

Interview with DAVID LEVY
Holocaust Oral History Project
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MY NAME IS EVELYN FIELDEN AND I AM INTERVIEWER FOR THE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HOLOCAUST
CENTER. TODAY WE HAVE MARCH 25, 1990, AND I AM HERE IN
BERKELEY INTERVIEWING DAVID LEVY.

Q: WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

A: I was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Q: AND WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A: This was 1922. I was living in Belgrade while
I went to school, and I used to live with my family--my
father, who was a very prominent lawyer in Belgrade; my
grandmother, his mother who was 82; my brother (Abram),
who was four years my junior; and my mother (Rosa Mishlem
Levy). When I was in school, I was very good in sports,
and I was Yugoslav champion for juniors in tennis.

Q: IN TENNIS?

A: In tennis. Tennis was my game. I played
soccer and I was active in all of the sports--skiing,
swimming, and other things.

Q: DID YOU GO TO A JEWISH SCHOOL?

A: It was obligatory for all students in Yugoslavia

one day a week to go to school of their religion. So, Catholics would go to Catholic school and Jews in Jew school. Jugoslavia religion was Russian Orthodox so they didn't have to go anywhere. They were taking their religion in their school, high school.

Q: THAT WAS JUST ONCE A WEEK YOU SAID?

A: Once a week.

Q: SO YOUR SCHOOL WAS MERELY INTEGRATED?

A: It was a boy school.

Q: YES. I MEAN BOY SCHOOL BUT ALL RELIGIONS.

A: We were all going to the same school.

Q: AND DID YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A: Yeah. I had a brother who was four years my junior. He was 14 when the war started, and we were all living nicely in a beautiful section of Belgrade. The name of the street was (Kingspeter) 44. Now they call it July 7, the day of the revolution.

Then the war came. We didn't expect it. All of a sudden the German (Shtukas) attacked Belgrade, the capital of Jugoslavia, was of any declaration of war. Immediately there was great panic. Cows were in the streets. The (Shtukas) were attacking seven days nonstop. The whole Belgrade was inflamed because many of those bombs, besides destroying the buildings, they were also incinerating bombs, and we didn't have the fire department. We didn't have all those things. There

was no police, so for seven days it was like that. It was a really terrible state of war. Two weeks after the whole Yugoslav army habituated, the German government was established. In Yugoslavia and in Belgrade every day would get proclamations from the German headquarters or the provision of the governor of Belgrade. Those proclamations were pertaining to all of us but particularly the Jews.

Q: THE FRIENDS THAT YOU HAD IN SCHOOL, DAVID, WERE THEY MOSTLY JEWS?

A: No. The Jewish friends I had, I kept in touch when I was in that once a week, the special Jewish or Hebrew school. Most of the other friends were not Jews because as I mentioned before, I was very active in sports. I was very proficient in soccer. I was usually a captain of a soccer team through the years, and then after I was a tennis champion, and then I would play tennis and compete in tennis matches in Belgrade and also outside town.

Q: OUTSIDE TOWN, NOT OUTSIDE JUGOSLAVIA?

A: Outside town.

Q: HOW ABOUT YOUR PARENTS? DID THEY MOVE TO ANY JEWISH SHELTERS?

A: My father was a very prominent lawyer. He had all kind of clients. He also had many clients that

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he almost paid the price for litigating the German
spelling propaganda and German (ferbs). He was very knowledgeable.
The laws in Jugoslavia were changing quite often and he
was an avid student of the new laws. So, he was often
the friend of the court that he was advising. This was
of reward and benefit to him personally. Other judges
also had trust in him and he would give them advice. I
used to work for my father as a kid in his office, and
that's how I recollect very well all kind of calls that
he would get from the prominent judges and lawyers. He
was also a permanent member of the Disciplinary Committee
(of the Bar Association. In other words, if a lawyer
would do something that was not ethical, he would be one
of the judges who would have to rule on that case.

My brother was very nice and serious fellow. He was
taken to Jugoslavian palace and he used to play every
two weeks with the Prince of Jugoslavia. In other words,
it was King Alexander who had a son Peter, and Peter's
younger brother was a friend of my brother. My brother
would go to see him and he would stay about one day in
the palace like he was a prince.

Q: DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY SEMITISM AT ALL?

(A: It wasn't aggressive as the semitism but it
was there eventually. I felt that somehow there are
many people who have been ignorant, and they would have

certain prejudices even unfounded.

