

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

WERNER GLASS

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Marian Salkin  
Date: April 7, 1992

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WG - Werner Glass [interviewee]

MS - Marian Salkin [interviewer]

Date: April 7, 1992

*Tape one, side one:*

MS: Mr. Glass, could you tell me something about your life in Germany before the Nazi era, including your birth date and place, residence, name, of course, education, religious affiliation, occupation or that of the family, experience, and any experience with the non-Jewish community?

WG: I was born in Berlin in 1927, and I lived there with my parents, Dr. George Glass, G-L-A-S-S, and his wife Anna. Her maiden name was Wolff, W-O-L-F-F. My father had been born in West Prussia and, after World War I, moved to Berlin. My mother had been born in the Rhineland and during the French occupation after World War I moved to Berlin. And this is where they met and got married. I had an older sister, Helga, H-E-L-G-A, who was born in 1924. We lived in Berlin where my father practiced as a pediatrician, and we lived there till 1933. We left very early right after Hitler came to power and the reason for this was that in the apartment house where we lived, the next door apartment was occupied by one of the Nazi leaders in that part of Berlin, Ignor Koern. And he hadn't paid his rent for quite a while, back in 1932, so the landlord had him evicted. And, as the apartment next to ours was empty, my father decided to move his office to that apartment and thus have it more convenient to him. And while it was being remodeled into an office, the Nazi leader--who was unhappy at having been dispossessed--broke in one night, with his boys, and smeared paint and swastikas all over the place, and hung, hanged a banner outside the window saying, "This Jewish swine has stolen my apartment." Of course, my father--being a good, law abiding citizen--said, "He can't do this to me," and promptly instituted a suit against him. When Hitler came to power in '33, the suit was still awaiting court appearance, and, of course, it was not a great idea to have a suit in against the local Nazi leader. So my father tried to get the suit dismissed, but German law being what it is, once you have filed a complaint, the complaint has to be carried forward. And at that point we thought it might be a good idea to get out, because the Nazi that was making all kinds of threats as what he would do to this Jewish doctor who had dared to sue him. So we decided to get out. At first my father wanted to go just to Holland, and said, "You know, how long can this last? After all, you know, it's just a phase." But my mother said, "We have to go as far away as possible. It's just gonna get worse." And as far away as possible, we decided on China because, for several reasons. One, it was one of the few places in the world where you did not need a visa or anything, and where you could practice medicine as soon as you got there. We found out about this because my father was the pediatrician to the children of the Chinese Ambassador in Berlin. And he said, "Why don't you go to Shanghai? There are many, many children, and many of them are sick, so you'll

have no problem getting patients." Well, Shanghai seemed far enough away, even for my mother, so we took off--my parents, my sister and myself and my governess, who we took along. She was not Jewish, but her brother was a well-known Communist, and she thought it also better for her to get out. Her brother had been arrested already, and so she thought she had better leave. So, we left by, we left in the summer of 1933, and at that time you could still take your property with you. And we took all kinds of things with us--furniture, a car, an x-ray machine, and God knows what else--by boat. Well, first by train to Genoa, and then by boat through the Suez Canal, around India, Malaya, the Philippines, and to Shanghai. The boat trip took 37 days.

MS: Do you remember the name of the ship that you took?

WG: The name was the motor ship *Fulda*, F-U-L-D-A, of the North German Lloyd Line. It was a, most of the passengers were missionaries on the way to save the heathen in Asia. And it stopped just about at every port you can imagine, which is why it took so long. But I remember very little of my life in Germany prior to that. I was six years old when we left. I went to school for a grand total of four months or so, and then we had the ocean voyage, of which I also remember very little, except for the fact that most people seemed to get sea sick except my sister and I. We were the only children on board, and we thought it strange nobody wanted to eat. Nobody wanted to do anything. And apparently children were pretty immune to this sort of stuff, and so we finally got to Shanghai. And again, we got off the boat, and there was no expectation of refugees coming or not coming. There was no interest particularly on anybody's part. People got off the boat, fine, they were off the boat. And, you know, they were on their own. There was, at the time, a sizable--actually two sizable Jewish communities--one, a Sephardic one, of Jews from Baghdad and Basra primarily, and one an Ashkenazic one of primarily Russian Jews. Neither side, neither one of these communities, expressed any particular interest in refugees from Europe. Of course, there were very few. Within the next six months or so there were a grand total of nine families that arrived, all for one reason or another. Of those, eight were doctors. So they formed a new Shanghai Doctors Association...

