United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Lucie Sternberg Rosenberg
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PREFACE

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LUCIE STERNBERG ROSENBERG
September 24, 2002

Q: Good morning.

A: Good morning.

Q: Thank you for agreeing to the interview.

A: I'm very pleased, Joan, that you…This is the first time I'm doing anything like this.

Q: So, first tell me where you were born.

A: I was born in Zagreb. At that time, it was the kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later became Yugoslavia. It's Croatia now.

Q: And what year were you born?

A: I was born in 1921, December fifth.

Q: December fifth?

A: Yeah.

Q: 1921? And, what was your name when you were born, your full name?

A: Officially, you know, in the documents, I was Carolina Sternberg, but I was always known as Lucie, L-u-c-i-e C-a-r-o-l-i-n-e, and that was never used except on documents.

Q: And your name now?

A: Lucie Carol Rosenberg.

Q: Rosenberg. Now, I want us to get some sense of what your life was like in your childhood. So, perhaps you can start with your parents, or you can start where you would like.

A: My father's name was Manfred Sternberg. My mother's name was Lili. Her maiden name was Prister, P-r-i-s-t-e-r. He was from Slavonska Pozega, which was a rural part of Croatia, and my mother was from Zagreb and her family was an old Zagreb family that had originally come from what is now Italy and is the extreme border that really is on the other side of Radiska and Achilea (ph), and places like that.

Q: And, your mother's family was a fairly wealthy family?

A: They were a wealthy family.

Q: And, what did her father do?

A: Her father was an architect and actually did all sorts of building both for the – some private buildings, but he did a lot of – for instance, he was building docks in Fiume at the time, and various – I think maybe some public buildings of one kind or another. I don't think that he was a particularly inventive or artistic or whatever, but he was a work-a-day architect who always kept his profession, whereas the rest of his family was spending money like crazy and ended up paupers, many of them, after spending money like mad in one direction or another. He was always working.

Q: And what was your father doing?

A: My father was an industrialist. I think mostly agricultural. Croatia obviously was a very agricult – mostly, 80 percent agricultural country, and he had alcohol – and he had an alcohol yeast factory which was a very large one, and probably the largest in that part of Croatia, and a number of other agricultural refineries and so on.

Q: Since I'm ignorant, what does it mean to have an alcohol yeast factory? What is that?

A: Well, yeast obviously, you know, is made - these we were almost monopolies because there were certain ones, I mean, not many people were producing yeast for making bread. Agricultural alcohol means that they would take beets, you know, various corn, for instance, and so on, and it would be refined as alcohol. And for a while, as a matter for fact, in Croatia, there was a law where you had to mix alcohol with gasoline, which is what they're doing here now, and this was always very protected because there were huge, huge taxes otherwise. But being as it was agricultural, any kind of agricultural stuff was protected by the government because it was sort of beneficial to the state or whatever, or the peasantry or whatever. So, obviously there were lots of land where some of this raw material was produced, but also was bought from the peasants as needed. The yeast was, you know, shipped around and so on.

Q: So, you were born into a very privileged life?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So, tell me about – like, let me first ask you, what is your clearest memory of your mother? When you were little, when you were a young person?

A: A very sweet lady getting dressed to go out somewhere elegantly.

Q: So, they were very social?

A: They were very social, but everybody was this way, young people, and it was a social town, and it was a fairly small group, totally mixed – both Jewish and non-Jewish population.

Q: Now, were you taken care of primarily by governesses at this time?

A: Yes, but my mother supervised. One of my very early memories was of a German nurse with a – who were dressed like nuns, and had this long veil. They were special children's nurses. And she was unusually unpleasant, and put me apparently into a dark room, and I do remember that, and the cook saved – me upstairs, started screaming and the woman was let go immediately, and then there was, I guess, when my brother was born, there was a peasant nanny that came and until my brother's maybe five, this was there. Then I got an English governess, Miss… her name was… because the second one – the first one was called Miss "Mees Smees" – Miss Smith – she was known "Mees Smees", who was with us for maybe six months. My brother was throwing tantrums and – because he couldn't stand her, and then the nanny came back for – and stayed forever as part of the household. And then there was a Swiss person who was quite unpleasant for about six months, and then my real English governess who stayed for years, whose name was Agnes Coyne. And there, there was something kind of amusing about her because when King Alexander was killed. There was a…

Q: That was in '28?

A: No, I think maybe '34, '34. There was a regency formed because Peter was too young to govern and one of the – I mean, the main member of this, of this regency was King Alexander's cousin, Prince Paul, and two other persons – one was a Slovene and the other was a guy buy name of Ivo Perovic, which was a Croatian *ban*, which was sort of like a governor of a state. He had three children and lived in Zagreb, but then they moved back to – then they moved to Belgrade, and they decided they absolutely had to have our governess, and contacted her and contacted my mother, and they wanted – she didn't want to go. And my mother said, "You absolutely have to go because we would have sanctions against us left and right. You can't say no." And finally she went, but apparently she was so unhappy she phoned us practically every week, and one day appeared at our doorstep with her suitcases and my mother had to make up some big story about her being sick, having to move to England, nervous breakdown and so on, and she stayed until I guess I was 16.

Q: Where did you eat dinner? Did you eat with your parents? Did you eat -

A: Lunch… The main meal was at noon, and the governess and my brother and I sat at the table with them, and in the evening we sat with them when had dinner with the governess.

Q: So, do you remember conversations around the table? Were they very inquisitive about what you had done during the day? Or was this a very adult meal?

A: Both.

Q: Both?

A: Both, but yes, of course, because we often didn't have school at the same time. Schools were – school days were three days in the morning, three days in the afternoon from eight to one, quarter to one, something like that, and then afterwards we would have private classes of one kind or another at home in German, French, this and that. And, my brother may have gone – he did not go to the same school as I did, but I'm a little – I'm already high school. I'll go back, if you want, to, to primary school.

Q: He's three years younger.

A: Three years younger, three years younger, yeah. And so I'm not quite sure whether – I think I'm talking now mostly is-is already in secondary school. Yeah, because, but otherwise, yeah, we ate at the table. This was mostly for discipline.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, you know, you sit around and slop around in sort of a children's room, it's different than when you're sitting at the table with a meal that was served with white gloves.

Q: So, there were people there who were serving with white gloves?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: So, did that mean you have to be very prim and proper, as well?

A: Yes. Well, no, listen, because she took off her gloves and we palled around afterwards, but, yeah, it was quite formal. It was quite formal.

Q: Were your parent warm to you? Were they affectionate?

A: Yes. Yes, but also quite disciplinarian, both, yeah.

Q: Were you close with your brother even though he was…?

A: Yes, yes. I mean, as much as you're close with a boy who's three years younger than you. You despise them mostly, but yes.

Q: And the friends that you had, were the many school chums that you had, or were…?

A: First of all cousins.

Q: Lots of cousins?

A: Not many, one cousin who is Mia Bauer (ph), who is two and a half younger – two and a half years younger than me. There was another one who died who was also three years younger, and then there were extended family – cousins who were about – but he was the oldest, except for two cousins who were from out of town, and then later on – it wasn't a very large family. And the Pristers all lived apart, so this was mostly Sternberg part of the family. Although there was one cousin of the younger ones of the sisters that would have been – who was about my age, maybe a year younger or so. Yes, they were very affectionate; yes they were strict as far as school work is concerned, as far as manners were concerned, as far as -

Q: Did you like school?

A: Yes, I did. Although, I wasn't a particularly good student at it.

Q: And, the private lessons that you had at home, what were they?

A: French, later on. Sometimes if I wasn't doing too well in any subjects, somebody would come and we would work on the Latin and so on. Then I would go out for gym of one kind or another, tap dancing.

Q: Tap dancing?

A: Tap dancing at the time of Shirley Temple, I guess, it was the rage. But that was outside. I mean, that wasn't at home.

Q: Did you ever tap dance at home once you got back?

A: Mildly, yes. Yes, I was not particularly good at it.

Q: Go ahead, I'm sorry.

A: Also, there were gym classes of other kinds. Now, this is kind of interesting. My brother went to the Maccabi, as most Jewish kids did, but I went first to the Sokol. The Sokol is a pan-Slavistic – pan-Slavic gym organization and also, I guess, pan-national, pan-Slavistic nationalistic organization, that had a lot of calisthenic-type things, and I went to that which took place – I can't remember – in some – there was a thing, yes, they had a particular hall in town which was called a Sokolan (ph), and there were dances there as a matter of fact and so on. And, somewhere in the early '30s, maybe '32 and so on, they had – there were things like the Olympics but only Slavic. So, they would come and, I mean, I never traveled out of Zagreb for it, but I remember there was a very large gathering and people came from Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria and Poland and who knows what, and there was this march and we did calisthenics and we did, you know, like the Germans did and so on. There's these horrendous things in stadiums and in fact there was a stadium built at the time for this particular get together. And then later when I was about 12, again, my brother and others in the family were in the Maccabi, I was a member of the *HASK*, which was the Crotian academic sports club, *Hrvatski akademski*

sportski klub, which still exists. It was a big soccer club and gym, and I did – what was it? – track, I ran marathons and that kind of thing. It was short marathons, and trained with it, and stuff like that.

Q: So, was your family very Jewish identified in terms of the synagogue, or was this in terms of social groups more?

A: My – they were obviously members of the synagogue. In fact, my mother had a plaque on, you know, a seat in the synagogue and so on, and they went for, I guess, Yom Kippur and the major holidays. We were required to go, both in public high school and so on, on Saturday to children services in the synagogue. And it counted – you had to have an excuse from the rabbi if you didn't attend.

Q: So, this is nationally required.

A: This was nationally required as the Serbs and as the – the Serb Orthodox – and the Catholic kids had to go to services. This was not all the time, but there was maybe a period of three, four years where this was really seriously required. And we had religious classes both in public high school and obviously in the Jewish school where I went – I went to four years to the elementary school, to the Jewish school, where we learned both biblical Hebrew and then later on modern Hebrew, and sang various things and so on. So, it was quite interesting as far as that's concerned. And, once – and then, during that, as I said, during the major holidays, the parents went and we went to the synagogue, which was just around the corner from town.

Q: Did you celebrate holidays at home as well?

A: There was a Challah loaf.

Q: On Fridays?

A: No, not on Fridays, on holidays. And for Passover we were usually farmed out to people who knew how to do this better, or well, anyhow – we went to that and then for Hannukah, there was a candles and -

Q: What would you call the family? Certainly not orthodox.

A: No…

Q: But traditional or somewhat observant?

A: Traditional.

Q: Traditional?

A: There were some – I mean, yeah. I suppose so.

Q: It sounds like, from what you're saying, that you didn't experience anti-Semitism as you a kid growing up.

A: No.

Q: That you were integrated in the community.

A: Completely.

Q: And do you think this was true of the Jewish population in Zagreb and in Croatia in general?

A: I think so. I think so. Yes.

Q: So, you think so.

A: Yes. Pretty much so.

Q: It was very different from a lot of people's experiences in eastern Europe and central Europe.

A: Totally, totally. I'm not talking only about Zagreb, but for instance, my father in Slavonska Pozega, his father and the priest of the one leading church there, obviously Roman Catholic, used to play cards together daily, and so on. Totally. Not only that, but my aunt was – this was the one that was a few years younger than my father – was sent to Ljubljana to a Malud, I mean, there was a school with was run by nuns, a boarding school run by nuns, which is where she sort of went to finishing school at age 14. She hated it, but that's where she went, finishing school I guess in German.

Q: Did you see movies as a kid?

A: Yes, sure.

Q: What did you like? Do you remember?

A: Oh, yeah. Clark Gable movies. A lot of German movies, of course, until the time came when we didn't go to any German movies. It happened – what was it that was this wonderful Clark Gable movie where they were on a train? I forget the name of it. "It Happened One Night"? Yes. That was one I remember.

Q: It's always odd when I hear people from Europe talking about American movies.