Q: WERE YOUR PARENTS (ZIANISTS)?

A: No.

Q: WHEN THE GERMANS ATTACKED, WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A: '41.

Q: DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOUR FAMILY TO LEAVE?

A: No. My father was a very big patriot and he was very proud of his role and position that he had in Belgrade. Fortunately for him, he died just four months before the Nazi and German (Shtukas) attacked us. As soon as they came, they were looking for my father and they were searching for him because it was known that he was litigating against the Germans. They had a special propaganda institute in Belgrade that was part of the German Government to stop them. So, they didn't leave us in peace until we were able to provide a death certificate that he was dead. But my grandmother had many brothers and sisters, and they were very religious. I would observe the holidays with my family for the sake of my grandmother and her brothers and sisters.

Q: DID THEY HAVE KOSHER HOUSEHOLDS?

A: No, not kosher but we would observe the Jewish holidays.

Q: WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DIE OF?

A: He had high blood pressure and died of uremia just four months before the war. So, when the Germans

(occupied Belgrade and especially after they were searching for my father, they were also at the same time making proclamations requesting all the Jews to report to (Tushmandan). This is the place in the center of Belgrade we all had to come under the penalty of death. In other words, if you did not show up there, they would prosecute you, and you would be shot for disobeying the orders. So, all of us would operate as citizens by showing up and registering. We were given special kind of pants with the Star of David identifying us as Jews.

(Eventually, we were all put in separate kind of slave labor like doctors would have to work as doctors, and other people had to work whatever the battalion of labor designated to them. I was somehow helping to steal from the Jewish stores, the merchandise and they would transport it to one place and then from there to Germany. All those Jewish stores were closed, and their merchandise was confiscated, and many of us had to help put them in the trucks. Speaking of art museums, they took them to art museums that was somehow like a warehouse for the time being until it was transported further.

(Q: WAS YOUR FAMILY EAGER TO STAY TOGETHER IN THE LIVING CONDITIONS?

A: In Yugoslavia, as I mentioned my father was very much of a patriot with all those things we heard before. We never made any preparation to leave Yugoslavia. Our home was given to many refugees who escaped from Germany. Prior to the war those were German refugees who had problems in Germany. They were on the transit in Yugoslavia to go to other countries like Israel or United States. So, many of them felt gratitude for us, offering them board and food. They were trying to advise us to leave Belgrade and go like they are going to do, but somehow we didn't see that way.

Q: YOUR FATHER WAS DEAD BY THEN; RIGHT?

A: My father was there but he died four months after. But we felt sorry for them. Maybe they see that way because that's their faith in Yugoslavia. This thing wouldn't have happened.

Q: YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF ATROCITIES?

A: But this was before the war. There was no atrocities.

Q: BEFORE THE WAR?

A: Yeah. They were coming before the war. In other words, when Hitler came to power there were different prosecutions in Germany and Austria. Many of those Jews were living in Germany or Austria. Many of them were going via Yugoslavia to other countries and under transit they were staying in our home temporarily. Then the war

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came and we were all in the same shape. We all had to register. We all had to go periodically to the center where we are selected as hostages for every German soldier. They were punishing by death hundreds of Jews, or communists, or freemasons. Every day you could hear a loud speaker at the main streets or the prominent places. The loud speaker was screaming how the propaganda was against the Jews, the communists, the international bankers, the freemasons, and so on. The Yugoslav patriots would sometimes kill a German, or sabotage or put a fire in the truck. For each of those episodes, hundred Jews were taken, and many of them you could see hanging right in the center of the town. You could see the wind blowing, and they were just swaying back and forth. Going often to those centers where I was hoping not to be taken as hostage, the group was getting smaller and smaller. My mother taking me, my brother was not in the same situation because he was much younger than me, and they didn't bother him. Since they were looking for my father and since I was always going in those slave labor camps, she was able to obtain some fake papers, like a false passport. I would go to a part occupied by battalion forces. The name of the town was Split. So, I was at risk and in danger of being shot.