MS: That's great!

WG: ...and they could all practice medicine, of course, as soon as they got there, as there were no licensing requirements. In fact, you could also practice medicine if you didn't have an MD degree. If you just hung out a shingle, that was, it was a very free enterprise kind of town. You did what you wanted to do and nobody cared much one way or the other.

MS: Mr. Glass, since you arrived so early, you could live wherever you wanted to, right?

WG: Oh yes.

MS: Could you tell us where your family settled within Shanghai?

WG: Yes. In Shanghai we lived in what was known as the International Settlement at first. This was an area governed not by the Chinese, but governed by elected

council, consisting of nine members--five British, two American, and one usually Dutch or Swedish or Spanish or something else, and one, again, from some other country. These, the only people who could vote for this council were people who had what was known as extrality. That is, they were not subject to Chinese law. As part of the "unequal treaties" that obtained by gunboat diplomacy, various countries had effectively obtained diplomatic immunity for all their citizens. This included initially England, France, the U.S., Spain, Switzerland, and many other European countries, along with Russia and Germany. After WWI, Germany was deprived of extra territoriality, or extrality, so people with German passports, which we had at the time, went, did not have extrality and could not vote. Russians, the Soviet Union had given it up voluntarily at a time when Chiang Kai-shek was still a Communist, back in the early '20's. So Russians did not have extrality. But most other, what were known as foreigners, or whites, had extra terri--eh, extrality. And the Japanese had the same rights. So the only ones who could vote for the council were a very small group of people. Most, the Chinese, could not vote. And most of the whites, most of the foreigners who were German or Russian, primarily Russian, could not vote. But this International Settlement was run by what was known as the Shanghai Municipal Council, and not at all subject to Chinese law, except for people who had no extrality, who were naturally subject to Chinese law. We lived in an apartment house, which most people lived in who were not very wealthy. The very wealthy lived in individual homes, but these were few and far between. But most people lived in apartment houses, either in small two story houses, which were sort of row houses, or they lived in high rises. We lived in a high rise. And we lived there from 1933 till 1937, when we moved--this first high rise known as Dennis Apartments--we then moved into a newly opened high rise, which was nicer, the Metost [phonetic] Apartments. Both of these were on the street called Bubbling Well Road, which was a mix of residential and light commercial shopping activity. We lived in this apartment, and my father had his office in the apartment, so it was not as spacious as it had been in Berlin, but it was a very nice apartment, and we lived there. In addition we had, there were, it was a five-room apartment plus two servants' rooms. The servants, because everyone had servants, they were very cheap and reasonable, and, in fact, if you didn't have servants you found you couldn't get any delivery of anything, because, of course, the servants got a cut of everything. The way it worked was that you hired one servant, called the Number One Boy. And he was in charge, and he hired as many of his relatives as he could afford to feed, because the more people he had working for him, the bigger his face was.

MS: Was he responsible, you say, like, for feeding?

WG: He did, he was responsible for maintaining the household. He himself would do as little as possible, because it was beneath his dignity to do very much. He would wait on table, and that was about it, and sometimes cook. But his wife would do the cleaning, and his, he, every Chinese Number One Boy had an infinite number of nephews, nieces, and assorted relatives who would do other things. And so we had anywhere from

three to six servants, depending on his own needs. These servants lived in the servants' quarters. Each apartment house, major apartment house, had a separate wing for servants, with their own elevator, their own toilet facilities, and the like. Our Number One Boy was very entrepreneurial, and his family did not live in the servants' quarters. Instead he ran a gambling casino out of his quarters. As I said, Shanghai was a free enterprise zone. If you wanted to run a gambling casino, fine. We occasionally got complaints from the management because it got too noisy. We had to tell them to stop this nonsense and calm it down a bit. In fact, almost none of the servants lived in the servants' quarters.

MS: Within your family apartment. Within...

WG: With, any of the apartments...

MS: Oh, I see.

