

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection Interview with Harry Markowitz. This is track number two, and we were talking that you were back in Seattle going to graduate school. And how long were you in-- for how long were you in graduate school?

For over two years.

OK.

I was working on my master's, which I didn't get. I got into a program that the University had set up. It was between Linguistics, Psychology, and the and Literature. And so it involved almost three departments, and there was a lot of infighting between the faculty. So many of us didn't get our degrees because each one had tried to get very high level of requirements for their field.

And I was teaching French. Then for some reason, two people in the same week told me about this new university in-- I don't know. I forgot. After that-- sorry-- after that, I got a job in a community college in Tacoma, Washington. In fact, it was called Tacoma Community College. I taught French there for two years. Then these two friends told me about this new university called Simon Fraser University in British Columbia near Vancouver.

And for some reason, they both said this separately, you fit in there. So I didn't know exactly what they meant, but I called the chairman of the Foreign Language Department or maybe-- sorry-- the Linguistics. No, it was a combination. And I told him I was interested. And he said, OK, come on up-- so '67. And now we can talk. So after a few minutes, he offered me a position as instructor. I didn't have a transcript or anything.

And then he introduced me to some other people in the department. I met a French woman, and she told me she was a graduate associate. I knew what a graduate assistant was because I had been one, but it's a little higher level and more pay. So I went back to the chairman of the Department and said, what is this graduate associate thing? Can I do it? Because I don't have a PhD, and I'd like to work on it.

He said, oh, sure, you can do that too. And so, and it paid very well too. So I became a graduate associate and taught French, and I got my MA degree there. Meanwhile, while I was there, I got interested in sign language completely by chance. I'll make it very brief. I had in mind a research project involving linguistic universals, which had become popularized or not only popular, but it was introduced by Chomsky-- Noam Chomsky.

And but it involved doing a little experiment with artificial languages to discover whether one could learn a language more easily. You've had that in universals. But everybody already knows a language, so the experiment was not feasible. Until one day I read in a book called *The Biological Foundations of Language* that Deaf children before they go to school, don't know any language. So I said, a-ha, those are going to be my subject.

Just about this time, there was a letter published in the Vancouver newspaper in response to an article, which I had not seen. But the writer wrote that So-and-so, a Deaf man, has a little Deaf girl. He and his wife are Deaf and have a Deaf girl who was two years old, and she has a vocabulary of-- maybe she was 2 and 1/2-- of several hundred signs, which she combines in two-sign sentences.

This was very exciting because that's what hearing children do in whatever language they learn. So I contacted the writer of the letter. He was a director of a social welfare agency. And we talked, and I also met a Deaf man. There he introduced me to this Deaf man he was writing about. I don't remember how we talked, but we had a long conversation.

And it became clear to me that if you're Deaf, and you grow up in a Deaf environment, namely Deaf residential schools, that it's very similar to being Jewish.

Why do you say that?

Because you're in the minority, and you're part of the larger society, but you're always a minority. And the kind of

relationships that develop among Deaf people are the same kind of relationships you have among Jewish people. For example, a Deaf American and a Deaf Japanese may have more in common than the Deaf American in a hearing American in some ways. There's a language aspect. There's a whole lot of.

So later in my life. I started writing about Deaf community-- the Deaf community as an ethnic group. Anyway, this became very fascinating for me. I got hooked, so I started reading books related to deafness. And either the books didn't mention sign language or else they'd denigrate it by saying it's not a real language because it doesn't have articles, and it doesn't have a passive voice, which is pure nonsense.

There are plenty of languages that don't have articles or a passive voice. It's not a requirement for a lot to be a language. So that immediately got a rise out of me. And the director of the Institute for the Deaf told me about a professor at Gallaudet University, William Stokoe, who had worked on sign language, and suggest I contact him. So I did, and immediately, Stokoe sent me back several books that he had written on sign language.

So I wrote my master's papers on sign language. This was in 1969, '70, at the time when sign language was not really accepted in America. So it was a cause. It was not my cause. I couldn't fight for my cause, whatever that would be. But I found that I wanted to take part in this fight for recognition of sign language, and I could see eventually, that has to do with Deaf civil rights. So that's what I did, get involved.

And eventually in-- what year what that? In '72, I came to Washington to go to Georgetown to work on my PhD and at the suggestion of Bill Stokoe. And so I studied at Georgetown, and then I started working at Gallaudet in William Stokoe's linguistic research lab where they did research on sign language. It was funded by various grants, National Science Foundation.

