joined the -- oh, there were a few funny incidents after the war. I en-enrolled as a student, and there was a Jewish student's organization in Munich. I didn't see any particular reason to join it, but one of my friends, Jewish friends urged me to, so I -- I joined. And no sooner had I joined when they summoned me for what they called a court of honor. They wanted me to prove that I was not a former SS man, and I said, well [indecipherable] my name is Alperovich, I can tell you a -- where we are from and so forth. How do I know that your name wasn't Goering yesterday? So once again Goering had intruded in my life. I said, here is my school I.D. see, from 1940, the one that you just saw. So he realized, few years older, but the same face, same name, so th-then they s -- let -- let me off. The second funny incident along these lines happened -- actually was three -- then, sometime later my mother was summoned before a board of rabbis to prove that she was Jewish, because they didn't believe her, she looked too Aryan for them. And she overheard the rabbis whispering among themselves, one of them said in Yiddish that, I bet her mother wasn't Jewish. That was ironic that here we had s-struggled so hard all these years to prove that we were not Jewish, and then afterward, after the war, it was just as hard to prove that we were Jewish.

Q: Why was it -- why did -- why did she need to do that? What was the rabbis role --

A: Well, as a -- as a Jew, you were eligible for better food rations and some -- some other benefits. Nothing major, but it -- it was helpful to be registered there. And the third incident was we were, of course, trying to emigrate to the U.S., and we had a bunch of papers with us, even after that s-s -- destruction session in the Stargard hotel, including some claims from my father's business, and various other papers which -- some of which turned out to be quite important in

getting a pension for my mother out -- from the Germans. And so being very law abiding citizens, there was still a -- a -- a s -- military censorship in Germany at the time, and so we inquired, we have a bunch of papers and so on, do -- is it alright to take those? You can take those, but you have to bring them to the censor first, the censor will check them over. And you can pick them up next Tuesday. So I went there next Tuesday and they said, well, sorry, well there's -- some of the documents were in Latvian and it will take us a little while to get them translated. Could you come back tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock? So I came back the next day at two o'clock, I was ushered into a Jeep, there were -- a military policeman beside me. They droo -- drove me to the CIC headquarters, that was Central Intelligence Corps of the U.S. army. And I was ushered to a room where there was a proud sign saying, into this room wa-walk the sharpest investigators in Europe. And I happened to see the file on his desk, Edward Alperovich, former Latvian SS man, wants to emigrate to the United States. And that George Alperovich, former SS -- Latvian SS man wants to emigrate to the United States. Well, George had been dead for over a year. Then they sa -- well, several years. Anyway, they started grilling me and they had a Pole who apparently worked for them. First of all they had me s -- stripped me naked and they searched me everywhere for tattoos, because SS men often had tattoos, couldn't find anything. Well, then the American sat across from me, he was carrying on a conversation with the Pole. Did you see? He's circumcised. No, for me it's sure. What he meant to say, I'm sure that he is an SS man. So they -- they searched and they hemmed and they hawed, and I was very calm, and I said -- he said, were you in Prague? I say, yeah, I was in Prague for a couple days after the war, I was trying to get the visa to go to Switzerland, which of course they wouldn't give me. And they asked me a few other question and they said -- I said, well, when was I supposed to be in the SS? Just tell me the time and I will show you documents where I was at the

time. I was never in the SS, it was the hospital much of the time. They wouldn't tell me when. There was -- in that suitcase there were letters from my brother when he was in the Latvian police battalion. There was some correspondence with some SS office about getting his passport back after he had been discharged from the police battalion, they hadn't returned his civilian passport. And my mother also tried to get some kind of a pension because he had died right after being discharged from military service, and was a good chance that he got his typhoid and diphtheria when he was still in the military. So there was correspondence, we had saved it, we had nothing to hide, and they got terribly suspicious. So in the end they gave up on me and let me go. But it was really funny that the shoe was now on the other foot, having to prove that I was not an SS man.

Q: Were you, for any period of time in a DP camp?

A: Yes. I was in -- near Munich. When we came to Bavaria we were shipped off there, and I worked as a draftsman there, and then just -- just trying to find out what options I had and I -- I heard that some -- UNRRA had opened the university in -- in Munich, and so I went there just to see how do I get back on an educational track. And it turned out that they were running a refresher course for people who had lost their high school diplomas. And they said why don't you take this class, in about four or six weeks of classes and there'll be exams afterwards. So I said, can't really, because I have not finished high school, I was still three years short. Oh, take it anyway. So anyway, I t -- I took classes, and managed to als -- to move out of the DP camp, and to Munich, passed the exam and I was admitted to the university.

Q: So you were in the DP camp how long?

A: I think a couple of weeks perhaps.

Q: What was the name?

A: Fernwald.

Q: In those few weeks --

A: Yes?

Q: -- you, I guess for the first time, met people who had really been through a very different side of the war.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you describe that? Your reaction to it, what people looked like?

A: As far as I remember, there were no people that I could identify as concentration camp inmates. There were some Hungarian Jews who had, as far as I know had been -- had not suffered too much. How and why I -- I didn't have a chance to find out. There were a number of people who had re -- entered Germany from Poland, from -- from Russia and so on, in the first few months after the war when the Iron Curtain wasn't very tight, and so most of them did not look like the -- the really sort of hard core concentration camp survivors. Ea-Each of them had a different story, of course, but th -- I th -- I think the -- the real hard core survivors, they were mainly in the British zone, that's where Dachau was -- no, no, Dachau wasn't in Bavaria, but I'm not sure what became of the Dachau people, Bergen-Belsen was in the British zone.

Q: But at this point you learned a lot more about what had gone on in Poland in -- in the camps?

A: By then, of course the German newspapers were carrying a lot of this. There were documentaries shown o-on -- in the movie theaters and so forth, so it -- and in fact, I had seen the first pictures in Bergen-Belsen, yeah, soon as they came out -- n-not as soon as -- they came out late April, probably when Bergen-Belsen was liberated. And I certainly saw those no later than when -- when I was in Czechoslovakia, because th-the Czechs would certainly play up German

atrocities. They weren't especially partial to the Jews and so on, but this was very graphic evidence of how the Germans had behaved.

