

Interview with GEORGE WITTENSTEIN  
 Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project  
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(Begin Tape 3.)

A. All the time I was in an orthopedic appliance, then they put my arm in a sling and I walked out with my arm in a sling and that satisfied the Gestapo guy there. Then a few days later we were permitted to go back to our studies, and then it was -- I discovered that the members who had been arrested would be tried by the People's Court.

Now, the People's Court is an illegal court, it is not an Israeli constitution. It was started by Hitler as early as 1934 for one purpose only, and that is to eliminate Hitler's enemies. It was actually outside the law but it was the highest court in the country, only for treason or similar.

This was, I think, during the same time that I went out to talk about Scholl's father. Once it was known when the trial would begin, this is set a few days later, I called the Scholl family to tell them -- I did not know them, I had never met the parents before, to immediately come to Munich because the trial would be the same date. I met them at the railroad station and took them to the

palace of justice where they went into the trial because I didn't go with them, of course. I took them to the building. If I hadn't done this, they would not have ever seen their children alive, because they were executed the same day.

Q. HOW MANY DAYS AFTER WAS THIS?

A. After their arrest? I think, four days after.

Q. WERE YOU ALL WAITING ON PINS AND NEEDLES ABOUT WHETHER YOU WOULD BE IMPLICATED?

A. I think all of us who were remotely connected were concerned, absolutely. All in all, over 80 people were arrested.

Q. DO YOU KNOW IF THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO WERE ARRESTED, WHETHER THEY DID IMPLICATE ANYONE OR NOT?

A. That is now evident from the interrogation that was started two years ago. What happened is that most everybody said the others had nothing to do with it, I am to blame, so everybody took the blame on themselves.

There was a very moving story, which is true; the man who interrogated Sophie Scholl felt sorry for her because she was young, she was 21 or so or 22, and he tried to save her life. And he -- in order to do so, he gave her a long, one-hour sort of lecture. Now, one was on national socialism and all the things it had accomplished and how great this was.

And at the end he said well, if you had known all this would you have done what you did? They were giving her an out, which would have changed the death sentence probably into life in prison and she looked him straight in the eye and said yes, I would, because it is not I, it is you who is wrong, and wrong in the beliefs, and that sealed her fate.

And, of course, naturally I was concerned because I'm sure that phone of the Scholls was tapped and I was in the railroad station for a uniform, but I was with a neighbor fellow, trailed or not, I don't know, but I had to take a risk.

Q. I WOULD LIKE, IF I COULD, TO ASK YOU ABOUT EACH OF THE PEOPLE IN THE INNER CORE, TO JUST HAVE YOU TELL ME YOUR VIEW OF THEM, WHAT THEY WERE LIKE AS PEOPLE. HOW ABOUT ALEX SCHMORELL?

A. He was a very artistic young man, he smoked a pipe, he was actually -- he wanted to study art and he went to art school in the evening. He was very romantic; that's about as much as I can say. I'm very poor at characterizing people, describing people. Schmorell was probably had his head too much in the clouds. I think he was the least realistic of all of them, but he was the drive behind most of this. His sister when she came to Munich a year later to study and discovered what her

brother was doing, she wanted to participate and he said no, I have to protect you, and she insisted and he eventually gave in and let her participate; Henrialta.

Q. WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?

A. A wonderful, marvelous, enthusiastic young lady full of joie de vivre; fabulous person.

Willi Graf I knew the least. He was the most serious of all of them, because I didn't meet him until Russia, and he was also the most religious; he was a devout Catholic. As I mentioned before, all of us except Sophie Scholl had been in the youth movement.

Helmut Halta I knew quite -- very well, he was a close friend of mine, the one who moved to Berlin. He was also very artistic; he sculpted, he played music, he also studied philosophy. He and Hans Scholl discussed philosophy many times and took long hikes in the mountains.

And one that I have not mentioned, that was Christoph Probst and somehow I overlooked and I forgot to mention him, Probst was closest to me of all of them. He was the only one who was married, which was very unusual for a student to be married in those days.

Q. HOW OLD WAS HE AT THE TIME?

A. As old as everybody else; early twenties. We took fencing lessons together many times. He lived outside of

Munich. When our discussions took too long and he didn't have a train home at night he spent in my little one room with me sleeping on the floor, and here is a very, very tragic thing.

He was not involved in distributing leaflets and writing them except for the very first few ones, because he then transferred to the University of Innsbruck in Austria; he also was in the Air Force, not in the Army. Even though he was a really close friend of all of us, when Hans Scholl was arrested he had in his pocket a draft for a leaflet that Christoph Probst had written. When he was arrested, he tore it up and tried to swallow it.

They took it from him, pieced it together, and from the handwriting and other letters in Christoph Probst's and Scholl's room discovered who this was. They would never have arrested Christoph Probst. They might have arrested him as a friend of the movement, but they would not have had anything against him, so here this young man lost his life. It was extremely tragic.

Q. AND THIS WAS A DRAFT OF A --

A. It was a leaflet he had written.

Q. IT WAS NEVER PUBLISHED?

A. No.

Q. IT NEVER SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY?

A. No.

Q. SO HE DIDN'T REALLY DO ANY OVERT ACT?

A. He'd written in another community hundreds of miles away.

Q. YES.

A. It's very sad. For me personally, it's unforgivable. It was an unforgivable act for Hans to have this in his pocket and he had to expect to be arrested.

Q. NOW, WERE YOU PERSONALLY THAT CAREFUL THAT YOU ALWAYS MADE SURE, WHAT DO I HAVE ON ME THAT COULD INCRIMINATE SOMEONE ELSE?

A. Oh, yes, very careful. We even had it hidden better than last time. We had a book and processional which withstood the death penalty. Danzig, which was a formerly German city, which after the first World War was made a free city under the government of the League of Nations, it was totally surrounded by Poland because Poland got part of former Germany so they would have access to the ocean.

And the League of Nations administrator of Danzig had many, many, many discussions with Hitler, which he published, and it's unbelievable what Hitler predicted and said in this book and how Hitler's mind functioned. He even states in this book -- well, first of all, England will never go to war against Germany. England

and France can never go together. But if this should ever happen, then that's the end of Germany, and I will draw Germany so in it that the whole Germany will be destroyed. And he said once we're in the war and America comes in the war, once we have defeated America, then we can eliminate all the Jews in the United States.

Anyway, this book we had my uncle in Switzerland smuggled into Germany and, of course, that I hid very well in case the house was searched. I still have it. Very few people know about this book.

Q. AND THIS IS WRITTEN BY THE COMMISSIONER --

A. Yes.

Q. -- OF THE DANZIG CRUSADE?

A. That's right.

Q. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HITLER?

A. It's called *Conversations with Hitler*; that's the title.

So that, of course, ended -- well, that was the end of those boys of course, and sad that nobody in the world paid attention to what Russia did to man, what Danzig said to the Allies; they didn't listen. A man in the German secret service who came to United States before America entered the war of course, Germany declared war on America and he was not to believe anybody in the state of (Tabun) what was going on. They didn't believe him

Spelling

that he was in the military and the coup were going to take over, it was mistakes that were made incredible.

You probably know this, I didn't learn until last year, that when the situation of the Jews in Germany got more and more terrible, the heads of governments of most of the western powers got together in the conference to discuss what could be done and should be done. And it came to naught because the minister from Australia said we do not have a racial problem in Australia and we do not want a problem. It was the end of help for millions of Jews who could have been saved. That's to me one of the blackest points in western democratic history.