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I left my mother, my brother, and my grandmother

without anything because you couldn't take any money with you. It was against the law to take any kind of sum of money or any clothes or anything else. So, I just came to Split hoping that by legal means I could get money. But that money never came, nor anything else, nor any news from my mother. As soon as I was on the other side where I was safe in that part that was occupied by Italian forces, it became clear to me all the danger. My mother, my brother, my grandmother, and all the other Jews were left behind. I tried by various ways to get in touch and get them to see the light and come and escape, but it was too late. From different sources later, I found out that they were taken from their home and brought to a center that used to be an exposition before the war. It was a place where they were taken to gas chambers and I haven't heard from them.

Q: THEY WERE NEVER TRACED?

A: First of all, there were intelligent people to get in touch with but through different sources such as through the international Red Cross. We all tried to find out if this did happen.

Q: HOW MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY DID PERISH?

A: Besides my immediate family, my mother had about ten brothers and sisters, and then I had cousins

on their side, and my grandmother had about six, seven brothers and sisters and cousins. Most of them I never saw again.

Q: WHAT WOULD THE FIGURE BE OFFHAND? WOULD YOU SAY 20, 30, 40?

A: 30, 40. My cousins and second cousins.

Q: SO, ACTUALLY YOU WERE ALL ALONE IN SPLIT AT THAT TIME?

A: Yes, I was alone in Split and though the Italians were allies of the Germans, they were all together different. They were very much human. They found out that those passports were fake. They transported me and other people who were in the same situation. It was about 20 or 30 of them. Some of them were my cousins. They returned to a place that is called (Bogotaro). It is in northern Italy and over there, we had to register every day in the city hall. We were restricted to the radius of five miles. We couldn't go further than the five miles.

The population in the major part was very sympathetic to our people. We were getting some small amount of money from the Italy Government. The population was helping us with the food and with the support. For a year and a half me and 30 other people went there until Mussolini was thrown from power. General Marshall

(Badaljo) came in power and then we became again under

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 spelling the Nazi occupation of (Bogotaro). I was able to get false identification card for me and my group and we escaped in different parts of Italy. Me and about six or seven of us escaped to Rome where I had some recommendations for Vatican. With that connection I had some additional help in Rome. The way that I came to Rome, I had access to Yugoslav Government who was in Vatican City. I also approached the Swiss Government who was somehow working with Yugoslav Government and Vatican. Then I worked in the underground delivering packages and fake immigration cards to many of the Jews and other prisoners of war. These were escape prisoners of war who didn't speak any Italian and who couldn't go on the streets because they didn't know the language. I was working in the underground until the Fifth Army under General (McLark) in 44 liberated Rome. That was a gesture by President Roosevelt showing to the world that America is interested in the responsibility of the refugees. A thousand refugees were invited to come to the United States as the guests of the United States Government only for the duration of the war. Once the war was over, there were a thousand of us who came from 14 different countries. Naturally millions of people wanted to come. They selected a thousand of us and with the American convoy, we came to the United States.

Q: BEFORE YOU GET TO THE UNITED STATES, HOW DID THESE SELECTIONS TAKE PLACE?

A: There are various ways of being selected that I am not informed how but they had different committees and they had different stipulations or rules that I don't really know how.

Q: IT WAS BY THE AMERICAN ARMY; WASN'T IT?

A: No. It was not by the American. It was like different committees but I think the American army had nothing to do with it.

Q: WAS IT JEWISH COMMITTEES?

A: They were different nationalities, different religions, and different ethnic groups. They are Polish, Austrian, Germans, Belgians and Russians.

Q: THEY ARE NOT JUST JEWS?

A: No. Jews somehow were a majority and Yugoslavians were a majority of the people selected. We were all shipped first by trucks to (Naple). We boarded a convoy who's returning American disabled soldiers and officers and we came to the United States. On the way to the United States we were attacked by German submarines. Once on my way to the United States, somehow I was suffering from stomach problems and I was locked-in in a compartment that was closed because each time they had an alarm off, the German submarines were attacking us. So, they closed the compartment and here I was

Spelling

(thinking that all these years I managed to escape and that now I should die just when I was close to being free. Somehow we came and we were sheltered in an army camp which was converted for our use. Even there and then we were restricted. We had passes if we wanted to go to the city. I was still sick in my stomach and I was in the hospital that was managed by the refugee doctors. One of those days Mrs. Roosevelt, who was also the Secretary of the Treasury, I think, she came and she saw me in the hospital. I was very young. I was like 20 years old. She asked me how I like the United States. It was very hard to talk to her because I didn't speak any English and she didn't speak too well other languages. But between English and German and French, she understood that I was very happy to be in the United States but that I was a little bit unhappy because we were not able to get any education, to go to the college as we had hoped to. A few weeks later, thanks to her and her efforts and other people, eight of us were sent to the college which was the only college in that area. It was maybe a few miles away from our shelter. So, we started to go to college there. One of those people that went to college with me, his name was Alexander (Morgelez), who lives in San Francisco now, became the foremost doctor in radiology in the world. (Selling Did you have a chance to meet him?