Q: Was this surprising to you, that it had really been so drastic?

A: To a considerable extent, yes, because it's one thing to hear in the abstract about concentration camps and so on. We had a ghetto in town, we saw the Jews. They didn't look th -- s -- badly un-undernourished. I'm sure they didn't get quite enough to eat, but it wasn't nearly as bad as in -- in the concentration camps, this extreme emaciation, with people looked like walking skeletons, and so on, this was total news to me, and i-it shocked me.

Q: So you enrolled in this UNRRA university?

A: Yes.

Q: Near Munich or in Munich?

A: It was in Munich, right.

Q: Yeah.

A: For awhile I commuted, left the -- the camp every morning at five a.m., and then returned the evening around eight or nine. And that got to be a little too much, so I managed to get a room in -- furnished room in town, moved out of the camp, mo-moved into town.

Q: Was your mother still with you?

A: Yes. We had been together all -- all this time. Yes, so anyway, I passed the exam and was then eligible to enroll at the UNRRA university. I also, shortly after, when the University of Munich opened, I registered there as well, which was a good thing because the UNRRA university was closed after a year and a half, forcibly by UNRRA. They just suddenly withdrew support overnight. There -- there was a lot of unhappiness among the students because we were really hopeful that this was something new, an international university and s -- and so on, but

anyway, they -- it -- it was destroyed by -- by UNRRA. Anyhow, so then I was a student at the University of Munich, and somehow in -- in ’48 I saw an appeal from the prosecutors at the -- one of the Nuremberg Trials of the German high command, asking for witnesses from the Baltic countries who could testify against the commander in chief of the army group north, Field Marshall Vonlabe. And yes, I was from a Baltic country and I realized that, having seen that -- the license plates of the germ -- of the trucks that rounded up Jews, that a -- and having heard the si -- German soldier brag how they had killed -- shot the Jews and so forth, I-I -- I could say a thing or two. So I re -- I-I notified them that I was available, they asked me to come up to Nuremberg. I was then interrogated by one of the prosecution staff, who showed me on the famous Einsatzgruppen a report by Stahlecker, and that’s where I saw this hideous map with the coffins and so on for the -- for the first time, showing how many people they had killed. He gave me a number of copies of documents and I told him about my experiences, and he felt this was quite useful information that would implicate Vonlabe. Then I -- he got onto Russians and communists and so forth and I could tell that as soon as I started telling him about my bad experiences with the Russians, so on, he sort of froze, he became quite uncomfortable. A few years later there were headlines, fr-front page headlines in the New York papers that two American prosecution staff members had defected to Russia, he was one of them. He wa -- we -- we talked a-about an -- at -- he said, well, no matter ho-how bad you say things are in the Soviet Union, there is no anti-Semitism. [indecipherable] there -- there is. So, well, you’ve had some bad personal experiences. But it was clear that he was, even then, quite sympathetic, and then at some point the damn fool defected. He was, as far as I know he wa -- I think he was a Viennese Jew, and just had this -- this strange notion that -- that Soviet Union was a good place to be, and this was about at the -- ’48, that was the time of the -- the doctor’s plot, you know, Stalin was --

which was when Russia became strongly anti-Semitic, was -- became -- official policy was Stalin's paranoia. Anyway, before long they had introduced me to the chief prosecutor, Walter Rapp, who decided that my testimony was important enough that he was going to interrogate me personally before the court, and was scheduled several days in the future. And then they said, are you interested in -- in hearing Ohlendorf, the commander of the Einsatzgruppe D, testify? He had already been sentenced to death but they hadn't executed him, he had volunteered to cooperate. They said well, under the rules, you are not supposed to appear in courtroom until you testify. Otherwise it's -- you'll -- you'll be prejudiced. Sit way in the back and make sure that you are not too conspicuous. So I went there, it was interesting to see Ohlendorf testify. The prosecutor told me the man was highly intelligent and it's really so sad and mystifying why somebody so intelligent would do such horrors, and maybe this was his way of showing his -- his remorse. The defense lawyer, of course, tried very hard to discredit his testimony, and his final question was, you are under sentence of death, aren't you? And Ohlendorf said yes. It was a strange sight to see the German high command lined up on the defendant's bench. They were little, old men. They had -- th-they no longer had their shiny army boots, a number of them were wearing slippers, together with [indecipherable] which looked pathetic. And they were tiny. I think they still had the mil -- some of the military insignia, I can't quite remember. When they wanted to go to the t -- the toilet, a -- a big, burly, black American MP walked in, towering over thi-this pathetic tiny figure in slippers. I happened to be using the urinal at the same time as one of them. It may have been Vonlabe, I don't know. But it was such a contrast these people di -- a few years earlier they were the people that were looked up to, they were the high commanders of whole army groups, and so on, countless divisions. And now they were just ordinary mortals, looking pathetic. But then came the day for my testimony, a-and -- and the -- Rapp started to interrogate me. And they

were very pleased when we had sort of rehearsed my testimony, they said [indecipherable] how did you know these were ar-ar-army trucks, and I told him the license plate numbers and so forth, the din -- designations and uniforms. I remembered a lot of details. Suddenly the defense a-attorney cut in and said that this, sorry, this is new evidence that should not be allowed at this stage -- the trial by then was at the rebuttal stage. And so the court recessed for two days and then finally decided -- while the attorneys were arguing -- and finally decided yes, this was indeed new evidence, it was too late for that, so it was stricken from the record. Vonlabe got only three years, he was 70 at the time. I learned since then that Vonlabe was an anti-Semitic s.o.b. from way back, from World War I. He had been major or lieutenant colonel, or whatever in Romania, and there had -- they had some problems with guerillas there in World War I. And he wrote to somebody that he [indecipherable] requests permission to hang a lot of Jews, he thought the Jews were behind these guerilla activities. That was long before Hitler. So he certainly had it coming. It's unfortunate that he only got a three year term, I would have loved to see him [indecipherable] a little longer. I met a few witnesses there. There were a couple of former Russian prisoners of war, Jewish. There -- neither of them looked Jewish and they described some of their experiences to me. I'm not sure in which trial they were to testify, I-I didn't hear much about their testimony, but they told me some of their stories, how they had been taken prisoner. And one of them was of -- assigned as a -- not quite valet, it's too fancy a term, but to some German medic, and the German medic apparently knew, for whatever reason, that this man was circumcised, and he said, well, I know that before long there will be -- you will all be stripped and they'll try to find the Jews among you, and if it's all right with you I'll perform a little operation so that you -- it won't be obvious that you -- you're circumcised. And if they ask you, then say you had phimosis, which is of a -- when the foreskin gets very tight, so that