WG: Because, the quarters were--they considered them too luxurious, and they would rent them out. Most of them would rent them out to others for pay, and they themselves would sleep in the kitchen, or wherever, or in the garage. The apartment also came with a garage, and one of the servants was a chauffeur, because no foreigner would dare drive in Shanghai, because if you hit someone, you were responsible for all that, not only their injuries, but their family, and God forbid you should kill them, then you were responsible for their family for life. And, whereas, if you had a chauffeur and he hit someone, they'd never bother suing him, because what could they collect from him anyway? So, we had the car and the garage and the chauffeur. The house servants worked full-time, which meant they were on call 24 hours a day. The chauffeur worked only half-time, from 7 in the morning till 7 at night, seven days a week. [tape off then on] The whole mess of servants, which was paid in one lump sum to the Number One Boy, came to maybe the equivalent of three or four dollars U.S. a month, but, of course, he got commissions on things that were bought. He got all kinds of things. God knows how much he stole from the kitchen, from the food supply, but it still did not amount to very much. And, the life in general, once my father's practice was established, was pretty good. When I first got there, my parents, of course, were worried that here I'd been out of school for three or four months, and so they put me in what was the Kaiser Wilhelm Schule, which was run by the German community, and was at that time a hotbed of anti-Nazi activity. These were old-line Germans who had been there for many years, and felt it was terrible that this Austrian paperhanger had taken over Germany. This didn't last very long.

MS: Did their sentiments change?

WG: I don't know if their sentiments changed, but the German Consulate changed, and the message was soon out, and when they introduced a *Heil* Hitler salute in the morning, I left, because that's not what we had come to Shanghai for. And by--this happened after we'd been in town for almost six months, which was very fortunate, because I could, once we'd been there for six months, I could go to the, a school run by the Shanghai Municipal Council, which was an English language school run along English lines. It was not a public school in the British sense of being a boarding school, nor was it a public

school in the American sense of being a free school. It was a school that was open to "residents of Shanghai", where residents meant you had been there for six months, and if you were willing to pay, too, a sizable tuition. So my sister and I both went to the local "municipal school." Of course, they had separate schools for boys and for girls, which were next to each other, but separate and far from equal. The only people who were eligible to go to this school, whether they paid tuition or not, were non-Chinese. Chinese were not admitted. There were municipal schools for Chinese, also non-compulsory, also charging tuition, where the language of instruction was Chinese. In the other municipal schools, the language of instruction was English. So, I went through this school, and picked up English, which, of course, up to this point I hadn't known, but when you are six years old, you learn it very rapidly, and I went through the municipal school, both grade and high school, as did my sister. Life was very uneventful until 1937. In 1937 war broke out. The Japanese attacked the Chinese, surrounding the International Settlement, and in part of the International Settlement--that part north of the Soochow Creek known as Hongkew. There was fighting for, from August 13, '37, till about December 1st, during which time we had no school, and we watched the bombing and the fires and the casualties. Most of the casualties south of the Creek were caused by anti-aircraft shells falling back onto the town, and by bombs that the Chinese air force missed when they tried to hit the Japanese battleship in the harbor. They managed to hit a Chinese refugee camp, because the town was crowded with Chinese refugees from the surrounding countryside, and they hit several hotels and a bank, but they never did hit the Japanese battleship. But after December, the Chinese forces withdrew to the interior. The Japanese occupied the surrounding territory of the settlement, and the settlement north of the Creek, that is Hongkew. The rest of the town within the Settlement, and the French Concession, which was next door to the Settlement, suffered very little, really, during this 1937 incident, as it was called. School started up again and everything went along much as usual for us, till early in 1938 when our passport was up for renewal. My father applied to the German Consulate to get his passport renewed. It had been a five-year passport. And they told him that before they could renew it, he had to pay back taxes that were due in Germany. And he said, "That's impossible. You know you can't leave Germany owing taxes." And they said, "Well, we have a record here that you owe taxes." And my father asked, "How much?" Because he realized this was just a shakedown. And they said, "Well, we don't know the amount, just sign here that you'll pay the back taxes, whatever they are, and then you can have your passport." My father says there's no way he could sign a blank check, so from that time on we were stateless. We did not have a passport, which again, initially was not much of a drag.