Q: NO. I'VE HEARD OF THE NAME. WHAT WAS YOUR EDUCATION BEFORE? HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GO WITH ALL THOSE HIDING AND GOING UNDERGROUND? HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET EDUCATION AT ALL AS A YOUNG MAN?

A: When I was in Belgrade, my father was a very big scholar and he always sought to it that we studied and we always had private tutoring. I had a French teacher and I had a German teacher. Through the war, being by yourself, you have to learn how to survive.

Q: HOW MANY LANGUAGES DID YOU SPEAK AT THAT TIME?

A: About five or six.

Q: THERE WAS SERBO-CROATIAN, ITALIAN, FRENCH, GERMAN.

A: Spanish.

Q: HOW COME SPANISH?

spelling A: My grandparents were ^{Sephardic} (~~Safari~~) Jews. They come from Spain. Though I didn't care to speak much Spanish when I was in Yugoslavia, later on I remembered and it came easier to me to speak and understand Spanish.

Q: IT'S LATINO, WASN'T IT?

A: Yeah, Latino which is a broken Spanish.

Q: THAT'S INTERESTING. SO YOU HAVE KEPT IN TOUCH WITH THE GROUP YOU WERE WITH?

spelling A: The group and me were there for about a year in (Laswego). Many of them did not like the city

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because many of them were hoping when they reached Americ
America, they would be working or doing something else
like visiting relatives. But they were confined to the
spelling (Laswego) camp and they were unhappy about me because
my situation didn't have anybody. I had that college
opportunity to go to. I was quite happy because I was
able to get my education and then learn English and
learn American ways of life which was a terrific transition
for me not having anybody else to get in contact with.
If I would be just left on my own would be much harder.
I don't think I could go to college and get that start.

Q: DID YOU MEET ANY RELATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: No, no relatives, no friends, no anyone.

Q: YOU HAD NO RELATIVES WITH YOU, NO COUSINS THAT
WERE WITH YOU?

A: No, nobody. In fact, my wife had many hard
times to overcome, but she was very fortunate. She
came with all her family and I knew her in the camp
though I didn't pay much attention to her. Her late
husband was my doctor because when I was sick in the
hospital managed by the refugees, he was one of my doctors.

spelling Q: HOW MANY DAYS DID IT TAKE TO COME FROM (NAPLES)?

A: It was like two weeks.

Q: IN A CONVOY?

(A: In a convoy and we stayed there until the war
was over until 1946. After that we were settled all over

(the United States and many people would go where they had relatives or friends. Part of them went to New York. I went to Cleveland, Ohio, because I spoke Yugoslav and Cleveland is a very big ethnic town. It has over a hundred thousand Yugoslavs, hundred thousand Jews, and hundred thousand Italian people, perhaps even more now. But the war was not over and I volunteered then to go to American army. I couldn't be accepted but a few months later I was drafted, and I went to Fort Knox, where I took my basic training.

Q: HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU WENT INTO THE ARMY?

(A: About 22. I was drafted and my friend from Belgrade, who also came was a friend I had in college who settled with me in Cleveland. He came with me and we obtained the orders. We went first to Fort Dix and then for basic training to Fort Knox. After completing basic training, we were shipped to Camp (Storman) with the idea to be sent to Japan. spelling But somehow they found out and we couldn't proceed. They discharged us. We went on honorable discharge and got the Bill of Rights. Then upon my return to Cleveland, I finished my schooling and graduated as an honor student from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland. I got a scholarship for graduate school of psychology to study clinical psychology.

(Q: WHEN DID YOU COME SETTLE THEN?

A: Since I was in the army, I needed only three years to become a citizen and after like '49 I became a citizen. Being a GI Veteran of World War II, I was eligible to get the citizenship not in the provided time of five years but three years. So, after three years of being in the country as a regular immigrant, though we signed the papers when we came to the United States that we would be here for the duration of the war and then after that leave to our respective countries, most of us wanted to stay. So, though some left, those who wanted to stay had to leave the country. We left for Canada and came a few days later as the very first immigrants of the United States. Then in 1946 I was not only a GI Veteran but also an immigrant under the immigration laws. And three years later I became a citizen.