Q. GEORGE, WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WEREN'T ARRESTED?

A. I don't know. I tried to hide my tracks as well as I could. I later got an invitation to appear in front of the Gestapo and was interrogated by them. My company chief protected me. My company chief protected me. He didn't know, but he suspected I was in the White Rose. I think I have an explanation for his attitude. At that time the Gestapo had no jurisdiction over members of the armed forces. And what happened is they had arrested several members of the armed forces, which was against the law. And in order to make it legal they had to retroactively expel from the Army on Hitler's orders it would be the joint chief of staff expelled from the Army



long after the execution. And it railed him that somebody -- the Gestapo could arrest a soldier without going through military channels. And I have letters from him after the war in which he certifies that he was pretty well aware that I was one of them.

Q. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A. If I had known you asked me this question I would have looked all these things up. I have his letters.

Q. DID HE KNOW YOU PERSONALLY?

A. He knew everybody in the company personally. Oh, yes, it was a small company.

Q. DID HE HAVE SOME FONDNESS FOR YOU?

A. I don't think so. It was a matter of principle.

Q. HE DIDN'T WANT YOU PUSHED AROUND BY THE GESTAPO?

A. Hans had a similar experience before the war. Hans was in the armed forces before the war and his chief protected him.

Q. WHAT WAS HE ARRESTED FOR, THEN?

A. For things he said against national socialism.

Q. BUT YOU WERE INTERROGATED?

A. Not until year later.

Q. A YEAR LATER. SO FOR THAT WHOLE YEAR THEY LET YOU ALONE?

A. Well, they let everybody else alone. We continued our studies. I got drawn into it through completely

different circumstances. There was a young chemistry student who -- and I mentioned before that some half-Jews continued to study because they were protected by their professors. And one of the men who was particularly well-known for this was the professor of chemistry, biochemistry -- no chemistry, who was a world famous man. He was a Belfast recipient and his institute, he had probably half a dozen or more half-Jews whom he protected, he kept on as indispensable assistants. One was the man I mentioned but not by name who had later been the Minister of Health who was the later German minister, Dr. Hans Rupert, and was this young man by the name of Hans Rupert.

And I mentioned him without mentioning his name earlier that he was in the war during the occupation of France, fought, risked his life, and was kicked out of the Army. And this made him so mad that he was the most rabid anti-Nazi I've ever met in my life, so far that it was beyond any sense. He became so enraged, he was so enraged and became so -- dropped all caution. And he was one of the recipients of the leaflets, and after the execution of the White Rose members he and his girlfriend sat down at the typewriter -- to makes it write again -- he and his girlfriend sat down and on the typewriter duplicated these letters and sent them out, those

leaflets.

And he was, as I say, he was not very cautious. He was eventually arrested. He was a member of a group in Hamburg who was more active than the White Rose branch in Hamburg, they even wanted to blow up a bridge, and he was arrested one day and one day his mother called me, she was in Munich; I don't know how she got my name, and said where's my son. And I met with her and told her that her son was arrested, that there's nothing she could do for him. As a matter of fact, that she was in the greatest danger possible, she should not even try to visit him because she was Jewish and she should immediately go back to Hamburg and if she ever should get in trouble she should come to Berlstedt and that was a mistake I made, but I felt so sorry for the woman.

I know my landlady did not like me, the woman who rented the room to me. I had taken care of the girlfriend of this Jewish chemistry student and it was her room that had been bombed out, so I took her in and gave her a place to sleep. And she said to me, you know, I could be arrested any day, because I was his girlfriend.

Q. SHE WASN'T JEWISH OR HALF-JEWISH?

A. No. And she gave me the name and phone number of her parents, call them immediately if I don't show up; this,

of course, happened. Now, when she was arrested, then the names of all these people were in the newspapers then. The landlady immediately recognized us, so I expected that she would denounce me to the Gestapo that I was harboring her.

So I had an attorney friend who was a most remarkable man, the most trusted and oldest, not in age but in joining the party members of the Nazi party, had the golden party, whatever you call it.

Q. (PIN)?

A. (PIN); that's what he had. He was as anti-Nazi as you can imagine, and he had some connections in a roundabout way to the Gestapo. And I got into a fight with this landlady, which I must say I provoked, I engineered. She got in a rage and she tore my uniform, and I immediately went to the phone and I called the attorney and said this lady is crazy, what should I do. He said I'll take care of her and I'll have her carted off to the psychiatric clinic; which he did.

And, of course, she was not insane so they let her go after a week or so. But when the Gestapo interrogated me and I said, well, you asked me because my landlady denounced me isn't that true? I said you can't believe what she's saying, this woman is insane, she was taken to the psychiatric clinic. So they checked and this is,

indeed, what happened.

The amazing thing to me, and I don't understand this, so -- of course, I also tried to take as many preventive measures as possible. I told my commander about this, my company chief, and he was still so enraged about it happening that he said if Gestapo should ever come and try to arrest you, I authorize you to use your gun.

Now, I would never done this because imagine what would have happened if I had killed a Gestapo agent, but this showed his mindset at the time. I'm sure he was a Nazi, he was originally -- he was a physician in a small country town, and most teachers in Germany, primary school teachers were Nazis, convinced Nazis, but that's what he said to me.

Q. WAS THIS, AGAIN, AN AUTHORITY KIND OF THING, THAT HE DIDN'T WANT THEM OVERSTEPPING THEIR BOUNDS?

A. That's right; exactly. He also later after the war when I said that, when I told you he had written this, he confirmed this, he wrote in letters that the Gestapo asked him several times about me, but he protected me.

Q. NOW, YOU SAY THAT HE SUSPECTED THAT MAYBE YOU WERE INVOLVED WITH THEM?

A. That's what he wrote in his letter. They had no proof, of course.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHY HE DIDN'T ACT ON THAT IF HE SUSPECTED THAT?

A. He had no proof, so what should he have done? What could he have done? I don't know. Not protect me, yes.

Q. YES, AT THE VERY LEAST --

A. But he didn't want any more members of his company involved, obviously. That does not throw a good light on him either. About six months later I was --

Q. NOW, YOU STAYED ON IN MUNICH AND CONTINUED WITH WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

A. Yes. About six months later I was called before a court martial and, of course, now they went the regular, routine way they should have done in the first place. And they asked me about this Jewish woman from Hamburg whose son meanwhile had been executed and said how come I saw this woman. I said well, I never knew her, she just stood there one day, wanted to know where her son was, and I happened to know, I met him briefly. And well, how did you dare as an Aryan German man to converse with a Jew? And I said look, I'm a physician. It is my primary responsibility to take care of a patient, regardless of creed or color or anything. This woman needed help and I gave her the best advice I could give her and that's that; that was my duty as a physician.

They said yeah, but she told me that you offered to

hide her, she told us. So there I was there really between a hard rock and a -- I did some very quick thinking and I remembered that all my official orders and official papers in the military and university gave my address, our house in Austria. Nowhere was the country property. I laughed and said look, this poor woman must have been tortured. Our house was totally destroyed early in the war by bombing; how could I have offered her to hide in a house that didn't exist? And, of course, it took the bureaucratic machinery a long time to investigate this and, of course, they found that the house didn't exist.

And she, I'm sure, was tortured and she killed herself in the cell. Not until much later did they probably find a hot trail or a trail hot enough to maybe get me, and that I learned through this attorney.

Q. HOW LONG DID THIS COURT MARTIAL LAST?

A. One morning.

Q. ONE MORNING? AND DID YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CONDUCTED YOURSELF OKAY AND THAT THEY WEREN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO YOU?

A. Well, I had hoped that I -- I thought I conducted myself well and I had hoped that I stalled for time, which, indeed, I did.

I should add that this attorney, this man, this

chemistry student and his girlfriend were all arrested and his father came -- her father, thank you -- and wanted to know what was going on and said can you help me find an attorney. I said yes. And he was a typical -- very personable, I don't know whether he was Nazi or not, but he learned that his daughter was in intimate relations with a half-Jew. He said, "I will not have anything to do with my daughter ever again, but I'll pay for her defense and anything from now on goes through my wife. I have nothing to do with her." So anything that happened after that was between his wife and me.