So when the money started running out, I was no longer working there. I worked there three years. And, oh, I had gone to Paris during the summer of '75 with several colleagues from Gallaudet. One, in particular, had a grant from maybe was National Science, no, it was National Endowment for the Humanities, a grant to study the historical foundation of American Sign Language, which its origins are from French Sign Language.

So I was the French expert. My task was to go into the library at the school for the Humane School for the Deaf in Paris and do research there on what was available on the French Sign Language. There I met a sociologist who had some interest in deafness. He knew the history of the deafness-related controversy.

But he thought that all-- he had been led to believe that with the new kind of hearing aids that were developed, that that was not the problem anymore. And so we got involved, and he invited me to stay with him. And I told him what I knew. So next thing that summer, there was the World Congress of the Deaf. It took place in Washington. It takes place every four years.

He came here, and then stayed afterward with me, and so what we were doing in the linguistic research lab. And then he asked me if I would like to go back to France, work with him to get the French Sign Language recognized in France. So it took a year. He got a grant there, and I went to Paris. That was '76-- fall of '76. And the year stretched to five years. And in the meantime, after the first year, I got married to my current wife, Arlene, who I knew already from Washington.

And then you came back after the five years, and did you go back to Gallaudet?

Yes.

Mm-hmm, and then how long did you stay at Gallaudet?

Eventually, let's see, I got a position in the English Department. And I taught, I think it was 25 years. I know the total number of years is 29 years and nine months.

OK, so now you're retired?

I retired in 2008.

Well, let's talk about two other topics. One is your experience as a volunteer at the Holocaust Museum-- that's number one. So how did you happen to decide to become a volunteer?

That was very easy. I know a lot of people who are volunteers. In 1985, I was one of the small group who were founders of an organization at the time was called, if I remember correctly, Child Survivors of the Holocaust from the Washington Baltimore area. It was Flora Singer who got us together. The first time there were 7. And we've been meeting ever since once a month. And we also have become international, and we have yearly international meetings. And so in this group, a lot of people were volunteering.

How did you get to meet Flora?

That's an interesting question. One day, I wasn't teaching. I guess I was home at lunchtime. I turned on the TV while I was eating, and it was the Povich program. I forgot his first name.

Maury.

Maury Povich. It was called-- anyway, she was on the show with her cousin.

So you contacted her?

Yeah, well, I asked my-- oh, I was going to say my mother-- my wife to contact her because I couldn't talk. I was just-- so she called the station. And eventually, Flora called me, and she invited me to come to the meeting of the-- now I don't remember what adult organization is called. I went and it is obviously not for me.

Is this the Hidden Child?

No, no, this is not the Hidden. This is the adults. This is the people who went through camps mostly and who are older-- maybe like 20 years older.

Yeah, yeah.

And, well, maybe not that much, but there's a huge difference. And to them, nothing happened to us because we were just kids. "You don't even remember." And so once we had invited one of their members to come to one of our meetings, and we tried to get close to them. This is a long time ago, probably 20 years ago. And at some point, this man said exactly those words-- "But what do you know? You don't remember anything. You were kids."

So I got back to Flora, and you know, I don't fit in there. She said, yeah, I know. There are several people who feel the same. Flora was sort of in-between the ages, and she spoke Yiddish fluently. So she said, well, you know, I'll get you together, just hold out. So she did. She got us together, and we met and decided to meet again.

But the beginning a year or so were very difficult because different individuals had different ideas what the group should be. But it eventually got sort of worked out.

And then how did you hear about the Museum? Through Flora?

No, I knew people in the Child Survivors group, there were several that volunteered.

So when did you start volunteering?

I think 2009. What happened also during in the year 2000, I taught a seminar on the Holocaust-- an honor seminar at Gallaudet. Since I knew so many, the way I structured the class was we met once a week for three hours. And I invited

my friends to come and make a presentation-- not all of my friends. The first time I invited two historians from the Museum, Patricia Heberer and I'm blocking on the other one.

And you signed their talks?

No, we have interpreters for that. I mean, yeah. But also, instead of just having it as a class, we had this in an auditorium, and it was open to everybody.

Wonderful.