A: Yes, that was one of them. "Gone with the Wind", I think. Any possible Shirley Temple movie that came around.

Q: Were these subtitled?

A: There was subtitles.

Q: But you understood?

A: Yeah, yeah, sure, but there were subtitles.

Q: And were you fluent in English?

A: Completely.

Q: Completely?

A: Yeah. The first governess was when I was seven, Mees Smees.

Q: Mees Smees, yes. Culturally, what did you do? Did you go to concerts?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go to museums?

A: We went to concerts, which were quite frequent and good musical life there. They had – my grandmother had a loge in the opera in the national theater with her name on it. So, I had to go to whatever was appropriate for children, ballet and so on. There was very nice – there was student, afternoon student performances with the school at a very low price, and you stood in the back if you had to, and that was permitted. I was always very pleased to do that. My grandmother had a subscription to various concerts which took place. And the theater of all kinds. The older – the parents, the grandmother and grandfather – went to Vienna every season to get clothes because we couldn't in Zagreb, to have them made, and to the opera especially. My grandmother on my father's side remarried. She was a widow. She was married, and her husband was a Croatian Jew, but he was bank director in Vienna, and she was – she loved being a Croatian, a provincial lady, and she actually brought to Vienna a Croat room, a folk room, like a peasant room. She went so far as to bring the wood paneling, cut out the way that they do in Croatia– a peasant room with peasant furniture, peasant dolls, stuff like that, which was kind of amusing, but she lived there so then from the time I was maybe a year old or so. She died when I was five, but I remember going visiting there and obviously, my mother and her mother used to go every season to Vienna, once a year at least, probably twice.

Q: I'm going to ask you about going to England – but I want to ask you to sort of reflect those years. Do you have any fond memories of your childhood or is it ambivalent?

A: Ambivalent in many ways.

Q: Can you explain that?

A: Yes, I would've loved to have been – I did, I was permitted from time to time to ride the trolley to school, but mostly I walked because that was healthy, but if I had been sick and the weather was dreadful, I would be driven to school, but the car was never permitted to stop there. I would emerge behind the corner.

Q: Was that so the people wouldn't see that you had been driven?

A: I didn't want it, and it would have been show-off. It would've been immodest for a little girl to be driven.

Q: So, you, yourself remain ambivalent about the kind of privilege you lived in.

A: Yes, yes. It was – there were a number of well-off families, obviously, but it was uncomfortable because the schools were totally mixed. You had children who were poverty stricken, who got free milk both at the Jewish school and in high school, I mean, in secondary school, and it was embarrassing. It was embarrassing when the governess would pick me up. I didn't like that. Although, oddly, I was with a friend two years ago, last year, two years ago in Zagreb who remembered how disgusted Pippsi was – Agnes Coyne, we called her Pippsi. She said, "No, she was wonderful." I said, "How can you say that? She was a horrible woman." "No, no, she was always very nice to me." You know, it was – you're right, it was unpleasant. And when you walked home, if you were picked up with friends, everybody, you know, reported back to one's mother how you – whether you greeted them properly, whether you curtsied, we curtsied. Still, I curtsied when I came to the States to married women always.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you were taught to curtsy to-

A: Older women, yeah.

Q: Did it make it difficult for you to make friends because of your -

A: No, no.

Q: It didn't?

A: No, I had lots of friends, very good friends in all strata, absolutely all strata. They would come to me. I would come to them – not a problem and not as far as religion was concerned or anything else, no, not at all.

Q: We're going to stop.

A: Good. Thank you.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: Let's talk a little bit about your political consciousness before you leave for England.

A: Absolutely.

Q: And you go to England in 1937.

A: Right. Right.

Q: Are you very politically conscious?

A: Yes, and I was fairly Croatian – well, first I was very Yugoslav. And then I become quite Croatian because they – mostly because, probably because the pressure from Belgrade was really quite bad. You felt it and everyday life. In fact, if you look at a certificate, school certificate from a public school in Zagreb, it was supposed to be in the two languages. So, you have it in Cyrillic, in Serbian, and you have it in Serbian with Latin script. It went that far. There was a lot of indoctrination, very intensely Yugoslav. I guess you just become – many of our friends were Croatian, peasant party people, who were mostly nice and decent and I don't think – they may have been anti-Semitic, but certainly not overtly so. I don't know, maybe some were. Some were, on the contrary, very less so. And both my father and my uncle who was a lawyer were very, very – had friends of all kinds. During King Alexander, and later on actually, even Prince Paul's regime and the various Serbian – especially after the death of Alexander, there was a lot of repression, and one of the members of my extended family was a young man who was a communist. He was in the same jail as Mose Pijade, and he was killed in the war. There was a whole group of young Communist activists, leftists, all of them, of course, very idealistic, had no idea what it really meant, and who sat in jail. And my uncle, who was a lawyer, was the one who was taking packages and taking care of them, and so on. They were in very, very notorious political prisons. One of them is Lepoglava where they continued giving, you know, that was also later on in jail during the Ustashe regime and so on. So, there was a lot of that going on. I'm trying to think, yeah.

Q: If I can ask you a question.

A: Sure.

Q: How would you characterize being very Yugoslavian Nationalist versus when you talk about becoming Croatian? How does one distinguish?

A: Well…

Q: How would you distinguish?

A: For me, I think this happened when I was maybe I was eleven. I guess you suddenly became aware of that this was a repressive regime and that people's friends were being – were being oppressed and also the peasants. At that time, Doctor Macek, who was sort of the leader of the Croatian peasant party and then later on became a member of the government, was in the opposition, and you lived in Croatia and not in Belgrade. You have – a lot of taxes and – not a lot, most, almost everything went to Belgrade. So, there it was [coughs], excuse me, there was a great deal of corruption of one kind or another. Money that was collected in taxes simply disappeared in Belgrade, and public works that were necessary in Croatia never took place. They were done in Belgrade. They weren't even done in Serbia. They were stalled along the way. And, later on, there was a political – I keep wanting to say the Spanish word which is *convenio*, but actually they – the Croatian Peasant party was actually now a public party, and it was not anything that was repressed in such a way, and there was a coalition government formed with Doctor Macek. And I remember during this, during the election campaign when you'd drive out in the countryside, you know, the peasants would yell, "*Zivio Doktor Macek!*" You also yelled, "*Zivio Doktor Macek!*", and so on - May he live long.

Q: And what does that mean?

A: Doctor – "May he live long," I mean, "Hail," or whatever you want to Doctor Macek. And this – the Croatian consciousness, which had been really very, very repressed – and maybe that was one reason why all those Ustashes were successful later on because, you know, of course, they via a Bulgarian assassin killed Alexander, and after that, there was a very repressive regime in Belgrade which repressed Croatia most of all.

Q: Really? More than any of the other…provinces?

A: Much more, much more.

Q: And did you feel that?

A: I didn't feel it, no. I did not feel it, but I mean, it was talked about a lot in school. Like, for instance, "God forbid, Croatia is not the Balkans. The Balkans stop at the Sava River."

Q: Really?

A: Yes, yes, that kind of stuff.

Q: So, who was Croatia, from that point of view, if not the Balkans? Just Croatia?

A: It was Croatia. And actually, geographically, it does stop there, and that's how far the Turks went. I mean, this is where they were stopped before going, getting into Vienna.

Q: At the same time, Alexander's assassinated in 1934.

A: Yes.

Q: In 1933, Hitler's over in Germany. Are you very conscious of this?

A: Yes, yes, completely conscious because I remember – I remember walking through a street, I must have been reading. Obviously, I was reading. There was a – I'll regress a little bit. Somewhere in 1933 or '34, my parents went to Chicago – whenever the World's Fair was in Chicago. It may have been in '34. Was it?

Q: I don't know.

A: Somewhere there. Okay, I think it may have been '33 or '34. When I tell you the next date, you will remember. We were in Slovenia on vacation with Agnes Coyne, Pippsi, and a friend of my mother's, and this was right on the Austrian border, and this was the year when Dolfuss was assassinated in Austria. He was the chancellor at the time. My parents got very scared, and phoned Zagreb and somebody came to see, to remove us from the border of Austria, and that's when things started becoming – became obvious that things were going to be happening in Austria. And, I remember the election when Hitler was elected as chancellor because there was a demonstration in Zagreb, and I remember seeing a – there was a newspaper. I don't think the paper was edited there, but there was a shop window where the headlines were posted, the front page of one of the papers was posted, and I remember seeing this. Then you started talking about anti-Semitism and so on, and that's what I, how I remember this.

Q: You were 12 or 13?

A: About that, yes.

Q: Do you and your friends talk about this?

A: Very much so. In the first place, we had, very soon after that, refugees coming in. Not under horrendous duress, but wanting to leave Austria, and we had very intimate friends there, which was a mixed marriage. The husband was Jewish. The mother was not Jewish. They wanted to leave. They came, they stayed with us, and they finally left for Argentina. One of the men who were working in my father's factory. Actually, he was in charge of livestock. He was half German and half Argentine, and as you know, they had a big cattle industry in Argentina, and he was there for years on the farm. The farm was part of the factory, as I told you. This was all – molasses were there and the cows were eating part of it, and so, this man, who had both German and Argentine citizenship, managed to get these friends, whose name was Polla (sp), visas to go to Argentina, and they stayed with us in the meantime. And more and more Austrian Jews were coming, sitting in coffeehouses. That's when there started to be some unpleasant remarks were made, "Do we need these German speaking foreigners sitting here?" Then it became, "German speaking Jews." And obviously they were staying either in rooming houses or hotels or with friends, but they were – everybody was –it was a coffeehouse society. I mean, my mother went to coffeehouse, my father – not the same one mind you. The men

played cards in one place, and the women had their bridge game someplace else or just went for coffee. So, it was a coffeehouse society like Vienna, and so on. You know, here they are talking German. At that point, nobody, none of the Croatian Jews spoke German. We were – except to them. I mean, it was, "Please don't speak German." And we didn't.

Q: So, you, at that point, began to feel a certain kind of threat.

A: Absolutely. Absolutely, from that time on, and it was getting more and more. There was talk of Dachau, for instance. There were no killing camps. There were no extermination camps. There were concentration camps and political camps and so on, and we knew of them. We knew that things were starting to happen, and at that point, obviously, we were – oh, and then for instance, we had a subscription to *Neue Freie Presse*, which then we didn't want to have anymore. Then, instead of the German papers, the Austrian papers, my father got Swiss papers, and everybody was listening to the radio to see what was happening, and so on. That was very – that felt threatening already.

Q: Do you see the beginnings of the Ustashe or is it- ?

A: No.

Q: You don't?

A: No.

Q: At this point?

A: No, not at all, not at all.

Q: Do you have any personal experience with people starting to say something about you as a Jewish person?

A: No, never.

Q: Never?

A: Never.

Q: It's interesting.

A: Never, and I don't think anybody else really. Never.

Q: But you decide you will not talk German.

A: Not only I, and there were a lot of people for whom it was hard because their education had been Austro-Hungarian, and there – and their literary language was not Croatian. Mine was. I spoke German, but I never -

Q: Was it true for non-Jews as well as Jews the decision not to speak German, or was it mainly the Jewish population?

A: I think mainly the Jewish population, yeah, because the upper-middle class, non-Jewish, probably continued. These were remnants of old Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy, aristocracy and so on, and they spoke German. And there were certain parts of Croatia where German was spoken almost as an everyday language. It never was with me, but for instance, Osijek, my great-grandmother, spoke Croatian, and very well and correctly, but she was more comfortable in German. But that was the town of Osijek where there was a great – by the way, that was a very large *Volksdeutsche* population around there that had come in – Slavians that had come in, I don't know, in the 17th century, 18th century, a whole batch of them who then became quislings of the worst sort. But, I mean, there were villages of nothing but German-speaking people in, mostly in Slavonia.

Q: Did you spend any time with these Austrian Jews who were coming through?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And, how would you characterize them because they're obviously leaving earlier than the *Einschluss* because you were still…

A: Yes.

Q: Right?

A: Yes.