MS: I was going to ask how did that affect your standing, your dad's standing?

WG: Nobody really cared. It only meant that travel out of Shanghai became practically impossible, not totally, but practically impossible. But then again, where would we have gone anyway? My father was well-established by this time. He had a thriving

practice. My sister and I were going to school. Everything was just fine. Our governess had finally left us to get married and remained in Shanghai. And oddly enough, she married the official photographer for the Nazi party in Shanghai, and their wedding took place at the German Evangelical Church, and it was paid for and the reception was paid for by my parents [chuckles] *in loco parentis*, which was the one and only time I was in the German Evangelical Church, which had, amongst other things, Nazi banners displayed and the like.

MS: That had to have been rather uncomfortable for your family, I would think, at that time.

WG: It was uncomfortable, but, eh...

MS: But...

WG: This gal had been with us for quite a few years and she had no one else and she was getting married, and, so...

MS: So be it.

WG: So be it. So, and then, that was early in '38. Meanwhile in Europe, of course, things had been getting worse. My father had written to his brothers and his sister and our mother's parents, "Come on out. Get out of there. Come to Shanghai. You can have a life here. You can make a living." But, of course, they said, "Well, it's just a phase. It's not gonna get any worse." By 1938, they were beginning to think maybe it would get worse, and my father's sister and her husband and my mother's parents both decided to come to Shanghai, whereas my father's brothers and my mother's sister and their spouses decided not to come, that they would wait it out. My uncle and aunt and my grandparents arrived in Shanghai late in '38, but both of them missed *Kristallnacht*. By the time they came, significant numbers of other German and Austrian Jews started to arrive in Shanghai, and housing was very tight, so what we did is we threw our number one boy and his gambling casino out of the servants' quarters, and put up my grandparents and my aunt and uncle in the rooms there instead, which was not the greatest of things, but there simply was no housing available. Gradually, housing became available in what had been Hongkew, which had been largely bombed out during the 1937 war. It was now being reconstructed and by 193--eh, by 1940, early in 1940, my aunt and uncle and my grandparents moved to Hongkew to their own quarters there. And in 1940 I was Bar Mitzvah. Let me talk a little bit about religious upbringing in Shanghai.

MS: Very good. I wanted to ask you that question. I'm glad you got to it. That's great.

WG: When we first got to Shanghai, as I said, there were two Jewish communities, the Sephardic one and the Russian one. The Russian community was quite, not only unaccepting of German Jews, but significantly opposed to them, antipathic, I suppose. Whether this was in revenge for the treatment of Russian Jews by German Jews in Germany earlier on, I don't know, but there was no particular desire to integrate with the German Jews. The Sephardic community, on the other hand, was far more accepting, although naturally customs were very different. But the social contacts were much more

with the Sephardic than the Russian community. And my parents said, well, it's time I went to Hebrew school. And I lasted exactly two weeks, because, of course, in the Sephardic community--when I went there I was six-and-a-half years old, almost seven--and the other seven-year-old boys naturally knew the daily prayers by heart, could read Hebrew fluently, and were busy discussing special prayers for the holidays and so on. I sat there like a good German Jewish boy. I knew the *Shema* and that was about it. And I could probably make the *Motzi*, and the teacher, the *Hacham*, thought that I was a disruptive influence, which I probably was, as I didn't know anything and was not very good at sitting quietly and absorbing nothing. So my parents took me out of there. And my religious education became very spotty until about 1939. By then I was 12 years old. My Bar Mitzvah was approaching, but, of course, by this time there was a very significant number of German and Austrian Jews in Shanghai who had come there from '38 on. And in fact my father was the first President of the *Jüdische Gemeinde* [Jewish community].

*Tape one, side two:*

MS: We will continue at this point.

WG: By 1939, as I've said, there was a sizable number of German and Austrian Jews in Shanghai who had formed the *Jüdische Gemeinde*, a community of central European Jews. My father was the first president. His main function was to make up the deficit, as he was not really an organizational type. But it was actually founded, the organizing part was by Jacob Steinhart, and this community was, had been set up, and a lot of activity occurred in the housing, feeding, and medical, and other care for the large number of refugees that were beginning to come to Shanghai and who, at that time, were allowed to leave Germany with only ten marks in their pocket. So that a lot had to be done, and a lot was done.