And somebody from the Museum suggested they have a general who was one of the liberators-- I've forgotten now his name also-- but he was well-known and he was Jewish. So I had him come. So and I selected people from my group who represented the whole scale of things from people who were in camps. The majority in our group were not in camps. But Charlene.

Schiff.

Schiff, her experience is unique.

And everybody-- there was somebody who came in the group of almost 1,000 who were brought to the state in '44, and they were sent to Oswego and put in the camp. So there was a Kindertransport and so on. So I knew I was going to do it, but after I retired-- I know why it took me a year-- I would ask who do I contact? And said, oh, I'll let you know next time. And it wasn't just their fault. It was mine. I could have just-- I knew quite a few people already at the Museum itself. I could have, but I don't know why so.

What do you do at the Museum?

I work with Visitor Services. Initially, I thought I should do that so I can see what it's like. And I did a little work for Judy Cohen.

The photo archivist?

Yes, but I wasn't working with-- let's see, what did I do? I did on the Salvadoran project. I don't know if you're familiar.

Yes.

And I think it was kind of tedious and not very exciting. Maybe she gave me something else to do also. But meanwhile, Teresa Pollin had asked me to translate letters that a family wrote. They were traveling through Europe. I think they started in France. Letters were in several languages but a good part were in French-- letters that were sent to their relatives in the States.

The family didn't survive, but the letters obviously ended up in the Museum. And I agreed to do it. She gave me copies. But my sister wrote many letters during the war to my parents, but they didn't go directly to my parents. And she wrote in French, of course, [INAUDIBLE] in French because of censorship. And my sister's dead-- she died about 15 years ago-- but her daughter who lives in Israel, she has the letters, but she doesn't know French.

And she's asked already several years ago, she asked my brother and I to translate them. And for some reason, we've done a few-- my brother [? Mort ?] and I-- but some of it you have to decode because of the censorship. You couldn't just [LAUGHS], so I don't know why I haven't really sat down with my sister's letters. And I felt if I'm going to translate letters, I'd rather translate my sister's letters first. And so I didn't do the other ones.

What is your feeling when you walk into the Museum building? Do you have any special feeling when you walk in?

Well, one thing, I don't feel.

Any connection? Do you feel any connection?

I feel a lot of connection but to people.

Or the exhibits?

I've always been interested in Holocaust-related things. In 1957, when I was at the University of Washington majoring in French Literature, I had a professor. He was French. He might have been Jewish, but by this time he was Catholic. He and his wife were in the States when the war broke out. He was [? there ?] a year or something. So they stayed in the States.

So one day in class, he started talking about-- it's only later that I realized who it was-- he was talking about Eichmann and the deal that he was trying to work out with Kant. I think the guy's name was Kantor. I think the Jewish-- I think it's Kantor.

Kastner.

Kastner, thank you. And but at the time, I didn't know any of this. And he was telling the story of how they were bargaining. And then Kastner or somebody else said, well, how can we trust you that when we deliver the 10,000 trucks-- which they didn't have, of course, and they never gotten-- how do we know you're going to release a million Jews or whatever it was going to be? And Eichmann said you have the word of a German officer.

So I start going to the library at the University of Washington. And you know, at that time, that was '57. It was very early. The French professor had used the word-- let's see, in English-- no, French it's [FRENCH], the literature of concentration camps. In France apparently, it existed already, but not here.

So anyway, I went to the library, got books. I remember one specifically, Bergen-Belsen was the title, and it was all about Bergen-Belsen. But it was each chapter was written by a different person, like an Englishman, soldier, an inmate from the camp, and it was fascinating. So I've always been interested [? for ?] [? no ?] [? reason. ?]

Are there any particular exhibits at the Museum that resonate with you, in the permanent exhibits or anything?

Well, yeah, come to think of it. There's a wall of rescuers. And most people have their names. And then there's the priest who saved my brother. He's got a whole... And then the woman who found places for my sister and I, she also has a plaque because she saved hundreds.

And her name?

You know, I can't remember it. She married an Italian who was teaching at Chapel Hill. My sister found this out. Both the priest and this woman. The first name was [PERSONAL NAME] and my sister remembered they called her Mademoiselle [PERSONAL NAME].

Do you find you are more comfortable among other people who survived the war--

Yes.

--than those who did not experience it?

Yes. Yes, definitely.

That it's easier to talk to them than someone who did not have to live through it the way you did?

Even if we don't talk about the war, you know, there's something we have in common.