Q: What is that they think is going to happen, or what…?

A: They are, I don't know, they were not comfortable. There was one and possibly, now that I think of it, these were mostly mixed marriages. There was another very well-off industrialist by the name of Alfred Braun, who was married to a non-Jewish Austrian woman, who took off for Kenya, and he was a business friend of my father's, and I remember them coming on business occasions previously, and then leaving for Kenya from Yugoslavia, as I remember.

Q: Do you remember young people your age, young teenagers?

A: One of them was – with families only – and another thing that happened is we all used to wear dirndls, you know Austrian – not real dirndls because they were too expensive to wear – but, you know, the little aprons and dresses with little puff sleeves. Everybody stopped wearing that. My brother had lederhosen. That was – I still have a picture of him as a small child, and then all that disappeared. It was also worn in Slovenia, you know, on the border, but we all stopped wearing stuff like that.

Q: Let me ask you something, does this stop because it's – you're feeling anti-German?

A: Yes. Anti-Austrian at first, and then, yeah.

Q: So, you want no identification in this way?

A: That's right.

Q: Were you, yourself, wondering what – would there be war, or would there be concentration camps, or would…?

A: There would be…a threat.

Q: Whatever that would be.

A: Yes.

Q: You wouldn't…

A: No, there would be a threat. And we, obviously – I mean, then later on things started to develop and Croatia was entirely surrounded by countries to which you couldn't go in, either pro-Nazi or were actually overrun or whatever. So, it was sort of like a little island, especially when the Germans entered Greece, it was very threatening, but that's much later on.

Q: Now, in the Jewish groups…

A: Yes.

Q: The gymnastic groups…

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a lot of talk among the Jewish kids?

A: Yes.

Q: About what all this means?

A: I think so. I think so, yes, sure.

Q: You do remember that, yourself?

A: I remember. Certainly, I remember, and I had a conversation with – what I didn't remember was brought back to me a couple of years ago, talking to the same friend of mine who said, "Ah! Your father was so smart and got you out in time." I said, "You

couldn't get out." People didn't have the means. There were many reasons why you couldn't get out, and I said – and she said, "I became aware of that when the first Austrian refugees knocked on our door." I don't remember anybody knocking on our door to come and stay, and she said "That's when I started pushing my mother," who, by the way, was married to a non-Jewish Slovene of German descent or Austrian descent and so on. Saved them in one way or another, in other ways not. So, of course, we talked about it, of course we did.

Q: Did you remember other people knocking at your door?

A: No, people who came, I mean, yeah.

Q: They knew?

A: They knew. Now, for instance, another group that came was this – again, this is people from my father's hometown, their name was Dierenbach, and they were from Pozega and two brothers who went and became bankers – one in Nuremburg, the other in Dresdner. They both work at the Dresdner Bank, both married to very, very German Jewish women. I mean, very German, intensely so, and they had – they didn't have dual-nationality. They were already German, and the son must have been about 13 at the time. This family came back and settled and the boy started learning Croatian, and spoke it. The mother never learned Croatian. And so, they were part of our group. I mean, he became part of fairly close knit – my cousins, and this boy, especially because they were originally – the parents were originally from my father's hometown. Yeah, they kept trickling in. There weren't huge boatloads, not boatloads, trainloads of people coming in.

Q: So, why, in 1937, did you go to Oxford, or prepare to go to Oxford, in England?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: My father was always very anglophile and I wanted to go. I didn't want to be in my school anymore, and later on my brother came. He went also to school there, but that was it. That was it.

Q: It had nothing to do with your father worrying that maybe he should get you out, at this point?

A: No. No. No, because I kept coming home.

Q: Back and forth?

A: Back and forth all the time, no. Obviously, we were in England. My family – I must have been on vacation or something and we went back – and a whole bunch of my family – my brother was still in Zagreb, but a whole bunch of the family was in London at the time of

Munich. And we all went back, and I remember – I remember Chamberlain, and I remember the French being – the army was called up. What do you call it when an army is –mobilized. We went through Paris, because the train you used was the Orient Express. That was the one way of going. There wasn't anything elite about it. It's just – that's the train. That was the line. And there was some members of a family who had moved from Zagreb to somewhere else whose sons were in England already in school, that's right, at the university both of them, two boys. I suspect maybe there may have been a question in that case of mobilization of kids to the army, and these were boys of the age that they would have been mobilized in Yugoslavia, maybe that's the reason why they went there, but this was also a family that had a *Precepteur*, a French male governess, and then an English male governess, and they spoke English and they went to school in England, both of them. They were Alfred and Erich Miller, their name was. And they were there, their parents were there, and two uncles of ours were there, and I guess they came to leave me in school. And in fact, I was at Oxford. I was already…

Q: You were there already?

A: I was there already, and they picked me up and we went back because my father – they hadn't prepared anything. My brother was in Zagreb, going to school quite normally. And then we stayed until things sort of blew over, and I went back with my brother, I remember. I may have the – I may have the dates off a little bit.

Q: As far as I know, you went to Oxford in '37.

A: It must have been earlier, I think '36.

Q: You think '36?

A: I think it must have been '36. Somewhere I have a piece of – no, it may have been '37 – I have a piece of paper somewhere where my father is asking permission from the Ministry of Finance to buy a certain number of foreign currency for my schooling and my brother's schooling abroad. You had to have it, and you had to show you passed whatever exams were necessary to get the next year's quota of money, of Pound Sterling to export, because you were not allowed to take any money out of Yugoslavia.

Q: So, do you think before Chamberlain and Munich, which is 1938, that you were already at Oxford?

A: Yes, I was already, yes, I was.

Q: Why would you father want you back?

A: The family should be together. That's why.

Q: Do you think your father, in 1938 or even before, was thinking about how to get the whole family out of Croatia?

A: I think probably so. I think so.

Q: But you were not talking about this with him.

A: No.

Q: He didn't say anything?

A: No.

Q: So you go back for a few months-

A: Yes.

Q: Before the attack on Poland.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: That whole year, almost a whole year.

Q: So, you're back almost a whole year. Do you see your family at this point, during this time?

A: Yes, probably I went on you know, on leave.

Q: Do you see brother fairly regularly?

A: At Oxford, all the time, every weekend I had to take him and a bunch of other boys for lunch because I was the oldest one, and they were entrusted to me. It was disgusting

Q: You were not happy with that?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: It was horrible. They had dreadful uniforms with boaters, you know, with straw hats, horrendous uniforms, and they handed them over to me and I had to turn them back in.

Q: So, how close was St. Edward's to-

A: Very close. It was at Oxford.

Q: I see. So, the women did not wear anything, but the boys were wearing these -

A: This was high school. This was what they called public school. It was horrendous. I was very embarrassed. I was the one who was taking care of them.

Q: Now, you returned to Zagreb in ’39.

A: And my brother.

Q: And your brother?

A: And the Englishman that I was sort of engaged to.

Q: Right, so this is the summer right before the attack on Poland.

A: Yes, right, exactly, exactly.

Q: So, we’ll stop the tape now because we’re at the end of the tape.

End of Tape #2

Tape #3

Q: Let's go back, before we get to, in Zagreb in 1939, describe the scene as you're going through Paris after Munich. What does that look like?

A: This was just, just, just exactly a day or two after Munich, total chaos with French men being mobilized, some in uniform, some in half a uniform. The trains were, including the Orient Express, complete – I mean that we – there was only standing room. People were sitting on, on suitcases, and completely and absolutely chaotic. And then when we came to Croatia, everything was quiet. I mean, to Yugoslavia.

Q: So, it must have been frightening to see that.

A: It was extremely frightening. It was extremely frightening. In fact, we almost missed the train because my father was rushing out to get the latest Swiss papers to read it from a neutral point of view, and as he was going in, he pushed somebody and he something like, "Pardon," or something – no, my father said, "Pardon", and the guy said in French, "Fichez-moi la paix!", and my father's French wasn't very good and he thought he was talking about peace, but what the guy was saying to him was, "Leave me alone." Or something like that. And, my father said, "Oui, oui, j'espère bien," or something like that. Then, we went on. I remember members of the family sitting on suitcases. That's how-

Q: How crowded it was.

A: How crowded it was in corridors. I mean, my mother and I sat inside in a *wagonlit* (ph), but it was totally crazy, and I'm trying to think where it was that it sorted petered out, all of the craziness, because when we came to Zagreb it was fairly normal, the train, but it was, for two or three hours, it was this chaotic situation.

Q: Now, when you go to Zagreb for this summer of 1939, and your fiancé Joseph Heaton -

A: Yes.

Q: - is with you? And you're a young woman. You're 18 years old.

A: Yes.

Q: When did you meet Joseph?

A: At Oxford.

Q: At Oxford?

A: Yes.

Q: He was a student there?

A: He had just graduated.

Q: Was he your first boyfriend?

A: No, no, no. Not I mean really boyfriend. None of these were really serious boyfriends. This was a serious boyfriend. This was a serious, engaged boyfriend, so to speak, unofficially, I would say, but expected to.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: How long had you known him?

A: Maybe six months or so. It was pretty fast.

Q: Were you in classes together?

A: No, no, no. The schools were not together. No, he, he – I had just started, and he had just graduated with a useless degree in history. But, I mean this was an Eton-Christchurch type person, and it was just love. We fell in love.

Q: He was three or four years older than you?

A: More than that, maybe even six.

Q: Really?

A: Yes.

Q: So, when –

A: No, I know what – he is – I know exactly when he was born. He was born in 1917.

Q: 1917?

A: And, I was born in ’21, four years.

Q: Not bad.

A: Not bad. At that time, no, at that time it was huge, yes.

Q: Had your parents met him?

A: I was bringing him home, yes.

Q: Yes?

A: Yes, and my brother was the chaperone.

Q: And your brother knew him from-?

A: My brother knew him.

Q: Did they like each other?

A: Yes, sure, sure, sure.

Q: So, how was your parents' response?

A: My father was very positive. My mother was very negative.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. She didn't – she wanted me probably to marry a Jewish boy from Zagreb who I could stay home with. This meant to her that I was going to take off and live God only knows where, possibly in the colonies. Who knows what? His father, this guy's father had all sorts of interests. His older brother was what was then called on the Gold Coast. He had graduated, and they had some kind of interest in Africa. So, my mother had these visions of my living somewhere colonial, which really frightened her, I think.

Q: Now, he wasn't Jewish, and that bothered your mother?

A: No.

Q: And that bothered your mother, then.

A: I think it may have bothered my mother, yeah.

Q: But she didn't say that to you directly?

A: No, she intimated it. [laughs]

Q: But her biggest fear was you go live in those crazy colonies?

A: Yes, yes, yes, in the colonies and for God's sakes in England, where the climate was so horrible and the bathrooms were so cold. And that kind of stuff, and "Who's going to bring up my child?" By that time in England, people were having a lot of household help, let's put it that way, and also, on top of it, his parents were divorced, which was another horrible fault. And, yeah, like that. But, my father liked him very much from the word –

well, my father was much more anglophile, although my mother spoke absolutely perfect English; my father did not.

Q: Do you think that she liked him, but was worried about what he was going to bring you to, or do you think she really didn't like him somehow?

A: I'm trying to think. He was a different culture. He was… No, no, for instance, it bothered her – boys in Zagreb were, you know, very much coat and tie and so on, and he was a rowing blue.

Q: He was a what?

A: He was a rowing blue. He was the one who did the Cambridge, Oxford/Cambridge rowing team.

Q: I see. So, he was wearing sweaters?

A: He was wearing, yes, sports clothes, which were very, let's say, informal. It was different.

Q: And, that was attractive to you, wasn't it?

A: I think so, yes, yes, that and being – not being obvious as I was in Zagreb. He talks among other people who didn't care who I was, that anonymity was very nice. Then I came back and the anonymity was gone.

Q: It was gone?