Q: MUST HAVE BEEN A PROUD MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE.

A: Yes, like for every citizen it was a proud day.

Q: SO, WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU FINISHED YOUR STUDIES?

A: After I finished my studies and when I was studying, I got married and then my wife, who was an American citizen and born in Cleveland, Ohio, became pregnant. Then I couldn't continue my education. I didn't get my Ph.D. for what I was working for. I had a Master's Degree but I couldn't finish my Ph.D. So, I

looked for a job in this field but that job opportunities were very few and maybe I could get some employment outside of the state in some small town. I was looking for work. I became a salesman working for one of the biggest jewelry stores in Cleveland. After, I opened my own store and was in my business as a jewelry and appliance merchant for 15 years.

Q: THAT WAS QUITE A SWITCH.

A: Yes. But psychology is always a good field where you learn about human behavior and you learn how to understand people. I was very ambitious. I was trying to provide for my family because in the meantime I had two kids. I learned from my father about education so I sent them to the best schools. They all graduated from the very best schools in the country. Most of them are attorneys now.

Q: HAVE YOU ALWAYS TOLD YOUR KIDS AND YOUR WIFE ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

A: No. At that time somehow we didn't talk much about my relationship with my first wife. She was not the very best. She didn't have understanding for my problems, nor did I want to involve her in them. It was somehow a little bit remote for her and therefore, my kids didn't have an opportunity to hear about the Holocaust. They knew that things were not good but they didn't know the details. They can't have full

knowledge what really happened in that period of manhood.

Q: WAS YOUR WIFE JEWISH?

A: Yes.

Q: WHEN DID YOU ACTUALLY TELL YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

A: They were aware a little bit and the more mature they got--because when you go to school--All of my kids went to school away from home. So, even though I didn't have contact with them, after I saw more of them and the older they got, they got more ideas about what happened. I was always talking to them about my father being very prominent lawyer. When I had my jewelry store, I went to law school. I was 36 then but it was somehow very hard for me to pursue the law. I always looked to speak to them about my father who was a really great lawyer and respected lawyer. Most of them are very successful lawyers. One in San Francisco and my daughter in Los Angeles.

Q: THEY NEVER ASKED YOU WHY YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES?

A: They knew that many of my relatives were dead. Somehow you know when something is so remote, they couldn't really visualize.

Q: IN CLEVELAND DID YOU HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS WITH YOUR BACKGROUND?

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A: Not as many because I was very successful in business. I was able to live in a nice area of the city which was called (Shaka Heights). Over there I always played tennis and I played golf and I had mostly American friends. Very few of them were from Yugoslavia or from Europe for that matter who have been refugees. There were few here and there but somehow we didn't have any organizations that would bring us together.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO JUGOSLAVIA?

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A: Quite often especially after I got married to my second wife (Zdenka). She has relatives in Yugoslavia and I have cousins. So, we started to go back almost every two years to see our relatives.

Q: DID YOU MANAGE TO TRACE YOUR RELATIVES AT ALL TO WHICH CAMP THEY WERE SENT?

A: No. I asked several of my cousins who also came back because they had better access to that information. The only thing is that I was very surprised when they somehow had a Jewish museum. Some of my cousins sent me a picture of my brother whose picture they found in that museum.

Q: WHICH MUSEUM?

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A: It's a Jewish museum in Belgrade. One day I was surprised when I got a picture of my brother because when I left Belgrade, not only did I leave without any money or clothes but without any pictures of my family.

This would be against me when they search me and they somehow may find out from my background. Those fake papers I had showed that I originated from the part where I was going, like I was just coming back.

Q: DID YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO JUGOSLAVIA THERE WAS ANY (ANTI-SEMITISM) AT ALL?

Q: At that time when I was going back with my wife--first of all, Jugoslavia had about 72,000 Jews. Now there are maybe three, 4,000 left. They had to assimilate completely and most of them stayed over there. They were protected by laws of that time because Jugoslavia is composed of many ethnic nationalities. There was a law that said that if you would attack somebody of their ethnic or race, it's a great penalty. It was forbidden by law and there were very few Jews who were there. So, many people didn't even know what the Jews meant.