An unspoken connection, you mean?

Yeah, when I was at Georgetown, when I first came, I was staying with a young woman I met at a conference because I didn't know anybody in Washington. And then in the seminar, one day, she pointed to a woman, and she said, I think she's French also. So during a break, I went up to this woman and I asked her where she was from. And she said France, Switzerland.

And after a while she said Israel. And then she said, and you? It's always a difficult question because I have to think what am I going to say? Seattle, Belgium, Germany? So while I was thinking, what am I saying? I already knew, obviously, what the situation was, but I was still thinking. She said you don't have to say anything.

Right, I know. It's unspoken. Mm-hmm. What is your opinion about the non-survivor volunteers?

I think they're wonderful.

Jewish and non-Jewish.

Yeah, well, the ones I've worked with-- I work on Tuesday afternoon-- right now they're all Jewish. And I don't know how it is-- I think it's the same with other people, I mean, teams or whatever on other days. When you form a very supportive group, even if it was a case that another day would be better, more convenient for me, I wouldn't think of changing. I really look forward to going. You asked me how I feel. I look forward to going already on Sunday.

Why?

One is this bond with these people. The other is I like the feeling of, well, interacting with the visitors. They encourage us to enter into conversation with them.

Do you ever say about your background when you speak to visitors?

No, I don't. It's funny because no, I don't. I don't. I just have to tell you, they made buttons for us that say I'm a survivor, do you have any questions? I don't know. people don't usually wear them. But I asked for one, and now it's my own little private joke.

But I feel like putting it behind the lapel of my jacket because I'm a hidden child. [LAUGHS] No, I don't-- well, I have on occasion. But like people come up to the information desk where I work and say, I thought there were Holocaust survivors that we can talk to, and I say, yeah, and they're over there. [LAUGHS]

These two ladies, you can go over there and talk to them. Once one of my Tuesday afternoon group came up and whispered to me this woman and her daughter would like to speak to a Holocaust survivor, but they went for lunch or they're not there. Do you mind talking to them? I said, OK. And so I talked to them, and they asked me-- I mean, not the mother, but the daughter. She had maybe a school project, I don't know. Yes.

[INAUDIBLE].

Yes. But I don't normally.

You don't not normally bring it up?

No, no.

Have you ever encouraged other friends of yours who are survivors to work at the Museum-- to volunteer?

Yes, very indirectly. This woman that I mentioned that I met at Georgetown. I lost contact with her. I have to-- I don't

remember. Oh, when I went to France and so on, after that I lost contact with her. But once I started work at the Museum, I joined the Echoes Writing Workshop, Echoes of Memory, and that's one of the-- maybe it was the first story I wrote. And so I thought, hmm, I'll try calling her. I knew she traveled back and forth between here and Geneva a lot.

I think her mother was living there still. And I called, and I left a message on the phone. And she called me back, and we got together. And we don't see each other that often because she lives in Potomac or McLean. But we correspond by email a lot. And still, she goes to Geneva. She's there right now-- constantly going back and forth.

But I don't want to suggest that-- in fact, I had brought her to one of our meetings-- the child survivor meetings-- and said that's not for me. And she didn't come back again. But I know she's very interested. I tell her about the things that are going on that are a peril to the work, the various events that we get to participate in like the President coming to speak. And I got to shake his hand.

Did you?

I got a wonderful picture out of it.

Wonderful.

But I don't want to suggest it, no. And I don't know anybody else who is not already affiliated with one of the groups [INAUDIBLE] lives here or there. Maybe Madeleine Albright that I was just reading [? her book review ?]. [LAUGHS]

Do you have children?

We have one son.

One son. When he was growing up, did you talk about your experiences to him?

No.

You did not.

No, but.

When did he learn about what you went through?

When he was very little, when I still used to read books to him, I had a copy of Maus. And for some reason he picked it. He wanted me to read it. So I read him, skipped a few parts here and there. And we [? adopted. ?] [? He's adopted. ?] He's from Brazil.

And he didn't have a bar mitzvah because we were going to have it in Israel, but then my wife got vertigo problems. She couldn't fly. Anyway, after that, he didn't want to have the bar mitzvah. So he didn't.

He doesn't feel-- he doesn't identify as being Jewish, which is neither here nor there. But he knows, like, sometimes he calls me and says, Dad, there's a film that you might want to see on TV. But we haven't talked. I've given him a couple of the text then I've written for Echoes. He hasn't said much. But he said he briefly, like, I liked it, or something. But he doesn't-- I ask him.