A: It was gone because I remember – oh, he did have – he was wearing a pair of white slacks and a white blazer, which is what these people wore, and I was walking down the street in Zagreb. And somebody saw him, of my older friends, actually a very well-known historian, a woman by the name of Fici Despot (ph). She was one who ended up by being a Croatian leading historian, and she saw us on the street, and somebody asked her, "Did you see Lucie with the guy, with the Englishman?" And she said, "Yes." And she said, "What did he look like?" And she said, "Like the ice cream man." So, you know, it was like that.

Q: Was he shocked when he came and saw how your-?

A: No, he came from a very wealthy family. Although the family was divorced and his mother lived in the lake district, and so on. So, no.

Q: So, he was perfectly comfortable?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: So, you had a big social life during that summer?

A: Yes, because two days after we were there, or maybe three days after we arrived, four other people that we knew from Oxford arrived – two young men. Two were journalists, and two were people that I just knew who had just graduated, who were – but not friends of Joe's. They met there. He was very jealous, as a matter of fact, but I had made these arrangements previously, and they came and they were going to go do a tour of the Balkans or Europe or whatever afterwards, and they stayed with us. And then there was the invasion of Poland in September, and all of them immediately went to Zagreb to the British Consulate and immediately – immediately reported, and the other four took off right away, almost immediately, to go to England, and Joe stayed maybe another week and went back. That's the last time I saw him. They put him on the train a week later.

Q: Did you try to convince him not to leave?

A: Oh, no, no, I would have gone myself. We were all very gung-ho to go fight Hitler one way or another.

Q: That must have been very sad time for you.

A: It was horrible. I remember it. It was on the railroad station, and of course at that time to embrace a man you weren't married to or whatever, kiss him on the railroad station, my parents averted their heads and went off, and it was so on. Maybe I was here and they were 100 meters away. Underneath there's way, there's a whole new... I think my mother was relieved.

Q: You think she was relieved?

A: She was relieved. She was very fond of this person who, whose photograph I had, who was more to her liking and also, you know...

Q: But this was not typical to have people who were not married kissing and certainly kissing in public.

A: Oh, God, terrible

Q: You learned really terrible things at Oxford.

A: Yes, yes, but then I was supposed to have been engaged to him officially, so to speak.

Q: Right. So, what happens then? You're – you were in Zagreb, you're obviously not going back.

A: I can't go back. I can't go back to the place. So, then I start taking – my brother, let's put it that way, had lost a year. In order to get back to high school, he had to go to a private school to make up subjects such as National History, Croatian Language, Yugoslav

Geography, which was a separate subject and so on, and he went to a private school which was horrendously terrible for him because only retarded kids went to private schools, but he went for a whole year before he could make up and then go to a regular high school after that. That was really traumatic because – yeah, I remember that very well. I did odds and ends. I took classes in History of Art. There was some sort of free university which was for people who did not – who were not inscribed, that you could go to classes. The British Council was running English classes and I sat in on them for laughs, really, because a friend of mine had gone there and did a course in proficiency in English which oddly, somewhere in '47, I got the results of the exams. Could you believe it? Somebody found them at the British Council after the war through a relative of mine. I learned typing, so I would know something worthwhile and practical for the future. In fact, I brought an Olivetti with me on the trip to the United States. I went to these ridiculous balls that were – You were launched in Zagreb when you went to a certain dance.

Q: And launched, is it -?

A: As a debutante. Until you were 18, you were a snotty-nose that nobody even considered as a person. You were a school child, a school girl, and so on, but after the *Matura*, after you graduated from high school, which I did not there, but I got to be 18 years old, you went to these various balls, and the ball was the, oddly enough, the journalist ball, and once you were at the journalist ball, I guess you were ready to get married maybe. Anyhow, then you were in society. Then you can – I mean, then you were no longer led by the hand, although supervised seriously, but you were launched.

Q: Now, these launchings, this is a mixed launching? This is Jewish, Catholic-

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: Everybody?

A: Completely. Completely absolutely.

Q: And, this was horrendous for you?

A: For me, it was horrendous. It was, you know, first of all, wearing ridiculous clothes that I hated with high heels, which I still hate. You had to have these dresses made on the whole, because there was no ready-to-wear, which was standing in front of dressmakers' mirrors being prodded hither and yon by mothers, by dressmakers, by couturiers, and so on. It was hard, but you went.

Q: Did your mother like this?

A: I don't think so. That was the duty, this was duty, but my mother – I was, and I still am, horribly nearsighted. To wear glasses, my God, I mean, you know – it was torn off of my face. So, a number of people as I walked on the street and I didn't curtsey properly, it was

reported to my mother, and I didn't see the poor person who was reporting me. Pictures, photographs were taken of no glasses on, God forbid. It was awful. It was boring. It was terrible. I had to stand straight, and I slouch on the whole; I always did. And it was boring. It was horribly boring.

Q: So, this was going in evenings.

A: This was going on in evenings.

Q: During the day-

A: Yes.

Q: Or in the evenings when this wasn't happening-

A: Yes.

Q: Are there people coming to your parents' house?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Politicians coming and discussions about-

A: Yes.

Q: About what's going on-

A: Yes.

Q: And are you able to-

A: Yes.

Q: At least observe, or can you participate?

A: Oh, no, I'm there.

Q: You're there?

A: I'm there.

Q: Can you talk about that?

A: Yes. One of the things that's going on is you're listening to Radio Paris. Paris Radio had a Yugoslav by the name of – I can't remember, but I do have his name written down – he was – oh, Petrovic, Sveta Petrovic. He had one of these programs, like Voice of America

had later on, where he was broadcasting to Yugoslavia and railing against the Germans, and then when France fell, he went on – not to Vichy – he ended up in the United States, but he followed the French government where he could – where he was broadcasting, and he ended up in the United States, and I ended up doing translations for the censors here for him, and when he was sick doing his broadcasts for the Royal Yugoslav government, which was very funny, you were listening to that. You were listening again on the radio to neutral radio stations, and there were family councils around the table, and friends. What's going to happen now that Hitler's about to get us all? But, you didn't know where and how. This was – these were family councils going on among the members of the families – dining rooms or another. It was constant. And people who had lived in the provinces, like the parents of these cousins that were in London, moved to Zagreb to be handy to be able to leave if anybody was able to leave. The major problem was that there were currency restrictions. You couldn't send any money out. The other problem was that my father was a reserve officer, a captain first class, and he would have had to have gotten permission from the army to leave. They were sending mobilizations going on. There wasn't mobilizing, but there was a – there was a state of alert, let's say. My father – not my father, anybody, this wasn't anything exclusive – had to do every – I don't remember when you, probably, at various intervals, but at that time, I think, every two years, you had to go and do some active duty as an officer. He was a reserve officer in the Yugoslav army, and every once in a while, they would pull you for three months or six months or whatever to re- I don't know – to get them up, you know, to whatever was going to happen. To get them ready for necessary combat, and my father – this was probably in 1940 – was in Split for three months doing his military duty, and I had nothing to do. So, I came to stay with him in Split, and that was very exciting, very nice first of all, nobody was supervising me. I was living in a hotel, and I would see him in the evening for dinner with the rest of the officers, which was also fun, I must say. One of the officers, there, was the Imam of the Muslim soldiers because, you know, just behind the mountain is Bosnia, and there were number of recruits who were Muslim. And I remember on one occasion how aware they were of Hitler and anti-Semitism. The Imam saying to my father, "Don't you worry about anything, Fredo. If they come, I will say you're Muslim. The main thing has been done already." So, you know, this is – this is what – I think that's sort of indicative of what the camaraderie was all among them.

Q: Can you explain that because the people who are watching aren't going to know?

A: Muslims and Jews are of circumcised. That's what it was.

Q: And, the only men in Europe that who were…

A: That's right. That's right. Absolutely.

Q: So, what were you doing during the day?

A: Reading, writing letters to Joe Heaton.

Q: So, you were still keeping up obviously this connection-

A: Oh, yes.

Q: You're hearing from him?

A: Oh, yes. Absolutely, absolutely.

Q: Was he in Burma?

A: No, he was first in England getting trained, and then he was in India for quite a long time. He was camped in Peshawar, places like that. That was the summer.

Q: That's very exotic.

A: Yes, very exotic. In India, New Delhi and then, you know, when the heat got horrendous they went to Northwest province, which was Kashmir, I guess.

Q: So, you're not dating anyone else, right? At this point.

A: Not, dating. I'm going out, yeah, yeah. I'm going out. Everybody knows. Everybody knows, but I do go to the darned balls and to coffeehouses and so on, but you know, mildly so.

Q: But, now, you were able to spend time with your father alone without all of this social-

A: Yes.

Q: Do you talk together about – is he telling you now that he's trying to figure out a way to get you all out?

A: Not at that particular moment, but yes, we talked, because this group was trained to withstand the Italian army, because, you know. Okay, so, obviously, I mean, we know what they're getting to, you know, to face. We did talk about it, sure. Then, as I'm walking along in Split looking at shop windows or whatever, maybe palaces, maybe Diocletian's Palace, something more cultural, my high school class turns up on their high school graduation trip, and I joined them, and that was a rather amusing thing because I have all of these dressy clothes. I was dressing in the evening in this hotel where they were staying. So, I packed all of that up, and I left it with my father who then sent it to Zagreb, and my father was on duty and a soldier was supposed to escort me to this third-class bus that my class was riding in to go to Dubrovnik, and I made a little suitcase of some kind or other, and this was like five o'clock in the morning, five-thirty in the morning, and suddenly there's this knock on the door. And I said, "Who is it?" in Croatian, and the man says, "The army." He was some kind of guy who was in – who my father had sent to pick me up. So, this was the army that was getting me out of bed, and left me there, and I joined this whole group, and then we finally got back to Zagreb on

some horrible third-class train, sleeping on the floor, as ____ I was saying how they were doing in Dubrovnik on mattresses on the floor, and that's what we did.

Q: So, now do you think your father was in Split in 1940?

A: Yes.

Q: So, then, you go back to Zagreb.

A: We go back to Zagreb.

Q: Now, is there a sense in Zagreb now for you different from what it was the year before, two years before, as a Jewish person?

A: Yes, very much.

Q: And, what is that?

A: And my father was very anxious for me to get out, and I know that I had papers. I know that I had to get a piece of paper that said that I was unmarried, which I had notarized. I know that I went to get a birth certificate, which I had translated and notarized – translated into English and officially notarized to send to England, to have with me. And, I actually think that I had a Greek visa, if I'm not mistaken, which – because Greece was not invaded yet, to go, I guess, via Iraq or something, Turkey, via Iraq to India, which, of course, never took place, but I do remember getting a Greek visa, and a letter from the Counsel General. Those Counsel Generals are very interesting things. There are a number of honorary Counsel Generals who were Jewish, and one was a Greek. The other was Portuguese, who also gave me a visa, and the other was Uruguayan. These were all Zagreb Jews, well off in CD cars.

Q: CD?

A: *Corps diplomatique*, CD on their cars. Diplomatic corp.

Q: When I asked you that it was different for you as a Jewish person-

A: Yes.

Q: In Zagreb-

A: Yes.

Q: Is that because you could feel a certain kind of anti-Semitism toward Jewish people?

A: I did not feel it.

Q: You didn't?

A: No.

Q: You just know?

A: You just know. You feel completely surrounded by – you feel actually jailed. I mean, where are you going to go? You have to get out. I mean-

Q: So, it's not that in Croatia-

A: No.

Q: It's that Croatia is being surrounded -

A: Yes

Q: And, you don't know what's going to happen?

A: Yes, yes, yes. Yugoslavia. In Croatia, you already started feeling that you didn't want to be there when it happened.

Q: Is ___? Or not?

A: Yes, because I think that there must have been – there must have been intimations already. I'm not aware of it, but I do know that there must have been some people who were quite happy with what was going on in Germany. I don't know a personal one. I do know that I met, the day before I left in, let's say, the Yugoslav portugates (ph), the German ____ on March 27th, and like on March 28th or 29th, I was on the main square and I ran into two friends of mine from high school, two guys, and I said, "Guys, we're leaving." Because, by that time, we already had our American visa and everything else, and one of them, who was a Communist, who later became director of the Zagreb theater, and the other one, who's father became director of the University under the Ustashe, were standing there, these are my really close friends from school, and they said, "Now you are leaving, when we need you?!" I said, "You'll have to do without me." These people were activists, but they didn't do anything, collaborated.