MS: Finish your statement.

WG: Yes. And also, of course, by this time, the Joint, that is the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, had become active in Shanghai. The Sephardic community was very forthcoming and, as they included very many very wealthy people, they soon came and took over the deficit reduction function from my father, and in fact they provided an enormous amount of help. They founded a school. They set up a hospital. It was known as the Kadoorie School, for the Kadoorie family. They set up a hospital. They provided a lot of the funds for the soup kitchens, for the meals, for--they provided--they bought the houses that were converted into *Heime*, the homes, where many of the refugees were put up. And in general the Sephardic community, along with the Joint, with some minor contributions by the Russian Jewish community, eh...

MS: The Russian Jewish community was not that forthcoming?

WG: Not nearly as much as the Sephardic. The Sephardic community was very forthcoming. The Russian community was somewhat forthcoming. They were more forthcoming when Polish Jews started to come in. And then they started to open the purse strings a little wider, because apparently they felt more at ease helping the Polish community. And this *Jüdische Gemeinde* was organized on very Germanic lines. It covered all kinds of governmental activity, from housing allocations to food allocations, to a polyclinic, to schools, and also what was called, *Kultus*, that is the religious life. There was a *Kultus Dezernat* [Religious Department] along with other commissioners, if you will. The rabbis and cantors were all employed by the community and were rotated between congregations. There were many prayer areas set up. The one we went to was within the Sephardic synagogue, the Sephardim--being sensible people and living in a subtropic area like Shanghai--had their Shabbat services usually from 7:00-9:00 in the morning, when it wasn't too hot. And, of course, we had services from 9:30 to 12:00, when it was hot as the dickens. But the Sephardim made their synagogue available for High Holy Days and the like. What was usually done was, movie theaters were rented and the services were held in them, because the congregations were much larger, obviously, at those times. And the

*Jüdische Gemeinde* held services in various degrees of Orthodoxy or Conservatism and the like. They, the rabbis, were rotated around and in good Germanic fashion, of course they had ranks. There was *Rabbiner*. There were *Oberrabbiner* [Chief Rabbis]. There were *Gemeinderabbiner* [Congregational Rabbis]. There were Cantors. There were *Obercantors* [Chief Cantors]. There were *Gemeinde* Cantors [Congregational Cantors]. And it became very important that not one of these praying locations got only the top level ones, not the low level ones. It was a bureaucracy hard to imagine--but it worked. And the, one of the cantors, not an *Obercantor* but just a plain cantor, was engaged to tutor me. As I am totally tone deaf and cannot carry a tune for the life of me, he was very worried that, God forbid, I should display my lack of talent in public and people would know he had tutored it. And so I managed, I was told that I had to, and I did. I read my *Haftorah*. I read my *Maftir*. No lightning struck, and we--I had my Bar Mitzvah, of course, in the Sephardic synagogue--at, but not at a Sephardic service. It was a good German Jewish service. Naturally, in the Sephardic synagogue, the women sat upstairs and the men downstairs, but that didn't strike me as strange, or anyone else, because that was the way it was. After the service, everybody came back to our apartment and we had sandwiches and sponge cake, and the whole thing lasted maybe an hour or so, and that was that. And I got my usual set of fountain pens and books and other good things as presents.

MS: And, Mr. Glass, can I ask you about your family's associations with other peoples in the community? Obviously they had a large circle of friends by this time.

WG: Well...

MS: Jews and non-Jews.

WG: Actually, there was extremely limited social contact out--with non-Jews. There was very limited social contact outside of German Jews. Some Sephardic Jews. Most of their contacts were with other German Jews, most of them ones not living in Hongkew, but living in the International Settlement or in the French Concession. So, by this time there were maybe 20 families or so living outside of Hongkew--German Jews--but there was social, significant amount of social interaction with. Plus, of course, we had relatives. In addition to my aunt and uncle and my grandparents, some cousins of my father and cousins of my mother had come to Shanghai, all of whom lived in Hongkew and whom we saw once or twice a month. But, as far as more frequent social contact, this was usually primarily with the other doctors of the New Shanghai Doctors Association, and with a few families who had also come more or less at the time we had come and were very well established. The, as far as the kids were concerned, there was relatively little socializing outside of school. The only socializing was in the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides that my sister was in, or the Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, that I was in. And there wasn't this continual socializing of the children. Children were seen and not heard. They came home from school, school lasted till 4:00. If you came home, it was 4:30, you had tea, then you did your homework, then you had your supper, and then you went to bed. And that was your life, and it went on like that. So, I don't say that, the socializing that I did was in school or