[indecipherable] it can't quite normally function, then one normally operates it -- and then it leaves some scars, but it's not like a full circumcision. So he -- he did this operation for him, which put the -- the man was rather uncomfortable for three days, but after that it healed, and it may have saved his life. And it's -- again it's a case where a German had the opportunity to save somebody's life. He had gotten to know this man a little bit, and apparently wanted to save his life. One incident, it's a little bit out of sequence. Right after the end of war in Karlsbad, we were staying in the apartment of some people we didn't even know, just a -- our -- our neighbors from Kometau had introduced us and managed to -- to get us into their apartment. And there was a -- a young man, probably in his mid or late 20's, who was a bit depressed about th-the fact that Germany had lost the war, and we went for a walk in the town together. And he said, well you know, I have done a lot of reading, and I know now why we're -- we lost the war. It's all because of the -- the Jewish conspiracy. I didn't say anything one way or another, I didn't do anything. I didn't feel like turning him in to the police. And I've asked myself occasionally, was that the right response? He was basically a pleasant young kid. He had read some Nazi propaganda about Jews, world domination, and this sort of stuff. Incidentally, when -- right after the Germans occupied Latvia, within weeks they started publishing Latvian translations of the protocols of -- of the elders of Zion. And I felt that the man would probably get his just desserts sooner or later. Maybe his eyes will be opened, but it wasn't up to me to turn him in. Quite possibly this was the feeling that a number of people had who could have acted against Jews, and again didn't want to get their hands dirty. Th -- somehow, when you know a -- a person, unless you a ver -- a very -- somehow a -- full of hate against another group, when you've got to know a person, even for just five minutes or so, you feel that you don't really want to have his blood on -- on your hands. That's -- I think it's probably a normal reaction. This case, they had lost the war, I now know

that Sudeten Germans, thousands of them, were actually killed during the deportations, the others had a pretty rough time getting out. I imagine that he presumably paid for it, and in the end maybe his eyes were opened. But perhaps one could call me a coward for not doing anything, or -- or saying anything. I certainly did not feel like saying, you're talking to a Jew.

Q: Actually, this is s-sort of that same period of time. The first time when you were in Czechoslovakia, and you were filling out papers, and you -- you wrote down that you were a Jew --

A: Yes.

Q: -- that must have been a difficult decision, or --

A: It wasn't so much a difficult decision, I had to give myself a push to write this word, which I had been avoiding all these years, and just to make the complete 180 degree turn, you know, all this time be claim -- be something other, then suddenly to come clean and say, I'm a Jew.

Q: Did it occur to you not to do it?

A: No. At that time there were practical reasons. If I had -- if I had written Latvian, there could have been problems. Th-They might have decided to s -- to ship me back to Soviet Union, and I somehow didn't really want to get mixed up with the Latvians. But the Latvians who had gotten out of Latvia included a number of Hitler sympathizers, as well as some people like ourselves, who just want to -- to avoid living under Stalin, who were basically decent people. But I -- I felt that -- that -- that wasn't much of a choice, I might as well come clean.

Q: Was that the point at which you sort of consciously acknowledged again that you were Jewish?

A: Yes. Yes, definitely. Part of it was the practical reason, if you could say that you are Jewish, in a way this ab-absolves you from all suspicion of being a Latvian with some things to hide and

so on, or a German, or whatever. That was practical, but in -- in part it -- it just seemed natural. I didn't feel especially close to Jews from other countries. I did belong to this Federation of Latvian Jews, it was called, and I di -- discovered that there were -- were several differences in -- in -- in the -- even in the Yiddish, of Lithuanian Jews, Polish Jews and so forth, and the mentality and so on. That -- Latvian Jews were terribly naïve compared to Hungarian or Romanian Jews, who were very, very wise in the -- the ways of the world. So yes, but primarily I was -- cer- certainly I consider myself a Jew, and this -- I had sort of concealed this fact for years and now it was out in the open.

Q: Now, you were not terribly religious, although you observed certain holidays, prior to the war?

A: I became religious after my Bar Mitzvah. E-Every day I would put on the Tefillin and say my prayers and so on, and I was trying to be, not maybe 100 percent, it certainly wouldn't satisfy the Orthodox today, but I -- I was pretty religious.

Q: Did you return to that after the war, did you think about returning to that sort of religiousness?

A: No, I -- I thought about it, but I had become -- I'm not sure whether estranged is -- is the right word. I -- that -- somehow I was now five years older than I had been at the time. I can't say that I'd lost my faith in God or anything, but I felt that the -- first of all the external observances of religion I-I found less and less meaningful and significant. I'm not one of those people who feels that there can be no God, how could He have -- have permitted the Holocaust and so on. Th-This is -- has not been my problem, it's just that I felt that the religion to -- to me had become -- should be less nationalistic, less tied to various rituals. There were also be certain teachings of Judaism that I approved of, certain traditions that I approved of, others I wasn't so happy with. So I didn't really feel that I wanted to return to become as 100 percent a -- a -- obs -- observing