Q: Okay, we'll stop.

End of Tape #3

Tape #4

Q: Lucie, tell me a little bit more about your meeting these two guys. What – they thought that you would help them in terms of resisting what would happen?

A: Exactly, exactly, they thought I would be very useful. They were both at that time very left-leaning, not party members, but they were left-leaning, and they obviously knew that things were going to happen now, and as I said, "Guys, we're leaving," they said, "Now? When we need you?" "Sorry, I've got to go."

Q: Why would they have thought you would have been an activist? Was that something that you gave inclinations of?

A: I think so. I think they knew where my heart was, and they knew, I mean, obviously I wasn't a Communist. One of them may have been a member of the party at one time, but he did – he served in the Croatian Ustashe army. The other one, the other one, whose father was a very famous grammarian, we used his grammar, nowadays I think it's still probably used. His name was Ivsic, became director in the Zagreb University, so, I mean the University of Zagreb during Ustashe time, no.

Q: So, you wouldn't call yourself left-leaning?

A: Yes, yes, liberal, left-leaning, liberal left-leaning, okay, yes, yes.

Q: So, you said prior talking to about this incident with the boys, that your father was engaged in trying to get you out. So, there must have been different plans that he was working on.

A: There were different plans. Well, I wanted to go and see Joe, but then everything – it got to be almost impossible as various frontiers were closing around us constantly. I mean, you couldn't go through this, you couldn't go through that. Then, of course, the fact that he could not have, I mean, my father could not have left the country without getting permission from the army. I mean, he was – they would activate you immediately, and he would have had to get a permit from the army, plus you had to get a permit all together to leave the country, I mean, which was a great big do. People couldn't just say, "Well, tomorrow, I'm going to go to Vienna," or something. You had to get a slew of documents, and permits, and who knows what, not to mention absolutely no money whatsoever.

Q: You were not allowed to take money.

A: You could not take any money out whatsoever, so what if not that?

Q: Nothing.

A: Nothing, not that. Very little, I think it's probably mentioned in the passports how much. I'm not quite sure, but very little. So, the money, at one time, probably in 1941 probably, '40, '41, my father pro forma sold the big factory where, you know, also where the country house was to some business friends.

Q: And that's Ljubljana or not?

A: No, no, no, this is the place is called – it's near Zagreb and the village or where the factory was is called Savski Marof, and that country house was called Janusevac, and he sold it to some friends in Ljubljana, some business friends in Ljubljana. In fact, I was just recently going through some papers, I saw some stuff about that. And through somebody, I don't know how, he got some money to England, to Switzerland, and a little bit to the United States. I don't know how.

Q: Now, you're saying he sold the factory pro forma, what does that mean?

A: That means that he-

Q: It appears to mean it's not a real sale.

A: It was a sale with a thing, you know, "When things calm down, I'll have it back." But he did get the money for it.

Q: He did?

A: Yes, he got a serious amount of money, but oddly enough, he had taken a loan on my mother's house which was very valuable, not so much as, you know, a historical house, but it was in the center of the center of town, and the land was very valuable, and he got a loan from the – he took a mortgage, that's what it is, a mortgage from the Zagreb Bank, the city bank, and was getting ready to send up money somehow underground to the States or to Switzerland or whatever, probably to Switzerland, but my mother said, "Listen, the president – I saw the president of the bank on the street, and he really didn't greet me with as much", I hate to say deference, but that was the meaning, "as usual. Would you return that loan?" Which he did.

Q: So, you knew that when you were – and you knew this at the time – that when you were leaving that there would be money in various places?

A: Yes, but very little. I thought it was very little, and it was very little, but it was enough to sort of survive. There was some in Switzerland; that I know.

Q: You didn't really – no, go ahead.

A: Why and how it was done, I really don't know, but there was enough to survive.

Q: Now how did you, I mean, did you pack?

A: Yes!

Q: How did you do all this?

A: Yes, the last month – okay, so we got this American visa which -

Q: You wouldn't have survived – let's describe about that and then -

A: Yes, yes. The Counsel General of the United States – the consulate was the house next to ours in, I mean the office of the consulate, next to ours in Zagreb, the house. My father was a hunter. He took the Counsel General hunting – it wasn't even the Counsel General, it was a Counsel, Mr. Miley, an American, nice middle-class person. My father took him hunting. He, I don't know, he saw in the back of our stable a – a suit of armor that was, you know, put away, nobody was bothering with. He went crazy with the suit of armor. My father gave him the suit of armor, which was cluttering things up, and I don't know how authentic or – it was a suit of armor that probably was authentic, and he was very happy to give us a visa. Now, one reason why this was going on was there were – as nobody could leave Yugoslavia – quotas – you know, the visas were given by country quotas at the time – were not being used in Yugoslavia. So, you had masses of quotas lying fallow in consulates, and it is very easy to get an immigration visa. And when my father asked for the visa, and the man in the Counsel said, "Why don't you take an immigration visa?" And, my father said, "What would I need an immigration visa for? I'm going to return, obviously." And, he said, "Okay, you'll return, but take this immigration visa. You never know when it might be handy." And we got an immigration visa and that's how it worked. Oh, and at one time, I guess, he did him a favor because he bought his Buick. He got a new Buick at the Counsel, and we got his Buick.

Q: His old one?

A: His old one. It wasn't all that old, but it was certainly not for Yugoslavia, and he – this Buick was very significant, by the way, and he – so, you know, it was a friendship. It was a – for maybe a year and a half, two years, they were – they went -

Q: It wasn't something very recent?

A: No, no, no, it was a long-term thing that was going on at that time, and he – yes, okay, we had that, but before that I was thinking we might be going, and that we didn't get the visa, but they talked about the visa probably a month before that. So, in town, in Zagreb, there were five or six trunks, you know, like – steamers, huge steamer trucks.

Q: In the house?

A: In the house, all the servants were there including the nanny, the present nanny, everybody was there. The dogs were there. There were three dogs running around in

town, not out in the country, and by the way, all the furniture and so on from the country house was in the basement of the house.

Q: Of the house in Zagreb?

A: In our house in Zagreb, yeah, that was taken out. When he sold the factory pro forma, he took – an uncle of my mother's stayed in Janusevac, and was going to be running the factory. They didn't do him in, but he stayed there. So, his furniture was there, but our furniture from the bedroom and stuff like that, that was in the basement, taken by the Germans, by the way. Okay. And we were putting into these steamer trunks embroidered bed linen and tablecloths and stuff of that kind, could you imagine why we needed that, and clothing, four-station clothing. This was – I mean, four-season, four-season clothing, all sorts of junk like that. And then there were suitcases around, and this was all open standing, being filled, so that when the Germans came, they had all packed together, they just took it out. It's amazing.

Q: So, what did you all think? That this would be shipped out somehow?

A: Yes, this would be shipped out. I mean, this is how this was going on with people who left three weeks earlier. There were people who left earlier.

Q: So, what happened -?

A: Yes.

Q: Was you were within days of the invasion?

A: Yes, yes, yes, we were days within the invasion. So, this must have been, let's say, a week before the 27th of March. That's about it, but when this happened, and when Yugoslavia – they went in Belgrade, the populous starting spitting on the German flag. They took the car of the German ambassador and knocked it over, and then I think they put it on fire, and they were yelling all sorts of slogans: "Better dead than a slave" and that kind of stuff, and in Zagreb there was jubilation.

Q: Because of this tri-part agreement with, with German.

A: Yes.

Q: March 25th?

A: That's – yes, it was March 25th, and on the 27th was the *putsch*, yes, they abrogated – the people abrogated, and on the 28th, we got into our car. We left everything there. We packed suitcases.

Q: So, you had some little suitcases?

A: We had – they weren't that little. There must have been quite a few because when I think about what I dragged over like typewriters and riding boots, necessary things of that kind, and urban coats. [laughs]

Q: Urban coats?

A: An urban coat.

Q: So, it was good it was a Buick with a big trunk.

A: Yeah, and they were quite – yes, yes, I don't know big of a trunk. It was a very large car. It was very large. My parents – so, then, we had the American visa, but my father didn't have the permission from the army to leave yet, nor did he have an exit visa for Yugoslavia, an exit permit from Yugoslavia. There's a piece in the passport, there's a Cyrillic thing that says "Official Visa", and he – and he had to have written in that he was a delegate on the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, otherwise he couldn't have gotten out, but particularly not the army, because he would have been activated almost immediately. So, we got into our car – my parents, my brother, I, my uncle – my father's brother, who was a lawyer, Felix, and our driver who grew up in my father's family. His name was Josip Levac, who was part *Volksdeutsche*, but that was – he was never anti-Semitic or anything like that. His father was a cooper. He made barrels for my grandfather's factory, and this man was schooled by – my father had him schooled and he went with us to Belgrade. We went through my father's hometown, which was Slavonska Pozega, which was where this man was from also, and my father had to report to the barracks. As we drove into the town, we were stopped by the army, by some recruits, and one stuck the gun into the car, not with the bayonet, but just the muzzle of the gun, and he said, "*Legitimacija*". We gave him whatever, IDs and so on. So, I gave him my ID. My father showed his army ID, said he was going to the headquarters there, I don't know about the headquarters, but anyhow to the barracks because this is where he would have had to report to, and when he saw the paper, he called out, "Anybody more literate around here?" I'm sure he was illiterate, and couldn't read it. Okay, so, somebody more literate came and he said, "Okay." So, we waited for my father in the car while he went to the barracks. I don't know whether my uncle went along or not. I don't think so, and Sepa, I think went to, the chauffer, went to talk to somebody in his family was left over there, and then we proceeded to Belgrade.

Q: Excuse me, was there any doubt that your father would get permission?

A: If they had felt that they wanted to be unpleasant, maybe he would have bribed somebody. I don't know. I don't know, but if they had wanted to be unpleasant, if he hadn't had – he probably had some other paper there that he showed them, that he was going to Belgrade to do something with – I can't imagine it any other way. He must have been, because it was very recently, he had just very recently done this, you know, training in Split not so long ago. And, you know, he probably would've survived because all the prisoners of war survived, almost all, and just as aside, a friend of ours who was a Serbian officer, by the way, who's father was a general, his wife's father was general,

and so on, was a prisoner of war in Germany, and he told me that the Jewish prisoners of war and the Serbs and everybody were together and that one time, the Germans wanted to separate the Jewish prisoners of war from the others, and these people went on strike and called the Red Cross and who knows what, and they left them together. And almost all of them survived.

Q: What is the atmosphere in the car?

A: Horrendous, awful.

Q: Are you really frightened?

A: Frightened, because you could see things were about to start. We were listening to the radio. There were mobilizations. There was army all over, you know, you could see army left and right as you went -

Q: So, you were sure that the Germans -

A: Oh, absolutely, absolutely, there was no doubt in our mind that something would happen.

Q: Your one fear was that you wouldn't get out soon enough.

A: Absolutely, that was the fear. Plus we had no visa to any country where we could have gone through. We had-

Q: You just had the visa-

A: We had the – no, we had the immigration visa – no! We got – oh, yeah, we had the immigration visa. That was it. That was it.

Q: But, you had no way to traverse -

A: We had no other, no way to traverse. I think, if I look in the passport, that all of this was obtained in Belgrade, the various consulate and embassies and so on. So, when we came to Belgrade, first of all, we had the permission from the army, then they wrote in this delegation thing that he was going as a delegate of the Ministry. Otherwise would have not been able to get there. And we all got these official visas, because you didn't just get a visa. You got an official visa. I know that my uncle – my uncle, I think had an affair with the prime minister's – the prime minister's wife. He was all over the place. He was a very, a popular guy, and had generally all sorts of connections. He was divorced first. He was a likeable, nice guy who had connections, and I think he helped somehow hasten things. We spent one horrendous night. There were two other members of the family, one or two – my aunt's husband was also a lawyer who was a businessman, who was there in Belgrade and I don't know why, and somebody else. And at the very last minute, we found that there was an industrial or some kind of fair, either industrial fair or an agricultural fair or something like that in Budapest, and they were giving visas.