in the Scouts, and very little outside of that. The Scouts, I belonged to a Jewish Troop, the Fifth Jewish Troop of Boy Scouts. I had first belonged to the Third Pack of Wolf Cubs, or Cub Scouts, which was not affiliated with anybody or anything. But then I went to the Fifth Troop, which was a Jewish Troop. And the main difference between the Jewish Troop and the other Troops was that we did not meet on Saturday, we met on Sunday. But, and we had the usual things that a city Scout Troop does, there was great difficulty finding places to hike. So we would hike around the town. And we, there was a campground that was run by the Boy Scouts Association, which was slightly out of town. It was almost a mile away, and in the midst of rice paddies and the like. And we would camp out there, cheek by jowl, usually with lots of other tents and other Boy Scouts. The, all these Boy Scouts of course were non-Chinese. The Chinese had their own scouting association, and there was zero interaction among them, between the two.

MS: I was going to ask if any...

WG: And socially, the only Chinese that we socialized with were Chinese who the Chinese would not socialize with, i.e., mixed marriages. There was a Dr. Whong, who had married a German gal, when he was in med school in Germany. And they were fairly well ostracized by the Chinese community. And so they were more, they were accepted by this small group of German Jewish doctors. Although Mrs. Whong was not Jewish, she fit in very nicely, as she had had a rather miserable life as a white wife of a Chinese...

MS: I would imagine.

WG: ...which was looked down upon both by the whites and by the Chinese. And her children, of course, being what were known as half-cast, had an even tougher time. Mixed bloods were looked on with disfavor, and this was part, of course, of the English heritage of Shanghai. That it simply wasn't done. And there were many things that weren't done--one of them was marrying a Chinese. Of course, people did it, but then they found life very difficult in most circles. The main focus of our social activity in Shanghai were--of the whites, the non-refugees, the ones who were in the International Settlement, and not in Hongkew--was usually centered around clubs. And, as a matter of professional necessity, my father was a member of many clubs. He was a member of the International Recreation Club which ran the race track, and of the Shanghai Jewish Club, and of the Club Lutzitano, which was a Portuguese Club, and of the *Sepals Port* [phonetic] *Français*, which was the French Club. A club that he couldn't--two clubs he could not join--one was the Shanghai American Club, which did not admit Jews, which was known as the Country Club, and the Shanghai Club, which admitted only English--not British--if you were Scottish or Welsh or Irish, or Canadian, or, God help us, Australian--you could not join the Shanghai Club. It was for English only. So, the Shanghai Club was out, and the Country Club was out, but all the other clubs that were around, my father joined, and the activities centered around those clubs, and, oh, he also joined the Russian Club, which was run by the Soviet community. And we had a pretty good time. Everything went very well until Pearl Harbor.

MS: Yes. This is interesting. How did life change for you then?

WG: And Pearl Harbor, let me go back a bit just before Pearl Harbor. Everybody in Shanghai knew war was coming. That was absolutely self-evident from the actions of the Japanese and their statements. It was so well-known that the major banks, the Chase Bank, the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, the Chartered Bank, asked, in November of 1941, asked their depositors kindly to remove their deposits, because, they sent a note around saying, "In the event of hostilities, we cannot be responsible for the safety of the deposit." And, when banks ask you to withdraw your money, you know it is for real.

MS: I see [chuckles].