How old is he now?

He's 26.

When he was your age that you were during the war-- you know, a young child-- did that bring back memories for you about what you went through?

I don't know if it brought back memories, but I was aware. I was thinking, oh, that's when I was there, and this is when you were liberated and tried to imagine how I could have gone through those things.

Right, as such a young child. Right, so it did elicit?

Yes.

Are there any sights today, or sounds, or smells, that trigger memories of the war, being hidden and anything that ever triggers it?

There are a lot of things that trigger it. Sometimes it's something that's said. There's a film. I think it's called The [? 80th ?] Blow. It's a documentary, and it's about probably the Warsaw Ghetto. I don't remember anymore. This it seems that it was shot then. And I can watch that without-- it doesn't bother me. I can watch bodies being bulldozed and buried.

But little things like in this The [? 80th ?] Blow, there's a scene which two little boys are sitting on the sidewalk-- little, little boys-- and one of them, as people walk by, he says in Yiddish, a shtik broyt, piece of bread. Just in English doesn't do it, doesn't do anything, but in Yiddish. So there are lots of things, but it's not obvious. I haven't categorized them, but I get teary easily.

You said you were in Israel during the Eichmann trial and you had to hear about it.

Well, I didn't really know what was going on. When I went to my uncle and aunt, they would give me a little, well-- you know, there was no television in Israel at the time. So they didn't say very much as far as I remember. Maybe they didn't know either. So it was such a big thing. And I was there, but I was out of it. It was the same with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

We were in England. We met my new wife then. We traveled to London where my parents were. And my uncle said something about-- I guess we were watching the news-- and he said, you know there might be war or something. I had no idea because we hadn't kept up with the news.

Didn't that shake you up, the fact that you had lived through another war?

No, maybe I thought he was exaggerating. I don't know.

Would you be a different person today if you hadn't had the childhood that you had? Has it affected you, do you think?

I think it has, but, of course, there's no way of knowing. But I think it has. But one thing, I wasn't even aware of that I read an article. There were two articles. I think it's in the Shoah Foundation Newsletter or little magazine. There was an article about a woman who was a hidden child.

And then the next thing was an article that she wrote herself, and she works in a medical school. I know she's a medical doctor or what. But she's made several statements that I can identify with. One is indecision.

In what sense?

Well, this writing business has been nagging me forever, having trouble writing. So I was seeing a psychiatrist and.

When you say trouble writing, do you mean the physical act of writing, or what do you mean by trouble writing?

You know, I can't write, and then I correct myself so many times.

You mean, picking the right words? And you can physically.



Oh yeah, physically, yes, all right. So one day said, Harry, the war is over. [CRYING] It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It can go this way or that way. It has no consequences. And that never occurred to me before. So she talks about this.

Another thing is feeling that people perceive you differently, like, this woman obviously is very accomplished. She's teaching in the medical school in New York. And she said that she feels like a fake. And I have the same feeling. I feel like a fake. A fake, Katie.

No, I know, but in what sense do you?

Whatever I get recognition for, I don't deserve, or that people take me far more intelligent than I am. That what I do, you know, when people-- sometimes I get praised for my writing, and I think, well.

And why do you think that is that you feel you don't deserve it?

I don't know. I never associated it with my experience, but this woman in her article, that's what she wrote about.

Do you think maybe it's because you had to lead two different lives? You were that other little boy, Henry. Do you know what I mean? So who are you really in a sense-- as a young child when your personality is being formed.

I think you're right.

That's an interesting comment, what you said.

Well, I think your comment is also very interesting because sometimes I think about it. I mean, it's kind of strange. Leading two lives, especially when you're so little.

Right, and your personality hasn't been formed yet.

Right.

You were such a young child. What are your thoughts about Germany, Germans today?

Today, I think what happened in Germany could happen anywhere. I mean, Germany was one of the most advanced countries, educational, culture, and in every field, they were tops-- among the tops. And it happened. The conditions made it possible to happen. I could see it happening here.

You can see it happening again?

I mean, not there.

Here?

I can even see it here or anywhere.

In today's world?

In today's world.

You could see it happening again?

If the conditions get bad enough.

Do you think your political views have been affected by what your experiences were?