Q: To be able to go?

A: To be able to go, and this was the only – this was the only – the only place, the only border you could cross. You couldn't go anywhere else. The Germans were in Greece already, couldn't go through Bulgaria, couldn't go through Italy, couldn't go through Austria via Slovenia. This was the only way to go, and this was some kind of probably excursion visa, I'm not quite sure, but they were giving these visas because there was this fair. We spent the night in Belgrade, and the next morning – naturally Yugoslavia was completed mobilized by that time – and decided that the chauffer would help us with the cars and go with us to the Hungarian border, and then be able to report back to the family whether we crossed or not. And in the train, my father wrote out an affidavit or something and said to the chauffer, who clearly was a member of the family, "You will need to take care of your family. Use this car as a taxi or whatever you want." And he gave him all the papers, and the piece of paper and the letter in which he said that he should take this car, which he did. [laughs] And the very first week, Artukovic, the Croatian minister of the interior became, I mean, he became his driver. The car was requisitioned and he became his driver, and stayed with him until the very last, and didn't tell him that he was fleeing, and this poor guy was caught by the British, and Artukovic took off to Argentina and finally ended up here.

Q: So, he -

A: He gets us-

Q: To the train?

A: To the – no, he gets us to the train, and he goes with us to the border, to the Hungarian border on the train.

Q: To say that the family-

A: That we crossed, yes. At that time, there were German soldiers in the train – officers and soldiers in the train already going towards Belgrade. There were troop trains.

Q: You mean in the train station, not in your train?

A: No, no, in the train station in Belgrade, this was total chaos, and there were recruits with peasants with their wives sitting on packages. I mean, you could hardly make a step. It was total complete chaos. This was the mobilized peasantry that was going to be fighting the Germans, all over the Belgrade station. No, he went – he left us on the Hungarian border, when the train, just before the train crossed to Hungary. Now, there were German officers on the train already going – I don't know where they were going – but there were German officers in jackets and everything going up and down in the train, but the war had not been declared yet, and troop trains going in the other direction towards Yugoslavia. And we arrived in Budapest, got into a nice hotel, and phoned Belgrade and

told them, "We're here." Meanwhile, tried to find out where other members of the family were, the ones who were in Zagreb. Some were getting ready to go to Dubrovnik, which they knew was going to be, if anything happened, it would be Italian, but they were not there yet. Other members of the family stayed in Belgrade, and we talked to them when we got to Switzerland. That night, maybe six hours later, they were bombed.

Q: But, they wouldn't listen to you?

A: No, no, no. They thought that we were-

Q: They thought you were crazy.

A: They thought we were – we called them from Budapest and we said, "Listen, this is what we saw." And they said, "You're so in panic among us. Leave us alone." And so on, and the same thing they said when we called them from Switzerland at midnight, and they were bombed six hours later.

Q: When you got to Budapest, you did not have papers for the next stage?

A: I think we had.

Q: You had?

A: I think – I can look in the passport because I'm thinking there are some – we went and we stayed two nights. We went to Vienna overnight, and those were not so hard to get. There were transit visas to, I think that they, I don't know whether they still called it Austria, probably Germany. It was Germany already, and we came in the middle of the night, and we got to some kind of dreadful hotel near the railroad station. I know that they stole a suitcase of my brother's, and immediately at dawn, we got on the train to Switzerland, but did not make it to cross. We had to spend a night in Germany.

Q: And your father was interrogated?

A: And my father was interrogated for hours.

Q: And this is at an inn that you're staying in?

A: This is at an inn in Austria, right on the border.

Q: And were there Germans in that Inn?

A: There were Germans, German troops, and German officers in that inn, and they were singing one of those lovely war songs about Prince Eugene, that's a boy, I guess, going to Belgrade conquering Belgrade. It's a march song. It's a march that we all knew, and it's part of – I'm trying to think in which one of the classic – it's part of a classic composition this is taken from. It's like a march.

Q: Was your father brutalized?

A: Not at all. He was questioned for a long time, very thoroughly, and as his German was very good, I guess that was part of the thing. He said, “We are immigrating to the United States, please. Here’s my immigration visa.” The war wasn’t on yet, but I was a very thorough in- And my brother and my mother and I were sitting in this inn absolutely quaking with fear. It went on for hours.

Q: And he was in the inn?

A: Somewhere in the inn. They took him in the room, a bunch of German officers who came and knocked on the door when, you know, in the middle of the night. The way it was, my mother and I slept in one room. He and my brother slept in the other. So, he came to tell us, and then my brother joined us in this room and we waited there.

Q: Okay, let’s change the tape.

End of Tape #4

Tape #5

Q: So, was your father – we were talking about your father's interrogation.

A: Yes.

Q: Was he interrogated all night?

A: No, but some three hours at least.

Q: So, it must have been just horrible for you.

A: It was horrendous. We were terrified, and by that time, we had see these troops going. By the way, Vienna, when we got there, was blacked out, and the windows were blacked out in the hotel, and so on. There was no light whatsoever. I don't know how we – it must have been fairly close, this hotel, to the station because I have a feeling we walked there in the dark. We came at night and we left at dawn, and I remember just darkness, and then – a blackout, a plain blackout.

Q: Where was your Uncle Felix? Did he stay in Belgrade?

A: At that time, he was in Belgrade, yes.

Q: So, he didn't go with you?

A: No, no, no, he just – he was in Belgrade, and he stayed in Belgrade.

Q: And having this…relationship…?

A: Yeah, probably just visiting around. I recently found – two days ago, three days ago – an incredible letter written by the person who was the Uruguayan Consul General who was a friend of his and he tells of this story of how he and a couple of others were fleeing, and my Uncle Felix was already in Italian territory going back because of some love interest or something like that, to Zagreb, and how they were jailed and so on.

Q: Did Felix survive?

A: Yes, he survived. He went – he went – he remarried. He went – why he came to the United States via Cuba, but first on some kind of Ellis Island, Cuban Ellis Island where he spent, it was several months before they would let them out, but he did.

Q: Before we get to Geneva, where you stayed for about a month-

A: Yes.

Q: I'm going to ask what's going to sound like a funny – what happened to the dogs? You had three dogs.

A: I have absolutely no idea. Everybody, the whole staff was in the house. There was a cook. There was a – two maids, the nanny.

Q: They were all in the house?

A: They were all in the apartment in Zagreb. They weren't even, you know -

Q: So, you assume they took care of the dogs. Maybe.

A: I hope so.

Q: You hope so.

A: Yeah, maybe it was Sepa, maybe the chauffer did. No, I hadn't heard anything. I had no idea what happened. I have no idea. There were two Dachshunds and an English Setter I brought in the apartment.

Q: I was a little concerned because -

A: Oh, I was very concerned. I was very concerned. Somebody must have taken them in. I mean there were other people there who might have taken them. Somebody who was a hunter would have taken them. He was a very bad hunting dog, but he looked as if he could do it.

Q: Was it easy to get into Switzerland? There was no problem?

A: There was a lot of frisking and stuff like that, quite serious.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, and probably interrogation.

Q: Probably interrogation?

A: Interrogation also.

Q: But you didn't experience this.

A: No, no, no.

Q: It would've been your father?

A: My father and probably my mother. I think they – I think they searched her in various manners.

Q: Did they search you?

A: No.

Q: Really?

A: Amazingly no.

Q: Because you're not a kid.

A: I'm not a kid. Nobody touched me, but my mother was searched, both in Spain-

Q: And in Switzerland?

A: Yes.

Q: And how about Mario?

A: No.

Q: But, he's-

A: My mother was very embarrassed.

Q: Oh I imagine. Do you begin in Switzerland, once you get through this interrogation-

A: Yes.

Q: And you stay for a month in Geneva-

A: Yes.

Q: Are you feeling a little bit more secure?

A: Yes, yes, but not completely because, I mean, no. Our visa – our permit to be in Switzerland would've run out after a month. We would've had to leave. Maybe it would have been possible to prolong it somehow, but I don't remember how long our permit was in Switzerland, but I – no, it was important to get going. Plus, the other visas would've run out.

Q: So, you didn't – you were in Geneva because your father was trying to get the next set of papers, or…?

A: We were in Geneva. Well, first of all, we had to get a French visa. We had to go through occupied France which was in a car, which was locked, sealed. It was a sealed car.

Q: A sealed train car?

A: A sealed train car, yeah.

Q: By the way, what was it like in Geneva for that month?

A: We were in a very nice hotel. We were in the Hotel d'Angleterre which was lovely, but it was very tense. It was extremely tense.

Q: So, here your father had some money.

A: Yes, and there were some people who we knew in Switzerland who had left earlier, who were in the lumber business, and I don't know what kind of nationality they had, possibly they had some other nationality, not Yugoslav. They were there. My mother's cousin who was this Baroness de Vateville, who was in – who lived in Lucerne at the time, my mother called her and she came to Geneva in a women's Swiss Auxiliary uniform speaking Switzer Dietch. It was very funny to hear, but was very helpful. She came and offered to help in any way. I don't know what kind of help it was.

Q: Phone calls?

A: I forgot, naturally. The night that we arrive and called Belgrade at midnight of April 5th or 6th and speak to the family, and they say everything is quiet, we shouldn't be crazy. Six hours after that they were bombed. This was the first time that I saw my father cry. When the whole army, everything, collapsed right away. There was no more Yugoslavia. I mean, this was such a Blitzkrieg there that this all went to pieces and was really in bad shape. I was very happy I was going to go to wherever – India, or – I didn't want to have anything to do with that anymore. I wanted out. My mother was very sad, but I don't think she cried, but my father actually cried, and then the next thing he did, he went to Bern to talk to the representative of Yugoslavia, and nobody knew what to do. I mean, it was completely unclear what, you know, what was going to happen to Croatia. Not Croatia, I mean, what was going to happen, one way or another. It was still Yugoslavia, completely falling apart, and there was very little news except the bombing Belgrade, nothing else. And, then later on, we found out, when we went on, we saw what was happening. When an independent Croatia was declared, but that was later. We went on this sealed train, came to Spain, and at first – this was very shortly after the Spanish Civil War – we stayed in a very nice hotel, but it was very obvious that this was very obvious that this was a country that had gone through a war, and it was completely obvious. Crazy thing, here we want to go to the Prado, first time we were in Spain, but the Prado is closed. So, we go sit in a café to have breakfast and there's some rolls, but it's obvious that there was a war. I mean, it looked shabby, and then children without limbs started coming to the window of this café and we're sitting there having food and asking for food. This was the first time I had seen a country – I mean, this was a very short time

after the civil war in Spain, and these children – this was the saddest thing about war – without an arm or without a leg, just holding their hands up, and emaciated, and so we took all the food and gave it to them and walked away. You couldn't sit and eat because of what was going on. We sat pretty much, and walked around a little bit through Madrid, but it was very sad, and it was very empty, and it was very obvious that they had gone through a war. Then we went to Barcelona and spent a couple of nights in Barcelona and we got on this horrendous bus that got us to Lisbon, and there, I think, we became very much aware of things are falling out because we didn't go to a very fancy hotel. We went to some kind of pension. It was very nice, but it wasn't a palace hotel in any place.

Q: Now, are you at all feeling a certain kind of ambivalence? On one hand, happy getting out-

A: Yes.

Q: And on the other hand, a certain kind of sadness?

A: Totally, totally, and also you had this feeling in Lisbon, Portugal that this is the spy capital of the world. It was very – it was eerie. You didn't know who you could talk to. People would approach you and say, "I'm going to get you a prolongation of your visa. Are you interested? You're going to get a ticket on such-and-such a ship to go hither and yon." It was bad. And we walked around, but it was a beautiful town we had never been to. In Lisbon, we walked around. I have pictures of all dressed up in suits and hats and the works.