And so I found an attorney for him and he consulted with this attorney whom I mentioned and he defended her before the People's Court and he managed to convert, change the death sentence to hard labor.

Q. INTO HARD LABOR?

A. Yes. Though I don't know whether you ever saw films, there are many shown every now and then on the proceedings of the People's Court and there were, I think, six judges. The presiding judge was both prosecutor and judge at the same time and he screamed at all the poor defendants, insulting them, telling them what horrible beasts they were.

And my attorney who defended this poor medical student, he was totally exhausted. I saw him immediately



after the trial; he said it was the worse experience he had ever had in his life and he said how terrible this was. But then he smiled and said the reason -- the way he managed to get her sentence from death sentence reduced to hard labor was by using Freud's arguments.

Q. BY USING WHAT?

A. Sigmund Freud's arguments, Sigmund Freud's theories.

Q. WHAT DID HE USE?

A. I don't know it in English, but there is a psychologic state where you are totally dependent on somebody else, where you are totally subservient -- I don't know how to say it in English --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Identification with the aggressor.

A. That she was totally subservient to this chemistry student, her boyfriend.

Q. AND THAT GOT HER HARD LABOR INSTEAD OF --

A. No, got hard labor instead of death. And the same man then later saved my life.

Q. THE LAWYER?

A. Yes. Well, he saved my life by having this -- my landlady carted off to the loony bin. His name was Kartini, K-a-r-t-i-n-i, Italian name, it wasn't German, and by warning me that now the Gestapo was on my trail.

Q. HOW DID HE KNOW; DO YOU KNOW?

A. I think I mentioned earlier that he had connections to the inside because of his membership, Golden Party membership. And I did the only thing open to myself, I arranged with pulling a few strings to have myself transferred to the Italian front. At the front the Gestapo -- oh, by the way, after they arrested me by those members, the jurisdiction of the Gestapo in criminal cases and especially political criminal cases, over the Army was extended, but not on the front, so it's ridiculous. At the front where you can get killed, you were safe from the Gestapo, but the rest of the war was spent in Italy on the front. That was from about November 1944 to the end of the war.

Q. THIS WAS AFTER YOUR LAWYER TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE IN DANGER?

A. That's correct.

Q. AND SO YOU VOLUNTEERED TO GO TO THE FRONT?

A. I had to arrange for it. It was not easy.

Q. HOW DID YOU ARRANGE IT?

A. I'd rather not talk about it.

Q. OKAY.

A. Because Italy was a quiet state of front. The west was bad, but Allies having landed in Normandy and Russia, of course, was a disaster.

Q. WHERE WERE YOU IN ITALY?

A. I was in the upper end, south of Sienna, in an advanced unit -- well, I was different places. First I was with the division hospital in Aosta in the Aosta valley; that was almost four months.

Then I was transferred to an advanced unit of which I was the commander way up in the mountains south of Sienna running a field dressing station where I did first aid and surgery on wounded Germans that came back.

Q. BY THIS TIME YOU WERE DOING SURGERY?

A. Yes.

Q. HAD YOU BEEN DOING SURGERY IN MUNICH?

A. As an assistant, yes, but never on my own. Here I was on my own.

Q. SO THIS REALLY REPRESENTED A GRADUATION FOR YOU OF YOUR SKILLS?

A. Yes.

Q. AND HOW --

A. By force I had to. There was nobody else.

Q. RIGHT. HOW DID THAT FEEL TO BE DOING THAT?

A. Great.

Q. DID YOU LIKE WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

A. Very much so.

Q. DID YOU FEEL YOU WERE GOOD AT IT?

A. (Mr. Wittenstein nods head.)

Q. FELT CONFIDENT?

A. Even though sometimes I was operating for 30 hours at one stretch. It was very safe, it was in a tunnel, an old railroad tunnel, and the Army had rigged up a little generator down at the creek so we had electric light in case we were shut out by American artillery. And I had two British wounded men, British soldiers, could have been Americans; I don't recall, either one, anyway, whom I was supposed to immediately send back to the main hospital and I didn't. I said they can't be transported, they were too sick. And the only reason I kept them was so in case of an Allied advance they could testify to the Americans how wonderful I treated them, so I kept them until the very last day.

When the final American offensive came and we had to evacuate, got orders to evacuate, then, of course, all of us had to go back. And we were evacuated on foot, the wounded in the truck and ambulance and so on and had to pack up everything.

And when we reached the city it was obvious from what little news we heard that this final offensive was the tide in Italy. And a colleague of mine and my -- in the German Army before Hitler officers had a young soldier who was assigned to them to do everything for them: Polish their boots, help with the food, et cetera. This, of course, had been eliminated.

Q. WAS THIS CALLED AN ADJUTANT?

A. No, adjutant is what you would call a secretary in a corporation. It was called a dean even in American universities the -- yeah. Anyway, in university it's called a dean; in American it's called a dean who cleans the blackboard. I had one, I created one. I asked a young guide whether he would be willing -- he gave all the anesthesia, by the way, and he was willing to do all the things for me and I in turn did things for him, so I cut his hair, for instance. He had an officer who cut his bush, if you wanted to call it, his hair. So the three of us had agreed that at the next opportunity we would take off.

Q. TAKE OFF?

A. Take off. So when we reached -- when we evacuated and reached that next city, we stayed one night.

Q. BY "TAKE OFF," YOU MEAN DESERT?

A. Yes; same thing. This boy of mine, let's call him boy, it's probably the best name, somehow organized three bicycles. Where he got them, I don't know. And when word reached that American tanks were entering the city on the other end, we took off. And I had maps, fortunately, as an officer; everybody in the Army at that time had only one desire, to be back to Germany. And there was a mass -- I mean, the whole Army was

disintegrated, there was no fighting anymore. And we reached Liverpool and there was no way, it was a big river to get across.

Q. THE IDEA WAS NOT TO BECOME A PRISONER OF WAR BUT TO ESCAPE BACK TO GERMANY?

A. Exactly.

Q. OKAY.

A. Then I discovered a flat bed of a truck lying in the field, so we three of us managed to carry that thing to the river, put our bicycles and backpacks on that, and swam across the river pushing that thing ahead of us wading across the river and then we went on. And in the course of doing so one day an American fighter plane -- we all carried big, red crosses on our back so he could see them widely. Nevertheless, he still strived us and shot me through the left hand, so and he bandaged my hand and we went to the nearest Italian hospital, which I knew had been occupied by the German Army.

Well, the German medical service had long since fled, the Italians were back. And I asked the Italian surgeon if he would operate on my hand and he said no. I said why not? He said I don't think it could be done. And I said well, the basic principle in trauma surgery is to debride the wound. He said well, I spent a year in Russia on the Russian front and we never did that.

Q. WAS THERE STILL A BULLET IN IT?

A. No, it was right through the hand; smashed a few bones. And he said if you insist on operating on it, go ahead, I give you my instruments. My boy was so incensed he pulled the gun and said go and do it. He said no, but I give you the instruments, so I had no choice but to operate on myself. And my boy, I couldn't dare to give myself a local anesthetic so I told him where to stick the needle and gave him the forceps to hold and I took the knife and did that and we went on.

Q. ARE YOU RIGHT-HANDED OR LEFT-HANDED?

A. I'm right handed, but in the course of my surgery training I am almost completely ambidextrous; I trained myself to be that.

And then we went on and came into the valley, which eventually ends up as the pass over the mountains to the Alps, and we were bombed. Yes, we found a whole column of trucks on which to put our bicycles to flee with them and, of course, everybody took everybody along.