WG: And, also it was known, we thought, by all the governments concerned. The U.S. pulled out their 4th Marines which had been stationed in Shanghai. The British pulled out their Seaport Highlanders, and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. So that we--the 4th Marines--withdrew to the safety of Corregidor, the Seaport Highlanders and the Welsh Fusiliers to the safety of Singapore. Everybody knew war was coming. We all thought it would be over in about a week or two, because here were the Japanese--they couldn't even take out the Chinese Nationalist Army which was considered a joke and totally incompetent. They'd been fighting them for four years without winning, and we felt, "If they can't take out the Chinese Nationalists, my God, they're crazy, they're gonna attack the U.S. and Britain? And, they'll last just about a week." Well, came Pearl Harbor, and, of course, on our side of the date line in Shanghai it was December 8th, not December 7th. It was a Monday morning. And we heard on the radio what was happening. And Japanese troops occupied the rest of the Settlement. They had already occupied, of course, all the surrounding areas. They did this not at all the way it was shown in *Empire of the Sun*, which is a completely incorrect version. They did it by the simple expedient of making a phone call to the Shanghai Municipal Council and saying, "We are taking over." And the Municipal Council said, "Go ahead. What can we do about it?" So, they just walked in. I went to school. School was on as normal. And we had classes, and we all thought, "Well, it will be over in a day or in a week or so." Then the Japanese broadcast the results of their attack on Pearl Harbor and we said, "They are absolutely lying. There's no way in the world they could have sunk the entire U.S. fleet. There is no way in the world the U.S. fleet would have been there, because the U.S. knew, obviously, that war was coming. Why else did they withdraw their Marines from Shanghai? Obviously the British knew war was coming. Why else did they remove their troops and ask us to remove bank deposits? The Japanese are just lying. It'll be over in a week or two." Well, in a week or two, we found out that the Japanese had been telling the truth. They had sunk the U.S. fleet. They had sunk the British fleet. They had occupied all kinds of places and we thought, "My gosh! This is very odd." The Japanese, of course, also thought the war would be over very quickly. They had no intention of occupying the United States or Britain or Holland or anything like that. They thought it was just a colonial war, like all the other colonial wars, like World War I, where, at the end of the war the colonies changed hands. They thought

they would take over British and American colonies in Asia. They'd take over the Philippines and Malaysia and Hong Kong, and the Dutch colonies, Indonesia, and then they'd sign a peace treaty and everything would be fine. They would have the colonies instead of the, eh, what they called the ABC power, ABCD powers--America, Britain, China, and the Dutch. They, because they felt the war would be over very shortly, they did absolutely nothing about the British and American nationals in Shanghai, or the Dutch or other so-called enemies. After a few weeks, they said, "Well, they had better turn in their short-wave radios." In fact, they collected short-wave radios from everyone. You were not allowed to listen to short-wave radio anymore. Then they had all the, what they called, major enemies, that is, the British, the Americans, and the Dutch, had to wear red armbands to show they were enemies. Their minor enemies, counter--nationals of countries that had declared war on Japan but that Japan didn't take seriously, some South American countries and various minor European countries, they had to wear pink armbands. But that was it.

MS: How were you affected, being a stateless person at that time?

WG: Totally unaffected, at that time. They did absolutely nothing about anybody, other than provide red and pink armbands. Life went on exactly as usual. The teachers in the school now wore red armbands, and some of the students wore red armbands, or pink armbands, and nobody paid much attention to any of it. In fact, it would take them almost a year before they realized that the war was not over, that America and Britain would continue to fight. And then they interned the British and the Americans. All the people with red armbands were interned, unless you had enough money to stay out, which some did.

MS: You could buy your way out?

WG: You could if you were very well to do. You bought your way out by becoming sick and being interned in a hospital. Like, one of the major Sephardic big wheels, Sir Ellis Kadoorie, spent the entire war wearing his arm in a sling at the Country Hospital in a private suite. But, nobody knew exactly how much that cost him, but it was assumed that it cost him plenty. The others, who were not that fortunate or wealthy, were interned. Americans were quickly exchanged for Japanese interned in the U.S., and very few Americans remained interned. They were exchanged at Lorenz Market as they were taken out on a Portuguese ship, shipped to Portuguese Africa, where they were exchanged for Japanese. The British had no one to trade. They had very few Japanese interned in England, so they stayed interned and suffered considerably over time. They were allowed to receive food packages, and my parents did send food packages to some of my teachers from high school who had been interned.

MS: What did internment mean, actually?

WG: They were in a camp, under miserable conditions. It was basically a prisoner of war camp. It was not an extermination camp. It was not a hard labor camp. It was a prisoner of war camp.

MS: Within the Shanghai area?