I don't know how to link that up. I mean, there are many people who have not had my kind of experience but feel the same way politically.

You had mentioned before about you were active in the rights for the Deaf-- civil rights for the Deaf. Were you active in the civil rights movement in generally? I mean you came from a situation where your civil rights were deprived, and your parents, and so forth. Has that made you more attuned?

Maybe more attuned, but I didn't-- I'm reticent to actually take part. I was in British Columbia for five years during '68 and so on, so there was also the movement, but I was afraid I was going to be evicted-- deported. At [? Simon Frasier ?] University, students took over the University. And lots of the people I knew were, like, in the building.

Were demonstrating?

Well, they were in the building that day, and the Mounted Police arrived. And I was outside, but I wouldn't go in the building. I was afraid of the consequences, but also I'm very skittish about [INAUDIBLE]. I never told people I was Jewish either. I think the first time was when-- I mean, some people saw me as. In the high school I went to in Seattle, it was in a formerly Jewish neighborhood. There were still a lot of Jewish kids-- maybe 15% or more. I don't know.

So there it was not an issue. But later when I was at the University of Washington, I remember being in a restaurant-- a hamburger place-- with my friends, several friends. I don't know why I said that I was Jewish, and they said you're Jewish? [LAUGHS] Like it was a surprise to them. But that was the first time that I remember saying it to anybody. It was not already-- I didn't know how they would react to that.

What is your feelings now religiously in the sense of said your family was quite secular.

Yes.

Do you feel yourself still quite secular--

Yes.

--or did you experience change there?

No.

On your thought about being Jewish in general?

I think I feel very Jewish-- but very, very Jewish, in fact-- but not because of a religion. Some of our relatives-- my sister married an Orthodox man, and her children are very quite Orthodox, especially her son. And my wife has several siblings, but one of them also is very Orthodox and married a very Orthodox man, and the seven children are very Orthodox.

So it's kind of strange sometimes. I think I don't need this. I don't-- or maybe I don't say don't need this. I feel I would like it, but I can't do it. Like, I see it's when they get together with other people that do have the same kind of faith, there's a rapport through religion that I don't have. And I don't know, the prayers and.

Are you a member of a synagogue?

No, we tried several things. In fact, two weekends ago, we went to an open house from the [NON-ENGLISH], and we're going to go on their retreat. But we had been members before we had our son, and it was very child-oriented it seemed to us. So we felt we didn't feel that it was our place. But we went to this one meeting, and it was quite amazing to us besides the bagel nosh and all that.

They had a discussion led by a reporter for The Washington Post reports on the national news that talked about the elections. And there another reporter who works for the Los Angeles Times, I guess it was, and but among the audience, everybody who commented, they were so brilliant. [LAUGHS] And it was an amazing intellectual feat that was going on. In fact, I felt I didn't feel up to par. But so we're going to try that.

Good, and do you think more about the war years as you get older?

Well, there's more time to think about it.

Now that you're retired. Yes, and especially being in the environment with the Museum, so when there are all these other activities, movies, and so on. And my wife doesn't mind, and she likes it. So it's a good thing because she didn't go through that. But it would be more difficult if she couldn't relate to it or didn't want to participate. She doesn't participate in the Child Survivors group. For one thing, when we started this, we didn't allow non-survivors, even spouses.

Even spouses.

And some people were very adamant about that, but that's all changed now. But my wife, she's much younger. And-- she's younger, and that's not her thing.

Are you angry that you had to go through what you did? Being hidden and away from your family, and some of the losses your family suffered? Are you angry and that other people-- Jewish children, let's say, or other children your age-- didn't have to go through what you did?

No, I'm not angry.

You're not?

No.

It's what? More of an acceptance or?

Other children who didn't have that experience, don't have such happy childhoods for whatever. In fact, my wife background, I mean, the family was four or five children, and her childhood wasn't that happy either.

It was difficult.

Yes.

Well, is there anything else you wanted to add, any thoughts you had?

Well, one thing that I've been thinking about at the Museum-- maybe elsewhere too-- there's a lot of emphasis on seems to be on the bystander as being guilty for not doing something. Well, to me, that doesn't make sense. Just because there are injustices going around you doesn't mean that you can-- especially being in an occupied country or in Germany-- it doesn't mean and you can just go out there and do something.