Q: So, you have all your luggage.

A: All the luggage, all of that is standing around, yeah. We're wearing spring suits. I think there's even a picture of my mother with a fur boa or something like that, a dead fox on her. I think so. I'm almost certain. And my brother and I walking there. There were really some quite unsavory characters that would come and ask him, and they'd be helpful in the hotels and everything. But we then started doing some traveling around, and you know, and first of all, we had – okay, the United States maritime union was having a strike. So, United States' ships were not going anywhere, and we had reservations on some sort of ship, but ___ American export. Nothing was else was going on in the rest of the country, I mean, the rest of Europe except for Portugal was at war. So, there were no neutral things except Portugal and, I guess, the United States that had ships going back and forth to the States. So, there was this maritime strike, and we had to stay longer, and there was danger of, again, our Portuguese visa running out.

Q: So, you're there for how long? Days? Weeks?

A: I don't – three weeks.

Q: Three weeks?

A: Not many. So, my father goes to the consulate or whatever, whatever the Yugoslav representation there is, and the poor person who is in charge of it, first of all, whoever was a Croatian employee quit and went to free Croatia, or thought they were – anyhow, they quit the Yugoslav Consulate, but there still the Yugoslav Consulate. There was a – what is the insurrection of sailors called, there's a word for it?

Q: That's right. It's a mutiny.

A: Mutiny. There's a mutiny on Croatian ships that are in the harbor in Lisbon because, naturally, the sailors are Croats. They're not Serbs. So, these are all Dalmatian Serbs. By that time, there's a – those Ustashes have gotten to Zagreb, and it's obvious what's going to be in Zagreb. So, they went back. They went with their ships. So, this poor person has nobody to talk to because, obviously, there's not – no connection, no telephone, no nothing to Yugoslavia, or ex-Yugoslavia, and so he's having this conversation with my father. What can he do with this mutiny? This mutiny? And my father said, "Let them go. What are you going to do with them? You can't hold them there." So, he said, "Okay." So, they took off. The next thing -

Q: Not with the ship?

A: With the ship. They took everything and went back to Croatia.

Q: Really?

A: As far as I know. I mean, this is – this is the way it was decided. They were taking the ship, and they were – there were a couple of them, I think. I'm not quite sure. Then, they had no money to pay whoever was employed there. No money from Yugoslavia. I don't know what happened to the rest. So, my father lent him, I think, $500 to pay off the staff. There was some Croats in the staff, no doubt, but most of them wanted to go back. For all I know, he was a Croat, but maybe not.

Q: But your father is known enough so these people know-

A: No, he goes – he walks in and he's got an official visa in his pocket, and-

Q: Of course, he's a representative of the transport and commerce, right?

A: Yes, yeah, yeah. And so, they have a conversation. So, he gives – and I have the receipt. I recently found it under the papers. It was little. I think it's $500, plus a letter which asks that we take along when we get to the ship, a – well, when we get transportation, to take along a Persian carpet for the representative of Yugoslavia in Washington, D.C., who was a guy by the name of Protasce (ph) at the time, which I think I saw on one occasion when there still was a Yugoslavia, which we took along. Then, we found somebody who got in touch with us, a family of a French diplomat. I guess it was a small place, and people heard who was where, or maybe this Yugoslav woman who I'm going to talk to you about now heard that – must have gone to the Yugoslav Embassy or Yugoslav

Representation to talk about what's going to happen to her, and so on. She was married to a, I think, the cultural attaché of France in Portugal, and he was supposed to go back to France, and they had a little boy. She was originally from Zagreb, and her sister's husband worked for my father in the yeast factory, the alcohol and yeast factory. And in fact, I was wearing a jacket that her sister, who was a weaver, had woven the material for. I used that for a long time. And we took this child, and took it to his godparents who were a Yugoslav – a Croatian Jew by the name of Alexander and his Russian non-Jewish wife who were in New York already for a year.

Q: So, you had added-

A: We added some, so then there were-

Q: Five of you?

A: Five of us in the cabin plus the rug, maybe not the rug. It may have been somewhere else.

Q: So, this SS Sibornay was the ship…

A: Sibonay, yes.

Q: And what country is the ship from?

A: US, US Export Line. The strike was over.

Q: It was over?

A: The strike was over

Q: And that was the original ship you were supposed to go on?

A: I don't know, but it was probably a United States export line ship because they were doing this traverse. It was full of all sorts of flotsam and jetsam from Europe on the ship, and then the consul from Pavelic, from Bern and his American wife were also on the ship. They came later. I mean, they came to Portugal later. So, we had somebody to have, to sit at the table with. When we got to Bermuda, it was quite, I mean, there were German U-boats there, and they were trying to avoid the U-boats, but the United States was neutral. So, we got to Bermuda. The British got on the ship and took off a bunch of people.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, German spies, they said, and so on, maybe 10, 15.

Q: How many people are on the ship with you?

A: I don't know. I really don't know. It was a big ocean liner, and there was interrogation then. The British looked at all of our passports and so on, but there was no problem whatsoever. They took off a number of people. Some, probably, were perfectly honest, decent people. In fact, one was a German leftist, who then found us in New York. So, they must have obviously let him go.

Q: Now, was the route to go to Bermuda, or they went to-

A: No, no, I think it was – I think it was – no, they were avoiding probably. I don't know, because the only thing that happened in Bermuda is that these – that these British officers-

Q: Interrogated people.

A: Yeah, boarded and interrogated people. And, then, it wasn't there too long, two hours.

Q: I see, and then-

A: And then directly in New Jersey, Hoboken, I believe.

Q: Hoboken?

A: I believe so, but definitely New Jersey.

Q: Did you see the Statue of Liberty?

A: Yes.

Q: You did? Was that great?

A: It was great, and we did not go to any Ellis Island or anything like that. United States immigration people came on board, and interrogated us on board, as I remember.

Q: So, you disembark?

A: We disembarked in New Jersey, got into a taxi, and went into the tunnel, which was very impressive to go through, and my father was saying, "This is under the Hudson which we're going now." It was very exciting. We went to 57th Street and 6th Avenue to the Hotel Salisbury, where they had sort of apartments, small, you know.

Q: They had an apartment already?

A: No, they didn't. Actually, yes, because my uncle's divorced wife had married a Czech who was a schoolmate of hers, and they were in the hotel next door, which is something called the, next door also on 57th Street, something like – not the Berkshire, but something like that. Also, on 57th Street between 6th and 7th Avenue. There was a

wonderful automat, Horn and Hardart, where you could put money in and you could get coffee or cocoa and it would go into a cup from out of the wall.

Q: Could you imagine trying to do this without money?

A: No. Maybe yes, up to – yes, but with a lot of difficulty, probably no Hotel d'Angleterres in Geneva and-

Q: But, your father was also prominent enough that he knew people and he could get a certain recourse that most people couldn't get.

A: Yes, yes, sure. A lot of – of course, there were a lot of people including very good friends of ours who had children already outside the country. This is a rather interesting thing. This was a very prominent Jewish family. In fact, at one time, the father was the head of the Jewish community in Zagreb, and he had two daughters living in South Carolina, in Dillon, South Carolina, planted paprika.

Q: Paprika?

A: Paprika, because you couldn't get any paprika from Hungary anymore so this was the business, and they had gone a year earlier to the United States to find out what, you know, where paprika could be – what would be the best land and climate for paprika and that was Dillon, South Carolina, and they had a paprika plantation, believe it or not. And these parents – although, my father went to before we left, and they had two daughters and family, they could've easily come along. People were afraid. These people could've done it, and other people that I know could have easily done it, and thought, "Oh, no, we'll get out." So, it was quite strange how this functioned. More people definitely could have helped themselves. I'm not saying young people who had no money, but there were very prominent Jewish and non-Jewish families that could've done it.

Q: Was it easy for you to adjust to the United States?

A: I think it was in the beginning. Later on, no.

Q: Later on, no?

A: Later on I became – at first, you know, we're in a hotel that had a kitchenette and a closet. We thought this was absolutely wonderful. We went to a five and ten and bought – my brother and I went to buy things with, you know, with flowers on it, for heaven's sakes, mugs with flowers. We'd never seen it. I thought this was terrific, like four spoons and so on. And then my father decided before we moved – we then moved later on to Riverdale, in New York, and my brother went to school there for some time. Fieldstone School, I think it was called. He bought a car.

Q: Mario?

A: No, my father bought a car. No, Mario, the first summer, was sent to camp in Maine, and we bought a car and got a chauffer, and traveled through New England.

Q: Fabulous.

A: That was fabulous, and then finally when we came back we took apartment. But I remember buying the car and having to pay cash because our, whatever account we had, bank account was blocked because we were aliens probably.

Q: You're illegal aliens?

A: I think so, for a little bit.

Q: When is your brother – we have to stop the tape.

End of Tape #5

Tape #6

Q: You came to the United States in 1941. Did you get here in May or June?

A: May.

Q: Now, your brother is still at home.

A: Oh, wait a minute, I'm trying to think, I think it would have been early June or May, maybe like you know the manifest is there. We can see it.

Q: Is your brother – does he volunteer to go into the army?

A: Yes.

Q: But are you US citizens?

A: No, but he became as soon as he joined the army, almost immediately.

Q: Was your family wanting him to, or was it okay?

A: It was obvious that they were going to recruit him anyhow.

Q: Even as a foreigner?

A: Yes, and at the time when he got him, he was told to change his name. He was going to be sort of an interpreter, but never was anything. He died in, near Sainte-Mère-Eglise, which was horrible battle in Normandy. He was in Texas and New Jersey and so on, is where he got his basic training, and it – whoever his officer was said, "Listen, it would be a good idea if you changed your name because they can find out this way. It won't be so obvious right away." And he did, and then my uncle changed his name also, Felix to Sorel. And I don't know why because this name, what's not clear to me is because when I was doing the broadcasting to Yugoslavia, sort of a women's program, whether I first used Sorel, whether my brother first used Sorel, I don't remember. It was one way like that, except all my friends who heard knew – it was in Yugoslavia.

Q: And, when did you get the job with Voice of America?

A: That was a fairly interesting thing. There was no Voice of America when I joined. It was something that was sort of a precursor of OSS, and there was something called, I believe, the analysis section, and I looked at the papers, and I think it was '43 maybe, and I was doing some research in – language research – at the library in New York, and then there was a Balkan desk where, again, I wasn't doing much. I was doing translations and nothing much. Then, this guy that I told you that was doing the broadcasting from Paris originally, was doing broadcasting in – it wasn't even Voice of America, I think it was still part of Coordinated Information, if I'm not mistaken, is what it was called. But they

had broadcasting facilities. So, from the same place where Voice of America was, he was broadcasting there, and I was translating it into English for the censors. Then, the man got sick, and I was the one who was broadcasting, and I had to end the – I said who I was because they knew who he was and so on, and I said I was broadcasting in his name, and it ended up, "May God save King Peter forever. May God save forever King Peter of Yugoslavia." _____ This was for about six weeks or so, I believe, I was doing it, and then finally something like the Balkan desk was established which was under – the chief was an Albanian, of all things, then there was some Greeks who had been – they were been shuttled back and forth, and I don't think that we actually broadcast as Voice of America in Serbo-Croatian until '44 probably, and so that's that.

Q: So, are you doing this work at the same time that Mario went into the army?

A: Yeah.

Q: And, how did you – when did you and your parents hear about this? Was it soon after the ___?

A: Very soon. My mother was at home alone, and a Western Union person came in.

Q: Western Union?