Q. WOULD THIS BE LIKE A BAVARIAN PASS?

A. No, still way south, way in Italy.

And unfortunately, the truck with all my luggage burned and with that I greatly decided I'm finished, and all my photos I had taken and everything with it. And so we went on first on foot, then the next two trucks came

and a few miles further up the road we were all taken prisoner by the Protestants. And this is very funny.

We were herded into the courtyard of the parish priest and here one of the Italian's partisans tried to -- we are prisoners -- tried to sell us condoms.

Q. TRIED TO WHAT?

A. Sell us condoms. What would we do? Typical Italian. Well, eventually because a big column with some of them where armored vehicle was coming, they let us go -- oh, they wanted to take our weapons and they did take all our weapons. I said no, we're partisan commander, you cannot take my handgun. I am anti-Nazi. I have to kill a few Nazis in Germany when I get back. He left me my handgun and then he went on with his column.

And there came the next place, of course, the valley got narrower and narrower, completely blocked by Protestants, but then they realized that we were with this column of 45 armored vehicles, we were too strong for them, so we struck a bargain with them, said you can have our weapons if you guarantee us free passage, which they did. And the Protestant commander rode ahead in the first car with the white flag and so we made it over the Bavarian Pass into Austria.

Most people wanted to go to Austria -- Oh, the reason this could be done, it was possible at all without



being shot immediately, because the German ruthlessly just like the Russians shot anybody who, quote, deserted, but don't forget the whole Army was in retreat. This column of vehicles was led by a very smart master sergeant, who when the Army had disintegrated had grabbed a whole bunch of empty, blank, not-filled-in marching orders and had them all stamped with his name. So wherever he went he filled out an order to go to that place and the next place, and eventually he had official orders to go to Austria. That's how we made it safely to Austria. And then to those who want to go to Germany, I said I know the Bavarian Alps like my pocket. I said I know a place to hide; it was snow, of course, in April, very little traffic. Anybody wants to go there, join me.

So we left the trucks and walked on foot over to the Bavarian side and we encountered the first Americans. And they, of course, took us in, put us in a temporary camp. And I thought that the Americans didn't treat me becoming an officer, they didn't treat me nicely enough, especially when I was wounded, so I decided I'll have no part of this and I went to the gate of the camp and said look, I have to go to nearest hospital, my arm has to be redressed, let me go, and so I walked out.

And, of course, they knew I couldn't go very far, I was in uniform. And I went to the house where I had

never been but I knew it was there where the parents of my best friend, Christoph Probst, lived. So I came there and they embraced me and I said I need civilian clothes. They said well, the only clothes that we have that we can give you that will fit you is the suit that Christoph Probst had worn just before his execution. They gave it to me with tears in their eyes and they said my only request is that once postal service is established in Germany to send it back, so that's how I got civilian clothes and made it eventually back to my cousin's in Schomburg, south of Munich, where my bicycle still was, and from there I went and bicycled home to Berlstedt.

Q. WAS YOUR MOTHER THERE?

A. Yes. And, of course, the last minute I didn't know why the house hadn't been destroyed and it very nearly same to that. Berlstedt had been badly bombed because, you know, what the folks told me, they said the last word is they took people over 60 and kids under 12 and so to defend and they tried to defend, and the American artillery there is a bad road to Berlstedt. They put a few potshots at the huge tower up in the fort which, of course, they just laughed. You still see two pocket holes; didn't dent it. And so not the last minute I see that the house was still there, so that's the story.

Q. DID YOU USE THE GUN TO FIND ANY NAZIS?

A. It was taken off us at the last moment when we exchanged them for free passage, then they took everything from everybody.

Oh, I forgot a very important story, which I was going to mention. In Munich, and this is very little known, unfortunately, and the reason it is little known is because nobody, very few people in Germany liked us. Munich was the only successful military putsch against Hitler. An attorney who was an associate in the same bureau of my attorney that I mentioned who defended that girl before the People's Court was drafted and he was made, even though he was only a captain, commander of an interpreter unit. It was a special, separate unit which trained interpreters for several armies, German armies. Of course, that's all they did, of course; they wear no arms, nothing, but he was very much anti-Nazi. As a matter of fact, on several occasions he tried to assassinate Hitler.

On one occasion he was lying in an attic with a window with his rifle and telescope because he knew Hitler would visit the house right opposite on the other side of the street from whence he came often there. He knew that day he would come. He was waiting there, lying there, and the car pulled up, Hitler got out, and out of the house ran a little girl embracing Hitler. Of course,

he didn't want to kill the girl. And in his unit he accumulated, collected only anti-Nazi personnel, those who were Nazi who were assigned to him after they were trained he shipped all to Russia. Those whom he could keep he kept; those whom he couldn't keep he sent to important places all over Italian western front for one reason. At that time the wounded soldiers did not have to turn in their weapons until they reached division headquarters. And the interpreters, of course, were at division headquarters, so they collected weapons. When they had enough weapons to carry by code they notified this attorney, the commander of the interpreter unit. So he sent them by telegram an order to come back for certain instructions to Munich. So this way he got his building full of weapons: Hand grenades, machine guns, et cetera.

And he got an entire tank unit to cooperate with him, and as the American Army approached the barrier, he took off. Hitler had ordered that Munich be defended to the last house. Munich could have been totally destroyed. They took off in the middle of the night, they occupied Radio Munich, and it appealed to entire Bavaria population to immediately hang out white flags, for which you were to be shot immediately, of course, and to arrest all the Nazis they could arrest.

And his units took off, they removed all the dynamite and all the bridges across the river in Munich. They never had a chance to blow out the bridges, and Munich was saved. Many people died, there was a lot of shooting, but it was an incredible thing. And as a gratitude from the German people and his colleagues they made it impossible for him for four or five years afterward to practice law because he was a traitor to them.

Q. BECAUSE HE WAS WHAT?

A. He was a traitor to them.

Q. HOW ABOUT YOU AFTER THE WAR, WHAT WERE YOU CONSIDERED?

A. Nobody knew me except the families of Scholl and Schmorell knew my Russian connections.

Q. HOW WAS IT FOR YOU AT THAT POINT AFTER THE WAR TO BE A GERMAN CITIZEN? DID YOU WANT TO STAY IN GERMANY?

A. I never wanted to stay in Germany. Remember, I was on my way to the United States in 1939. I had only one desire, to get out. And I went to the American consulate, once that was established, they said there's no way you can live in Germany, it's against the law. But during the war all the Germans who had fled Germany had used up their American quota that had long since come to the United States, so there was no waiting period. If

you can manage to get into any other country, you'll have immigration visa within a few weeks.

Well, it so happened that -- let's call him a mentor of mine, this art historian who made it to England in the last minute in '39 arranged an official invitation for me to come to England to lecture at British universities.

Let me add that I had most of my life, at least in my youth, picked as close friends I can call people 10, 20, 30 years older than myself. They all were role models for me. One was this man who I mentioned a number of times, (Dr. Bott) is his name, one who was probably the best known literary figure in Germany by the name of (Hughes Kent), he was the editor of literary magazine who translated many, many books from English into German and one was also an art historian who was an editor at the best German newspaper in front of the title and who was immediately fired from the newspaper when Hitler took over because his wife is a Belgian Jew and who during all these years, of course, lived in terror that they would cart her off which, fortunately, never happened. So these three people meant a lot to me. They helped me in my literary undertakings, et cetera.

In between, as I mentioned, I went to Heidelberg, which is fairly close to Berlstedt, a hundred miles or so, to use the library to write my thesis and I conceived

Spelling

with friends of mine to create a magazine the like had never existed, a magazine that incorporated all arts: Music, literature, theater, film, painting, et cetera. And at that time Germany was divided, of course, in East and West Germany, but travel was -- the borders was free and mail was free and telephone was free, so we had several contributors in East Germany, which was very unusual, nobody else had that.