Jew. And then there were sort of f-festivals like -- like Passover. This was a family festival, and we had -- we had no family left. And you know what, my mother and I should have a Seder together, it didn't seem right that -- yes, well the notion of the exodus and so on is -- als -- always seemed like one of the -- the -- the highlights of Jewish history, and I could still relate to that, but the external observances somehow became less and less acceptable to me. But I still consider myself a Jew. On the ship that took me from Germany to the U.S., I was put in charge of the ship's newspaper, which was a good outlet for my sense of humor, such as it is. And I reported with -- I would show the drafts regularly to the IRO officer, IRO is International Refugee Organization, the successor of UNRRA. Was a Frenchman. I think he was Jewish, but I'm not s -- not sure. And he asked me to [indecipherable] what nation-nationality, and I said, I'm -- I'm a Jew. Yes, but from what country are you? I said, from Latvia. Then why didn't you say you're a Latvian? Now, that was my first encounter with the difference be -- the eastern and the western European definition of a Jew. One case it's just a religion, and the other case it's religion and race, or ethnic identity. And I took it seriously, and I -- I began to think about it, and I felt yes, well why not just make it a religious affiliation, why should it be national? And I so -- also felt that in Latvia you never had the choice of assimilating, I would have liked to assimilate. I wanted to become an agronomist, Latvia was an agricultural country and I wanted to be 120 percent Latvian patriot. The smart thing to do then is to become a -- an agronomist and advise farmers on how to grow bigger and better crops and so forth. I was steered in other directions after that. But in Latvia I never had the choice of fully assimilating. Minorities were given their rights, they could have their own schools, their own newspapers and so on, but they were permanently excluded. There were no Latvians in the government or in the s -- no Jews in the government or the civil service. There was something for the Latvians and the Jews, their

families could have lived there for 400 years, but they were still outsiders. And then I was pleased to find that in the U.S., you get your citizenship papers, you get your passport, and you are a -- an American by passport. Not by blood, or by name, or whatever. And I much prefer that system.

Q: Would you like some water? Do you have a glass? I'll get some. You chose to emigrate to the United States, is that primarily because you were in the U.S. zone, or was that something that you gave a lot of thought to?

A: We had some very distant relatives in New York, so that was one consideration. There were some other relatives that I never succeeded in locating, that would have been a little closer. At one time, having read a fair amount of anti-American propaganda during the war, I thought the United States has a lot of problems. It's an interesting country, a large and powerful country, but somehow I felt that maybe it's a -- it -- there's a lot of light, a lot of -- of shadow too. I thought, well, I'd like to emigrate to an English speaking country, maybe Canada, maybe Australia or whatever, but at the time they weren't taking Jews with no strings attached. In one of them you had to -- you could go there if you agreed to work as a lumberjack for two years. Well, that didn't quite fit into my career plans. So I gave up and decided maybe the U.S. was -- was the best place after all, and from I had seen of America and Americans in the U.S. occupation zone, I-I just really liked what I saw, and I got to know more. I read the New York Herald Tribune when I -- whenever I could, and I -- I liked what I saw and decided yes, I want to go there. At one time I'd thought of going to Switzerland, but then, through a -- the Hillel foundation, I think, they've got the scholarship for me at the University of Oklahoma. Fortunately I never made it there, it was a bit of backwater. Among my papers at one point I discovered I was also offered a scholarship at the University of -- of Zurich in Switzerland. And though at one time I had the

ambition of going there, a -- by then Switzerland was no longer interesting option, I wanted to go to the U.S..

Q: You wanted to get out of Europe?

A: Yes, yes. Thi -- this was a general feeling among many DPs, that we have been caught up in one European war and we've just barely escaped and we would talk occasionally, what is the best kind of passport to have. Well, a very small cun -- country, like Andorra, so what? Nobody's going to start a war with Andorra, or San Marino or whatever. Well, the next best thing that is, a passport of a large country, preferably at the other side of the ocean. So that was certainly an element, but the other one was that I became more and more aware of the great potential o-of the U.S. freedom, the opportunities and so I -- I liked the idea of going to the U.S..

Q: And you didn't have too much difficulty getting over here?

A: I had a lot and -- and you may have s -- I'm not sure how much of that I actually -- yes, I -- the copy of the biography that you have, I'm not sure whether it actually goes to the time of emigration, but I don't know whether you want me to go into that story or not.

Q: Well, there is a bit of it in there --

A: Yes.

Q: -- I just didn't know if there was anything that you wanted to say about that.

A: P-Probably not, it-it's that -- it's -- I got to the U.S. two years later than I was supposed to because of some foolish things that happened, but I -- at one point I was ruled to be that my -- my admission would be prejudicial to the best interests of the United States. F-Fortunately I-I prepared to prove that -- that it wasn't.

Q: When you arrived here, in New York, I assume.

A: Yes.

Q: What -- what were your first impressions? Do you remember what you thought?

A: Well, I -- I arrived in Boston. I liked the uniforms of the Massachusetts State Police. That's one of the first impressions. The second impression was I had about six dollars in my pocket. I had not had a chance to eat bananas during the war, I had a great urge to eat bananas. And I just, well, I can buy some. Went to a grocery store, still near the place where we had landed. Went to the store -- and I had seven years of English in school, and I suddenly realized nobody had ever taught me how to ask, how much are these bananas, because I had no idea whether they would be 10 dollars a pound, or one dollar a pound, or 10 cents a pound, whatever. But this sort of practical question nobody had taught me, so I stood there like a fool, waiting for somebody to -- to notice my plight and then explain myself. Anyway, I ate lots of bananas that summer.

Q: Let me turn this over.

A: Yeah.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is tape three, side B, of an interview with Professor Edward Anders on February 28th, 1997.

A: Okay. Well, one of my first impressions, of course, was New York City, which is unique. And we arrived there in -- in June, it was a good heat wave, which was also unique, a new experience. There was -- the next experience was I found myself in the Catskills of all places, in a-a very low budget vegetarian hotel belonging to a very distant relative, and I was pressed into service as a waiter -- I was a lousy waiter, incidentally. And the problem was that this was a place where people went to lose weight, who had -- people who had eaten more than enough all year and they were delighted to be in a place where they were getting sort of low calorie diets.