WG: Within the Shanghai, well, on the outskirts of Shanghai, near the airport, not in the actual citified part, but just outside, in barracks, barrack-type environment. And miserable rations, miserable medical care. It was a standard prisoner of war camp. The food was usually no better or no worse than Japanese troops rations, which were not very good. Medical care was no better, and probably worse. And they stayed there. It was unpleasant and difficult, but not terribly life-threatening, unless you got sick, in which case medical care was minimal, and you, they did not have a high survival rate once you got sick. But, if you didn't get sick, you were O.K.

MS: Were they aided by any organizations, like Red Cross?

WG: They had, they got some supplies in from the Red Cross, through the Swiss Consulate, and they, I don't know the exact survival rate, but it was put very high, compared to--there were no death marches, there were no--it was just very unpleasant. Especially as most of the English and American citizens who were there had been used to a rather charmed life, with diplomatic immunity effectively, were well-to-do, lots of servants, and here they were reduced to a very miserable, mass existence. But there was not, it wasn't a matter of basic, you know, "Will we make it or not?" Everyone expected that they would make it, and most of them made it. It wasn't--now, as far as the Jews were concerned, the German government started to put pressure on the Japanese to do something about the roughly 20,000 Jews in Shanghai. And the Japanese were in a bind because of these different kinds of Jews that were there. The Jews that had Iraqi passports, they did not want to do anything to. The Iraqis had Swiss Consulate protection. They were enemies. Some of them were interned, some of them were not. But they received supplies through the Swiss Consulate, and the Japanese did not want to irritate the Swiss, because the Swiss were a source of hard currency for them, and so they did nothing about, they did not want to do anything about Iraqi Jews. The Russian Jews were a different problem. Many of them had Soviet papers, and the Japanese were scared to death of the Soviets, because they knew the Soviet army could march into Manchuria any time, Mannish--or, what they called Manchoukuo. And Manchoukuo was the main basis of their heavy industry--all their iron production, steel production, coal production came from Manchoukuo. So they bent over backwards being nice to the Soviets. So they certainly weren't going to do anything to Soviet Jews. Many of the Russian Jews had no papers, were stateless, but so were some 10,000 non-Jewish Russians, White Russians, in Shanghai, Czarist Russians who were avidly pro-Axis, because they were anti-Soviet, they were pro-German and pro-Japanese. In fact, the Japanese used the Russian regiment, a regiment of White Russians, that had been part of the Shanghai Volunteer Corp which were, had been part of the military force, so-called, of the Shanghai Municipal Council. And the Russian regiment was used by the Japanese as part of the police force to maintain order and discipline. And they certainly weren't going to do anything against stateless Russians, or, of Russian origin. So here they had stateless people who they were in cahoots with, the White Russians. They had Soviet Jews that they didn't want to irritate. Then they had a whole bunch of Jews living in

Hongkew who were stateless, and who were primarily of German and Austrian origin, or of Polish origin. And they were fair game. Now, they did not, when they set--when the Japanese set up a ghetto in Hongkew, in a very small part of Hongkew actually, they did not set it up for Jews. They set it up for what they called, "stateless refugees." And the difference between being a stateless immigrant and a stateless refugee was the day you showed up, the date at which you showed up in Shanghai. If you showed up before 1937, that is, before the Japanese invasion of the outskirts of Shanghai, you were an immigrant. Thus, all the White Russians, all the Russian regiment, and all the Russian Jews who were stateless, and those ten families or so--of which my parents were one--who were stateless, they were stateless immigrants and they were not subject to the ghetto. Anyone who was stateless who arrived after 1937 had to move into the ghetto, whether you were Jewish or not. So there were quite a few non-Jewish stateless people, who had arrived in Shanghai after 1937, who had to move into the ghetto. So it, officially, it was not based on being Jewish, but being a stateless refugee. And, of course, 98 or 99% of the people who were forced to move into the ghetto were Jewish. Now my grandparents and my aunt and uncle had already lived in the area that was designated as a ghetto, so they didn't have to move. However, other Jewish refugees had to move in to this ghetto, which was a small, small area. And housing being what, was very tight, space was allocated by the *Jüdische Gemeinde*, and they had to share facilities and have people move in with them, and...