And, of course, getting an American license to publish was virtually impossible. We got together with a publisher in Stuttgart who had a license already and who agreed to publish the magazine. We got as a main editor a very well-known art historian who worked at the newspaper in Munich. And when we had the first one and a half issues ready to submit, the man that published it backed out. I'm sure you know how strict the Allies were in the beginning. Nothing could be -- no German radio, no German newspaper, nothing. There were newspapers printed by the Allies for the Jews, by the French, the American, the Americans for the British and so on, but eventually there were some licenses given to Germans.

Interesting story for you probably is this particular art historian whom we got as chief editor was going to move to Berlstedt and we were going to arrange to give him that smaller house of the two. And during

the war -- and I really wanted -- during the war you could get the death penalty for listening to any foreign radio, of course, but everyone did it. And what we usually did is we had the second radio going full blast on the German station. The methods that they have today, of course, didn't exist that you could immediately discover any radio that was on. You know, I'm sure, how ratings of TV stations goes, a truck or van drives through the streets of a city and immediately records whatever station his television is set on; that's how it works. That technology didn't exist then. And when I wanted to know more, I went to this particular man who was an editor of the German newspaper in Munich during the war; they got all the foreign newspapers. Most importantly, they got the London Times and French papers and British papers and Swiss papers, and then I had the wonderful delight in the middle of the war reading English newspapers. That, of course, was not open to anybody, except he was a close contact of mine. So that, unfortunately, fell through.

And then, as I mentioned, I decided to go into surgery. I was engaged at the time and my father-in-law was very well-known surgeon and he said, "Why on earth would you want to do this? You have the complete training. Why don't you open a practice of



psychotherapist? Why do you want to go through eight, nine more years of hard training instead of beginning to work?"

I said, "Well, I talked it over with my fiance and she agreed that if that's what I felt I had to do, that's what I had to do." And I applied at the University hospital in Heidelberg with vague promises that next year I would be taken as a resident.

And then I got this invitation to come to England and that was very difficult because there was no German government. The only government in Germany was the Allied-controlled council in Berlin and there was already the beginning of the Cold War, so at least the three western powers had to sign your travel papers. I still have that travel log issued by Allied government in Berlin, and it took four months. I had made friends in the precursor of the CIA, which at that time was called the CIC, Counterintelligence Corp, and they pushed very hard in Berlin, and one day they called me that your papers have been signed, and that's when shortly thereafter I left for England.

And the day after I arrived in England I went to the consulate and applied for an emigration visa and I thought in a few weeks I would get it, but I didn't get it. But McCarthy was already important and they could

not into the state department conceive that there was anybody in the German underground who was not a Communist. So with many, many people in England all the way up to Randall Churchill, this other, Winston Churchill, and many people in the United States pushing for me, I eventually over one year later got my visa.

Q. YOU EVENTUALLY WHAT?

A. One year later got my visa.

Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A. '48. In '48 I came to the States.

Q. HOW HAS IT BEEN FOR YOU TO BE HERE?

A. Wonderful. Hard. When you emigrated, when you traveled from outside of what was -- Britain was in terrible shape after the war. They had rations until long after I left -- you could take ten pounds with you. If you emigrated you could take 40 pounds; that was all I could take with me in my life was nothing in my pocket. Fortunately I had a cousin in New York who I had mentioned before and he let me stay in the apartment of my uncle, the playwright, who was in Europe at the time, so I had free rent.

And on the ship to the United States on the Queen Mary in my cabin was a Swiss lawyer who also was very short on funds and I said well, why don't you stay with me. You can stay with me for free and you take care of

the food, so this is how I survived.

Q. DO YOU FEEL AMERICAN?

A. Yes.

Q. HOW ABOUT GERMANY, WHAT DOES GERMANY MEAN TO YOU NOW?

A. I love the country because of the countryside. I could not live there because of the people; it has wonderful people. But as my wife often said, the only country in Europe that I would still to this day get screamed at is in Germany.

Q. HOW ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WHITE ROSE? WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IT ANY DIFFERENTLY IF YOU HAD TO DO IT AGAIN?

A. Well, now being older, wiser, knowing more avenues, I probably could have done more than I could have done at the time. Like this man, this attorney who I mentioned by the name of it was Gerngross, by the way, that had this interpreter come to me, I knew all about this, if I had stayed in Munich I would have joined them in that Putsch. It so happens I was in Italy, but I collected weapons for him.

At that time in '44 and '45 it was literally impossible to assassinate Hitler unless you were in the Army. I remember one day walking along the sidewalk in Munich and suddenly four big cars pulled up next to me, stopped, and people in brown uniforms very rudely pushed

me out of the way and out of the car jumped a guy and ran in the building; it was Hitler.

Oh, one important thing I forgot. One other thing that we did is in three nights signs were painted with tar and other paint on the walls of buildings in the main thoroughfare in Munich, "Down with Hitler," and the swastika crossed out and "Freedom" was written on these signs.

Q. DID YOU ENGAGE IN THAT?

A. I painted in the university itself. Not with tar paint, with pen, small, in Russian, in the toilets.

Yes, another thing comes to mind, how inhumane the Gestapo and Nazis were. Professor Huber was the last one to be executed. They waited a year almost, and in prison he finished his main work, major opus on Leibniz. His wife was presented with a bill for wear and tear on the guillotine for 600 marks. She said, "I don't have that money."

Then the man said, "Well, maybe I can give you a discount because we have so many executions right now." Being deprived of her civil rights, she did not get a penny, she was starving, she had two children. I began to collect money for her and as long as I was still in Munich, before I went to Italy. And a few years ago there was a memorial service in Munich in memory of

Professor Huber and the university invited me to be one of the speakers. In the reception room, a few people related this, a lady walks up to my wife and introduced herself and then came over toward Christoph and told Christoph a story which I had completely forgotten, that I had met with her. She's the sister of the Widow Huber whom I met with several times bringing her money. She said one time I gave her an envelope with over 2,000 marks, which was an incredible amount of money at that time. She remembered that.

Q. YOU DIDN'T REMEMBER THAT?

A. I had forgotten.

Q. WHEN DID YOU LEARN THE FATE OF THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE IN THE INNER CORE?

A. Oh, immediately.

Q. IMMEDIATELY?

A. Well, everybody was arrested. The two -- well, I didn't say about -- he had tried to flee, he had tried to make his way to Switzerland, not our way but a different way and was turned back by snow. He had to go back to Munich because there was a Russian chauffeur at the school in Bavaria whom he knew but he had decided he could not hide him, so he made his way back to Munich. And during an air raid he went in the air shelter and in the shelter sat a former girlfriend of his, she denounced

him.

Q. I'M SORRY, SAY THAT AGAIN?

A. During an air raid while he was in Munich he went into the air raid shelter and in the shelter happened to be a former girlfriend of his and she denounced him, so that's how he was arrested. But he and Graff and Scholl and Schmorell and Sophie Scholl all were executed. Halta in Berlin was interrogated by the Gestapo and let free, they couldn't prove anything to him.

Q. WHO WAS THAT?

A. Helmet Halta in Berlin.

Q. YES, I WAS GOING TO ASK HOW IS IT HE WAS ALSO ABLE TO --

A. They couldn't prove anything. He had nothing when they searched his room. They knew he was a close friend of Scholl, but you can't put somebody in jail because he was your friend.

Q. NO, BUT YOU SAID THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE JAILED JUST BECAUSE THEY WERE FRIENDS.

A. No. The people who -- I said over 80 were arrested. Not all of them got tried. Those for whom they had no proof, they were let free eventually. The others were tried by the People's Court and sentenced to so and so many years of prison.