Q: WAS THERE A LOT DESTROYED?

A: The school that I went to not far from my home was burned by the Germans. When my wife and I went just three years ago, it was still in existence but it has just a room and they have holiday services there.

Q: DO YOU THINK IN BELGRADE THERE WAS 3,000 JEWS OR IN ALL OF JUGOSLAVIA?

A: In all of Jugoslavia I think two, 3,000 Jews in Belgrade.

Q: ARE THEY MOSTLY ALL OLDER PEOPLE?

A: Older people but I have a few second or third cousins but they are completely assimilated.

Q: DID YOU GO BACK TO THE HOUSE YOU WERE BORN?

A: Yeah. I was going to show my wife where I was living, but it became an office building. I saw some other places. I showed my grandmother's sister's house where we had services for holidays. We went to see some crisis from them, but since my family was sent to the gas chambers, those plenty of apartments were empty and whoever would come there, they would have the right to live there. They were called squatter rights. So, I met them and they said we just came here. That's where they are living but I tried to find out what happened.

Q: OF COURSE YOU NEVER GOT RESTITUTION OR ANYTHING?

A: No, I never got from Yugoslavia Government or any other ways I tried to get restitution. In Cleveland where I was living we didn't have many of those refugees. The only way I got some was because my friend who was living in New York, he sent me paper where I could address somebody. The only restitution I got is for very little. It was \$450 for which I was deprived of schooling and that I was having the bad time. That's the only thing that I got. I remember I applied for

everything else. They confiscated our apartment. They took all the possessions that we had but I never did claim nor did I get.

Q: DID YOU EVER GO TO GERMANY?

A: Only passing Germany when we went to Vienna.

Q: HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WERE THERE?

A: It could condemn the whole new generation and yet you wondered what would have been if Hitler had won.

Q: THERE WERE A QUITE A FEW AUSTRIANS LIVING IN JUGOSLAVIA AT THAT TIME?

A: Yeah, all those Austrians who lived from the first world war, those were the ones who became a major part. Those were the people you couldn't ignore because when they sat, I often had a question "How come you went to those places when they would take you hostage, when you knew they would shoot you if not this time, next time?" But Belgrade is a small town and people knew me and most of them were afraid I didn't know them. I know they would be able to denounce me that I was the one. Then it is inevitable death. That's the reason we always showed up and registered. I don't know if you understood what I meant.

Q: IN WHAT RESPECT? I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING.

A: I don't know whether they were all speaking German. They were taking care of the big buildings.

For instance, in the building where I used to live, the German super--how they call it here? He was German. If he would see me on the track, I knew I would be denounced immediately. So, there are many others that I knew or didn't know but they knew me because I was very active in sports.

Q: DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU TO ESCAPE TO GO TO PALESTINE AT THAT TIME?

Spelling A: My parents were not (Zianists) but I used to love to play soccer and one place where I played soccer was a certain organization which were Boy Scouts. I was boy scout and also the group had (Zianists) teaching. Then I became aware of the (Zianists). My grandmother would always say how she would love to die in Jerusalem or Israel. I didn't have the same idea but I could understand because I became aware of the teaching and other things.

Q: YOU HAD REALLY GOOD RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS; DIDN'T YOU?

A: Yeah.

Q: YOU WENT TO ISRAEL SEVERAL TIMES, DIDN'T YOU?

A: Yes.

Q: HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WENT TO ISRAEL?

A: The first time that I went to Israel was Jewish War Veterans. It was a special time and they were guests of Israel Government. We were short many

things over there that are very impressive and what we found out great culture and great religious and cultural things. We had very good guards who expanded us from the Muslims to the Jews, to the Russian Orthodox and other religions. So, it was very impressive trip and of course, we went many times after and my wife and I had many friends who went to Israel to live. Many of them were not as fortunate to come to the United States. They went to Israel and when we came there, we felt like at home and all those friends that I grew up as a kid, I felt like I never left them. When they asked me why don't I come to live there since I am so well with them. We felt like very good friends; we were close. I would ask them what would I be doing here. I didn't speak Hebrew. They were just laughing.

Q: DID YOU EVER SPEAK ENGLISH?

A: No, because in my home they didn't speak English. They spoke Latino.

Q: YOU NEVER HEARD OF YOUR JEWISH FRIENDS?