I mean, you can do something, get hit over the head, and that's the end. I've become aware that a lot of the people who were involved was due to circumstances. [INAUDIBLE] and somebody came knocked at the door and asked if they would take a child-- didn't say Jewish child. She suspected it she said. Others, that woman who-- [PERSONAL NAME], she was a schoolteacher. She was 20-year-old, a schoolteacher, and some of her kids were disappearing-- the Jewish kids.

So she had this connection. She was then started helping other kids. And I now I watch for them. I'm on the lookout, and I see that's what's happening with the priest in Belgium. There was also that aspect that he was asked, or so I see it is not that easy to just decide, well, this is not fair. I'm going to go out and demonstrate or something.

You can do that here. Under certain circumstances, it's perfectly fine, and get your permit or whatever. You can have a demonstration. But under the conditions in Germany and later in the occupied countries. I admire the White Rose movement. I think it's-- but they gave their lives for nothing, and the same with a lot of-- well, another thing that gets to me is the myth about the Jews not resisting.

There was, of course, some armed resistance, but it was futile. What does it mean? Countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium, France, Holland, almost Russia were invaded and almost never-- they were defeated, not Russia almost. What does it mean to resist? Well, there was resistance to all kind of form.

Every time you didn't do what they wanted to, every time you didn't report to the work when you were chosen, or you didn't go to the place where you were supposed to go so they can deport you, or when you were supposed to register, hiding children, all these things were resistance. And so that's bothered me for a long time.

There's all kinds of resistance.

There's all kind of resistance. And the armed resistance was, I think, well, it's wonderful that people did decide, OK, we're going to resist with weapons, but in general, I guess could say that those few. And I mean, they didn't survive many times. Hostages were killed.

Have you been to Germany?

For very brief periods of visits. When I was living in Paris-- well, I had an aunt who had been in Tangier. She's actually not Jewish, and I didn't even know that. But when my uncle died in Tangier, she and their two daughters moved to Frankfurt where she was from I guess. And while I was in Paris, I visited them for two weekends. And another time with Arlene, when we were living in France, we did a lot of traveling back and forth and come here for the summer.

And so at one time, there was some, I don't know if it was a controller strike or whatever. I don't remember what it was. I think it had something to do with controllers. So we couldn't get a commercial flight back here. But my brother who was in the tourist business arranged for us to get on, I think it was a charter flight or something, from Salzburg in Germany, I guess it is. So we went there and we had to spend a night or so. I felt [INAUDIBLE].

Are you comfortable? Are you comfortable in Germany?

I'm not comfortable wherever I can't speak the language, and my German is limited in vocabulary. It's also limited by the fact that I only spoke it with my parents or relatives, so I don't even know how to talk to people. When I was in college, there was a Swiss, but he was from an Italian area. So his German was [INAUDIBLE].

So it was more the lack of the language rather than the feeling what Germany represented?

It was both. I still thought, you know, when I saw all the people. What did they do? But you know, at least, intellectually I think, they didn't do anything more than people do in other countries in that kind of situation.

Did your parents get reparations at all?

My parents got-- yeah, they did.

And you and your brother and sister, did you get any payments?

I think my brother and sister got a few hundred dollars for loss of school. I didn't get anything.

You didn't get anything. But your parents did.

Yeah, my father had a pension. They lost the apartment in Berlin. We left illegally across the border illegally. We left. My father believed that Hitler wasn't going last, like other people were not informed. Well, I think a lot of professionals lost their job, so they left, but my father had his business. And it was getting better as his competition was leaving because he had [INAUDIBLE]. So things we're doing well. So he didn't want to leave.

But then his friend-- I am not sure. He was a friend. He was-- they used to have a German maid until '35, and her boyfriend was a policeman. He came to see my father in '38 and said-- oh, well, I'll get back to that. He said, Max, you have to leave, and something is going to be terrible. And I think he had knowledge about the Kristallnacht, the plans.

So my father took my brother and sister, and but they were caught at the border by the Dutch, and sent back. And you know, he was going to prison, but he got out. And then, see, my brother and sister disagreed on whether we left before or after Kristallnacht, and I think it was both. They left before, but they were caught and sent back.

Well, is there-- as I said before-- anything else that you wanted to say before we close?

I don't if there was, but I forget what it was. I'm sure I'll remember later.

Well, thank you very much for doing the interview.

Thank you, you certainly helped me with your questions.

This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Harry Markowitz.