Q. DID YOU REMAIN FRIENDS WITH HELMUT?

A. Yes.

Q. DID HE STAY IN GERMANY?

A. He stayed in Germany, became a well-known international professor of medicine. He died two years ago.

Q. HOW OFTEN DID YOU SEE HIM OVER THE YEARS?

A. Whenever I went to Germany.

Q. DID IT MAKE MORE OF A BOND THAT YOU AND HE WERE THE ONLY TWO SURVIVORS OF THAT INNER CIRCLE?

A. No, I think the closest bond between us was that his sister was my wife, but that happened later.

Q. AND HOW ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?

A. My mother stayed, ran what was left of the business as long as she could, and I think she made the greatest sacrifice that a mother can make. She, of course, had hoped I would take over the factory, which I would not and could not have done ever, because I'm such a poor businessman. In fact, it would have gone bankrupt within a year or two. She understood that I wanted to live in a free country and I wanted to get the best possible surgical training in the world, even though it meant we would be separated for a long time. So yes, go ahead, if you have to do this.

Q. HOW LONG DID SHE LIVE?

A. She died in 1957.

Q. '57?

A. Yes.

Q. HAD YOU BEEN ABLE TO SEE HER?

A. No. I saw her twice. I saw her in '56 was my first return visit to Germany and she was very ill, she was ill then already, and she had real problems where she -- not mental, other problems where she needed my help, so I came to do what I could. And a year later she became very ill, and the physician who took care of her let me know that if I still wanted to see my mother alive I have to come immediately, so on Christmas Eve of 1956 I went to Germany.

Q. DID YOU GET THERE IN TIME?

A. Yes. Of course, if you wonder why for ten years I didn't go to Germany, of course, a surgical resident in my time got \$10 a month and later on it was \$30 a month and for that you cannot get very far.

Q. WHEN YOU CAME TO AMERICA YOU BECAME A SURGERY RESIDENT, YOU WENT BACK TO MEDICAL SCHOOL?

A. Oh, yes, I had already started my surgical training in London after lecturing and working for six months or so at the BBC, then was accepted in a hospital where I helped.

And then after arriving in New York, of course, I had tried to find a good residency, and through America



there was no other way for it, I was accepted in the best hospital in the United States. And none of the American physicians who learned about this couldn't understand this, because that was the time when all the American medical students and residents came back from the war, they all wanted residency positions, and to get a position in that hospital -- it was at the Peter Van Brigham Hospital in Boston. It's the main teaching hospital of Harvard; that's how my surgical career started. That's my alma mater. This hospital has supplied more professors and chairmen of departments than any other hospital in the United States.

Q. HOW DO YOU THINK YOU GOT IN?

A. Well, the man who had just been appointed the year before as chairman and professor of surgery took a great personal interest in me and he thought I was good enough material for it. And we still correspond.

Q. I WONDER IF YOU COULD REPEAT THAT STORY THAT YOU TOLD US EARLIER ABOUT THE CONFERENCE THAT YOU WERE IN WITH THE THREE OTHER PEOPLE AND YOU SAID THERE WAS A GERMAN GENERAL?

A. Oh, in Los Angeles?

Q. YES.

A. Well, that was an exhibit put together by semi-government organizations, two organizations in

Germany on German assistance, starting with in 1923 already with early communists and so on, which was traveling through the United States. And as it came to Los Angeles which, of course, consulate general knew of it ahead of time, he had invited me to speak at that, at the opening ceremony of the exhibit.

And the German general was in Texas where the Germans are trained, lots of German officers and men are trained in Texas, he was invited, and a Jewish refugee who now lives in Berlin, lived in Israel during the war spoke about her experience, very moving experience, because she was hidden by non-Jews.

Q. IN GERMANY?

A. Yes. And the history professor (Gusilet) spoke first and made the, I think, unforgivable faux pas that after he delivered his lecture he walked out, left.

Q. AND YOU WERE GOING TO SPEAK ON WHAT?

A. On German assistance; particularly, the White Rose.

Q. AND YOU --

A. Oh, I did. But at the end of my talk I added my comments on the exhibits.

Q. WHAT DID YOU SAY, IN GENERAL?

A. What I criticized about it, what I felt was wrong and where the exhibit was in some ways was not correct.

Q. WHY NOT?

Spelling

A. It was a picture of members of the White Rose with long names under it. And I had learned about this because this chemist I mentioned who was at the National Institute of Health in Washington had seen it in Washington and he called me and said look what's going on. So I immediately wrote to the two organizations in Germany which had sponsored the exhibit and they did nothing.

And then six months later when it came to Los Angeles somebody had painted some white paint over it but not corrected the right names, you could still read all the names, and there was not one mention of the military putsch in Munich. But two-thirds of the exhibit were on the July 4th, which accomplished nothing. That was much too late anyway; 20th of July -- I'm sorry, 20th of July, the German bombing, assassination of Hitler.

Q. SO YOU SAID THESE THINGS --

A. Yes.

Q. -- AT THE END?

A. Yes.

Q. AND HOW WAS IT RECEIVED?

A. With quite a bit of applause.

Q. AND THEN YOU SAID SOMEONE CAME UP TO YOU AFTER?

A. After, during the photography session, yes.

Q. AND SAID WHAT?

A. Oh, a lady who always wanted to be in all the pictures, everywhere pictures were taken, smiled at me and said, "Once a rebel, always a rebel."

Q. DID THAT FEEL OKAY TO YOU?

A. Yes.

Q. I WANTED TO TALK JUST A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE KIND OF CULTURAL LIFE YOU HAD IN YOUR FAMILY. THERE WAS A LOT OF ART AND A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTIVE IN WRITING PLAYS AND THINGS LIKE THAT?

A. Yes.

Q. COULD YOU JUST TALK A LITTLE ABOUT THAT, WHAT THAT WAS LIKE?

A. Well, because of my uncle the playwright and painter and so lots of people stayed -- visited us at our country estate. And amongst them, two well-known Germans there was one, (Doutin Diane), the other one was (Randamovie), people connected with theater and movie industry.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE PEOPLE COMING?

A. No, I was not there, I was at school most of the time. However, in the summer, yes, but these two I don't remember because I was not there.

Go back once more to that exhibit in Los Angeles, of course I think the consulate general and a few other people, of course, did not like my criticism of the exhibit and felt it was directed against Germany, but it

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was so one sided, it had to be to do justice. I could not let it go by.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THE WHITE ROSE MOVEMENT HAS BEEN PORTRAYED HISTORICALLY ACCURATELY?

A. No, it has not.

Q. CAN YOU --

A. I'll be glad to do so. Let me go back to this.

This had some repercussions because I wrote to the chair of modern history at the University of Berlin who had a lot to do with this exhibit and I got a letter of personal attacks from him, which hurt me so deeply that for eight months I was unable to respond.

Q. WHAT --

A. Finally, over two months writing and rewriting and with the help of my wife and other people had finally concocted a letter where I point by point show him all the things where he was wrong. I never got a reply.

Q. WHAT WERE YOU ATTACKED ON?

A. That he said I knew nothing about this. Without saying so, he implied that I was a fraud and that I didn't know the facts and so on and it was very, very painful.

In answer to your question, much has been written about the White Rose that has been written by people who knew nothing about it. The first person to write about

it was the eldest sister of Scholl, of Hans Scholl who, by the way, was a very big shot in the German female Hitler Youth. And her great --

Q. CONTRIBUTION?

A. -- contribution is that she was the first one to write a book about the White Rose. Now, she knew nothing about it because, as I mentioned, none of the family members knew anything, so she had it only second-hand. It was an honest effort, it was reasonably good. Almost everything written since then is based on that book, was rewriting of that book, whether it was published in England or America or Germany. There are very few people who did thorough research.