And -- and I had not really had too much to eat in Germany in the last two weeks or so in -- in the camp before we -- and i-in Bremerhaven before we got on the ship. The people there who ran the camp realized that they could steal all the food they wanted, the -- the people who managed the camp. That people, being this far along with the immigration process didn't want to make any waves and they wouldn't complain. So the food was very inadequate in -- in quantity and quality. On the ship most of us were seasick and couldn't eat. So we arrived in the U.S. and one thing I really wanted is lots of good food. Wrong place, this vegetarian place. Anyways, I [indecipherable] going to [indecipherable] anyway we -- people gave us fairly decent tips, it was, of course, a low budget hotel, but maybe by standards of posher places it [indecipherable]. But it -- it was enough for me then to pay th -- to pay tuition, I applied to several colleges and it turned out that for most of them I -- I was sort of neither fish nor fowl. I was too far along to qualify for an undergraduate degree, and I was not far enough along to -- to go to graduate school, the one place that took me was Columbia. They had a big, sort of school of general studies, which was a catchall for people going to night classes, or people that again, didn't fit the regular system, that they want -- just wanted to look over. And then after first semester my grades were very good and so they were quite pleased to put me immediately into graduate school, and I was fine. One of my other strong impressions of the U.S., an early impression was -- is -- it was, d-during the Korean war, and Harry Truman had decided to sort of -- to take over the steel industry because there was a strike. And it was during the war, he felt it was wrong to strike. And then a lowly U.S. district judge overruled him, and said it was illegal to intervene, the strike was legitimate. And to me this was a tremendously impressive demonstration of what the U.S. was all about, that in the European tradition it's unthinkable that a third level judge would rule against his president, especially the president of the almighty United States. So that was really a wonderful object

lesson. And there were many others, and there were quite a few things I liked about the U.S., and very much impressed me, and you think living the U.S. makes you -- opens your eyes to a lot of things that you previously weren't aware of, not that I approve of everything that goes on in the U.S., but it -- it was a -- a very great experience, and I was certainly very glad that I -- that I was allowed to come to the U.S..

Q: Can you just very briefly kind of summarize your life after the war in terms of schooling, your career, marriage, kids, just briefly summarize it for me.

A: Yeah, sure. Schooling, I -- from my second semester on I was in graduate school, and was admitted to the PhD. program, got a fellowship. I wasn't eligible for a government fellowship, so I got an industrial fellowship. Got a teaching assistantship, and managed to get my degree. My first academic job was at the University of Illinois. I thought all American universities were like Columbia. They weren't. Illinois was a very conservative place, run by old men, and they, in the division that I was in, they only had two kinds of faculty, those who had been there for 25 years or longer, and those who had been there for a year or less, nothing in between. And the young men were sort of very much put in their place. It turns out I didn't have the right to choose the textbook I wanted, the department chairman had written a textbook, and oh ye -- in principle I was free to use it, but in practice I wasn't. And so on, there were a number of things that I didn't like, so I was delighted after a year and a half, I got an offer from the University of Chicago, which was very much like Columbia in that respect, young faculty members had the same privileges as old ones.

Q: Your -- the area? What field?

A: I was trained as a chemist, actually as a radio chemist, having to do with radioactivity, which is now an unpopular subject. And I -- while still a student, I fell in love with meteorites. I took a

course in geochemistry and one day the professor brought some meteorites to class and passed them around. And this was several years before Sputnik, before space travel and so on, and I was f -- th-thought it was tremendously romantic that here are these bits of rock or metal that come from hundreds of millions of miles away, from where no man has ever been, or had much hope of ever being. That were older than anything, any rock on the earth by quite a bit, and that you could study in the laboratory and you could do measurements on, it would tell you something about the origin of the solar system, the earliest [indecipherable] the earth. It was fascinating. I -- I want to do work in this field. It was love at first sight, really. And unfortunately I had a tiger by the tail, I had been -- somehow I had been persuaded by a Nobel laureate to look for one of the last missing elements in nature. There were four holes in the periodic table where there ought to be an element that hadn't yet been found, and some forms of this element had been produced artificially, but nothing had been found in nature, and he persuaded me that I should look for it by some modern techniques, that there was a good chance that the people that looked for it before had missed it. And so I -- I spent the next seven years on that, which was a wild goose chase. And I had to solve the problem one way or another, in the end I solved it when -- I had some -- I kept getting experiments which suggested it -- th-that the results were not good enough to publish, and not bad enough to quit, always were in between. And finally I managed to repeat an experiment I'd done earlier and show that the earlier data were wrong, that the new result, which was really negative, was hundred times more sensitive than the old one, and so completely overruled it and I felt that I was now a free man, I could work on meteorites. So I did that the rest of my life. And I worked on lunar rocks and various other things, and had a certain amount of recognition, and I had fun. And th-the only good thing that happened at the University of Illinois is I met my wife. Both of us had just newly arrived, she was a Canadian who had just recently

moved to the U.S., she was a dietician at the girl's residence hall, and I was newly a-arrived instructor. And there was Lincoln's birthday, which is a big deal in Illinois, of course. They had a party for grad students, faculty and staff, and she went there as staff, I went there as faculty. It was a dance, I sort of looked over the girls that had -- were there, and decided none of them were interesting, so I positioned myself near the door to intercept any good looking ones that came in, so I -- I -- before anybody else got to them. Anyway, I did intercept her, and the rest is -- is history. And we had two children, and -- and a very happy marriage. My mother turned out to be extremely difficult, because she had focused all her emotions on me. I was the only survivor, and as a psychiatrist later explained to me that I had fu-fulfilled all the roles of son and husband and protector and whatnot. And she kept saying for years that she wanted me to get married, but when it actually came to it she was very much against it. Also, she had suddenly ha -- she had also really detached herself pretty well from Judaism, but when the time came to talk about the wedding and so on, she suddenly rediscovered her roots, objected to any kind of a church wedding. My wife is Presbyterian, and so my mother was -- was very difficult and we had endless troubles with her. She lived with us, we had -- I felt that all the years we'd lived together, contrary to all the advice you normally get, can't very well push her out. And then, at one point she attempted suicide. She went -- went to the psychiatric ward of the hospital and was under psychiatric treatment for quite awhile. I paid all the bills and so on. And -- and gradually we reached an accommodation, but we never knew where we stood, because she was schizophrenic, and part of the time she was a very charming, very sweet person, and parts of the time she was just a paranoid devil. And it continued like this, she made life especially difficult for our daughter, was a very dear child. As one psychiatrist explained, that she hates women in general. She hates my wife, she hated my daughter. It's -- you know, it's -- don't quite know why, but it -