A: Western Union came with a telegram, and I remember I was at the hairdresser after work, and I called to say, "I'm coming home. I'm sorry, do you need anything along the way?" Then we were living on 102nd and Riverside Drive, and she said, "This man just handed this." So, my father was in the mustard business in Brooklyn, and – which was quite a strange thing, and he came home. It was horrendous. It was horrendous. I can't tell you how horrendous. On the other hand, it was happening all over. There were several families, friends of ours, who had lost, in the States, sons. So, it was in the middle of this whole dreadful trauma for everybody. We weren't the one that was picked out as the only one to live through, you know, badly. The training that they had, I don't even know how long the basic training was, and he was in Germany – in Britain for a while, and he wrote a letter that made us know where he was, and he's buried in Saint-Laurent, you know, that big cemetery.

Q: Have you gone?

A: Oh, several times. I went, the first time I went there, it was still only wooden markers, no Mogen David there, and then there was one British person who was an administrator, and then of course, it went on to became this super, huge, enormous cemetery which has lost some. I mean, in a way that more moving and impressive, and in another way, it's less, because this was, so to speak, raw earth, just lines and lines of wooden crosses, and with names on them, that's all there was. And then we lived in France in the '60s. So, we went several times. This was a decision my parents made, especially my father. He said, "You know this will be a grave that will be taking care of. It will not depend on whether you're

paying some kind of duty, or somebody should be there to watch this." And I think it was a very good decision.

Q: Rather than bringing him home.

A: Yes, because friends of ours did, and that was better for them, and I also have a feeling maybe my father wanted to save my mother more trauma. I think my mother was closer to my brother, then – not closer to him than to me. In a way, I think, she was closer because we were women, but this was the carrier of the name. So, that counted, and it was an extremely macho society, Yugoslavia, not only, I mean, for everybody, for all people, for all Jews and for everyone, Serbians.

Q: So, in some ways he was more important?

A: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I think maybe I was closer to my father. All together, he was, and it's crazy to say "mama's boy", because that's not, you know, in that sense, but I think he was more – I think he was independent. I don't know, maybe because I was older. I have no idea. Maybe, because he was better looking than me. He was very good looking person, and I was, for a while there, a very thin child with glasses who was sloppy, and that kind of thing. He was a good looking young man. So, I think – for a child, and they fed him well, and he got round, and I was always scrawny at that time. So, you know. I think that may have been part of it. And Yugoslavia was a country where women walked behind the donkey while their husbands rode. I won't say in our society, but underlying that. It carries over.

Q: Did it affect your father the way it did your mother?

A: I think it affected my – my father was a soldier through four years or more, and he knew of the horrible possibility existed, and I mean, he didn't sit in an office during World War I. He was in the Russian front among ____ going on, this, that and the other came out. And, horrible as it is, I think in a way it may have been an interesting experience for him. He told a story which has nothing to do with this, but I just want to mention it. When he got – I guess this must have been on the Russian/Polish border somewhere, he said that a man came to him who was in the Russian army and surrendered, and said that I'm Jew soldier (ph), and so he -my father took him home to Pozega along with his horse, and the man stayed I don't know how long with the family as a prisoner of war. So, he was in a nice regiment, hunter's regiment with nice uniforms, and so on. Although, he was in trenches, and he knew how horrible – I think it's a different experience to them than to us.

Q: So, when did you hear about Joseph?

A: He was missing in action for more than a year, the poor soul. We kept writing to each other, and suddenly there was no, nothing anymore.

Q: He was writing to you-

A: I was in New York. We were in New York. We were writing practically daily in New York, and there was no answer, and then finally, the mother wrote me, and his insurance policy was written for me, which I find incredible, I mean, they needed it probably less than we did. Maybe he felt I was here, the poor refugee sitting in New York, which was true, but he made it out to me, and the mother heard – no, first he was missing in action from both of us were writing back and forth. Finally, my parents were sending food to England to her because she was in horrible shape at the time. She married a Colonel Enzeing (ph) of all names, and his brother, they couldn't find him, his brother. He was missing in action. His brother went to look for him, in Burma, and they recognized him by his boots a year later in the jungle. This was – my brother's death and all of that was at the same time, at about the same time. It was about the same time. For a year, more than a year, he was missing in action, and something called the Duke of Wellington's regiment, and this is also bizarre to think of.

Q: And, when the war was over, were there any relatives alive?

A: Yes.

Q: In Zagreb?

A: In Zagreb, or in Croatia, far off. Some came back. Some were in camps in Italy. Others had gotten from Italy to Latin America. Here's another very, very interesting thing about – they were helped by a group of monks, not monks, but religious, an order that was called San Rafaele, that was formed to help refugees. They help Jews. They helped Ustashe. They helped Germans. They helped everyone. That was their job, and these people took their passports to Zagreb. The Uruguayan consul had left who was Jewish, and was fleeing, and this is the letter I just found of eight pages, left the official seal with his secretary and this order carried the passports to Zagreb under their robes, had them stamped, brought them back to Rome, because they had these, they were given exit visas from Italy and transit visas from Spain. That was my father's sister, husband, daughter and then the young man that she fell in love with and they finally married, and my uncle Felix somehow went to Cuba, where he sat in a sort of a holding camp because I guess they didn't feel like letting people out or couldn't get enough money out of them. He finally came to the States, and actually my father visited him and he had a Cuban visa at that time, in '44 or '45. I think it's stamped in his passport, and then finally Felix got married to an Italian Jewish woman who was a scientist, and then they ended up in Caracas, Venezuela.

Q: Is there anything more you'd like to tell us about your experiences? I know you have a full life afterwards which we can't go into now.

A: No, of course. A wonderful husband who I met. He was working in Belgrade – actually, it was not Voice of America, it was the United States Information Agency, he established the office for them in Belgrade. Before that, he was an Albania during the war – Italy, Albania and so on, and we met at Voice of America. He came back to tell us how we

were getting, you know, how we were accepted and heard and so on. And we got married. We have two daughters. We've lived all over the place. We lived in Venezuela for I don't know how many years, six maybe, seven. Then, we came back to New York. We went to Mexico, and then we had 11 years in Paris, then went back to Mexico, and now we've been here since – it's 14 years?

Q: You were married in 1949.

A: No, before that, '47, yeah, and I got my citizenship without him. I had been here the length of time. I didn't get it – it wasn't any shorter because I had married an American citizen. I got it on my own. I'm very pleased with that.

Q: So, when did you become an American citizen?

A: On the nose, five years after I came here, exactly, '46.

Q: Lucie, thank you so much.

A: Thank you very much.

Q: Now, we'll stop the tape and look at some of the photographs.

A: Okay.

Q: Can you describe this?

A: This is Zagreb, and the address is Jelacic Trg, which means Jelacic Square, which is the absolute center of town, and this original house in front, which is the oldest house on that square, was built somewhere in the 1840s, maybe 1850, a very famous architect called Feldinger. When they started building it, Jews were still not allowed to have houses within the confines of the city, and then after that, by the time they finished, it already was built and my great-grandfather lived there. It was built for two families.

Q: And this picture?

A: This picture is Janusevac, which is our country house built somewhere in the 1840s, and so on, we were one of the last owners, I suppose, and it's about 15 miles from Zagreb. We stayed there as long as there was no school. Let's say we stayed there from April through October, but as there was no central heating, we then went to town and lived on Jelacic Trg.

Q: Okay.

A: And this is the entrance hall of Janusevac, and these two bronze vases or whatever they are, are actually from China. This came from somebody, I don't know, friends whose parents were there during the Boxer Rebellion, brought it back, and I don't know how

they came into the family, and in the middle is this round room which we used to call the chapel, which – we called it the chapel because there was a – not organs, but a harmonium – were there, and it had a nice cupola. As children we used to dance there mostly.

Q: This?

A: This is what we used to call the chapel, a round room, and I guess we used to call it the chapel because it was there big musical instrument that's normally in churches, and from that door over leads to a drawing room which is where the piano was, and it led to the balcony, the front balcony.

Q: Okay.

A: This was the main drawing room, I guess. There was some original frescoes up there, but one of them was missing so, one of them is false. There's nothing there now. Maybe some shelves. I think my father had them restored, and had one of these painted originally, the one on top maybe – I have no idea who the painter was of these paintings. This particular stove was from my grandmother's house in town. I don't know when it was brought to Janusevac. I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: This is my bedroom, and this is a portrait of my mother at age 17, and that's the only thing that exists. The portrait disappeared and that's all gone, and there's a wooden saint there – I believe it was Saint Christopher. As I said, that's my bedroom. You can even see the salon, look at that. [New picture] This is the house. This is what the country house looked like after the war. According to one story – we know that the Germans kept ammunition in the cellar, and we're told that they exploded this when they were retreating. On the other hand, others said that the Ustashe did it, but who knows? And, after the war, there were fewer and fewer, and fewer bricks because they insisted on rebuilding it unnecessarily for my taste, after the war, and the peasants needed to get their houses fixed. So, they just went and got all of the bricks. So, finally they had to build a brickyard to rebuild it, which I think was ridiculous, and now it is apparently an archive of the city of Zagreb. I don't know what's inside. Dora was there. She was the last one there, and it's all painted up.

Q: This?

A: This is a group on my seventh birthday. The woman behind me, the girl behind me, was a year older than the rest of, is still alive. Her son – her name is Angie Zaus (ph), her son is a professor at Zagreb University. The girl in the sort of sailor suit is Zora Krajce. Her father was a banker. She was killed in the most – no, she actually committed suicide by going to lie down with a bunch of people who had some infectious disease because they took away her child and threw it into the Danube, frozen Danube. The girl on the other side is somebody by the name of Cerhov (ph), she is alive and living in Israel. The other

girl, her name is Rudfeld, and she was a – she lost her mother, and I don't know, she was a classmate. The little one who is sitting on the chair, she was in Bergen-Belsen and she lost her child there. On the bottom is a cousin of mine with the dark hair, Anica Bauer living in Venezuela. The next is a cousin who died. The next is my brother. The next is Mia Bauer Pinkas, who is my cousin, who lives in Venezuela and in Geneva and in Florida.

Q:

A: This is my father, Manfred Sternberg. He's wearing the uniform of the Yugoslav army of which he was a captain in the reserve, and the decorations are Saint Sava and got a Georgia Crown of I don't which order, but this apparently was with my brother when he was killed in France.

Q: And the other picture?

A: The other picture is me in this dress. That's an evening dress, sitting. Behind me is my mother, on the left – no, okay, this is Dragon Mauntner who was killed by the Nazis very early on. It's almost legendary what happened to him, and the other is – on his left is Zlata Mainic (ph), who was a good friend of mine from childhood on, he became an Ustashe and then fled to Argentina.

Q: Okay.

A: This is in a place called Glovidin Adolf which is on the northern Adriatic coast. This was in 1939, probably June, early June, and this is Joseph Heaton, who was then my fiancé, who was an Englishman who was killed in Burma. [New picture] This is Josip Levac, known as Sepa, who was our chauffer, and actually family friend. His father was – worked for my grandfather. In the back is my cousin who died. My father gave him this car when we left Yugoslavia, and he became the driver of Artukovic, the Minister of Interior for Croatia and he was forced to do that. [New picture] This is my brother Mario Sternberg who was killed in Sainte-Mère-Eglise in Normandy, obviously an American soldier. He was three years younger than I was, and I think this was the one formal picture we had of him in his uniform.

Q: _____?

A: Uh, 19, he might be 20, somewhere there.

Q: Okay.

A: This is a picture of my mother Lili Sternberg, who was extremely pretentious here, which she was not, taken after the war, and that's all. It's somewhere in New York. This was taken in New York.

Q: She looks lovely.

A: She was very lovely, but she didn't look like this. She wasn't really stiff.

Q: Okay.

A: This is my husband Morris Rosenberg. When he was working for the United States government abroad, they were meant to wear a uniform and they hand sewn-on ranks of captain and so on, in case they were captured because they were working in Belgrade and so on, and the Germans were still around. He was 32 or 33 years old, and then worked for the Office of War Information, and later became a journalist. mostly with the Associated Press.

Q: Was he wearing the uniform when you met?

A: I think he – he had the uniform. I don't think so. I think as he came in, he was wearing a horrible hat, green.

End of Tape #6
Conclusion of Interview