There was a reasonably good book relatively early, I think the '60s, written by an American journalist. The book was called *A Noble Treason*. It was sympathetic to the White Rose, but obviously written to make a great book. That was also translated and published in Germany.

And there was one book written by a German author just for his time, he did as much research as he could, and it's quite a good book. There's a dozen other books all based on this one book by Scholl -- Excuse me. The man who I mentioned who wrote this reasonably good book, his name was Peti, P-e-t-i.

What since has happened, and while I was unable to

really speak about this before, I spoke in England and the first two months in United States but never -- just couldn't.

Q. WHAT SEEMED TO HAPPEN TO YOU?

A. Oh, I was too involved in it, It was too painful for me. What happened then is what I discovered on my frequent trips to Europe, because I was in Europe many, many times as a visiting professor almost every three years.

Q. DELIBERATELY?

A. Excuse me?

Q. DID YOU WANT THAT TO HAPPEN?

A. Oh, it was wonderful. In '58 I was invited by 14 German and Swiss and Dutch and French universities to lecture and operate there and show them techniques of -- special techniques in cardiac surgery. And I saw what was going on there and one of the first things that happened is that this first American book, *A Noble Treason*, had all my pictures in it credit given to Inga Scholl, the eldest sister of Hans Scholl. And she told me that in the letter that now a German edition comes out, so I had my attorney in Germany whom I still had because I still had someone to take care of my mother's estate, write the publisher that he was violating the copyright. He said what do you want? What is this? I

have a letter from Inga Scholl that she has the copyright.

And over the course of the next 20 years what happened is that more and more Mrs. Scholl has completely eliminated anybody else except her brother and sister. And all over Germany you only read about the Scholls and schools are founded, named after Scholl, streets were named, and so on.

And all the relatives that are still alive of my friends, of course, were up in arms, but most of them did nothing about this, and I felt something had to be done. First thing I did about the copyright, and I straightened that out, but that's when I felt I had to speak up. And it's amazing what this woman has done since.

Q. YOU MEAN IN DISTORTING --

A. Yes, absolute distortion. And since everything is based on her book, most stories that are written are very incomplete. There are only two really factual books -- well, there's one book which you can't forge anything; this is the diary of Sophie Scholl. One of the books is the diaries and letters of Willi Graf, edited by his sister. If you look at that book, it's that big a book, one-fourth of the book is footnotes, references which she has done. But that's, of course, a small part of the pie because it's about her brother, so the book has not been



written.

The lady in Munich who I mentioned, Mrs. Muller, has written a part -- a chapter in a book that appeared in America on German assistance and it's based completely on the Gestapo documents of the interrogation. This is very factual. I have told her that she should write the book on the White Rose, but she hasn't.

In 1970 or so -- no -- yeah, 1970 or so I was approached by a young Australian journalist who had lived in Munich, he lives in London, and at that time had lived in Munich for a while, married a daughter of a German attorney, and learned about the White Rose. He got so intrigued by it he decided he was going to write the definitive history. He's interviewed more people than anybody else in the world; everybody that was even remotely connected, he interviewed. And the book was supposed to be published and then he found new material so the publishing date was postponed, postponed, and then a very tragic thing happened.

The White Rose Foundation in Munich put together an exhibit on the White Rose which traveled all through the United States and now it's traveling through France and Italy and other countries. When it came to Santa Barbara, as a matter of fact, I was sort of instrumental in the university of putting this on because I said it's

coming to LA, so that's the chance to bring it to Santa Barbara. I was not on that committee because I'm not a member of the university here, I'm a member of the UCLA faculty. I suggested, gave some suggestion that they invite as the main speaker this man living in London to give the main address, so they agreed to that and wrote him.

He was delighted, he was honored, he said wonderful, I will gladly come to speak, and four weeks before the exhibit opened in Santa Barbara he died, so there is no definitive book yet.

Q. AND NO ONE TO TAKE OVER ALL HIS MATERIAL?

A. No, his widow is sitting on it. She hasn't done anything. He's never done anything about it, he's never shown anything. In his last letter I'm not sure there is anything; maybe it's all in his head.

Q. NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTA BARBARA?

A. University of California at Santa Barbara, yes.

Q. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, YES.

A. University of California, as you know, is very strong in oral history. The reason, it has something to do in connection with the oral history exhibits decided to do some kind of history. That's been going on for exactly three years now.

Q. ARE THEY HOPING THAT A BOOK WILL COME OUT OF THAT?

A. Well, the way this goes with oral history is this will be buried in all libraries of the university system, of course; that's it. We can have copies and so on, but the man who was writing it is planning to bring it out as a published book in addition.

Q. IS THERE ANY CHANCE --

A. There will be two volumes.

Q. IS THERE ANY CHANCE THAT THAT COULD BECOME THE DEFINITIVE BOOK OF THE WHITE ROSE MOVEMENT?

A. No, because I don't know enough. I know nothing about Willi Graf, I know nothing about Sophie Sholl, I know nothing of their background.

A very strange thing happened, I guess, very strange thing happened. There's a young accountant in a small town in Texas who somehow heard about the White Rose and she spent a couple of months with her mother in Germany. She interviewed lots of people, she got so intrigued by the White Rose that she decided she's going to write a novel, a semi-historical -- a historical novel for young people because she felt this would be a subject that would really interest young people. And it's amazing how it does, because the exhibit here, when it was here at the university, over 20,000 school students came to visit the exhibit.

Q. NOW, THIS WAS WHAT EXHIBIT?

A. The White Rose exhibit when it was here at the university.

Q. OKAY.

A. So she has done an enormous amount of research. Now, it's not a factual story, it is a wonderful story and it's well-written and she has dug out material that I didn't know and some that involves me which I have forgotten. It's unbelievable, this woman. And I'm right now waiting for a manuscript because she sent it to me for critiques. It's thousands and thousands of typewritten pages. She already has a publisher, so this will come out next year.

Q. THE PICTURES THAT HAVE BEEN SHOWN THAT YOU TOOK OF SOPHIE AND HANS AND --

A. Everybody else.

Q. -- AND EVERYBODY ELSE, DID YOU MAINTAIN POSSESSION OF THOSE PICTURES?

A. Of course, I have the negatives. Absolutely.

Q. WERE YOU ALWAYS INTERESTED IN PHOTOGRAPHY? YOU MENTIONED ALMOST --

A. Oh, yes.

Q. -- EVERYWHERE YOU WENT THAT YOU TOOK PICTURES.

A. My mother bought the first camera for me when I was six or seven; that was at the time of the box cameras.

I'm sure you don't know about those.

Q. NO, I CAN REMEMBER THE BOX CAMERAS.

A. Really? So that has been changed now. Everything now carries my name.

Q. GEORGE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK IF YOU THINK THAT SOMETHING LIKE THIS COULD HAPPEN AGAIN IN THE WORLD, WHAT HAPPENED IN GERMANY?

A. Oh, in the world, yes, easily. It's happened in country after country, except which there are lots of dictatorships around. Look at Indonesia, look at Cuba, look at -- gosh, there are lots of dictatorships. There are fewer and fewer, but look at the emperor of -- I forgot the state in Africa, has got this huge golden bed, who was eventually dethroned. Thank God there are more democracies now, but there are still dictatorships. So it could happen in any dictatorship if enough people stand out and follow their conscience. I don't think it could happen in the United States. I think we have too many checks and balances.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE WORLD NEEDS TO HAVE PEOPLE BE ABLE TO STAND UP FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN LIKE YOU YOUNG PEOPLE DID?