- it was a problem. When she began to get Alzheimer's, many people have a personality change for the worse, hers was for the better, she became very mellow, we could do no wrong. The early stages of Alzheimer's, no matter what we did, it was fine, it was -- she was at peace with herself. But it was not easy. But it -- in a way it -- it made my -- my wife and me closer, and also it -- perhaps the experiences were -- were traumatic for my -- my daughter, she went through a stage where she was anorectic and so on and she needed counseling, but she's -- she's fine now. But my mother had treated her quite badly and my -- my wife insisted the children had to see the grandmother every Saturday morning and not realizing what kind of mental torture my daughter was going through, especially. So anyway, that's past. But I've had a happy life, I worked very hard all my life, but I had a happy life in the U.S.. Relations to Judaism, so very gradually sort of cooled off in the sense that, I have good Jewish friends, but I don't have any ties to the religion. We raised our children -- of course there had to be some sort of compromises with my mother, but the understanding was that they would not be baptized. They were told about their background early on. We lived in a neighborhood of the university where it was actually a matter of prestige to be a Jew. And so they have no hang-ups about their background and we felt that they should choose for themselves, and whatever they chose would be fine with us. As it happened, I think one married a Catholic, the other one married a Protestant. But they are not particularly ashamed of their background, they can talk freely about it. And to me this, of course, has -- brings up the question that I asked myself many years ago. When this outstanding German architect who I met during the war, when he said he would not consider it unfortunate if the German people ceased to exist as a nation after the war. Said, they have done so m -- so many bad things as a nation, he said he doesn't want the individual people to be destroyed, but if they ceased to [indecipherable] as a nation it wouldn't be so bad. And to me this was a bit shocking,

but then over the years I've asked myself -- nationalism has caused a lot of problems in this world, and each nation, each group should ask itself, what are the quintessential qualities that we want to preserve? In Judaism I think there is the respect for learning, which has been extremely important. The strong sense of justice and of siding with the underdog, which again is very admirable. The Jewish sense of humor. There -- there are a number of qualities and they really should be universal qualities. Maybe the Jews have a special sort of aptitude for it, the special responsibility to propagate these qualities and I'm glad in a way that there's a state of Israel and Jews no longer have to be pushed around, and so on, and it -- it's only proper that those who feel uncomfortable where they're living, that they should be able to move to Israel and -- and live in a 100 percent Jewish society. But to some extent I must say, I was -- I -- the Holocaust has left its scars. The -- I did not want my children to be -- ever to go through it again. I've occasionally asked myself, could another Hitler arise in the U.S.? I've -- I first asked myself this question before my children were born. And I saw a movie, "Judgment at Nuremberg", and my wife and I sort of went for a long, long walk after, late in the night after the movie and we asked ourself, what is it that prevents the U.S. from getting a Hitler? And I realized one thing is a free press, and another one is an outspoken intelligentsia. And that's very important, when we have somebody like Nixon and so on, there was no lack of protest from the intelligentsia, from the press. We sometimes get annoyed at the press, but as long as we have a free press, there is hope. One can go on philosophizing about this theme, but m-my own feeling toward religion is I don't like to associate with any foreign religion. In my research, of course, I have a fair amount to do with astronomy, and to me looking at the sky is one of the most -- night sky, is one of the most religious experiences. Just to realize that -- the vastness of the universe, and to read about biology and to just know how intricately designed organisms are. And I am not taking sides

whether there was a -- God created various living forms and so on, or whether this all, you know, is just by evolution, what role God, or some combination of both, I think it's just -- nature is a very wonderful place, and I find it perfectly possible to believe in a deity that presides over it all, maybe with minimal intervention. I have trouble believing in a personal God that is -- is petty and keeps track of how many times a day I say my prayers and so forth. And I-I'm -- I'm comfortable with that. It's -- it's certainly not conventional Judaism, and I'm not sure that it deserves any label.

Q: But that ta -- ta -- your brand of faith grew out of your experiences.

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean, had the war not happened, you would have -- could have still been worshipping daily in Latvia.

A: Probably not. I was 13 -- of course at bar -- Bar Mitzvah, I did this from 13 to 15, and I think I have grown a lot since, I've asked myself a lot of questions. Also, someday I would have had to come to terms why my father didn't belong to the temple, and just what was the proper dose of religion, the proper form of religion. I mean it -- so long as you were treated as -- as a -- as a Jew, as a almost foreign element by society, well if society defines you as -- as -- as a Jew, then you don't have much choice, you -- you make the best of it. But Judaism, of course, as I learned only after leaving Latvia, that there are many brands of Judaism, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and so on. I find a lot of -- a lot of appealing elements in Reform Judaism. But for awhile I would actually go to -- to some churches and go to some temples and so on and I would listen. And the one thing I found myself looking for was humility. And really the only place I found it was at the Unitarian church. Now, I haven't s -- set foot in a Unitarian church in decades and I can't properly call myself a Unitarian, but there was humility and tolerance, and a sort of attitude,

well, we are not all sure we have the right answers. We have no dogma. We are all trying to get to the same place, perhaps by different routes, and think we're -- one definition is reverent agnosticism. And I go to a Protestant church and I find this us versus them, and we have a monopoly on the right religion. I go to a Jewish temple, I hear the same thing. And to me there is so much we don't know, and I think it's wonderful to believe in a God, but even that should be optional. But then to start with precise attributes of the God, and -- and precise dogmas and so forth, especially if it's that we have the right answers and all the other people are wrong, I find this more and more objectionable, and that would have hit me even if I s-stayed in Latvia.

Q: When you were in tight spots during the war, did you pray?

A: Actually, I still do. Though I didn't pray when I was in -- well, I suppose I must have prayed a few times when I was in tight spots, but I don't -- I-I don't think that I prayed in the sen -- I don't think I prayed in the sense that I expected -- I was in a tight spot and I expected my prayer to result in -- in a quick solution to my problem.

Q: But you prayed because it was a comfort, because you needed to do something.

A: Yes.

Q: And your mother carried this prayer book with her, but that was probably sentimental as much as religious, I would think.