Spelling

A: Yes. When I was in (Laswego) I mentioned many other Jews who were speaking English. Then I could understand them and the fact that I understand German, it's not easy but I could understand English.

Q: I JUST WONDERED IF IN JUGOSLAVIA YOU DID?

spelling

A: Yes, because in Jugoslavia like anywhere else they had (Safari) Jews and they had (Ex-Safari) Jews.

Many of my friends were married Ex-Nazis.

Q: WOULD YOU CARE TO TELL US HOW YOU MET YOUR WIFE?

A: My second wife I knew because her husband was my doctor and I was always thinking how wonderful for a doctor to be in the United States. I tried to inquire what happened to this guy, what happened to the other one and somehow I left at that. Then when I got a divorce from my wife, my best friend's mother was my wife's mother. In other words, my wife's mother and my best friend's mother were neighbors. So, when I told that lady how I am divorced, she said it would be nice if I could get a nice wife. I said, "Do you have anyone in mind?" and she mentioned (Zdenka). Then I asked I didn't know about her and where is she and she told me she was in Washington D.C. I had business offered to go all over the United States. So, on one of those trips I went to Washington D.C. I called her and we got together. We have same background, same values and we got married.

Q: AND HOW MANY CHILDREN BETWEEN YOU?

A: Four.

Q: HOW MANY GRANDCHILDREN?

A: So far two and one grandchild on the way.

Q: CONGRATULATIONS. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US? ANY MESSAGE? ANY FEELINGS YOU HAD?

A: My wife and I went through the same thing and we are both very happy to be in the United States and we are very kind of the facts that it's the greatest country. Democracy is the only way where people can be more human and guaranteed that another Holocaust won't happen again.

Q: DID YOU LOSE YOUR FAITH ALONG THE WAY?

A: No. I studied psychology. I studied how people could be maneuvered and brainwashed. They become like animals and like animals, all those primitive instincts come out and intelligence stops to exist. Then they become just like animals and then many of them could do those things that they have done in the war and during the Holocaust.

Q: WE HEAR TO OFTEN THAT CRITICISM OF THE JEWS OF HAVING SO WILLINGLY GONE TO WHERE ORDERED TO GO, MAYBE TO THE CAMP OR THE GAS CHAMBERS. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

A: I often hear that and it's very easy to see after the fact when we were confronted with that. I mentioned to you before that I could be recognized by more or less lots of people. Even two or three people could recognize me and I knew I would be shot if I wouldn't be registered. I think they would never shoot at me. I was thinking of the past and the war would be some other labor camps maybe in some other

country, but our mind couldn't believe that we would be shot. In the country you thought if you registered, you would maybe survive and then there was tremendous fear and terrible emotions that you couldn't analyze. Many of my friends got shot and I wanted to go the same route. I was still hoping that I wouldn't be selected to be shot and when I get afraid, I cannot think rationally. German power was overwhelming at that time. Just at the sight you were trembling because they were of super power and very aggressive. That's how I could understand how I did it and how many others did it. When they went to the gas chambers and also little by little you would lose your dignity and somehow you don't care.

Q: HARD TO VISUALIZE. DO YOU THINK IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN?

A: I don't think so.

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF GERMANY TODAY?

A: That's a big question that everybody poses and I think if the Democracy prevails, people would be living in peace rather than being one country after the other or one acting group be taken as a scapegoat. Because after a while eventually nobody would benefit by them because in peace you could accomplish a lot but in war, everybody loses especially in the future war.

Q: THERE'S A LOT OF TROUBLE IN JUGOSLAVIA RIGHT

NOW, ETHNIC?

A: Ethnic problems and also Communism was proven not to be good solution from economic angle. In Yugoslavia, besides what's happening in the south of Yugoslavia with Albania, but also Slovenia, which is also the most successful, didn't like to pitch in to the Federal Government and support it because they don't agree with the policies of the Central Government. Also Croatia is feeling the same way. It is also successful and they are also thinking of succeeding from the federation. My prediction is that all those countries would become independent eventually.

Q: VERY INTERESTING STORY, DAVID. I'M GLAD YOU SHARED IT WITH US.

A: It was very nice being here and I hope my story could prevent a future Holocaust.

Q: I HOPE SO TOO. THANKS AND IT'S A REAL PLEASURE MEETING YOU.

A: Same here.