A. Conviction, guts, courage, and probably role models. I don't hold myself out as a role model. My friends might. I don't think I am. And I say this because in so

many conversations I had with young people from their questions from the few lectures I've given where the audience asks, I think that would be very effective.

Q. WHO DO YOU THINK WERE YOUR ROLE MODELS?

A. My role models were the three, let's call them the mentors that I mentioned, and my mother.

Q. ON BEHALF OF THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, I WOULD LIKE TO PROFOUNDLY THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BE ABLE TO LET US INTERVIEW YOU AND TO SHARE SO MUCH OF WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU IN YOUR LIFE. AND TO BE THE MODEL THAT THE WORLD NEEDS TO SEE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THINGS AND STAND UP FOR THEM AND GIVE US THE HOPE AND -- THE HOPE THAT PEOPLE KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT AND KNOW WHAT TO DO AND KNOW WHEN TO DO IT AND DO IT LIKE YOU DID. AND I REALLY THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION HERE TODAY AND YOU BEING A PARTY TO ME BEING ABLE TO INTERVIEW YOU.

A. Thanks for those words.

(End tape three.)

(Begin tape four.)

A. It's a story how I eventually managed to come to the United States ten years later. I already mentioned that my visa was turned down in London and I tried desperately everything -- I didn't want to go back to Germany -- to make it to America. And everybody whom I could think of

helped who later became a good friend of mine in the CIC, Counterintelligence Corp, who had come to the states helped, Randall Churchill helped, a very influential obstetrician in London helped, and I don't know who else helped. But eventually my time in England, my stay had ran out, my permit, and I was threatened with deportation. And the English are even much more interested in civil rights at that time than we did in America.

And the friends with whom I stayed -- don't forget, I had no money -- said well, if police comes get out the back door. And then miraculously -- Oh, the people with whom I stayed, I first stayed with this art historian for the first six months and the next six months I stayed with a classmate of mine from (Salem) had who had married an Englishman who was a civil servant in one part of the government, I forgot which one, fairly high position. She was, but not he. She was half-Jewish and she had and her brother emigrated to England and the younger sister emigrated to America and we see her regularly. Anyway, he also did what he could and with his people in American embassy and so forth.

And then one day I learned that -- I got a call from the American consulate that my visa had gone through. And then they looked at my travel document and said well,

that has expired. And, of course, I already knew that the English police had threatened to deport me, so you need to extend it. Well, Allied control was in Berlin but there was a branch of it in London. So I went there and the officer said well, I understand your story but I can't do this unless you prove to me that you have an immigration visa for the United States; then I might do this, perhaps.

So I went back to the American consulate and said well, I need a letter from you that I have this visa. They said we can't do it; it's against the law. So this gentleman in whose house I stayed with his friends got the American --

Q. OKAY, GEORGE.

A. I've been asked to show a few documents that I have from those years. What you're looking at now is an invitation to appear before the secret police, the Gestapo, on November 17th, 1943, at 4:00 p.m., in building so-and-so in Munich.

The next one is an invitation to appear before the military court on March 3, 1944, that's four and a half months later, also at 2:00 p.m., for an interrogation by the military court.

Since there was no German government the Allied control consulate in Berlin was the military government



for all German and the western three powers, France, Britain, and USA and had to issue travel documents, and this is the travel document issued for me for travel outside of the country.

And this was a picture of mine in 1946.

And that's the page giving the dates, the official expiration date of March 8, 1948, with the various stamps. And in the top right corner is the extension granted by the officer in London for extending me for about four weeks.

I was supposed to make or rather put together when we're supposed to go back at least three generations to the great-grandparents to prove that one is an Aryan and doesn't have any Jewish contamination.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let's get the table -- what page -- oh, gosh. I have to zoom way back. Just a second. I can't get it all in one -- just a second. Don't do anything yet. I just want to see if I can get -- okay. I'm going to get an overview shot and just zoom in so they can see that there's writing on it, because it's pretty small. Okay. I'll give you a signal. That's pretty amazing.

A. Well, I'm not nearly as good as this very good friend of mine whom I mentioned earlier, a Jewish friend who lives in London with whom I wrote, he can literally trace

himself back to King David.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's totally amazing.

A. It's amazing; he really can.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It really is incredible.

A. Well, he didn't do the work, a Frenchman did. He can trace himself back to --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Because I don't know anyone of my generation in this country who can go back more than a couple of generations and then it's all lost with the immigration.

Q. OKAY. I'M GOING TO PUT ON PICTURES OF THE --

A. Did you show this to Peter?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What sequence? Is there any kind of logical sequence?

Q. OKAY. WHAT SEQUENCE DID YOU RECOMMEND?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think first just a general view, you know, that this is the castle and then you have to walk down from there.

What do you think, honey? What do you want to do, which sequence?

A. I don't know what you want me to do. You decide.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think you want to give an idea of the location of what it looks like, what Berlstedt looks like.

Q. LET ME RUN THROUGH THESE --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think maybe this is the house overview too, because that's approaching it and that's it.

A. No, that's not the house, that's the fort. That's the house.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There are too many to know how to order them.

Q. CAN YOU GET BOTH OF THESE?

A. No -- well, yes if I lay them cross-cut.

Q. I MEANT COULD WE GET BOTH OF THEM?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Why don't you get from one to the other -- this is the road, that one, I would like very much to have when we get to the interior.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think it's better to do them one at a time, but we can do three.

A. What he wants is this is the best one. There are three and you pick what you think is best.

Q. OKAY.

(Inaudible conversation.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So that's the fort and that's the house and that's the town. Yeah, that really makes it clear. I think this is -- now I see exactly. Okay. Give me a minute to zero in on it.

A. Okay. Then I think what we can do is after this we show these two.

Q. OKAY.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I'm going to give you a signal. Okay.

A. That is the view of the city and it is a city, it's not a town. And the castle or fort on top of the hill and halfway up our house, and you see the wall that goes around everything.

This is our house and the wall, the fortification wall that went all the way up the hill, around the town and up the hill to the fort. And you see it going up and then see the castle or fort on top of the mountain. That's a view from top of the castle looking along the wall down to our house and the city above.

This is the entry hall of the house with a look through the door back into the garden behind the house.

That picture was taken at the memorial service at the University in Munich on the 50th anniversary of Professor Huber's execution. On my right is the Widow Huber, on the left is her sister whom I met several times giving her money to take to her sister. Sometimes, of course, I went out directly to Mrs. Huber.

This is at the same memorial. On the left is (Dr. Hambrisher) whom I mentioned a few times, the former minister of the German Federal Republic and she is greeting Dr. Traute Lafrenz. She was the closest friend

Spelling

of Hans Scholl and she took leaflets to Hamburg. She was sentenced by the People's Court to several years of hard labor and she now lives in this country. She's also a physician.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did she serve out her sentence?

A. Yes; otherwise, she couldn't live here. Move to next one.

This is a picture of the interior court of the palace of justice where all the trials of the People's Court in Munich took place.

The next picture is inside the courtroom where the People's Court met and in the docket is sitting in the center the widow of Professor Huber.

And the last picture is the Professor Huber's grave.

Do you want me to say something?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tell us what your medal is, please.

A. Hang on a second.

What date was it?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't know.

A. It was last year, June 28th, I think. Yes. Yeah, last year. Okay, I now remember. Last year in June the German general consulate of Los Angeles traveled to Santa Barbara, were at the university, and in the presence of

spelling  
over 100 invited guests I was handed the highest civilian order that the German president has to give. It's called the -- in German it's (goinzidenz). In English it's the commander's cross of the German order of merit of the German Federal Republic.

Q. AND WHY WERE YOU SO HONORED?

A. I was honored for two reasons: One, for my participation in the White Rose and for what I had done to further German surgery after the war, especially cardiac surgery in Germany.

(End of tape four.)