A: Yes, yeah. Well, yes, wa -- she's na -- I th -- think with -- with her it was -- it was both. She certainly read the prayer book and she would get some comfort from it.

Q: Let me ask you a few other things. When you were living through the war years, did you find having your mother with you a source of strength, or a responsibility that made things more difficult for you?

A: Mainly, I would say a source of strength. There were times when I felt that we had to do something. For instance, I decided that we had to get out of Latvia, and she didn't want to for awhile, and she got -- she didn't want me to get th-the famous I.D. card for her. There were certain decisions where we had to argue things out and of course it was a little difficult for her to accept that this -- this child has now grown up to be a young man and maybe he has more [indecipherable] than -- than I do. So we were a team. We did have our occasional friction, but as long as there were just the two of us, and bef-before my wife appeared in the picture and so on there, we generally managed to straighten things out.

Q: When you got over here to the United States, did you finally feel safe, did you trust everyone, or is that something that's -- one has to learn gradually -- relearn?

A: To me a very natural attitude is to -- to consider everybody a gentleman til he or she proves to be the contrary. And so trusting people is still natural to me. I think I wouldn't carry it to ridiculous extremes, and I tend to be rather aloof and -- and sort of a bit buttoned up. My mother would sit down at the park bench next to a person and within five minutes they were telling each other their life stories. And she thought it was just wonderful if the other person told their life story. My mother actually didn't want to talk about her Jewish background and her experiences, so on, but she loved it when people opened up to her, and she wouldn't reciprocate. She resented being quizzed and so forth. I -- I am not that sort of person at all. I think I mentioned to you that they're only -- I've -- I've told my wartime experiences to only about a dozen people outside family in 55 years, including a number of close friends I've never -- never told them about. They know of my Jewish background, but somehow I didn't really feel that I need to entertain them with a rather bizarre story.

Q: Have you thought about what sorts of long term impact these experiences have had on your life, had on the way you've lived it, you raised your kids, or just on your personality? You've spoken a bit about your relationship with your mother, and your mother and your wife --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- but aside from that?

A: I think it has taught me not to generalize about people, and th-there are really two factors that pushed me in that direction. One of them was that before the German occupation, we thought that just because my -- my father was a very decent businessman, he had some letters from his German customers commending him for having warned them about some unfair practices of some -- some other business people, that no matter what -- whether there were any legitimate complaints that the anti-Semites had about certain Jews, that my father had a-a-an excellent record and that he would be treated accordingly, that they would not -- not treat everybody the same regardless of what you -- you've done as a person. And similarly Germans, I've learned very quickly that there were some -- some awful Germans, some monsters, and there were some angels, and lots of in between, and -- and the same with Latvians. And so I began to realize that it's absolutely wrong to generalize. I -- I don't like to say the Germans, or the -- the Jews, or the Lat-Latvians. I tend to view people as individuals. So that's one important lesson that I learned. And the other thing is that I feel that sort of ethnic religious labels are some of the less important descriptives of a person. The story that I like that illustrates this very well, a number of years ago, there was a conductor named Dean Dixon, an American. When he first gave a concert in Europe -- he spent much of his career in Europe, the newspapers would write about the American Negro conductor, Dean Dixon. After the second concert it was the American conductor Dean Dixon. After the third one it was the conductor Dean Dixon. They should have

started with the third concert right away, because to s-size up Dean Dixon the most important thing is a conductor. He was a good conductor, he was a mediocre conductor but he obviously knows a lot about music and so on. Prefers certain kinds of music and so on. It's less important that he is Am-American, music is fairly universal. Still less important that he is black. In the end all of these factors have to be considered, but they went at them in the reverse order. And I want to be known primarily as -- as Edward Anders, who has done such and such with his life, done some good things and some bad things, made some mistakes, had certain quirks and so forth. I have [indecipherable] done research in certain area, I've done this or that, and it's considerably less important that -- that I am an American, or that I'm a Jew by birth. So, to me these are less im-important because there's such a tremendous variety of Americans, there's such a tremendous variety of Jews, and to start with either my American citizenship or my Jewish background and put that as the number one label on me, I -- I think it's putting the cart before the horse.

Q: How else do you think these experiences have affected you?

A: Strangely enough, not all that much in the sense of long term or short term damage. The only recognizable quirk that I have is I don't like anybody barging into my bedroom in the middle of the night, and we had to train our children when they had a bad dream they were welcome to run, but to our bedroom door, and they could knock, or they could otherwise make -- make a sound, we had the intercom anyway, to their rooms, but they were not to barge into the bedroom. They grew up normally in spite of this restriction.

Q: And you told them, at some point, about all your experiences, or --

A: Yeah, I think when -- when they're s-small you don't go into un-unnecessary detail, it's just this is a rule and that's it. And since then, of course, they've learned t-to -- little by little.

Q: But it's interesting that in all this time you've s -- you've spoken about this so little. Maybe people don't talk about where they've come from, I don't know, it's -- it's something you've been reluctant to share.

A: Yes. It is a hang-up. It's -- e-even today I behave in some ways a little lit -- bit like a child that does not speak until it's spoken to. My wife and I are very close, we share a lot. And when I've read something interesting, I sort of wait for her to ask me, did you read anything interesting today, and then I tell her. My excuse is that I want to make sure that she's really prepared to listen, that she's -- she's ready, that she doesn't have other things in -- in her mind. And with these wartime experiences, it's -- it's that factor and perhaps also that it's something highly personal. It's quite far back, it hasn't really changed my personality all that much as far as I can tell. And as I mentioned in my written notes that I -- I'm rather thin-skinned and I have a fairly short temper, I'm impatient and when I look back I had all these traits before the war, so I can't blame them on the war. Well, in that case, I probably would be a fairly similar person if I hadn't been through these experiences, if I had been born in the U.S., for example. Well, in that case it's no longer an important de-descriptor of my personality or of me.

Q: Are you more demanding of your -- are you demanding of your children? Were you protective of your children?

A: I'm a bit of -- more than a bit of a perfectionist. I try to be understanding. I had fairly high expectations and I've realized subsequently that some were a little too high. And my daughter once reminded me that she called me from college and she said she got three A's and a B and I [indecipherable] to ask her what's the B for? I would not do that again. But I think that's a way I -- I'm pretty hard on myself and I unthinkingly rel -- applied this to my children.

Q: Are there any -- I sort of want to finish with that, are there any circumstances that kind of bring back and evoke your earlier experiences in a -- in a profound way for you? Are there any lasting images, are there any --

A: I can remember a lot of the -- the circumstances I told you about I can remember quite vividly, I can remember the scene in the prison, and -- with the guard asked us for our watches, I know exactly where the German policeman stood and was calling out names. A l -- lot of these images are very vivid, the things that I described to you. And sometimes even some secondary events about the same time than an -- also -- wh-which were not painful or dangerous or anything, I can also remember. They don't exactly haunt me. I did have to come to terms a little bit with it when I read Ezergailis' book in the last few months. When I came to the detailed descriptions of the executions and so on, there was one night I had a little trouble going to sleep and I -- when I wake up early -- and I'm a bit of an insomniac, then again I couldn't go back to sleep because I kept thinking of this. So during the weeks that I worked on my talk and my paper for the seminar, let's say that I did get a little less sleep. But it's not -- was not to the point of giving me nightmares or otherwise dominating my sleep --

Q: There are, over the years, certain images that have stuck with you in an uncomfortable way, or --

A: No, nothing has haunted me, just that I can bring them back a-at will, and if I so occupied myself too intensely with them, yes, then they will probably bother me a little more than they -- than -- than is good for me. But as long as I don't bring them up myself, they don't haunt me. I -- I'm supposed to have a fairly good memory, which was very helpful in -- in my research, but -- and of course it's not as good now as it used to be. I can remember a lot of detail, but it -- I can't say that it torments me.

Q: Then -- and it's -- and you -- once you assumed a new life here, you didn't dwell on it much. You didn't think about it too much?

A: No, there are other things to -- to keep you occ -- nowadays I talk a lot with my wife about this. I dredge up little details, something I'd forgotten, so on, and I talk to her about it and she's always interested, and occasionally I add it to my notes.

Q: But this is -- but this is recent, what you're talking about --

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: -- you know, for the last 35 years or so , this was not something that you paid much attention to.

A: No. We -- it was part of my life, but it was there with -- with -- along with some other parts. I didn't try to -- to run away from it. And -- but at the same time, I have seen a lot of things, done a lot of things, and yes, this is perhaps different from everything else because it involved considerable danger to me. But may -- you -- you been through it and you file it away in the proper place, you know where to find it when you need it. The -- the file drawers don't pop open spontaneously.

Q: When di -- you just said but you -- you know when to sort of call on it when you need it. What sort of circumstances would make you need it?

A: Well, when I talk to somebody, either family, if my daughter is interested in -- in some detail, my wife, or this history professor, he wants to know more about it, then -- then I -- I try to remember additional detail, occasionally things come back. And certainly you asked a number of good questions, and I sort of tried to --

Q: You tried.

A: Yes, sometimes it takes me an hour or two to dredge up the detail that I -- I need at the sp-specific moment.

Q: Do you have any -- anything else you'd like to say, and -- any final thoughts, any --

A: No, I think we've covered a fair amount of ground. This -- you ask very good questions.

Q: What I'd like to do -- I thank you for your time -- is ask you about some of the documents --

A: Yes.

Q: -- in your archival file, so I'm going to stop the tape for a moment --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and pull them out.

A: The first one is my school I.D., and -- when I was 14 years old, and this served as my I.D. after the war in Czechoslovakia for a few months, because it was not in German and didn't have an eagle on it. Unfortunately the beautiful German I.D. with the eagle, I -- was-was one of the things that I tore up after the war. I was afraid that the -- the Czechs might decide that I had a stronger connection with Nazi Germany than -- than was safe to have. The next item is my mother's Latvian passport. There, the interesting part is first of all that she had a -- a double surname, Scheftelovich-Leventals, as maiden name, both of which were Jewish, and there was also at one time there was a -- a Jewish first name, Rachel, which I took out with sodium hypochlorite, and the others had to be Aryanized, and -- which I succeeded in doing when I applied for her I.D. card in 1944, and ended up with a girl that was quite willing to let me dictate to her which parts of the personal information to copy and which one not to. Then here is a -- a -- the letter from the Herman Goering works, which merely certify that my mother had -- had worked there in the office for a year, and that she -- l-lately her health had suffered beca -- by the death of her oldest son to the point where she no longer was able to carry out her duties. This

was written less than a month after my brother died. And the -- the funny thing about this is of course that is the small purchasing office that was -- had the -- the name of Herman Goering on it, that may have given rise to these weird rumors about us having a connection with Herman Goering. Here are the two affidavits which should really be translated verbatim, of those two kind ladies that th-then -- that testified that they had known for many years that my mother was -- was really an Aryan, a Christian. And in -- in one case I think it's es-especially noteworthy that my mother barely knew the woman who -- who wrote this and she was a mother of our neighbor, who ha -- sh -- we had also known for only two years, that people still were willing to perjure themselves and take considerable risks by certifying that we had -- that my mother was -- was Gentile. Here is the police registration in -- in Karlsbad where, for the first time since the war, I gave as my nationality Jew. And it's -- asks here, nationality before an-and after October 10th, 1938, of course it was Jew both times. They didn't ask what I was in between. Here is an -- an oddity, the Federation of the Liberated Latvian Jews, they wrote a letter saying that I was the in -- their -- I was employed in their war crimes department and therefore it was important that I am able to continue this work. This happened at the time when the Haganah was actively recruiting members for this Jewish army, just before the i -- and during the Independence War in Israel. And since I had no intention of emigrating to Israel, I felt that really it's -- I shouldn't be asked to go and fight for Israel. The rest of the documents are self-explanatory. There is one document in Latvian, dating from the mid-30's, which only -- which certifies that my -- my father was recorded in the -- in the Jewish birth register of 1897, and [indecipherable] document dated 1934. The rest is straightforward and doesn't require any comment.

Q: Thank you.

A: You're welcome.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview