

Interview with JOHN STEINER

Holocaust Oral History Project

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MS. BENDAYAR: I'M HERE WITH JOHN
STEINER. WE ARE DOING INTERVIEW NO. 4 FOR THE
SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. TODAY
IS NOVEMBER THE 19TH, 1991. AND ALSO HERE AS A SECOND
IS BRIAN PARIS. AND CAROL HOROWITZ IS HERE ALONG WITH
JOHN ALSO.

Q: SO WHERE WE LEFT OFF LAST TIME WAS
YOU WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR AUSTRALIA.

A: Yeah. So my decision, which is
quite interesting, to go to Australia was primarily
based on the fact that my affidavit to the
United States, my quota number was not -- there was
such a long waiting list that I simply couldn't wait
until I would get permission to come to the
United States.

Instead I had Australian relatives
and a great, great uncle, who was the black sheep of
the family, who started a family there and who was

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very successful, and who married a Scottish woman.

And then relatives -- that is to say, my aunt and my two cousins -- followed, came to Australia via England. They were actually sent there because they were viewed as Aryans because they came from Austria, and they didn't care whether or not they were Jews and what have you. So they were interned in Australia, and then stayed there and became citizens.

That was actually the main reason because it was a very closely knit family, and my relationship to my aunt, especially, and to my considerably older cousin was close because we used to see each other every year in one way or another.

So they were in Australia; and so I decided to go to Australia.

Now, prior to my decision to go to Australia, I talked to some people with whom I had been at Dachau. And these people were very important Czech people who were very important role models to me because of their conduct, their bravery, and their profile in courage.

One of them was the archbishop of Prague, a man called (Berand), who became later a Cardinal, died in the Vatican. He is actually buried in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

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So I went to see him and said, "I know that I cannot accept communism. It's another totalitarian system, and I've had enough of Nazis." He was with me in Dachau; so we were kind of brothers, so to speak.

And so I continued in the Underground, and the chances are since I already had been arrested before and my father got me out with the help of influential friends -- out of jail. I was not in prison yet -- and he couldn't recognize me because they had beaten me up to such an extent that I was totally deformed. And it was actually worse than any beatings I got from the Nazis, as a matter of fact, come to think of it. And so I was on the black list because when they arrested me, I was taken to one police precinct, and then they looked at the list and there was my name.

I was not prepared to go through another sort of slave labor camp and all that, which, of course, existed already during that time, of course, for a number of years as a matter of fact. So I decided to skip the country because I knew that I couldn't continue my studies by virtue of the fact that I was not a communist, by virtue of the fact that I was opposing communism with all means at my

disposal.

0240 So then I had very wealthy relatives who left prior to World War II, in time, with lots of riches. They were the richest Jewish people in Czechoslovakia. Their name was (Perczyk), Otto Perczyk. And their family was -- my mother was first cousin of Otto Perczyk's wife.

So they arranged for me to go to England, but they closed the borders. I think I mentioned that. And I had a ticket and everything, but they closed the borders just about the day I was supposed to leave. And that's how I got into concentration camps.

Now, I didn't want to go through all these things again because I felt I had my fill. So I filled out papers, and I just smuggled my way through the borders, and they paid for the trip.

Q: WHAT FORM DID THE SMUGGLING THROUGH THE BORDER TAKE?

A: Well, just false papers and all these sorts of things, and just a number of difficulties. And since I had some training in all this back in the camps, it was not that difficult for me, but it was not easy either.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) HOW OLD WERE YOU

AT THIS TIME?

A: At this time I was 22.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) 22?

A: No. 23. 23. And I decided that I didn't care what I had with me because I didn't have virtually anything with me at all. I didn't take anything with me, or a minimum.

So this very wealthy relative came to the United States via England. But my, whatever, my mother's cousin -- her name was Martha Perczyk -- she arranged all the things for me in London, and then her children arranged -- she was no longer alive -- arranged for me to go first class to Australia, which was kind of an irony because I didn't have a handkerchief to my name. So I went first class without having a handkerchief.

That took about 28 days. And I was shipped in in Genoa and was picked up by my relatives in Sidney. And that, of course, was a tremendous reunion and all that. And they took me to Camberwell. And within about two or three weeks, I got a job with the Department of Immigration of all the things, based on the fact that I spoke English and that I had some education and what have you.

And within that particular time,

also I started to think about the university, and I enrolled as I think the first immigrant, displaced-person type, at the so-called Camberwell University College, which was associated with the University of Melbourne, upper branch.

So that was a big thing, and it was put into the papers that John Steiner or "Yon" Steiner, or whatever they called me then, enrolled in the Camberwell University College, which was a big thing, and worked for the Department of Immigration.

Now, the important thing working for the Department of Immigration was that I could help countless other people to come into Australia, and primarily Czechs. Not that many Jews, as a matter of fact. There were some Jews among them, but primarily Czech people who also had skipped the country and needed to go someplace and they didn't know where to.

So I assisted them to get landing permits simply because I knew the ropes. And because of some of my activity which I then initiated, we started an organization which was called Czechoslovak/Australian Alliance Organization. And that was exceedingly active in supporting Czech immigrants and also in bringing Czech immigrants into

the country.

So that was one of my major activities from which I derived a great deal of satisfaction. And then I also worked for the Intelligence, Australian Intelligence to work against the communists because there were some communist infiltrators coming in and all that. So that to me was also important because of my experience with the communists, and I was, you know, very glad to be connected in this sort of thing. It didn't amount to very much, to be sure, but it gave me a psychological, psycho-emotional outlet.

Q: SIR, HOW MANY SURVIVORS -- YOU SAY NOT MANY JEWS WERE COMING INTO AUSTRALIA.

A: There were some Jews, of course, who came. But they didn't come as displaced persons, most of the people, because a displaced person had a two-year contract. The Australian government, of course, needed manpower or human power. They paid their passage.

But for that they needed to be under contract for two years, which means that they had to accept assigned work given to them by the various departments of immigration in different regions if it was taken. And that was, truth, was

exploitation because they were given jobs the Australians didn't want, the worst possible jobs.

So I, working then later, I moved from Camberwell to Melbourne, because my father worked and lived in Melbourne, and I wanted to be with him and also his second wife, who also was a survivor from Theresienstadt but was half Jewish and, because of a fluke, was sent to the concentration camp Theresienstadt by virtue of the fact that although she was a Jewish half Jew first in the, not second degree, but first degree, which means these people were exempt; because she was baptized, she was a Catholic and therefore would have been exempt from being sent to a camp.

But by virtue of the fact that she had married a Jew, she lost all these privileges, although she was a widower because that person had died. So that didn't help her, and she was sent. Her mother was not because she was the non-Jewish link. And she, of course, stayed there. So she was sent there but stayed in Theresienstadt. She was not sent to any other destruction camps. So that saved her life.

Anyway, so my father married her, and they both worked at Melbourne, and I just wanted

to be with them. Also I wanted to continue my studies. I was not getting all the various courses I needed back at the Camberwell University College; so I wanted to be at the University of Melbourne proper.

That's when I moved there and continued to work with the Department of Immigration in Melbourne where I was able to help a lot of immigrants and cut all the various red tape and got people out of difficulties and saw to it that some people who were not divorced could marry people and did all sorts of things to aid people who had been affected by the war conditions and sought refuge in Australia from going into some sort of bureaucratic morass.

So that gave me some degree of satisfaction.

But because I had also a number of interesting encounters and met a young woman, an Australian woman I wanted very badly to marry but it didn't work out because I left for the United States because I couldn't continue my studies at the University of Melbourne because I had a full-time job, it was virtually impossible to get any sort of fellowship or scholarship. And I wanted to continue, but it was simply too much. And at that particular

time I still had an active tuberculosis, lung tuberculosis. And so it was getting too much.

And I decided that it was better for me to come to the United States and take advantage of an offer I had received from the so-called Masaryk Foundation, which supported and obtained fellowships for people who were political -- I mean real political refugees who were there to escape from Czechoslovakia because of political reasons, namely, that they were anticommunist and were working against the communists. And I certainly fit that description. And they wrote to me in Australia that if I come to the United States, they would guarantee me to get a fellowship to one of the larger universities in the United States.

And so I decided to take advantage of it. And in March 1953 I went tourist class -- not first class because that obviously I couldn't afford -- via England, where I also stayed for a while and toured Europe. In England I was able to get some sort of inheritance from my uncle, who had money all over the world, which included England and other parts. Only got a fraction of it.

But that really put me into a very good shape so that I could indeed come to the

United States from England cabin class, and that was something I never regretted because I came to the United States not as a poor immigrant, but in style, which is unusual. And I remember that I bought all these sorts of things back in London at expensive shops so that I could have all the outfits, you know, to wear to all the gala dances. One wanted some sorts of things back during that time.

And there was an intelligence officer on board, and I got to know him. And he found out about my background and of my anticommunist activities which, of course, put me immediately into favor with him so that when I checked out with all my luggage, I didn't have to go through any of the passport and things and red tape, and I was kind of proud of that. I thought that was very nice.

Q: I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU, IN LEAVING AUSTRALIA, HOW HAD YOUR RELATION WITH YOUR FATHER BEEN WHEN YOU REUNITED?

A: Well, the interesting thing is that I knew, of course, I knew her very well because they had lived together in Prague already without being married, which was okay, but not, naturally, accepted, you know, socially, was not. But he didn't have any problems because of it. Besides he had some other

ladies, saw other ladies too, which was kind of interesting but -- for him, not for me.

So she was a very excellent cook. And so I used to come there for meals, and she never forgot to tell me what all the things she did for me and what I would do in return. So she was a very, very calculating lady and pretty cold. But she was very good looking, and that was very important for my father because he responded to good looks and sex appeal. I don't blame him for that, you know. I hasten to add that. But I never developed any very close ties to her because she was a cold fish in so many ways. Very intelligent and all that.

And so I got to know her already in Prague, and I had hoped he would marry someone else with whom he was engaged after the war. But she persuaded him to marry her instead of the other woman whom I liked very much because she was exactly opposite. She was very appealing and all that, very nice, very warm person, and we became very close. And so that was a disappointment, that he married her instead of the person I really liked and thought would have been probably the better wife. They would have gotten along much better.

The only problem was that she was

Sudenten German and had considerable problems. But because she was not a Nazi but merely a German, she could have stayed. But she chose not to stay in Czechoslovakia. She met with all the rest of her family in Germany.

All right. So we got along quite well except she always asked me "What am I going to do?" and "What presents?" and this and that. At that time I was not as flexible as I would be today; so I kind of neglected her appeals. In retrospect, I feel that I should have given her more recognition for whatever she did because she was an excellent cook and really looked after both of us in this respect. Not in terms of affection and so on, but she put all the things into the cooking and hospitality and all of that, and she was very expert in doing that.

So it was not a very close relationship, but it was not a strained relationship either. The only thing I missed in her, she didn't share the sense of humor my father had. What a tremendous sense of humor. We had a lot of laughs together, you know, so that we all were in tears very frequently because of some of the jokes. It was just really uncanny. It was just really out of this world.

And I still miss that because I

haven't met anyone who would have been that funny, who could have been that funny, sort of with some sort of level of sophistication but kind of intellectual sense of humor, which I appreciate very much. So I miss that, yeah.

So she didn't share that. All right.

Then I met this young lady there, and of course, I brought her to their place, and they assessed her immediately, you know, took measurements, what have you, in so many words, and assessed her manners. And they were Australian women, very lovely women, all very good-looking and all that. But they always found something, you know, which just didn't fit.

So the one I was really very attached to I think they liked also except she was not attached to the United States and certainly didn't think in terms of leaving Australia because of me, and she was very open about that. And if I had stayed there, the chances are we would have married.

So then I came to the United States for reasons which I have explained. Also I found that the affidavit -- which was the quota number, was Czech and I had to wait and all this -- now was due so I was

able to come to the United States. And I came to New York, and I was picked up by these very rich relatives, director of one of the enterprises who also had been a colleague and a friend of my father's, and very nice. But I had never met these rich relatives, but somehow they sort of delegated the care to this director.

So I found some friends, people who permitted me to share an apartment with them. And I went from Connecticut, Darien, Connecticut, to Englewood, New Jersey, and from Englewood, New Jersey, to New York for just about half a year until the fall.

And then for reasons which still escape me, they said, "Well, you can go to Harvard. You can go to this and that." But I was so unbelievably ignorant about the reputation of American institutions that for reasons which still escape me, I selected the University of Missouri, which at that particular time was No. 10 on the list of state universities, not private universities.

And that was, on one hand, very good because I learned a great deal and I met professors who were like family to me, and I will never forget them. But chances are I don't know whether this would have been the same case at Harvard.

But of course, Missouri didn't have all the -- I made very good contacts, but that cannot be compared with contacts which were made by Henry Kissinger and other people who were immigrants and knew exactly what they were doing simply because they knew the ropes.

So I got my master's there and started my doctorate, and then worked in a state mental institution just to apply some of the theoretical concepts which I had picked up and see how they would work. And that was a very beneficial experience, apart from the money, because I had a fellowship, and this fellowship consisted of pocket money, tuition, and all the textbooks and whatever I needed for my studies. They paid for that, and meals, which I had to take at various fraternities. And that proved to be exceedingly interesting, although at times it would be cumbersome.

And that way I became -- I think the notion was to become acquainted with different American sectors of walks of life, and I think that did a very good job. I thought it was exceedingly interesting for me to be introduced this way, and I made quite a few friends.

Q: WERE YOU AT ALL APPREHENSIVE ABOUT

STARTING OVER IN A NEW COUNTRY AND HAVING TO LEAVE THE FAMILY?

A: Yes, I was very apprehensive simply because the university system was very different. So for example, at the University of Melbourne or Camberwell, you only had examinations at the end of the academic year, which took hours. In every subject, there were at least three hours, and we had to write countless papers and things like that throughout the semester. But then on taking that seriously, the important thing is that you had to, under very strict supervision, respond to questions, pointed questions for about three hours in just one subject.

And so here all the weekly quizzes and objective tests was something totally new to me and took a great deal to adjust. And by virtue of the fact that I had a scholarship, I needed to accept it. And during the first part of the semester, I had two D's because of that.

And the dean called me in and said -- and addressed me as, "Sir, you are a disappointment to us because we gave you a scholarship expecting you to excel. And the report you have in these two subjects" -- I remember one was in

anthropology and one was in psychology. And these were graded courses -- "and you have two D's there." And that was a very bad thing. So that was a very embarrassing situation.

So there was not very much I could say other than, you know, just "I'm adjusting" and what have you, and it was a bit traumatic, to be sure. And I worked hard. It's not that I was lazy, that I didn't try. But then I learned the ropes and the quizzes in time; and so the D turned into a B, and the other D turned into a C. That's the only blemish I had on my graded record, one C.

But because all the other things during the next two semesters, three semesters -- I was at the University of Missouri for four semesters. I got my master's in three semesters, which included the writing of a thesis. So that means, you know, one and a half years which is not bad for someone who comes from another star, mostly the Jewish star.

So that was not too bad. And then I made honor society simply because all the other things were A's, you see. So therefore I just caught up and got quite a bit of recognition as a matter of fact.

Q: HOW DID YOU ADJUST TO SOCIAL LIFE?

A: Social life was not very difficult because, for some reasons which at that particular time escaped me, I had lots of friends, very good friends, also by virtue of the fact that I was in fraternities. I always had a little bit problems with women, young coeds, a number of two private junior colleges, the same place, Columbia and Missouri. Not that many women at the University of Missouri proper.

So I dated quite a bit, but I was very insecure by virtue of the fact that I didn't have a car, I didn't have any money and couldn't invite them to big things, and most of these kids came from very well-to-do homes. So I was very self-conscious about my limitations.

But apparently these limitations were not that dreadful because I had no problem. They still liked me, and for reasons which, you know, as I say, escape me, then -- today perhaps it's a bit more easy to understand -- I was not starved for company for sure.

And except, you know, my choice, I just simply didn't understand them too well because you had a date and they kissed you good night at the dorms, you know. And then you went with someone else and the same thing happens. You see the girl you've

dated yesterday was kissing someone else. And it was pretty confusing to me because the dating system was not exactly something I was used to.

So I had to adjust to that, and in a way I didn't because I said, "Hey, either you like someone and you just, you know, go steady with them and do the things all the way or you just" -- this sort of halfway thing was very frustrating because of the puritan ethic, which still prevailed at that particular time. And people, of course, pretended to be this and that. But you know, everyone claimed to be a virgin until she had a ring on her finger. You know, if nothing else, at least an engagement. But usually they had to be available. So I had problems with that.

So then I found some people who didn't have problems with that. Okay. And then I didn't have the problem too. That was supposed to be funny.

But I was very overwhelmed by the hospitality of all the people. They were exceedingly hospitable. And I had a very functional support system there. And some of us who excelled were even invited to the governor's mansion, which was in Jefferson City and hosted by the governor. In a very

unusual way I wish that something like that would happen in California.

So that was very -- and lots of important activities. And I was invited with another person who had excelled gradewise and all that, academically, we were invited as, you know, unusually gifted people to Dallas by the United Churches of Dallas over Christmas.

And I never had heard of Dallas. Totally ignorant. I said, "Who wants to go to Dallas?" And my friend, who was secretary general of the University YMCA, to which I belonged, said, "Dallas is a very important place." And I started to explain to him I was not very impressed because I had never heard of Dallas.

So we went there, and we were hosted, red carpet treatment, and all the oil millionaires with all their beautiful daughters. But I was a very naive person and didn't take advantage of all the contacts, which I should have at that time. But I was, you know, I just had my nose into the academic stuff.

So during that particular visit which was in '54. That was '54, Christmas '54. And so they asked me, "What do you want to do when you

finish your studies?"

I said, "Well, I guess maybe teaching."

They said, "Well, how much will you make as a teacher?"

I said, "Well, I don't know. Not that much."

They said, "Well, if you make that little money," they said, "you can't be very intelligent."

So that gave me some sort of a taste of the value system in the United States. And I was in Dallas, and it was exceedingly interesting, and also what happens to you when you are treated as a VIP, which somehow I couldn't relate to. I just couldn't quite assume that role which they assigned to me because if I had, you know, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you, the chances are.

Q: HOW WAS YOUR HEALTH?

A: My health?

Q: YES. YOU SAID YOU HAD STILL THE TB?

A: No. The TB had healed. It had healed apparently at some time or another either prior to leaving or after leaving. And I haven't had any

problems with it since.

Q: SO PHYSICALLY YOU WERE ALL IN
PRETTY GOOD SHAPE?

A: I was in pretty good shape, yes.

Q: WERE YOU SUFFERING ANY OTHER KINDS
OF THINGS, LIKE NIGHTMARES?

A: Nightmares stopped pretty much back
in the first few years when I returned back to
Prague, because I got it out of my system to some
extent so that I wouldn't be bothered by nightmares.
I had indeed nightmares, frequent ones the first few
years.

And I had particular problems with
the loss of my mother because at that particular time
emotionally I had not cut the umbilical cord at all.
I was not ready for that loss. And that is something
which lingered on for a very, very many years. And
for all practical purposes, I still haven't come to
terms with that because that is something which both
of us -- that is, my mother and I -- were totally
unprepared to cope with, including also many other of
my relatives because it was a very closely knit
family.

That's a very important point which
I think I have repeated on several occasions. It was

probably the worst thing which has happened to me, the worst consequence of the Holocaust. So that all the physical injuries and the mental anguish and the trauma which I experienced in the camps was something I could come to terms with in time. But I have not come to terms with the loss of my family. I haven't.

Q: THAT'S A LIFELONG GRIEF?

1490 A: Absolutely. Absolutely, yes. And that's still my problem, and it's still something which comes back every new year, every Christmas, every holiday and (Passover or Chanuka) because that was something which was celebrated by my uncle's relatives, to which we were always invited because, in contrast to my father, my mother, and her relatives -- which included my aunt who was married to the particular uncle who were very well-to-do people and very cultured and highly sophisticated individuals, role models in so many other ways, not just people who were relatives, but people I looked up to and had good reasons to look up to because they were just fantastic people.

1524 My uncle's family were not religious Jews but were very cultural Jews, and part of that included Jewish holidays. And (Passover) happened to be a very important one for them. So that

is something which was very important, and we all participated.

So just closing that circle, because of these experiences and because of the age in which I lost my family, it is something which I was not able to come to terms with. And also primarily because I have not been able to find a substitute. I have had my relationships. I had a very unsatisfactory marriage, and I have a son, and that is the only link I still have in terms of a really family feeling of family.

But other than that -- also the death of my father and all that, to whom I, after the war, was not that close because then it reverted back to the sort of prewar situation, which was very conflicting -- I just simply hadn't had a chance to find a substitute, and that is something which made the thing even worse because if you fall into and marry into a family by virtue of the appropriate person, then I think it would have been eased, I'm sure. But under the circumstances, that was not the case.

Q: SO YOUR VISION IS THAT IF YOU HAD HAD A GOOD MATE, AND NOT ONLY THAT, BUT SOMEONE WITH A FAMILY, THAT WHOLE SENSE OF FAMILY --

A Yeah. Well, you see, that's the irony of my life in a way, and the dreadful disappointment, because I always hoped for that. And that was something which was more or less implanted into me by my mother.

 And my mother always dreamt about that, and we talked about it even in Theresienstadt. As a matter of fact, my mother specifically said, "Well, when we get out...." There was no "if" or "but." Yes, we would get out, and we both were convinced that we would, for reasons that were strange but psychologically understandable, I'm sure.

 And so she said, "I really hope that you will have a nice family, and I would not want to live with you in one place." And it was all these sort of prewar notions which would supposedly continue after the war, after the liberation, whatever. And that's what she envisioned.

 And we would have the family, and she saw herself as a grandmother and just as a person who continued to be the very close link which, yes, I certainly would have wished more than anything else. And she said, "But I'm not going to impose on you," and the way she talked was just something which really stirs my emotions when I just think of that. And "I

wouldn't want to impose on you, but I would like to have a small apartment," you know.

And all these sorts of things come back, and I say, my God, in terms of my private personal life, what actually happened and all this would have been a dreadful disappointment to her. And she would be turning, whatever, her ashes at Auschwitz or whatever it is, would stir in responding to my situation. That is something which is a very heavy weight on me. And I say, my God, in a way it's a terrible disappointment just to myself, but certainly if my mother had lived, it would have been a tragedy for her.

Now, on the other hand, if she had been around, the chances are she would have given me counsel so that some of the mistakes I have made, I may not have because of her counsel. And she would have been at my side, and I'm sure she would have counseled me. Whether I would have listened to her or not, that's another thing because, you know, at times these sorts of things are not always heeded.

That is, to me, one of my -- that's the crucial thing in my life, that this has not happened, that my personal life, my family life was destroyed and I was not able to replace it in any

shape or form. And I think probably -- I may be wrong there -- I think that it was made more difficult by virtue of the fact that I came to the United States.

Q: IN WHAT WAY?

A: Well, I think in Australia it would have been easier in terms of human relationships, and the chances are that this particular girlfriend I had back in Australia, I think she probably would have filled the bill more readily than what I had found here or elsewhere, for that matter, because I met the person from a wrong country. Wrong culture, I should say, more than country. Both maybe.

Q: WOULD YOU HAVE HAD A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP, DO YOU THINK, WITH YOUR FATHER HAD YOU STAYED IN AUSTRALIA?

A: Well, he wanted to stay. He was very successful in Australia. He really built for himself a very secure existence and was well recognized in his field as an accountant. He was very able, very successful.

And he wanted to stay, but because of his wife, who had relatives in Germany, who then came, who were Sudeten Germans and went to Germany, her brother -- her mother, I think, and then she had a sister in England.

So she wanted to go back, and she just perservered in this, that he then gave up his job there and then decided to come with her to Munich. And that also affected my personal life because the chances are I may have returned back to Australia under different circumstances.

But because he went to Munich, I was more than Europe-oriented by virtue of the fact that he was there and I wanted to visit and keep in touch, yes. And that was -- they were staying because I had also a doctorate back at the university of -- German university, which I do not regret. On the contrary, I think I've learned more there than anywhere else.

Q: WERE YOU AND HE IN GERMANY AT THE SAME TIME?

A: Yes. But actually at the same time I came to Germany because of him, because he had come there, not that I had not visited Germany before, yes, but that was for different reasons. But he had come there, and because he had come to Germany, I also frequently came to Germany, and that was one of the major reasons, apart from some of the research which I conducted with the archives there in Munich, the Institute of Contemporary History, and later then did

all the research with former perpetrators. So that was something which I never would have done if I had been in Australia, the chances are.

Q: SO YOU CONTINUED YOUR GRADUATE STUDIES IN GERMANY? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

A: Well, I was a doctoral candidate at Berkeley, but they didn't want me to do the type of research I was interested in.

Q: SO AFTER YOU LEFT MISSOURI, WHERE DID YOU THEN GO?

A: Oh, I see. We didn't talk about that.

Q: I'M SORRY. MAYBE I'M CONFUSING YOU.

A: No, no, no. Sequentially, I think we've gone a little bit astray. I was back in Missouri until '55. And then one of my mentors got me a fellowship because I already started my doctorate at the University of Missouri after I completed my master's in '55.

So he felt very strongly about the fact -- and he was a very eminent sociologist, actually urbanologist. A man called (Nowell Gist). He felt that they taught me all they could at the University of Missouri, that I should continue. And

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he didn't want me to get a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, when I think it was a mistake because it prolonged the whole thing and complicated things, but be that as it may.

Then he helped me to get a fellowship to a place I was not particularly interested in going, which was in Louisiana, university of -- their own university.

1853 Q: (TULANE)?

A: (Tulane), yes. And I was scared of the climate because I developed an allergy, and I couldn't take humidity. It was a kind of climatic allergy. And humidity is something which really exacerbated that state of sneezing and all this.

And so although I had it and I was accepted, I was very reluctant, and in '56 I got a fellowship to a university in San Diego to spend the -- I think it was about a month or six weeks, something like that, at a sort of international corporation, international kind of an interesting experiment which brought 23 different nations together, presented 23 nations to live together, kind of an experiment in international living and interacting.

And I got a fellowship. That was

something which was done by the Quakers and Friends service. And I got a fellowship to that.

And that way I came to California, which I had not intended before. And while I was in California, I had a number of friends who were at the University of California Berkeley who had studied with me and received doctorates from the University of Missouri, who were, in other words, more advanced than I because they had come earlier and what have you.

1930 So they said, "Why don't you come, and you may get something here?" So one of my Indian friends whom I was very close to -- I was particularly very close to with people from India, the students at the University of Missouri. It was a very closely knit, communal sort of relationship in which I was totally accepted for interesting reasons. And all these people in their doctoral studies. And one of them was a man called (Shandi Tonri). And he graduated from the University of Missouri and got a job at Berkeley.

And he said, "Why don't you come, and I'd like to introduce you to maybe possibilities," and all that. And he did a lot of foot work for me prior to my coming. And I came, and he said, "Well, they are hiring some instructors, lecturers in the

department of speech. And you really should go and try it and introduce yourself."

And I thought it's just absolutely ridiculous. I didn't have any teaching experience. I was not an assistant. And I was just absolute 100 percent against it. I felt I wouldn't have a chance, particularly at Berkeley and all that.

So I came to an interview, and they just, for reasons which still escape me -- it doesn't make any sense to me, just doesn't make whatsoever -- and they hired me on the spot, and I became a lecturer at the University of California Berkeley.

And then I wrote to my professor, my mentor, and said, "Hey, I'm here at Berkeley." And he was very mad. He was very angry with me. He said, "You know, we've done so much work. Next time around we don't have a chance with Tulane because you have somehow given up that sort of fellowship." And that I was very sorry for because he behaved like a father to me. I didn't want to be a disappointment. But I still stayed there.

I got the job, and they said, "Okay, you start now in the fall." You know, and it was just summer. And I had butterflies in my stomach.

I had sleepless nights. I said, "I can't possibly do it. I can't face a class of students without having ever taught before" and not really knowing what the hell I was doing.

And so I couldn't eat and lost a lot of weight and sleepless nights and butterflies in my stomach. And I said, "I'm going to skip Berkeley. I'm going to run away." And then I talked to my friend, and he said, "Don't do it. Try it," and all this. And he was very supportive and all that. And then I mustered the courage to face up to the whole thing, and I thought it was just absolutely impossible. And for reasons, whatever, I just did. And then I was in the doctoral program also. So I was a lecturer but also a doctoral student back at Berkeley.

2017 Within half a year, I was a very popular lecturer, again, for reasons which I don't understand, but it just happened. And the Chair came, said, "John" -- he was a blind person. (Yacobels), (Yacobels Tenbur) was his name. Very famous attorney and jurisprudent. Wrote a lot of interesting, very important books.

And so they said, "John, what is it with you? All the students" -- of course, some female

students -- "They just rave about you and say how well you dress." So I had to describe for him because he never saw me, you know, by virtue of being blind, about some of the success.

And so he said, "Well," when I left, he said, "John, I would like you to finish your doctorate. And you'll send us a dissertation, and then we want to consider you for full-time tenure."

2049 All right. And that was, of course, very nice. But the fact is that when I was finishing my doctorate back at the University of (Freiberg) in Germany -- I went there because they were very supportive of my theme, because there were people there who themselves were interested in national socialism.

2058 And one of the professors, a very well-known person called Arnold (Bergstrasser), was professor in Chicago during the war because he had to flee from Germany, being non-Jewish, but he was active politically. So he had to flee during the war, and after, he returned to the University of Freiberg.

Q: HOW DID YOU GET THIS CONNECTION WITH THE FREIBERG AGAIN?

A: Well, that goes, again, back into sort of an interesting situation. I went to

Germany -- I left -- I went from -- from Berkeley I went because I wanted to have some sort of a change, continue my doctorate, but have some change. And I was hired by the United States Air Force as a social psychologist as researcher. And I went to Dayton, Ohio, which is the Wright Patterson Air Force Base, to do research there.

And for reasons which I can't understand which are partially political and my interest in applying some theoretical stuff which I had picked up back at Missouri as well as at Berkeley and it was exceedingly well paid, I just thought I'll try it and see what it will do. And yes, I tried it, and I know what it did, and I was pretty much disappointed because of some of the things which were going on which I absolutely disapproved of, this squandering of money and the nepotism, which I disliked, and some other things which were just very bad.

And so I resigned and came back to Berkeley and applied for a job with the state department which I received as a vice council to go to Laos. And so they gave me all sorts of shots and all that. I was ready to go. And prior to my going, I wanted to be sure that I will see my father and visit

there. And while there, I got a cable from the state department, said, "Unfortunately we regret that we cannot give you the job because you have not been a United States citizen for five years."

And I was a United States citizen for four years and eight months or something like that, you know. And I don't know. I think it was a trumped-up thing. I think the CIA had something to do with that because all the people who would have been sent to Laos would have had also to work for the CIA. And I may not have been to their liking because of my past. And I think that was the reason because they said, "Okay, before you go to Laos, you just can go to all the various training and in four months you can go when you have been a citizen for five years."

All right. And that happened while I was in Germany. That cable came to my father's address, which I gave to the state department. After I had been screened, after I had all the shots -- plague, cholera, you name it -- I had all this.

Q: DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK WITH THE CIA TOO?

A: Well, I had some inkling. But I felt that I could stay out of it because it was not with the state department. It was not particularly in

aiding people; so I would have had to work with aides, the nations, and the case laws. But I talked to people who were there, and they said, "CIA is connected to everything you will be doing." And I think that broke the camel's back. And these sorts of things happened while I was in Germany.

And what now? What then? I had a girlfriend who wanted to come with me to Germany and all that and wanted to get married, and I said, "I can't get married at this point." And she was very disappointed, a very lovely woman. So I sacrificed a great deal because that was what I wanted to do, and then it just fell through.

So then I'm saying, "Well, now I'm here. I may as well see what I can do here." And I was interviewed for a research job at the University of Freiberg. Well, it was not actually the University of Freiberg, but it was sort of supervised by this particular Bergstrasser person.

And I got to know him because I got a job as a researcher in this sort of research institute. Kind of a trumped-up situation; but nevertheless, I learned quite a few things about particularly German perspectives and research and all, which was helpful.

Q: WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH?

A: My subject was primarily international race and minority problems.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YOU REALLY SHOULD TALK A BIT ABOUT WHY YOU WERE STUDYING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY, REALLY WHY YOU CHOSE THOSE FIELDS.

A: Well, but that was prior to that. Simply because I studied my medical studies in Prague and couldn't continue back in Australia. When I came to the United States, I felt I was too old for that. And then I decided to switch to something which would be related to the camp experience and somehow find answers to questions which I've had, find meaning in all this trauma.

And so I decided to study sociology because I felt that that was a field which might provide me with the tools necessary for understanding what is going on, and social psychology specifically. So that's what I did.

So that's the answer to your question. And also because I felt I was getting too old to study medicine, which was not correct at all, but, I mean, I felt for reasons I was too old to start

from scratch.

So when I was in Freiberg doing this sort of research and meeting this Arnold Bergstrasser, with whom I had very personal and in-depth talks and who could relate to my background, he suggested, "You should get a doctorate here, forget Berkeley, because we are interested in your dissertation, and we will give you credit for all the things you've done" and all that, "you've studied."

So that I could finish the doctorate in a minimal time and at no loss to -- in spite of the loss of semesters and all that, I could catch up and finish the doctorate within the shortest possible time, which I did.

Q: WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT OF IT?

A: The subject was very simple. The subject was national socialism, the sociology of national socialism. And the title of my dissertation was "Power, Politics, and Social Change in National Socialist Germany."

Q: THIS YOU HAD PUBLISHED INTO A BOOK?

A: Yes. Yes, it was very important because I had a friend back at Berkeley who happened to be in the process of getting his doctorate from the University of Oslo. And that was in '58, that is to

say, the same year I was actually hired. Well, actually, no. I was hired in '56. So he got it in '58.

2332 And he asked me to come with him to meet his parents in Oslo at the University of Oslo. And I helped him to put together his index on the boat. We took a boat. Beautiful trip. Was just luxury and fun and just El Dorado. On that ship from (Stavaunger Fjord). It was the Stavaunger Fjord we took from New York to Oslo. Just a terrific thing, two weeks.

And that was relatively inexpensive. I could well afford it, although everything was first class. And I shared a cabin with him. And while we were on the trip, he finished his last touches of his dissertation and had to defend his dissertation at the University of Oslo. And he also said that the condition for getting a doctorate at the University of Oslo was that you had to publish that -- had to be a publishable dissertation, and had to be published. They had to have your contract, have it published in a reputable publishing firm.

And I was very impressed. I felt that was very proper. So I just simply emulated that and wanted to write a dissertation which, indeed, was

publishable. And that's exactly what I did.

Q: AND SO AT THAT POINT YOU HAD
ALREADY DECIDED TO MAKE YOUR LIFE'S WORK STUDYING THE
PERPETRATOR?

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A: Well, yes. At that particular
point I was not sure to what extent it would be
possible. But while I was doing my preliminary
research at the Institute of Contemporary History at
Munich, looking at all the archives and the documents
and getting stuff together, looking at German
publications, newspapers, and (The Schtermeyer) and all
this sort of thing, I had a person who was very
supportive of me, very well-known person, leading
person who died quite a few years ago now, a man
2389 called (Broshard). Very leading German historian,
national socialist. And he was very supportive and
very impressed with what I was doing, very supportive
indeed. And he was older than I, but very friendly
and supportive.

And so we talked about present
things and also my ambitions and looking into not
being satisfied with just simply looking into archival
material but that I actually wanted to interview the
S.S. perpetrators. And that had not been done at the
time, you know, certainly not by a survivor.

And so he was very helpful. And he said, "That's interesting because in Munich you are all a people, and I think it's crucial that you start with a man called General Steiner, Felix Steiner." And he was one of the senior S.S. generals, actually, and a person, interestingly enough, not a national socialist, but he didn't know that. But he said, "This General Steiner is very open, and he's accessible."

And so I called him, and I said "Hey, my name is so-and-so, and I think we are namesakes, and for what I know, we may even be remotely related. And I'm from Berkeley, originally from Berkeley and this and that, and would be interested in coming and talking to you."

And he was immediately very enthusiastic, very open. Of course, I was full of trepidation, you know. S.S. general. All the notions which -- experiences I have had, you know, "What am I getting into?" So I was kind of jittery, to be sure.

But the funny thing is so he came. Very arrogant and very well dressed, kind of stocky fellow. Just about my size, sort of stocky, you know, real big fellow. Hands of a butcher. And so he opened the door, and I came into the apartment unit,

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which was a very nice apartment which he shared with a relative of Cardinal (Fauharber), Munich cardinal who played an interesting role in opposing Nazis.

And so there was the table all spread with cake and coffee, and he had put all the things together. And I just said, "Oh, what is going on here? General with the S.S. and coffee table with cake and all this?" So I had to adjust to my role as an interviewer --

Q: DID HE KNOW YOU WERE A SURVIVOR?

A: -- and as a victim.

Q: YES. DID HE KNOW YOU WERE A SURVIVOR?

A: Well, I didn't tell him, "Look, I've just come from Dachau to visit and give you hell," you know. Well, I couldn't. I couldn't do that, of course.

So I said, "Yeah, I'm a researcher, and I'm a faculty member of Berkeley, and I'm interested in interviewing perpetrators" -- "members of the S.S." I didn't say "perpetrators." I said "members of the S.S." "And you have been suggested to me by this and that Dr. Broshard, and here I am, and I am very interested."

And so we hit it off for reasons,

you know, which I -- my God, this is a monster. And he turned out not to be a monster. He was a sort of an amiable, sort of dreadfully interesting person, very generous and very hospitable in a way which was exemplary. I mean, you know, his hospitality. I mean, he had put his paper napkins in some sort of special way so that they had decoration, you know, because he just folded -- so he went into real minute sorts of things to prepare this.

And I was totally unprepared for this because I saw the S.S. type from the camp, you know. That's my projection. I expected some brutal type of sadist, you know, barking at me. Well, the contrary was the truth.

So then he would let me go, and then I came back and back, and he just said, "I don't want to call you 'Dr. Steiner.' I want to call you 'John' and you call me 'Felix,'" and all this.

And I thought, "What the hell is going on? This man is becoming my friend -- an S.S. general." You know, it's an absolute irony. And I just had a problem to adjust to it.

But I said, "Well, I have to be open minded and I have to go through that because that may develop into a life's work."

And I came back and back, and he kept on writing to me and calling me on the phone. And then I came out with my first full-blown project. That was prior to the completion of the dissertation also, but was certainly connected also. And in a questionnaire with an authoritarian personality and all that, what do you do?

So, I mean, what he has done is precisely handed me to other S.S. generals. And one of them was S.S. General Karl Wolff. And he was really -- he was a different type altogether because he was a political general, not an S.S. general as Felix Steiner.

But so he introduced me more and more so that I had a circle of people whom I was handed to. He simply said, "This fellow is on the level. He is going to do objective research, and he's got my support." And because of his position, senior position in the S.S. at that particular time, he opened all doors for me. And so I was not a persona non grata, but I became a persona grata.

And that made it all possible, including this Karl Wolff, who was, again, a very influential person, who was Himmler's right hand up to a point, tainted with mischief because he interceded

in really transport ministry to get the boxcars which made it possible to ship Jews to Treblinka, for which he got 15 years in prison and was released after 5.

So this fellow, then, viewed me as a friend and said, "Now we know each other," and of course got to know my wife too. And when he visited me in Freiberg and I stayed in all the other places overnight and was included in all the personal stuff. And Felix Steiner, I was the guest of honor during a so-called Yule festivity where all the S.S. congregated there to celebrate in the beer hall where Hitler used to meet and all that.

So it was just real unbelievable stuff. And eventually saw the thing like that in the dream. So I come with the S.S. general. Everyone was seated there. Hundreds of people congregated there to celebrate, not Christmas, but this dramatic Yule fest, which was to be the new religion, and that's how I got this sort of interest into what was really brewing there which was in preparation to replace the traditional religions with a new Nazi religion, and that's what I was introduced to. And I was the first to really describe it also in publication.

Q: WHEN WAS THAT?

A: That was in -- must have been in

'64. I don't know the exact date, but it was published around '64 I think, '64. And you come and see all these people, and they come -- they eat with an S.S. general.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) WITH YOUR ARM COVERED, I PRESUME?

A: I had long sleeves, and it was winter.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) FORTUNATELY.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) NONE OF THEM EVER KNEW WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH?

A: No, no. Well, some did because I told them. But he didn't. I would have told him too except he would have probably died of a heart attack.

And so there all these people were sitting with their families, all the former S.S. people in all different things, but primarily all (Wafma) S.S., but not all, of course. Many people came from different walks of life, from S.D. and concentration camps and what have you.

So all the Munich S.S. people had congregated there. Let's put it that way. And there I come at the last. He came in last. He was a senior general at that particular time, surviving general. So there I come into this beer hall thing, you know,

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where all these people are with him, you know, just as guest of honor. I still can't, you know, quite fathom the whole thing. And all these people get up, all the S.S. people, and stand in attention.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) LITTLE DO THEY KNOW.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) SOUNDS SURREAL.

A: Absolutely and totally.

Q: SO THIS WAS A NEW RELIGION, YOU ARE SAYING, THAT WAS BREWING?

A: Yes. So then I was seated, of course, the guest of honor, next to Felix. And then the people came and talked to me because I was the American, you see. I was not a Yid. I was not from Prague. I was an American.

And so they talked to me, and then one came and explained, you know, this and that, that's the Yule. And then a Christian, "It's nothing. It was a Jew," and this and that, and comes and tells me about this sort of religious rites. And I, in my naivete, had a piece of paper, and I took notes. And somebody said, "Hey, what are you doing?"

So I said, "Well, I am very interested."

And then this fellow came. He was

a staff sergeant. A real badnik. I mean, if I've seen a badnik, he was a badnik. And telling me about all the S.S. religion, which I had, of course, never heard because there was nothing in the literature at that time published after the war and documented during the war. I had not seen much of it, just some. But minimum.

So he comes and says, "Don't listen to this person. He's just a criminal." It's all published. The whole episode is published.

But of course, I listened to him, and I didn't see a criminal. He wanted to disparage him because this was a very threatening thing.

Q: WHEN YOU SAY "HE WAS A BADNIK," WAS THAT FROM YOUR SENSE THAT YOU HAD THAT YOU COULD RECOGNIZE THAT?

A: Oh, yeah. I mean, he was badnik.

Q: YOU COULD RECOGNIZE THAT?

A: Oh, God, he was a badnik. No question about that.

Q: COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THIS RELIGION, WHAT HE WAS TELLING YOU?

A: Oh, yes. He said, "Well, it's all -- the thing is it's older Germanic paganism, and all this Jewish stuff and Christianity, it's all bad

news. And this is what it really stands for, and the Christians stole all this from the Germanic festivities and turned it into Christianity."

That's something which is important which wasn't explained to me, the meaning of "solstice" and "Yule" and all these sorts of things, and what the rituals were. They were singing songs and lighting these candles for people who died for Germany, these people, for the children and for the mothers who suffered and all this sort of thing. And I just don't remember all the things. I put it down. It's all published.

So I went through all that, and then he caught the end of this and said, "Don't listen to him. He doesn't know -- criminal. He doesn't know what the hell he is talking about." And of course, he knew, except he didn't want me to know really what the game was because that's what they celebrated.

And then they said, "Well, you know, we are still into this, and some other people are still into it. But our children, we raised them in the Christian thing but this doesn't -- we will be the last ones. But in order for them to survive in this new society, it's important for these children to be brought up in acceptable Christian religion,

denomination."

And so --

Q: IT SOUNDS LIKE --

A: -- he devalued all the things which some of the people did and tried to keep me, you know, apart. But they came and started talking, and I listened because that's why I was there. Except they thought I was there because I wanted to be a guest of honor. I didn't do anything. He said, "I want to invite you to this Yule fest," Felix said. And I was his guest, and because I was his personal guest, I was the guest of honor. And, you know, it really shook me up. It really shook me up.

Q: SO IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS IS ANOTHER BIG ELEMENT OF MANY OF THE HINTS OF THE OCCULT GOING ON.

A: Yes, yes. That's what I was after.

Then this led to sort of my sensitivity wounds, this sort of thing. And when this general Karl Wolff was sentenced to 15 years, and I went to the trial because I was there at the time in Germany doing my research and starting to work on my doctorate at the University of Freiberg. So I went there. I was already working quite a bit, as a matter

of fact, on the doctorate. So I went there to be on the trial because I knew him.

So there I come to Munich, the trial of Wolff, and said, "Hi, how are you." And he was sentenced. And then I visited him in prison, and visited other S.S. people to whom he introduced me. He said, "Oh, by the way, there is this and this and that." And so we talked, and then one day when I visited him, he said, "Well, John, I've got a big favor to ask, and I've got this chain here with this emulate, and I'd like you to have that repaired because it tore. It tore." That's interesting because it's a play on words.

And I took it, and there was a hammer -- silver hammer on a silver -- or was it platinum? I don't know. Platinum or silver chain. I said, what, a hammer? Why would he have a hammer here? Why would an S.S. general own a hammer on a silver chain?

And so I went to this Broshard fellow and said, "Look, you know" -- I told him about my encounters because I went to visit him, and he told me many things about CIA connections and all these sorts of S.S. and CIA connections. That's what also he told me. He said, "Well, if they don't release me

within a certain time, I will talk."

And I said, "What do you mean, talk?"

"I'm going to spill the beans in terms of the CIA and their role in the S.S." and all this.

Q: THIS IS WOLFF SPEAKING?

A: That was Wolff.

And I said, "By all means, spill it now."

And he said, "Well, I'll wait until I find out, you know." And sure enough, he got out because of CIA intervention.

Q: REALLY? DID YOU EVER FIND OUT ABOUT THE CIA CONNECTIONS?

A: Oh, yes, yes.

So anyway, so coming back to the chain, I went to Broshard and said, "Hey, John, I have no idea. I can't place it. So but this sort of thing -- I said I've had to repair it. I paid for it, of course." I always smuggled cigarettes to him which he could use and all that, and then he opened up and told me things about -- all sorts of things which otherwise he may not have because he felt obligated. Then I was supportive of him.

So it was a very complex game. So I brought back the chain relatively shortly after that. Brought present and say "Here you are." You know, "I'm bringing this to you. Now tell me what it's all about. What the hell is this?"

And he was very reluctant to talk about it. And then, you know, peu à peu, piece by piece, it came out that it was the hammer of the (Thor). And said, "What the hell is this?" And then I got into this sort of religious thing. And that gave me the entry which I then continued to research and came out with a rather important publication relating to this sort of thing.

Q: WHAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR PUBLICATION?

A: The "God Believers in the S.S.," and that was published in German, in English, and in a Swiss history journal.

Q: IS THIS IN A BOOK FORM?

A: No. It was just an article but -- and also part of my book, yes. It was a subchapter in my book. Except in modified form, it was in some other journals, a chapter in a book, in a German book, a very reputable history book -- two books. Just about four or five different publications in modified

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forms, and one which appeared in Switzerland with lots of pictures, photographs.

So that was a very popular thing, and most of the S.S. people read it, and they were all over me later on. "How can you do that, this and that?"

Q: SO YOU WERE REFERRING, BY SAYING "GOD," TO THE ANCIENT, MYTHICAL GODS THAT WERE PRECHRISTIAN?

A: (Dr. Steiner nods his head up and down.)

Q: IN THIS YULE CELEBRATION, ALONG WITH THIS MYTHOLOGY, WERE THEY STILL UPHOLDING THE PRINCIPLES OF FACISM?

A: Well, the interesting thing is they simply look back more than forward. And somehow I think most of these people understood that this was the end of the line, that this would not be perpetuated or would not be easy because they themselves said, "We are bringing up our children in Christianity," in some sort of, whatever, Protestant or Catholic faith.

But they still brought them to these yule things while they were around, and they continue to do that now, the old ones, because they

are the last who will continue with what they had adopted, accepted during that particular time while they were in the S.S., during Nazi time. But they also know it is coming to an end and that chances are that no one else will pick it up and perpetuate it again, although we don't know.

Q: NO, BECAUSE THE CHILDREN ARE BEING INCULCATED WITH THIS.

A: Well, yes, but I think they are exceeding in those -- many I have met, you know, I don't think they -- I think they have been so much influenced by the media about national socialism and all that that I don't think they are building or think it to be prudent to continue this sort of thing. I think that would be a very small minority because I think the influence of the media and the teaching and the democratic sort of perspective at this time is stronger than the influence of their parents.

Q: SHOULD WE ASSUME THAT ONLY PEOPLE WHO WERE CELEBRATING THE YULE WERE BROUGHT UP AS CHRISTIANS ALSO?

A: Oh, yes, you can because, you see, because at that time this sort of thing was just beginning to be popular. And that was before. I'd like to make sure that that was also existing starting

the turn of century, something of that nature, and even before, the beginning, the seed of it, if you will, the beginning of that particular development.

But no one took it dreadfully seriously, and very few people adhered to it or were interested in it. It only then became popular and furthered officially by the top Nazis. Now they all belong -- for example, Borman and Himmler and Goebbels and all these people catered to this sort of thing and renounced their Christian faith to become what they called God (Goribic), namely, God believers in God, which was the name of the new faith.

And now with a friend of mine, I'm doing research which has not been done before, because I found in the legal texts that, according to the Nazi definition, racial Jews could be Catholics or practice the Catholic or Protestant or any sort of Christian faith, but they are not permitted -- not permitted -- to become God (Goribic), believers in God. That is something we are not permitted to do.

Q: YOU HAD TO BE ARYAN IN ORDER TO DO THAT?

A: That's right. And no one has ever written about that. It's just something that is totally new. And I just simply because I browsed

through some legal texts which I do to see what sorts of laws, particularly the racial laws, and among those things, precisely that.

3046 Including the fact that Hitler himself was the only one who could make an exception to the (nermad) clause. That's also a legal permission. And right now we are interested in both things, to find out if there indeed were cases of full-blooded Jews -- "full-blooded" quote, unquote, because there is no such thing as Jewish blood. That's the fiction of the Nazi imagination.

And so I am particularly interested in finding out if, indeed, an exception was made by Hitler because yes, there was a provision in that, which kind of boggles my mind that even there was a legal provision. And that's in the legal books, and I have it, you know, in several legal books.

Q: SO YOU HAVEN'T YET RUN INTO AN INSTANCE THAT HE USED THIS?

A: No, no, no. I know that some people who were half Jews, or married to Jews -- for example, a very well-known Austrian actor, his Jewish wife was exempted from her Jewish status, and that was referred to in documentation, which I have lots of documentation on that because last year I went to

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(Coblins) to the archives just to do a search like that.

And now because of these Germans, there are many more archives open, much more access to documentation which hasn't even been tapped before. And Prague also has very important documentation, particularly on the S.S.

So all these things, if I have a chance, if I ever should get into a financial position that I can do that, you know, then I certainly would like to do that with Ms. Horowitz or someone else, you know, do that. But this is something that we will be able to get the funds because it takes time and we have to get away from.

Q: YOU HAVE SAID THAT SOME OF THESE S.S. PEOPLE WERE AWARE THAT YOU ARE A SURVIVOR.

A: Well, yes, because, you see, when I, for example, interviewed some of the Auschwitz perpetrators, who by now -- and I taped all the interviews, which is important, or most of the interviews -- I told them, you know. And after the interviews, you know, I said, "I am a survivor."

And they said -- they burst into tears, many of them, and said, "How is it that you treat us the way you do?" And were -- couldn't quite

come to terms. And I came back and talked to them again. You know, "Because of you, we haven't eaten, I have not eaten. I have not slept," and all that, "Because of the encounter with you, and you treated me as a human being," and all this. And these were the Auschwitz perpetrators. These were the S.S. These were the people who were, you know, doing it.

And that was a very fortunate thing because I have access to them by virtue of the fact that I was befriended by the Jewish attorney general of Hessen, in whose jurisdiction the Auschwitz process and he initiated the Auschwitz process. And then these people are saying -- I did not attend the Auschwitz process unfortunately, but I talked to them later after they were sentenced to multiple life sentences.

And then I had access because of his permission and because of friends I've had who -- one friend who actually once was the director of that prison at that time, who was a personal friend of mine. So I stayed with him at the premises of the prison where all these Auschwitz people were. So I had virtually 24-hour access to him and took advantage of that. Except these people, I taped, you know, I taped most of these interviews.

Q: SO IT SOUNDS LIKE IN THIS GROUP
THERE WAS QUITE WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A HUMAN REACTION?

A: Oh, yes, very much so. And most of
these people were exceedingly eager to talk to me.
And that is something which came to me as a surprise
because I thought most people once I start probing
in-depth, that they would clam up on me. Not only did
they not clam up, but they couldn't get enough of it.
So I had to come back and come back.

3177 And one of them who was another --
was not Auschwitz but he was known as the hangman of
Buchenwald, a man called (Zomo), he wrote to me twice
a month, and I had correspondence over years, which is
just, you know, it's a mountain of letters.

Somehow I became their father
confessor and also some person whom they could talk to
in order to get all this sort of dreadfulness out of
their system. And that was to my advantage. And I --
so they wrote to me, and they expected me to respond
to their needs, which I did.

And relations developed so that
when I -- still a person with whom I worked very
closely, was one of my major research assistants, if
you will, back in Germany; so whenever I come there, I
stay with them. They treat me like a family. And he

knows that I am a survivor. And whenever I leave, he bursts into tears and tells me, "I'm so thankful to you," and all that. It's a dreadfully embarrassing situation for me. And he embraces me and cries and weeps, you know, a man who was a guard at Dachau and witnessed and participated in one way or another in the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto. And he wrote me what his whole description of the destruction which he, as an eye witness, S.S. eye witness, wrote. And he's a journalist. He knows how to write.

Q: HOW IS IT FOR YOU TO BE IN THE
ROLE OF FORGIVING AND ASSUAGING THE FEELINGS OF --

A: I don't know. I don't know. You see, that's sort of forgiving. To begin with, I was terribly confused because, you know, project my experience of numerous death camps. You know, most people didn't survive one. I survived four, five, a death march and all this.

And project into this --
particularly with Felix Steiner. Here is an S.S. general. My God. That terrible stuff, you know. How am I going to stand up and not do something or say something or whatever, be there as a sociologist in an interview? And I thought I couldn't do it. And also all the feelings came back, you know, all this sort of

replay of what had happened.

And he turned out to be exceedingly human, a person who can be a very loyal and dreadfully supportive friend who is very caring.

And I said, "Hey, how is it possible that they can be humane and before they fought for the Nazi cause? You are glad to see me and talk to me as a human being, and you were the hangman of Buchenwald. Or you burst into tears, and you gassed hundreds of thousands of Jews. How do you put that into proper context?"

Well, yes, and that's precisely -- people respond to different situations. The interesting thing is, and the upshot of it is, most of these people who participated in it were not people who initiated it but were sucked into it by the system because they themselves never would have initiated it. Most of them. Some of them were sadists, no question about it.

And I discussed it with Eric Fromm, and we agreed that among all these S.S. people in concentration camps, there was a pitiful 16, 17, 18 percent of sadists. I have met them. And that's why I think that they feel the Zimbabwe experience was very important, the simulated prison. And that's why

I participated in that as a consultant because that was a replay for the situation which was not totally unsimilar to the real thing, except, of course, it was by far not as traumatic obviously.

But traumatic enough to see what sort of Eichmann -- Eichmanns are all in us, you know, which under certain circumstances will come out and where we will behave out of character.

Q: SO THE PRESSURE OF THE HIERARCHY, THE PRESSURE OF THE PEERS TO FORCE YOU INTO THIS --

A: Well, yes, the system.

Q: UH-HUH.

A: The system, which creates situations because the structure, which is manned by individuals, will compel, persuade and compel people with the help of an ideology, Nazi ideology, absolutist ideology, persuade people to lend a hand in mass destruction.

Q: IT HAS LIKE A LIFE OF ITS OWN?

A: That's right. That's right, which is being created with the help of Hitlerism and people who will benefit from it because of power and satisfaction of their needs at the expense of countless millions -- and where other people also will participate because they feel they are doing the right

thing ideologically, indoctrinated, brainwashed to believe that they are doing the right thing.

And when this sort of ceases to exist, then they revert back into some sort of normal -- quote, unquote, "normal" selves and behave in a way which is not going to break any law. And you would meet them and say "What a nice person," totally innocuous, kind of harmless individual.

Q: THE AUSCHWITZ PERPETRATORS, THE ONES WHO WERE IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED, IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH THEY WERE SUFFERING OBVIOUS GUILT.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: BUT WAS THIS ALSO TRUE OF THE --

A: Well, there are some other people, for example, very few people just about to one of them, a man called Boger. And he was a well-known sadist. And I had one encounter with him, and then he didn't want to continue any interviews. And this man just thrived on sadistic acts. I mean he was thriving on it. And he invented torture for that very -- a fellow called Boger, B-o-g-e-r.

But then I also met someone else who was another general in the S.S. -- no, that was not the animal. But I went back because I wanted to see some other S.S. people in a prison in Bavaria.

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And then I tried to have an interview with a man called (Bukselefski), who was actually the head man of all that region. (Fondane Bukselefski).

And I met him at this prison, and the director of that prison was very cooperative and for whom I have tremendous admiration. He also was a very fair-minded and sophisticated individual, a humanist, in a way. Cooperated with me and said, "Okay, we'll bring him out, Bukselefski. And you can eyeball each other and see how you respond."

And so I came there, and he was sitting there because they brought him out. And I said, "I am Steiner," and he introduced me, was very courteous, very nice. Said, "Professor Steiner would like to interview you. Would you mind doing that?"

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And he said, "If I have a choice, I'd rather not." And so this fair-minded director said, "I won't force you." And that is one of the major interviews. About 98 percent of people never refused an interview and cooperated. And this is just about 2 percent roughly speaking. And he is one of the 2 percent who refused to be interviewed, which is a tremendous loss because he was responsible for most. He was the senior man in all the destruction (poses) in the east.

Q: SO THAT'S LOST, THEN?

A: That's lost because the man is dead. He died of cancer and was released. He was, you know, prior to this because, you know, life sentence. He was the real --

Q: THE OTHER S.S. GENERALS AND PEOPLE OF THAT LEVEL OF THE HIERARCHY, DID YOU FEEL THAT THEY WERE JUSTIFYING THEMSELVES, OR DID THEY TOO SUFFER GUILT IN THEIR DECISIONS?

A: I think that's a very important question, and I had the feeling that some of them to some extent, maybe, but to a minimal extent. I would say primarily they bathed in their past glory. They continued to look back and focus on their glory and their power. And that to them was more important than the consequences of that power, namely, what they had done.

And that I could see in Steiner. That I could see in Wolff, in all the S.S. generals, and I met a few. God, I met a few. And none of them really came and said, "Hey, Dr. Steiner, it's terrible." I mean, you know. And now, the first time I got an apology, and that is an important thing which is -- it made history, although it's not recognized so it may be after my death it may come out. Because

3450 now, when I was in Germany last summer, I've had the first table talk which was with S.S. people, which was a public broadcast in which two of them said -- and we talked about it -- "Any one of you apologize?"

(Haval), (Vaksleff Haval), the Czech president, apologized to the Sudeten Germans what they had done, the Czechs to them. "And I've been there. I know what they have done. I've seen it. And I helped many of the Sudeten Germans to save their lives, particularly those who were friends and I knew them as Nazis thick as I am."

And so he has done this. And that's what I used. I said, "Hey, what have you done? Have you ever thought of apologizing?"

And they said, "Yes, well, it's really terrible." And so we discussed that, and it became a very interesting sort of thing.

Well, of course, I left Germany before it was broadcast; so I don't know what sort of response it stimulated, but it was broadcast in major broadcast stations all over Germany, including Cologne and all that, which caters to Bonn and what have you.

So they said, "Yeah," two out of the three said, "If we had understood what the consequences would have been at that particular time,

we would have not become members of the S.S." That was the first public statement anyone has made since World War II. And I got them to do it.

Q: THEY SAID THEY WOULD NOT HAVE JOINED THE S.S.?

A: That's right. They had regrets. And one fellow was just as old as I, same year, born same year, and the other one was born in 1920. That's right. And the other one was the senior there, he didn't join the club.

Q: NO?

A: He didn't join the club. Didn't say anything.

Q: IT SEEMS THAT, THEN, IN GENERAL, THOUGH, THEY DIDN'T HAVE THAT SAME OUTPOURING AS THOSE --

A: Well, this is something that my questionnaire, I've kept that all because these are questions I've asked, and that was published in 1970 and '72, "How do you look back with regret?" or whatever. And I had categories there, and only a very small minority had regrets.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) IT WAS TOO SOON?

A: What?

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) IT WAS TOO SOON?

A: Oh, no, I don't think so. I think that timing was just very appropriate, '70. I mean you're talking 25 years.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) SO YOU ARE SAYING THE RESPONSE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ANY DIFFERENT?

A: No.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) SURELY THEY WOULD HAVE --

A: And that was, of course, in person, because they filled out a questionnaire, you know, in person. And it was an honor. So they had no reason to -- so I think in terms of their real true sentiments, it came out. That time it came out loud and clear.

Q: SO NOW AT THIS POINT, YOU SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF YOUR ADULT LIFETIME STUDYING THE PERPETRATOR. KIND OF GENERICALLY, WHAT CONCLUSIONS HAVE YOU DRAWN?

A: Well, the conclusion the terrible thing -- the terrible thing is that most of us are capable of dreadfulness regardless how we were brought up. Well, maybe not. I think there is still some difference in terms of how we were brought up and what sort of insights we have gained by virtue of the way we were socialized.

And so I think there is a significant difference. There is a significant difference between people who are authoritarian and those who are not, because the authoritarians will be more susceptible to ideologies and also more willing to participate in crimes against humanity.

3549 But for all practical purposes in what we see in everyday life, that all of us are capable of things which would be defined as out of character and would be destructive. So human destructiveness is something which is not merely done by people who are full-blown sadists but by relatively, as (Howniara) said, banal individuals like Eichmann, who himself would have not initiated, I'm sure -- chances are, in terms of what, you know, the destruction. He participated because he identified with the ideology and he was given orders and wanted to advance in rank and power.

And so that is -- I think that's the danger. That's the danger. And politicians and just general individuals who are not dreadfully well read or have not looked into it, don't know that, and we all are more or less capable of these sorts of things.

And that's, I think, the dreadful

outcome of this investigation, that these people -- and that's something which I found out without any question, that the majority of the S.S. people who were perpetrators, who were doing all these ghastly, monumental crimes, under different situations, revert into the kind of behavior which is not going to break any laws. And that's exactly what I found out. They have not broken any laws. They are law abiding citizens who have not harmed anybody. That's the frightening thing.

Q: DO YOU THINK THERE --

A: Because I too went into this beginning of research, I went into this sort of thing believing that, you know, I'm going to interview an S.S. and he's going to beat me up, you know, because I projected my experience into this sort of situation, and I lost my convictions. And I said, "Hey, my God, am I going to" -- "What am I doing exposing myself to all of this? Who needs it?" Only to see that these people are just absolutely charming, concerned, hospitable.

[Videotape stopped and started.]

Q: DO YOU THINK THAT THE FORMS OF CHILD REARING AND THE PRUSSIAN ASPECT OF GERMANY MADE A LARGER CONTRIBUTION OR MADE IT MORE A FERTILE

GROUND? I'M THINKING OF SOME OF ALICE MILLER'S WORK.

A: Well, my notion is, after all the sort of research and reflection, is that the socialization process which took place in Germany and in some European, central European countries as well, apparently rendered people more susceptible to ideologies, totalitarian absolutist ideologies. And that, I think, is a key issue because people will not become destructive unless they are persuaded to be destructive. And this persuasion is only possible when I'm susceptible to it.

And the idea is, for example, what I'm trying to do with my son, know that indeed do all I can so that he will question authority, that he will question belief systems which indeed are mixed rather than just buy into it and let themselves be influenced by them. And I think that's something which we can do and we can do by way of proper socialization. And that is my conclusion.

Now, I use myself as an example for that because I didn't buy into any of these sorts of ideologies, may they be communist or any absolutist ideologies which make you see enemies in people who have heretofore been your friends or your neighbors. And I'm not going to be persuaded to accept that.

And I think that's what I believe with my students. I'm explaining all this to them, and I think it will be more difficult to persuade some of my students who have taken my classes or have been exposed to the oral course lecture series or what have you, to become true believers. And so that's a crucial step, step No. 1.

And also where I don't have much influence is to appeal to politicians to see to it that there will not be outlets which will be socially acceptable outlets to do harm to other people, and that includes the types of businesses which are obviously counterproductive, and total institutions, what we call "total institutions" in which other people simply have to act up on assigned roles. These sorts of things, once they exist, provide outlets for human destructiveness.

And I think if we are mindful of that and if we bring up people who will see that, we can reduce the resolution of conflict, which we will have at all times, with violent means to a minimum. And that's what I find to be one of my major life goals to attain in my role as educator or as an individual who speaks his mind.

Q: I'M THINKING HOW TO GO BACK AND

FOLLOW HOW YOU CAME TO BE THE EDUCATOR INVOLVED IN THE HOLOCAUST ASPECTS AT SONOMA STATE. IN THE FIFTIES YOU WENT TO FREIBERG AND DID YOUR DOCTORAL WORK THERE. BUT YOU MUST HAVE, I PRESUME, COME BACK TO THE UNITED STATES SOMEWHAT AFTER THE DOCTORATE WAS FINISHED?

A Well, the same year, actually. I finished my doctorate in 1968, and that's when I came back to the United States to teach at Sonoma State. At first I had some choices, but I came there because of a colleague of mine with whom I initially taught at Berkeley, and he asked me to join him. But when I came, he had left, you know. He decided to leave. So I actually assumed his position rather than a position which was available to me which was vacant, and which I think is -- it was kind of a shame. But that's what happened.

Q: IN THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

A: Yeah. And then I stayed, for reasons which still escape me.

Q: DID YOU START RIGHT OUT TEACHING HOLOCAUST-RELATED COURSES?

A: Not really, because first of all, I had to think about things, how to teach them and to what extent there would be interest in them, and to

begin with, I don't think there was much interest. And what I think is the irony that most of my Jewish colleagues in the department were the ones who were least interested and didn't want to have anything to do with it and were certainly not supportive. They still are not supportive. And that is something which I think is unforgiving.

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTIVE?

A: I'll be damned if I know. I think they are dreadfully ignorant and insensitive.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) DEFENSIVE AGAINST THE --

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) DEFENSIVE?

A: Insensitive.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) WELL, I WAS GOING TO SAY DEFENSIVE; IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST A SUBJECT THAT --

A: Defensive too, but I have not encountered any more insensitive individuals than I have met there, in terms of my profession, in contrast to people I have met elsewhere. Just like (Philippe Simbardo), who exceedingly understands the problem and has devoted a great deal of his efforts to shared insight and shared understanding to any sort of

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dreadful problem. So I haven't had any help from the department whatsoever.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) SO WHEN DID YOU BEGIN TO TEACH THE HOLOCAUST IN YOUR COURSES?

A: Well, I started the first class sometime in the early -- I think early seventies or mid-seventies, and I had no takers. No one came.

Q: DID YOU JUST INTRODUCE THIS BY YOURSELF?

A: Yes, well, I just offered that.

Q: UH-HUH.

A: No one came.

Q: NO ONE?

A: And then I just was, of course, disappointed, and then I waited for a few years. And then I started again. And then I've had I think the class -- the first one was when you came.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) UH-HUH.

A: Which was in 1980- --

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) '84?

A: '84, yeah. And before that I had maybe one, two trials, and nothing very much developed. And so the first more full-fledged class with a sufficient number of students was at that particular time, which was, as I said, 1984.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) THERE WERE ABOUT
A DOZEN OF US.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) DID YOU HAVE
DIFFICULTY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OR THE UNIVERSITY TO
TEACH THIS THING?

A: It was uphill all the way. And now
we have someone who is very supportive. We have a
dean who is very sympathetic, who is a historian. And
generally the historians are much more sympathetic
than any of the sociologists or psychologists I have
encountered so far.

And so they cooperate, and they are
very supportive. And this dean who is a historian is
very supportive and has been very kind to us in making
things possible which other people are not at all
interested in or just simply felt were unnecessary
sorts of reminders of unpleasantness.

I find it very disappointing,
exceedingly. I mean, it's one my great
disappointments in life that I have dealt with people
who are dreadfully myopic and limited in their
vision. And of course, it has something to do with
the institution itself because the region in which
Sonoma State is and all that particular -- it is a
provincial place.

I don't know. From what I understand, it would not be that different probably at San Francisco State. I don't know. But I have the feeling that in this part of the country, I don't think this is a subject which people would be interested in studying.

Q: DO YOU THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE TIMING OR THE CLIMATE OF THINGS IN THE MID-EIGHTIES?

A: Well, it has something to do with it for sure, you know, the mood of the times, dominant mood of the times, which is changing. I think that has very much to do with it.

Q: BUT THIS BURGEONING INTEREST IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, I WONDER IF THERE WAS ANYTHING SPECIAL HAPPENING THAT WOULD BRING MORE STUDENTS TO THE CLASS.

A: Well, politically, you know, you've had Cambodia; you've had genocide taking place in different parts of the world. And then some people consciously or subconsciously respond to that, and they may be more susceptible to developing interest in the area. But by and large, I have found, with the exception of a lecture series in there, we have people who just look for two units which they would fit into

their curriculum, and that is something which happened just in the last year and will happen this year.

They say, "Well, we can fit that in. We are not terribly interested." And they are very up front. "We are not really interested in that, but you know, it just fits in," and so they might try it.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YES, IN THIS CASE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT STUDENTS IN THEIR TWENTIES MOSTLY.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) YES.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) AND UNDERGRADUATES GRADUATES.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) YES. AND WHEN DID THE LECTURE SERIES BEGIN?

A: A couple of years ago.

Q: HOW DID THAT GET INITIATED?

A: Well, that was initiated by the Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust, and that's a communal organization --

Q: COMMUNITY --

A -- communal organization of American Jews who, for reasons which are not clear to me, just are motivated (). I've got some

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notions but --

Q: ARE YOU WILLING TO SAY?

A: Oh, well, maybe guilt because they have not really done very much to assist those who were under pressure, you know, while they could. Some of them are fairly old and haven't done really very much for anyone. They are not doing very much for me personally either, for that matter.

3900 So I think () guilt has some place in it. And so they do it and initiate it because they felt that would be a useful outlet for making a contribution.

Q: DO THEY DO ANYTHING ELSE OTHER THAN THE LECTURE SERIES?

A: Well, they try to have events in the community, such as --

3914 Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) (Yarmashowa)?

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) Yarmashowa?

A: Yarmashowa. And Kristallnacht to commemorate and all that these sorts of things. They try, which is not easy because not that many people are interested in it and would want to hear about it.

Some years ago there was some interest, and the local radio broadcast station interviewed us, and they were supportive. And they

had one event which was exceedingly well attended. I couldn't go, but it was supposed to be very successful.

So yes, we are trying, and then, of course, what now we will be trying to do simply because of the law, we hope to be getting some money for it, to have lectures of some sort of introduction to the Holocaust for high school teachers. And so that might be something which may or may not develop by virtue of the fact that this needs to be -- that it is the law that this needs to be taught.

So that may be productive. But you see, there is also -- there are not that many people who are qualified to teach it properly. And it's not simply enough to tell you how it was in concentration camps, although it's fine and it's important and all. But I think much too much time is spent on the descriptive part and not enough on the interpretive part.

And that's what I'm trying to do. And that's not always well received because it's more complex, it is a bit more abstract, and does not come out with all the gory stuff which kind of people like to hear because it's sensationalist and it satisfies whatever curiosity they may have.

So we see that also in our students, because the students, when they respond to the student faculty S.S. men questionnaire and the contents of the lecture series, they invariably say that the most meaningful or the most stimulating presentations were panels of survivors and generally panels of people who are eye witnesses of either liberators and -- so they seem to be the most popular. And that tells you something. It tells you something, that people want to hear the descriptive part of that and not that much interest in the interpretation of it.

Q: WELL, ALTHOUGH THE IMMEDIATE EXPERIENCE, I THINK, PROBABLY --

A: Oh, yes, I'm not discounting the importance of it, but I don't think it's enough because it doesn't get us any further. We need to understand what can be understood in order to prevent it. And otherwise it's all for the bad. We stimulate emotions maybe and disturb people, yes, but it's not going to change anything.

Q: NO. I FEEL LIKE YOU ARE DOING BOTH, THOUGH, IN THIS INTERVIEW.

A: Oh, yes, I think you need to do both in order to make it clearer to the people, and

that is something which I have seen also in my present class, Sociology of Holocaust and Genocide, where I have young students, and they simply very quickly became very saturated with the abstract theories, which I consider to be exceedingly insightful, but, I mean, their level of sophistication did not permit them to appreciate that.

So then they staged a, so to speak, palace revolution and said, "But when are you going to tell us about the real thing, actually tell us about your experience?" and all that.

4016 And I'm a bit -- not very happy with it and just to make it possible for people to have an experience which will be meaningful by giving the descriptive stuff and also associated with an interpretation which will develop the insights necessary for them to act in everyday life to prevent, is exceedingly difficult, and to develop a (paragogy) which will do it is a work for a lifetime.

And since we are the generation, and I am one of the younger ones, of survivors, with one foot in the grave so to speak, I think we have to prepare for who is going to teach the students after we are gone. And I don't know if very many people are interested or capable or equipped to do that. And I

don't think there has been any preparation.

So when we die, there will be books, maybe, which have been written, and there will be some stories, and there will be oral history which is exceedingly important. That's, I think, the next best thing of the real stuff. And that is going to be exceedingly important, but other than that, I don't see very much.

So the Oral History Project, I think, is something which cannot be overrated as an exceedingly important contribution.

Q: YES.

A: And that's why, you know, that's why I'm willing to do what I can to do my share.

Q: THANK YOU.

A: But I'm not very optimistic in terms of other things which are being done to perpetuate the teaching of the Holocaust after we are gone. I'm not dreadfully optimistic as to who will assume the responsibility, if it will be assumed at all.

Q: DO YOU THINK THIS COULD HAPPEN AGAIN?

A: Well, it's happening. It's happening all over the world. You look at Iraq; you

look at Cambodia; you look at many places in Africa; you look at Turkey. It's happening. And it will continue to happen until we will educate people who will become politicians.

So I think that the dreadful problem is that we have politicians who are utterly ignorant and unqualified to even begin to understand the complexities. They are into power. They are into limelight. They are into satisfaction of their personal needs without being properly educated and socialized to assume this responsibility for this tremendously consequential role they assume.

And talking about role models and people who really have attained this, the one I keep on mentioning to people who will listen is Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, who was a sociologist, a humanist, a philosopher; who was a philosopher king in that case, philosopher president; who to some extent was also very close to Woodrow Wilson. I think Woodrow Wilson had many of the attributes which are needed for someone who is a president. He just became very gravely ill. It was sad.

But he had the vision and the understanding, and I think a potential president who

probably could have grown into his position was certainly John F. Kennedy, whom I have encountered back at Berkeley when he got his honorary doctorate. I sat just vis-a-vis of him and just observed him and didn't talk to him, of course, never had a chance to talk to him. But, anyway, just was able to....

And Adlai Stevenson was certainly one of them. But other than that, I think Harry -- old Harry Truman had some of the potential and probably would have listened to some of the survivors if they had talked to him.

4121 But those people we've had in recent times, forget it. I mean, you know, it's just a sad commentary to what shouldn't be. And so I wish I could teach people who will have a -- or would have become potential leaders on a large level, and that obviously is not -- the places they have (Towel) University and Harvard, and I've made a terrible mistake that instead of Harvard I went to Missouri because I didn't know any better.

And an example is old Henry. And he played it right. And look at his, you know, secretary of state, a Yid, you know, and with an accent. And yet he made it. Why did he make it? Because he is superior? Well, certainly, he has a

very good mind, although I do not think that he is dreadfully ethical, but that is another point.

But he is a person who went through Harvard and made his contacts, and that is something I was reminded of when one of Hitler's very close associates at that particular time until he came into power and a few years after that was a person who studied in the United States and at Harvard, and he then via England came to the United States and, because he got to know Roosevelt at the university, was used as an informant and as a person to inform the president in a special position. Instead of being put into some sort of a business, as a criminal, he had a special status given to him by President Roosevelt, by virtue of the fact that he was a Harvard man and had tremendous contacts.

4159 And his name was (Putsy Haunshtingle). And it was written a very interesting biographic account relating to the association, he says the (Association Triofekle), which I think first appeared in English before it actually appeared in German. Exceedingly readable and I think a very accurate account.

4163 So Putsy Haunshtingle was a Harvard graduate, and that made all the difference, even

though he was a close associate of Hitler's and furthered the cause and all that until somehow because of his intelligence, he began to see some light, not very much, and events simply triggered the fact that he felt obligated to escape Germany because he felt his life was threatened by an event which was kind of a joke which they played to the Nazi -- Goering played a joke on him.

And he took that very seriously, and in spite of assurances that it was a joke, he just felt that they were after him, and he may have been right. And so he escaped and via England came to the United States and became a wartime advisor, so to speak, to the administration.

Q: WHICH MAKES ME THINK, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE KIND OF WORLDWIDE THREAT OF NAZI GROUPS, I.E., THOSE WHO ESCAPED GERMANY AND WENT TO LATIN AMERICA, DIFFERENT ENCLAVES?

A: Well, I think they make a very -- by and large, they've assimilated and certainly are still a very formidable influence in terms of making contributions, a general, if you will, rightist mood prevailing in these countries. I think they are certainly very much at home.

But I think their influence is

limited by virtue of the fact that most of these people, the old guard are dead. And by old age or disease, they are no longer around. And so if I had, for example, not interviewed all these S.S. generals in time, you know -- very shortly afterwards they all died. I wouldn't have had a chance, you see. And then I realized that very soon, and that was too late already almost, you know, when I started. I should have started much earlier, but I just simply didn't have the means to do that.

So I don't think they are any force anymore by virtue of the fact that they are not very much around, and not only that, children will perpetuate anything in extremis.

But I'm more concerned about the young people who are susceptible to some of these ideologies because of their low self-esteem and self-image, identity which is an unpleasant one, and so they will be susceptible to any sort of ideology which tells them that they are superior, not inferior. So I think that's a tremendous danger.

Now, I think that was very functional in the case of pre-Nazi Germany because there you have a vanquished nation which used to played a very major role in European history and lost

the ball for the first time, you know, because before that they were very successful in winning the wars. And having to come to terms with that, adjusting, affected the self-esteem.

Now, Hitler, just an unbelievably brilliant sort of stroke to say, "Hey, you are not inferior. You are superior. You think you are inferior. These are the scapegoats responsible for all the misery, and you are victims because you are such fantastic people, unblemished with mischief, and that's because you are superior."

Now, if I feel inferior, I want to believe that. I certainly will accept that as an alternative, viable alternative, and feel better.

And I think it's a momentum which should not be forgotten. I think it's an exceedingly very important ingredient in terms of the attraction of any sort of movement which resembles this sort of a racist situation, because who are the people who are attracted to such belief systems are people who are failures and have low self-esteem. Hitler certainly did. And most of his followers are losers.

And so if I say, "You are not a loser. You are a winner and superior," my God, I'm going to jump on the bandwagon and feel better for it

and say what I can do to prove to you that I am not a loser, that I am indeed a superior person who is a winner.

And I think that has been not sufficiently emphasized, why, indeed, national socialism has been so successful and was accepted by so many people.

Q: I NOW THINK YOU WERE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE CONNECTION OF THE CIA AND THE S.S.

A: Well, it's a very important thing that Karl Wolff cooperated with the CIA back in the so-called armistice, special armistice in northern Italy and the allied forces, and that particular event shortened the war in northern Italy by virtue of his cooperation with Alan Dulles, who at that particular point was the American intelligence representative in Bonn, Switzerland. And that particular cooperation is known as Operation Sunrise.

And this particular documentary I was asked to work on two years ago was just being shown in Germany and Switzerland, without me getting any explicit credit for it. Although I have done a lot of research which was used, made available to them because they hired me to do that as a consultant, I didn't get any credit for it.

So during that Operation Sunrise, Wolff, who could see, of course, the sinking ship of Nazidom and his very vulnerable position, tried to save his skin and that of many other people and turned from a fanatical Hitler supporter into a traitor by cooperating with Alan Dulles to have a special status.

So the German forces, German armed forces, that situation there would be ended, and he was one of the prime initiators against all sorts of obstacles and went to Hitler to get his approval, and that made it very palatable to him so that he is more seen as okay, although Himmler and Ernst Kaltenbrunner, who was Heinrich's successor, were very, very eager to see to it that he would be punished as a traitor.

And so he was able to come to Hitler and persuade him that what he was doing was in the interest of Germany and put it in such words because he was a very glib individual, was getting the so-called okay and continued to do what he did, namely, negotiate with the allies via Alan Dulles, and succeeded so that indeed they have had armistice on -- well, relatively before the general armistice, and by -- and that goes to his credit, whatever his motives were, whereby a hundred thousand of people's

lives were saved.

And the interesting thing is also that the -- he had almost a duel with Adolf Eichmann by virtue of the fact that he was trying to get some people who were being deported, either people were deported to just get them exempt or just see to it that they would not be deported and intervene for these people who were not full-blooded -- "full-blooded" quote, unquote, again, you know -- who were not real full Jews, but enough to be deported. And they almost had a duel because Eichmann -- you know, he was a mere lieutenant colonel, and he was a full general. Adolf simply wouldn't have any part of it and almost came to a duel. And that's a fact because I discussed all these things with Karl Wolff.

So this was the first CIA connection.

Q: IS THIS THE INFORMATION THAT --

A: Well, no, there was much more to it because -- much more to it, some of which he told me, some of which he didn't. But that was the CIA connection which at that time was not CIA because it was CIC and what have you and did not exist CIA in -- only after the war.

But that brought about the contact

of the S.S., which is what later became the CIA. And so that's how that developed. That was one of the first contacts.

Q: THAT WAS REALLY A POSITIVE OUTCOME?

A: Yes, in this case a positive outcome. And so because of his contacts, he also was brought to the Nuremberg trial as a witness in full uniform. And he was the only one who came with his S.S. rank and full uniform and because of these various contacts.

Now, also he was not accused and was not sentenced by the international court for whatever he had done, which was known by virtue of his activities, and that only came up in the early sixties when he was very active and very successful in his business.

But then because he was an ambitious individual and missed the glory of his Nazi position as a very influential senior S.S. general, he then enjoyed giving interviews so that he would again be in some sort of a semblance of the limelight, and that brought his past to the attention of the legal authorities, the criminal justice system.

And they started to, you know, become very suspicious and started digging until they

found out that, yes, he was tainted with mischief, and that he indeed assisted the Nazi authorities, although that was not his major occupation and function, but that he intervened on the part of the S.S., the Nazi authorities, with the person he knew was in charge of the transportation system in Germany to make these boxcars, these cattle wagons, available to the S.S. so that they could ship thousands of people to Treblinka.

And so that came up, and they found that this was the case because he wrote telegrams and had a communication with these people, very specifically saying, you know, these things to -- and thank the person who was in charge to whom he wrote these communications, thanked him for his cooperation that he made indeed these boxcars available.

And that was found, of course, in the documentation. And he was therefore accused for aiding the destruction of Jews who were sent to Treblinka, and sentenced 15 years.

Q: THESE OTHER S.S. GENERALS WERE NOT BROUGHT TO THE TRIALS?

A: Oh, yes, as witnesses and what have you.

Q: BUT, NO, I MEAN CHARGED.

A: Oh. Well, charged, wherever they could find some documentation and all that, and that is something which either happened locally, in the case of Bukselefski, or through the center of the judicial system which brings war criminals -- that is to say, criminals against humanity -- to justice, which is in Ludwigsburg.

And they have small fish and all that, people who were responsible for crimes against humanity in concentration camps. They bring them to justice.

And I was, for example, just kind of moot situation, I was a witness, and I was interviewed in Freiberg by an attorney. Well, he was actually a -- yes, a state attorney -- to be a witness against Josef Mengele.

And then I was also a witness, and I was interviewed by very pro-Nazi consul or vice consul in San Francisco in connection with one of the concentration camps I was in in terms of being a witness, and this man was so unbelievably hostile it was not even funny. And I told him a few things too. Just a real S.O.B. And you could see where his sympathy was, you know. He treated me like -- just unbelievable, just unbelievable. And I really should

have written a letter to the president of the Federal Republic of Germany and complained about that.

But anyway, so I was a witness in these two situations, and nothing has come of it. First of all, they didn't get ahold of Josef Mengele. And secondly -- although I know that he actually went back to Germany. I know that from eye witnesses with whom I talked from the town where I did some investigation, in the town in Bavaria from where he actually came and where his family had a very large organization which virtually employed many people of that township, all these sort of machinery, agricultural machinery, production of agricultural machinery. So he came back with impunity, with impunity. And people saw him, and nothing happened.

Q: SO WHILE YOU WERE TEACHING WHEN YOU WERE AT SONOMA STATE, SEVERAL SUMMERS YOU WOULD GO BACK TO GERMANY AND DO RESEARCH?

4522 A: Yes. And also I had some Fulbright fellowships, and I've had an (Alexander Umbrow) fellowship last year for three months. So I use that time to do whatever I can, but I mean, it just requires a great deal of time to dig and find and all that. And as I said, most of the people who really were perpetrators, they are all dead by now. They are

all dead. And there are some still younger ones who are still around, and junior people, relatively junior people by virtue of age, who also know a great deal, and they are still around, and also I try to interview and talk to and visit and do whatever I can, you know, to learn from them what can be found out.

And one of them is the editor-in-chief of the so-called Schwartzig Hall, the "Black Hall," which was the official S.S. news report which came out -- I think it was a weekly paper -- which had a circulation of 1 million.

And he's still around, and he knows a great deal. But he is very offensive, and I was fortunate enough to have taped interviews with him until the time, which was last year, because of the broadcast, because of television appearances in Germany, found out about my background, and his wife became exceedingly hostile, although he wasn't.

And that is something which is quite interesting, that some of the wives are very protective of their Nazi husbands. The interesting thing is that the Nazi husbands shed their old wives and got more recent editions of wives, you know, generation of wives, and many of whom have not even consciously experienced the Third Reich.

And this one is one of them, a very attractive woman with whom he procreated some children, and she is very protective of him. So she really gave me a hard time when I went to see him, which he promised, and she prevented it. She prevented it. It was last summer.

Q: YOU MENTIONED A BIT AGO THAT AT ONE POINT YOU WERE INTERVIEWING SOMEONE WITH YOUR WIFE. AND I WONDER, WAS YOUR WIFE AMERICAN?

A: No. My wife was German.

Q: SHE WAS GERMAN?

A: Yes. And I met her at the University of Freiberg.

Q: I SEE.

A: And so no -- she knew Karl Wolff very well, and through me, and through me she also went with me to visit Albert Speer, with whom I had a very interesting encounter, very lengthy and interesting encounter, correspondence, and numerous telephone conversations. And that is something which I've mentioned in one of my writings dealing with primarily my experience in concentration camps.

Q: YOU INTERVIEWED SPEER ALSO?

A: Yes, Albert Speer. On several occasions I was with him, met with him, in person

twice and had written communications with him and several telephone conversations.

Q: AND WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION?

A: Well, my impression is that he was a very hardy, intelligent person who was an expert manipulator, who also, I think, showed some degree of regret but in a way which was to his advantage. And he knew it, and he played that particular game very skillfully. Whenever I came in, he just didn't -- had a nice coffee and all this. But he -- I could see in his eyes he was scared to death that I would just make a scene. And I could see that he was very apprehensive.

And so I had to set him somehow at ease because otherwise he wouldn't have talked. He just thought that I would blast him. And in a way, I certainly said to him, "You were responsible for slave labor camps. And I think you were also my boss."

And he said, "No, no," very defensively. "No, I was not your boss. It was Hermann Goering. He was your boss. That was not my" -- the (syn fuel) plant in (Blackhammal) where I was a slave laborer -- "It was not under my jurisdiction. It was Hermann's jurisdiction." Very defensive about that. And of course, he was the boss

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of other slave labor camps. They made rockets, for which thousands of people were killed and worked to death.

And so somehow he played his cast very skillfully. And he certainly just portrayed himself as a person with regrets, and to some extent, I gave him the benefit of the doubt. And not only that, but he also alluded to the fact that he was trying to assassinate Hitler or thought about it, fretted on that, and wanted to put poisonous gas through the bunker in which they had this sort of air system which brought in fresh air, and he wanted to put -- and all these sorts of things.

But I and people who knew him just simply laughed because he was known as a very enthusiastic supporter of Hitler, who was his mentor and made it possible that he became what he had. And that was not because he was not a Nazi or not a collaborator or whatever he may be. Let's say he was an opportunist. Well, I mean, that doesn't make him any less guilty.

So then he somehow disassociated himself from his role as a very enthusiastic supporter of Hitler, well, obviously because when the going was getting tough and it was obvious that Germany had lost

the war, all sorts of people tried to save their skins by making claims which were kind of laughable, ridiculous.

4669 I talked to the president of the Federal Republic, (Ribka), when I was invited along with other -- Alexander Von Humbolt, people who had fellowships there. This Alexander Von Humbolt fellow, he invited us, and he was a talkative individual and all that, and he was accused of -- Heinrich Ribka, President Heinrich Ribka accused him of being responsible for constructing barracks in concentration camps, and he was publicly accused of that.

And I had a chance talking to him in private back in the White House back in Germany. And I asked him, "Mr. President, there are these accusations. I am very interested. I am a researcher. I would like to know what" --

"Oh, well, let them talk. There is nothing to it."

"Well, if there is nothing to it, so it's very easy for you to say 'I'm not guilty.' Why don't you -- "

"Well, let them talk. I don't care."

And then we discussed things

further, and he was very evasive in a way, and obviously he was tainted with mischief. No question about it. He was not a dreadfully clever person to begin with, not a very intelligent individual.

And then he said, "Well, you know, Dr. Steiner" or "Professor Steiner," whatever he said, "There was only a handful of Nazis in Germany," and that was something which was just really unbelievable. "Handful of Nazis in Germany." I'm quoting him.

So after the war, you know, just like now. You go to Czechoslovakia; no one is communist; and no one knows a Nazi. No one was a Nazi. You couldn't find any Nazis anymore. You can't find any Nazis.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR WIFE? WHAT WERE HER POLITICS AS SHE UNDERSTOOD THEM GROWING UP IN GERMANY?

A: Well, I mean, she was the daughter of a Prussian officer, you know, who was just an absolute German chauvinist. And I should have, you know -- and I was very much aware of it -- said, "Hey, my God, what the hell am I getting into here?"

So, yes, he was a person, when she came after two or three years or whatever it was to see him and visit him, instead of embracing her or

kissing or just what normal people would do, he just shook her hand. That's all. "Nice to see you. How are you?" That's all. Just absolute, you know, no feelings, no nothing.

And that's something which I should have taken more seriously. But I thought, well, maybe we can overcome it. Well, I just couldn't.

Q: WHAT WAS HER NAME?

A: (Ureka).

Q: UREKA?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: WAS SHE YOUR AGE ALSO?

A: No, she was not my age I'm happy to say. At least that part was -- no, she is 14 years younger than I. I like to follow President Masaryk's advice, to associate with women somewhat younger than I, for reasons which do not escape me.

Q: AND SO WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A: In '68.

Q: AND WHEN WAS YOUR SON BORN?

A: My son was born in '79.

Q: OBVIOUSLY YOU WERE MARRIED FOR
QUITE A WHILE.

A: Yes, quite a while.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR SON'S NAME?

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A: Ingmar.

Q: INGMAR. WAS HE BORN IN THE
UNITED STATES?

A: He was born in San Francisco, I am
happy to say. And he just is totally identifying with
that and very proud of it, that he was born in
San Francisco.

Q: HOW DID YOUR WIFE --

A: And on the 22nd of April. And I
just really pushed it, and I said, "Hey, God, don't do
it to me that you would be born on the 20th of April.
I couldn't take it." 20th of April is Hitler's
birthday, in case you don't know. And so fortunately
he was born on the 22nd. And so I said, "Just hold
on, hold on. Just give me those few days." Would
have been not a very pleasant memento.

Q: NO. HOW DID YOUR WIFE REACT TO
BEING IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: Not well because she didn't like
it.

Q: SHE DIDN'T?

A: (Dr. Steiner shakes his head from
side to side.) It was not her cup of tea. She never
adjusted. Never adjusted.

Q: DID SHE HAVE ANY INTERESTS OF HER

OWN, I MEAN, CERTAINLY DURING THAT LONG PERIOD YOU WERE IN CALIFORNIA?

A: Well, you know, primarily having an easy life, relatively speaking, you know, not working too much and catering to her own interests, whatever they were, you know. Yeah.

Q: DID YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR HOLOCAUST EXPERIENCE WITH HER?

A: Oh, yeah, very much so. I mean, she typed an entire book manuscript and many other manuscripts she typed, and did an excellent job, and helped me with editing and all that. So she was very helpful in that.

But she got very adamant that I should discontinue all these sorts of things about the Third Reich, and she became saturated with all that and tired of it, and wanted me to just simply disassociate myself from that. And not just because of her feelings, but also she felt very genuinely that it would be also better for me.

And so that was a bone of contention because eventually if I had done what I think I want to accomplish, I have other interests and all that, don't want to dwell on it permanently, to be sure, as long as I -- but there are certain things

which I feel obligated, and I particularly feel obligated to those people who were very close to me and were my friends and, if they had lived, would have made very important contributions to humanity.

4801 I feel obligated to do what I can, which is less than they could have done if they had lived because very many of these people are just outright geniuses. And I was very fortunate to be able to associate with them, particularly in Theresienstadt where we had a group of people under a kind of leadership of two people, one was (Freddie Hirsch), and the other one was (Uster Shorsch).

And these people were absolutely role models to me and significant others, not only because of their humanity but because of their intellectual brilliance and leadership and backbone, profile in courage, you name it. And just about all together 30 of us, and I am the only one who survived. All the other ones died, including all the other leaders too of the particular youth groups.

And that is an unbelievable loss. Unbelievable loss not only to me personally but also because they were what I would consider to be the better people. And that also helped me somehow to consider the possibility that indeed the better people

have not returned and that those of us who have are not exactly the cream of the crop. And you know, that's something which I suspect is the case.

Q: IN ONE SENSE, THOUGH, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT MAY BE VERY MEANINGFUL FOR YOU TO DO THE THINGS IN THE WORLD YOU DO AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE.

A: Well, I mean, that's what I said about -- their representative. I mean, I know that that's what they would want me to do. But I simply, intellectually and otherwise, I'm much more limited than they were because they were the brilliant people. I'm not. And so that to me is very regrettable because I think their contribution would have been far superior to whatever I can do.

And being aware of that, you know, I just feel very humble. But on the other hand, I'm trying to do what I can in spite of all the obstacles which are put into my way. And there is no question that this is the case.

And I've had little support from the Jewish circle, virtually none. I have very little support from my colleagues, and I'm just a lonely person in a desert, so to speak, with some few individuals who, for reasons of their own, are supportive, and they themselves are struggling like

that, for example, like poor Ms. Horowitz. I'm saying "Horovitz," with an accent.

So it's just a struggle, and I'm getting very tired of that struggle.

Q: DO YOU THINK THIS WAS THE WEDGE THAT CAME BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR WIFE, OR A WEDGE?

A: Well, yes, it was, yes, a wedge. There is no question about that.

Q: AND I GATHER THAT INGMAR IS LIVING FAIRLY NEARBY?

A: Well, very fairly nearby in Germany at this point.

Q: OH, IN GERMANY. SO SHE RETURNED TO GERMANY WITH YOUR SON?

A: That's right. Yes. She wanted to return for quite a long time.

Q: SO YOU REALLY LOST HIS PRESENCE ALSO?

A: That's right, which I think is, you know, a very serious matter which I never would have done to anyone.

Q: YES.

A: Under the circumstances, especially. But that's what is happening. And how it will evolve in the future? Well, I had him here last

summer; he didn't want to return.

Q: REALLY?

A: And he said, "Well, I'm going to run away and wait until the plane has left, and then I will come back and use the money for the plane ticket," because he is so very European, very thrifty. He is a penny pincher because that is what he learned from me. Penny pincher because, you know, that's what has transpired.

But by virtue of divorce and things of that nature, I'm just lost -- lost my existential security for the third time: once under the Nazis, second time under the communists, and third time because of the family problem. So now it's too late for me to start again, financially, just to recuperate is virtually impossible at this point, at my age.

Q: WELL, FINANCIALLY, DO YOU MEAN EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY?

A: Well, that too, but I mean financially, emotionally, and psychologically, but also financially because everything which I worked for which was quite nice and comfortable was either lost to attorney fees or some other fees, dividing property and this sort of thing, and very little is going to be left. And to live on that is going to be a very, very

difficult thing to do.

Q: SO DID YOU ACTUALLY GET DIVORCED
YET?

A: I'm in the process.

Q: RIGHT NOW?

A: Yes.

Q: BUT YOU SOUND AS THOUGH YOU HAVE
BEEN SEPARATED FOR A WHILE.

A: Oh, yeah, we have been separated
for a while, off and on.

Q: BUT NOW YOU ARE ACTUALLY --

A: And that whole time she went back
to Germany.

Q: AND HOW OFTEN ARE YOU SEEING YOUR
SON?

A: Well, as often as I can, just once
a year. Usually during the summer because he goes to
school there, and he can't come, and I can't go there,
you know. So far I have been able to see him more
than I normally would by virtue of the fact that I
have these sorts of assignments back in Europe which
were paid. So financially it was feasible because
they paid the trip and they paid for my stay there and
they would make a bit of money. But that may cease,
you know. That may -- it's not something on which I

can depend.

Q: HAVE YOU TALKED WITH INGMAR ABOUT YOUR HOLOCAUST EXPERIENCE?

A: Oh, yes, I've talked to him the first time -- of course, he's seen my books because they left in '89. So he has seen my books and "Hitler" and all that, and looks at some of them. But I didn't force it on him at all. I just took it just step by step.

And when he was interested now when he came back last summer, I showed him some -- a movie which I participated in and was a consultant on and was doing -- which was "Hitler, Man or Myth." And I showed that to him, and I showed him the short stip, 15 minutes of liberation of concentration camps.

And he said, "Why do you show me these terrible things?"

And I said, "Well, I feel it's just about time that you know what I've been through. And we can talk about it." And he talked and was getting more and more interested in it and reads and said in class and all this, "I read this" and all this. So he just keeps on telling me.

But again, I'm very careful not to force it on him. But last summer I felt it was time

that he could face up to some of the things so that he gets some sort of a feeling for it, in effect, because my wife never talked to him about that, and somehow tends to avoid this and deemphasize it, if you like to put it that way.

And I feel that I don't want to emphasize it, but I don't want to deemphasize it so that I respond to him -- and I think he is ready for it -- and not burden him unnecessarily when I think he cannot digest it.

But I think it's important he knows what I have been through and also what role the Germans have played. And I think that will, in essence, influence him because chances are that they want to come here for higher education, one; and two, he would rather live here permanently than in Germany.

But again, that is not something which I will force. I hope that this will develop, whatever is the best for him. And I know this place is right now, you know, we don't have much of a rosy future to look forward to at this point. So, you know, there you go. So it's a problem. Certainly Germany is everything () for so many reasons.

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So it's a problem.

Q: IS HE LEARNING IN GERMAN SCHOOLS
TOO?

A: Well, he hasn't so far. He hasn't so far, no, because it was not part of the thing. Now I think he is in an age where they probably will go into it. And he will let me know about that. I talk to him over the phone every two weeks for at least an hour, just about an hour anyway.

So he writes to me and I write to him. He doesn't write to me much because he is dreadfully lazy. People who are very -- he is very intelligent, and that is a handicap because if things come easy to him, he just simply leaves it because everything tends to come easy to him.

And he is not used to working hard. He has kind of a lazy streak in him so that his writing, he doesn't like to write very much. And he wrote me because he enjoys using the typewriter. So now because he has now a reason to do something which he enjoys, he probably will be writing more.

Q: I THINK I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT
AND ASK IF OTHER PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU ANYTHING
UP TO THIS POINT.

A: All right.

Q: (BY MR. PARIS) YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE -- I'M INTERESTED IN HOW YOU -- I PERCEIVE A KIND OF A SCHIZOID CHARACTER TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE AT THE TIME THAT YOU WERE DOING YOUR INTERVIEWS. HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THEIR NEED TO BOTH PURGE THEMSELVES OF THEIR GUILT, AT THE SAME TIME PERPETUATE SOME OF THE MYTH OF THE PAST?

A: Well, I think that's an understandable question, primarily because they live in two different realities. They lived in Nazi Germany, which was a very specific surreal reality, not at that particular time, but looking back today it is surreal. And so they -- their major professional life and their success stems from Nazi Germany, on one hand.

But Nazi Germany did not prevail, and they had to adjust to a new reality, which is the quasi -- and I am stressing "quasi" -- democratic leader to which they had to adjust. So they sit between two chairs, so to speak, because they had to remain functioning in these two different realities.

And that I think is the reason or that is perhaps the reason why they are schizoid because they had to adjust to the new reality, yet could not quite cut the umbilical cord with Nazi

Germany simply because that is where they were in limelight and that's where they were exceedingly powerful and that's where they enjoyed their glory, which disappeared after they lost World War II, and had to adjust to new realities which were not as meaningful and certainly not as rewarding as the Nazi reality.

So that makes sense to me why they would be schizoid, which they are, in so many ways. I believe that's indeed what they are because they lived in two worlds.

Q: (BY MR. PARIS) DO YOU THINK THEIR WILLINGNESS TO REPUDIATE THE PAST WAS HAMPERED IN THE DECADE FOLLOWING THE WAR BY GROUPS LIKE THE CIA WHO WERE WILLING TO DEAL WITH THEM?

A: Well, in a way, yes, because so many of them were used by the CIA because of the anticommunist fear, that is to say, the communist fear, and the anticommunist activities. And because that was more of a situational event that transcended all the other previous considerations. Therefore, they didn't care whether someone was a Nazi or was tainted with mischief as long as he served their purposes at that particular time because there is no morality attached to it or whatever.

I mean, just no morality particularly, and I wrote about these things in one of the books of which I am a coauthor. And I mean, there is no morality. It's just a totally opportunistic thing which they think they do in order to further United States. I think they cause more damage for the United States than anything else, apart from the financial losses, which are enormous.

Q: (BY MR. PARIS) FROM A SOCIOLOGIST'S POINT OF VIEW, HOW DO YOU VIEW THE PHENOMENON OF SOMEONE LIKE DAVID DUKE, WHO HAS REPUDIATED HIS PAST BUT IS NOT BELIEVED BY THE PUBLIC?

A: Well, it's just, you know, he is a reborn Christian, and I don't know to what extent it is authentic or not. I think the man is, in terms of the type of long history of activity in the Klan and other thing, I don't know why -- he is not a very viable individual in my eyes. I don't care how many times he has been reborn.

Well, I think it's a barometer of our times, and if a person actually can become a serious candidate for the governorship with his sort of background, well, that's enough to cause you to stop and think what is going on, what it indicates as far as the attraction people of that ilk have.

And I think that's a very serious matter, very serious matter. It tells us something about our time. And it's typical, also, because if you've got the socioeconomic upheaval, all these people will come out of the woodwork because there is a call for them. People need to find scapegoats for their misery. And these people are providing it.

Q: (BY MR. PARIS) DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WHO HAVE GOTTEN CAUGHT UP IN THIS TYPE OF IDEOLOGY ARE PRECLUDED FROM A POLITICAL LIFE AFTERWARDS? I'M THINKING PARTICULARLY OF SOMEONE LIKE KURT WALDHEIM.

A: Well, I mean, I don't know whether they should be rewarded with all these positions of power because obviously in the past they have not been very credible in handling responsibly.

And I talked to some S.S. people about that too. And they have the right, as anyone else, to see the errors of their ways. And I think we need to look at it also this way.

And I am not doubting that some people generally have seen the errors of their ways, except I think -- you talked about Speer a little bit earlier, a moment ago, and you know, Speer was playing a very clever card. And you can also make believe something which you then will believe yourself, as not

a lie, but as the truth. You can repeat it so many times that you can persuade yourself that you are speaking the truth although you played a very sophisticated con game.

And so I like to look at the people very carefully. So one thing which I say, which is not something which I am the one who discovered and Bernard Shaw and other people, you know, we have situations, and something which I tell my students very frequently, where you take a civil service position and you have to pass civil service tests.

Now, we have politicians and we've got senators and we've got people in the highest positions, and they are not given any tests. Now, I think we should look into their background, and I think their autobiographies or their biographies should be developed very carefully by experts, and I think they should pass tests too to what extent they have qualifications with which they claim to have.

And to be sure many people will fail miserably. And to me it's just simply totally unbelievable that if I work in some sort of a two-bit job in the civil service, I have to pass a civil service examination, those people will just become the most powerful people, we just take their word for it.

I mean, it's absolutely unbelievable. It's scandalous. It's incredible. It's ridiculous.

And it's not that much of it here because we've got enough expertise to develop these tests and administer them, and people who are really experts in that field and who on the average will be exceedingly objective.

Why on earth don't we do it? It's totally inconsistent. But obviously because the powerful, those people who have a potential to be powerful, can avoid all these sorts of unpleasantness.

Q: WE LIVE IN A POLITICAL CLIMATE RIGHT NOW THAT SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO CLEANSE THE SYSTEM. FINDING IT VERY HARD TO FIND CANDIDATES FOR THE HIGH COURT THAT HAVEN'T HAD SOME KIND OF DISCRETION IN THEIR BACKGROUND. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION, THERE HAVE BEEN INNUENDOS ABOUT THAT FOR 20 YEARS NOW. HOW DO YOU VIEW THAT FROM A SOCIOLOGIST'S POINT OF VIEW?

A: Well, you mean Kennedy -- I don't know to what specifically you are referring.

Q: HIS CONNECTION WITH THE MAFIA.

A: Well, I don't know whether he had a connection with the mafia directly. I doubt it very much. I think he had a girlfriend who was. And all

the way his girlfriends, the chances are that someone will have a mafia connection. It's a realistic possibility.

And the other ones, the youngest who is being -- who is kind of the least gifted one, I mean, he's got lots of connections too, and these connections are the only thing he has been very successful with I guess in a way. But not in terms of contribution to politics in the United States necessarily.

But many people are precisely of a doubtful moral character and very subject to corruption if not already corrupt, and if we permit them to become our leaders, I think it tells something about ourselves, you know, that we permit it.

And I think ever since Kennedy's assassination, everything has deteriorated. And I think Kennedy -- I don't care whether he was a womanizer or not. I think he had the potential of a statesman. I mean, I'm not going to judge his personal life, and I don't want to as long as he has done things which are responsible and learned and improved. And I think he could have grown into a very substantive and important statesman.

Q: (BY MR. PARIS) THAT'S ALL I HAD.

THANKS.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) CAROL, DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YEAH, I HAVE TWO LAST THINGS. I THINK WE'VE DONE VERY WELL COVERING A LOT, BUT TWO THINGS I HAVE JUST BEEN PONDERING HERE. ONE IS THAT THE TATOO THAT YOU HAVE ON YOUR ARM WHICH IS CHARACTERISTIC OF A SURVIVOR AND WHICH --

A: Auschwitz survivor, specifically, because the other ones were not tatoos. I've got two numbers. I've got a Dachau number, which was not a tatoo, but it's a number which I was given when I came to Dachau, and then I've got the Auschwitz. And the notion of the tatoo is that people with a tatoo were not to get out ever. That was the notion, that these people were there until they died, never to be released.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) SO IN A SENSE, IT'S A MARK OF DEATH?

A: Yes, absolutely.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) IT'S A MARK OF DEATH. IN MY GENERATION, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME IS THAT WHEREVER I GO, WHEN I SEE PEOPLE -- AND I DO SEE PEOPLE FROM TIME TO TIME. WHEN I WAS IN VIENNA, I SAW ONE. I WAS IN LUCERNE,

SWITZERLAND, I SAW ONE.

A: You saw one in Lucerne, really?

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YES. WHEN I WAS IN -- YES, AND I TALKED TO HIM. EXCUSE ME. NOT LUCERNE. ON THE WAY TO LUCERNE, ON THE TRAIN. IN NEW YORK I JUST SAW ONE, THE TAILOR. AND WE TALKED. HE WAS FROM MAUTHAUSEN. AND IT HAS SUCH A POWERFUL EFFECT ON ME WHENEVER I SEE SOMEONE WITH --

A: But he didn't have a tatoo because -- he was not from Mauthausen, was he? He must have been from Auschwitz.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) WELL, HE WAS IN AUSCHWITZ. BUT HE SAYS HE GOT IT AT MAUTHAUSEN.

A: Oh, yeah. But I mean the tatoo he got in Auschwitz.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) AND IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM YOURS. I THINK IT HAD A "B" IN FRONT OF IT.

A: Yes, because he came later.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YES. BUT ANYWAY WHAT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT WAS THAT I FEEL THAT KNOWING YOU AND ANY OTHER SURVIVORS THAT I'VE KNOWN, THERE IS JUST SOMETHING SO -- THE IMPACT OF HAVING A TATOO ON YOUR ARM AND GOING THROUGH YOUR LIFE WITH THIS ON YOUR ARM FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFETIME -- I MEAN,

YOU'VE HAD IT FOR MOST OF YOUR LIFETIME NOW, AS AN ADULT. AND I KNOW YOU'VE MENTIONED TO ME SEVERAL TIMES THE EFFECT OF HAVING TO HIDE IT IN AN INSTANCE, WHEN ONE OF THESE GENERALS ASKED YOU TO GO SWIMMING ON A HOT DAY, AND YOU COULDN'T TAKE OFF YOUR SHIRT SO YOU HAD TO NOT GO SWIMMING BECAUSE THEN YOU WOULD HAVE REVEALED YOU WERE A SURVIVOR IN THIS TRICKY SITUATION.

A: That was a tricky situation, yes.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YES. YOU'VE TALKED TO ME ABOUT THE FACT THAT --

A: Also during the summer when I was asked to go to an S.S. rally, and I was also a guest of honor there because it was a general, S.S. general who invited me, and I sat at the table for all the honored people. And I was perspiring something dreadfully hot.

And I couldn't take off my -- and there were S.S. Somewhere about 1,500 people. And I had to address them. So you can see how I must have sweated, particularly to say something which reflected my persuasion and did not antagonize them too much because I had 1,500 to 1, they could have clobbered me with some degree of ease.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) YES. AND THEN I WAS THINKING OF THE TIME YOU TOLD ME WHEN YOU WERE I

THINK IN NEW YORK APPLYING FOR A JOB?

A: Yeah.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) AND A WOMAN SAID, "DON'T TELL PEOPLE YOU ARE A SURVIVOR. YOU WILL NOT GET EMPLOYED."

A: That's right.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) AND THIS WAS -- I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS THE SIXTIES? WHENEVER IT WAS THAT YOU WERE APPLYING --

A: That was in the fifties.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) IN THE FIFTIES.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) DID YOU EVER CONSIDER HAVING IT REMOVED?

A: Well, I discussed it actually with my father, and my father's solution was to put a band-aid over his. And then I was in a very ticklish situation last year. So I remembered that, I put a band-aid over that, and they immediately said, "What have you done to yourself?"

Q: MUST HAVE BEEN A LARGE BAND-AID.

A: No, it was a small one, relatively small. "What happened to you?" "No, that's okay." It's not -- a normal-sized band-aid. And so they asked me, "What happened to you, my God, you've got this."

And I said, "Yeah, well, it's nothing. It's nothing."

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) IT'S NOTHING, RIGHT.

A: It's nothing. But anyway, I never -- the thing is because it would go against my grain. I have nothing to be ashamed of. I didn't do anything which I would have to be ashamed of, and that's not my problem.

The only thing is some people respond to it differently. One person in Austria, when I was there two years ago with my son, or last year as a matter of fact with my son -- and so he said, "Ah, it's GI Joe," whatever they thought the number was. And another one, when I went swimming back in Freiberg, said, "Hey, I know what you were in. I know because my older brother was also in the S.S."

[Laughter.]

And so you get all different interpretations. And at the college, they say, "Hey, what is it? A telephone number?"

I say, "Sure, you can call it."

[Laughter.]

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) WELL, IT'S

WONDERFUL THAT YOU CAN HAVE SUCH A SENSE OF HUMOR ABOUT IT. BUT MY POINT WAS THAT IT HAD A TERRIFIC IMPACT ON ME.

A: Well, I'm sorry for that. I apologize.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) NO, DON'T BE, BECAUSE TO ME IT FEELS THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE THAT IT'S A TABOO SUBJECT; THEY LOOK AT YOU, THEY KNOW YOU ARE A SURVIVOR, AND THEY ARE AFRAID TO BRING IT UP.

A: Yeah, I get these sorts of ways.

Q: PEOPLE RESPOND TO YOU IN ALL SORTS OF WAYS. SOME PEOPLE ARE HOSTILE TO YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE WEARING IT, YOU HAVE IT. SOME PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTIVE, SYMPATHETIC, AND IMMEDIATELY DRAWN TO YOU BECAUSE OF IT, AND THEN OTHER PEOPLE LOOK THE OTHER WAY BECAUSE IT'S A KIND OF DISGUSTING TO THEM.

A: That's right.

Q: AND I GUESS THAT --

A: I have to bear and grin. Grin and bear it.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) GRIN AND BEAR IT.

A: And that to me is one of my least problems, to be perfectly honest with you.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) WELL, YES, I

UNDERSTAND THAT, EXCEPT THAT I WAS THINKING OF IT IN TERMS OF HOW YOU GO THROUGH YOUR LIFE, AND IT'S UNAVOIDABLE UNLESS YOU PUT YOUR SHIRT ON, YOU KNOW, OR YOUR JACKET.

A: Well, and I can handle that. If I won't have any more serious problems in life, I tell you I am well off.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) SPEAKING OF THAT, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I WANTED TO KIND OF RECAP WAS WHAT YOU FEEL HAS BEEN KIND OF LIFELONG OTHER KINDS OF SCARS. I KNOW YOU TALKED ABOUT THE GRIEVING FOR YOUR MOTHER AND THE SENSE OF FAMILY, THAT THIS HAS BEEN A LIFELONG IMPACT ON YOU. I MEAN, I FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE A DIFFERENT LIFE OTHER THAN WHAT ONE HAS HAD. BUT HAVE THERE BEEN OTHER IN LARGE --

A: Yes, well, I suffered a -- you see, I am a very aesthetic person. And I was a very athletic person, and I excelled, as a matter of fact, excelled very favorably competing with German kids of my age, and then I was one of the role models in terms of gym and workout and what have you.

So when I lost my toes, it was a very traumatic experience, not just merely because it may impede all the sports, which it has. I still can swim, and that's one of my major sports, except it's

getting more expensive because I don't live in a region where you can swim in the ocean, and I don't particularly like to swim in spittoons.

[Laughter.]

So the problem is that it is also an aesthetic scar, and I suffered from that very much, particularly with my relationships to women. And I was very self- -- and still am very self-conscious of that because I feel that this is an imposition.

Although some people are generous enough and don't feel it that way. Certainly my wife didn't mind. And I give her lots of credit for it. And some other ladies with whom I had an encounter didn't. But I mean, it would bother me for sure. I don't know to what extent it would bother me that I would not have an association or intimate relationship, but it could, and I certainly don't exclude that possibility.

So that to me is a very important handicap which I -- particularly when I was young, it was very difficult for me to go to the beach. I always had some sort of tennis shoes or some moccasins or something because I didn't want to -- and it actually happened back in Maui in January, you know, I was there by myself, and now I'm, you know, seasoned,

and somehow I don't care that much anymore for some reason or another.

And there were some young kids, you know, in the ocean and at the beach. And I was taking a shower, just it was a cold shower after you come from out of the ocean, in these sort of beach resort situations. And the kids said, "Look what's he's got. Look at his feet." So I was reminded of that.

I find it very curious and charming in a way that they responded the way they did, some sort of a very nice way, in awe of that and somehow in a nice, not in a vulgar, but it was kind of admired, "Look at this," changed things here. But I was reminded, you see.

Years ago it would have embarrassed me. It would have bothered me. Now, it doesn't anymore because really I don't care that much anymore for some reason or another. But aesthetically, yes, it is something which I considered a flaw, a very serious one, a handicap.

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) ONE MORE LAST QUESTION. IT'S NOT REALLY A QUESTION, ALTHOUGH YOU MAY TAKE IT THAT WAY. I'M CONCERNED BECAUSE IN WORKING WITH YOU FOR THESE EIGHT YEARS OR HOWEVER LONG WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER, EVEN THOUGH I VALUE

YOUR WORK VERY HIGHLY AND I THINK THAT YOU HAVE DONE A REMARKABLE JOB OF TRANSFORMING YOUR EXPERIENCE INTO CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIAL WORK IN YOUR EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVORS AND SO FORTH, MEDIA ENDEAVORS, I FIND THAT YOU CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT YOUR WORK HAS NOT QUITE MADE THE MARK, HASN'T QUITE ACCOMPLISHED WHAT YOU HAD HOPED, HASN'T QUITE GOTTEN THE ATTENTION THAT YOU HAD HOPED FOR. AND I CONTINUE TO BE TROUBLED BY THIS.

A: I continue to be troubled by this.

Q: YES. I'M NOT SURE THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIFIC WE CAN DO ABOUT IT BECAUSE IT MAY JUST BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ENOUGH PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, BEFORE THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE TRIED TO ACCOMPLISH, THE KIND OF COURAGE THAT YOU HAVE HAD TO HAVE GOING INTO THESE SITUATIONS WITH, YOU KNOW, LARGE GROUPS OF NAZIS AND ALL THIS KIND OF THING.

BUT IT DOES TROUBLE ME A LOT THAT YOU WOULD FEEL THAT YOU ALMOST HAVE TO DISPARAGE YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE AT SONOMA STATE INSTEAD OF HARVARD OR THAT YOU HAVE NOT DONE AS WELL AS OTHER BRILLIANT PEOPLE IN YOUR PAST WOULD HAVE BECAUSE I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU CONTENTED WITH THE AMOUNT OF WORK YOU HAVE DONE.

YOU HAVE PUBLISHED ALL THESE

THINGS. YOU HAVE DONE ALL THIS MEDIA WORK. SOMEHOW IT'S NOT QUITE ENOUGH. AND I GUESS I'M MEANING TO ASK YOU WHAT --

A: No, I'm not contented, and you are not going to talk me into it.

Q: NO, I'M NOT TRYING TO. I WOULD NEVER DO THAT. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

A: Well, first of all, get that type of recognition which would generate support, you know, support on a massive scale so that one really could go forward with some sort of major research so that I could finish the thing before I kick the bucket. That to me is very important, and that has not happened.

Because you can see yourself after knowing me for that many years, whom do I have as a co-worker or someone or other. Yes, one of my best assistants, you are the best I've had so far. And then I have to say that my best assistants are former S.S. people. They are the ones who really support me, and it's kind of an irony. All the Yids around here, they just ignore me. Why? Because I'm dealing not with dead people, because that's what they prefer.

That's something which I'd like to mention, that it's much easier to deal with dead people than living survivors because they don't talk

back and they are not a burden. I just simply sit by and create some awful monuments and say "Now I've done my duty and this" -- "done my duty and my responsibility." It's an easy, easy way out.

And I see that, particularly in American Yids, which I don't find particularly very attractive because they have ignored and continued to ignore the survivors. They haven't done a thing for them, or very little, if anything, and I find that totally intolerable.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) YOU MEAN AMERICAN JEWS AS THE --

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

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) THE AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION IN GENERAL?

A: Yes. Nothing. I don't remember that I've been ever invited by a Jewish group, with the exception of one, you know, when we went together back in the -- what was it, back in Santa Rosa the --

Q: (BY MS. HOROWITZ) B'Nai B'Rith?

A: B'Nai B'Rith. And they gave me some sort of minor recognition. I give them that. But other than that, I have not been invited to any people -- a party to any people who I am working with, any of the people of the Alliance or anything, not a

single person asked "How are you doing" or be interested in some sort -- not a thing.

And that is something ever since I -- in New York when I came to talk to them, "Oh, you were" -- "come back later or maybe you come back again or" -- nothing has been done for me, ever, ever.

So it's easier. That's what I say. It's easier to build monuments for those who are dead because then you have done your duty and you can ignore those who are alive and cumbersome. Yes, and very many of the scarred and traumatized survivors are cumbersome. Yes, no question. And therefore, they are being ignored, one of the reasons. "I don't have to deal with them." And that's one thing which I think is inexcusable.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) WHAT ABOUT THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL LIFE BETWEEN SURVIVORS?

A: That's another thing. For example, when you go to Europe, the social life between survivors is much better. Here it is not bonded. It doesn't take place very frequently. They don't relate to each other very frequently. There is no real meaningful support group of survivors.

It is something which is exceedingly problematic, and I have been in some

groups, and they fell apart, and you don't hear from them ever again. It's something which is very strange.

The only explanation I have heard is that they simply haven't come to terms with their own fate, which is a possibility, and don't want to be reminded of it and, therefore, they may want to avoid each other because they don't want to be reminded of a situation which they haven't quite come to terms with. That's one of many explanations.

Also I think that very many of the survivors have not been very successful existentially and educationally so that their communication skills are not that great.

And then also there are very many different nationalities, some of which have very little in common in terms of interests and all that. So that's another reason, apart from geographic distances. And there is no real place for them to congregate. They don't have a place to go to.

If someone, instead of some sort of bloody monument -- and I mean bloody monument -- they would build a place where people could come and perhaps also stay overnight or possibly retire, then they would have a place to go. They would have a

home, and very many people don't have a home in the real sense of the word.

And that's where I think the money should go instead of some idiotic monuments which don't mean very much at all and don't do anyone any good in a very concrete sense. But no one has thought of that, and with all the rich people here who could afford it with ease, inexcusable. Thoughtless. Just as thoughtless as they were in World War II when they didn't come to any aid whatsoever and were ashamed and, as a matter of fact, opposed the fact that some European Jews would come to the United States in order to enhance antisemitism.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) I WAS WONDERING, I REMEMBER YOUR MAKING A REFERENCE BACK SOME TIME AGO TO A GROUP CARRIED ON BY (JANPULSKI).

A: Yeah, well, there is a group which I was referring to which was a totally unsuccessful group.

Q: IT WAS?

A: I considered it to be totally unsuccessful. There were only two people who were add-ons. And they wanted to continue. All the other ones had left because they felt it just didn't do anything. And we went several years. And just, it

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was absolutely nothing, nothing which would have changed that predicament. Nice talks and all that, but nothing of permanence has developed, which would have changed the predicament.

Q: AND NO SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS?

A: Social relation- -- none, zero. Perhaps more among women, more among women than among men.

Q: MORE RELATIONSHIPS?

A: Yes. And they subvert the group. They somehow met and continue to meet and I think are active, and I think that may be the consequence of some of the encounters they have had within the Janpulski group.

Q: BUT YOU DON'T PARTICIPATE IN THE
BERKELEY GROUP?

A: Well, I have not been asked, number one. And number two, even if I were asked, I don't know whether I could avail myself of this sort of invitation by virtue of the fact that I just don't have the time to travel this sort of distance. I've got very close and dear friends at Berkeley, and one of my dear friends and colleagues is living now in Berkeley, and I hardly see him anymore. It's not because we have lost interest in each other. On the

contrary.

Q: GEOGRAPHY?

A: Yes.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) GO AHEAD.

Q: (SPEAKER UNKNOWN) MY QUESTION HAS TO DO WITH THIS CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN SURVIVORS SEEM TO BOND MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN AMERICAN SURVIVORS. MY QUESTION HAS TO DO WITH AMERICANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH HISTORY. WE ARE A VERY YOUNG COUNTRY. DO YOU THINK THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE DON'T PAY ATTENTION WHEN WE SHOULD IS THAT WE DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF HISTORY AND THAT LINEAR QUALITY THAT EUROPEANS SEEM TO GRASP A LITTLE BIT BETTER?

A: I don't know whether this is the reason why people who are survivors tend to congregate more readily back in Europe. But I think maybe it should be said that most of these people who have more functioning and functional organizations back in Europe are primarily people who are non-Jewish in mix and therefore had political reasons which motivated them differently to stick together simply because they had common persuasions other than may have been political, religious, or whatever, or homosexual for what I know.

And so therefore they have

something in common. They fought for something. And our Jews were there because they are Jews. And therefore they don't really look back at their presence as heroes.

Survivors, you know, survivors are not -- usually survivors are not viewed as heroes, either by the Israelis. Heroes are viewed as people who were rescuers. They are the heroes. They were not the survivors, you see. And they are the ones who are celebrated.

The survivors are being kicked about. And simply because they -- well, they were, of course, I was in the Underground. I didn't do very much, but I certainly was doing something. It's when I was a boy scout and all that. And we did all the things, and I certainly did what I could, also in the camp. And certainly did quite a bit of sabotage. There is no question about it. But didn't go beyond that.

And I risked my life, yes, no question, on very numerous occasions, particularly in the slave labor situation back in the syn fuel plant at Blackhammal up where I did a lot of sabotaging and a lot of things which would have -- just a minor infraction of that, had they caught me, I would have

hung. There is no question. Because people were hung for lesser reasons than what I did.

But they are not viewed as heroes because they didn't fight for a cause. They were victims. But merely because they were victims doesn't mean they were not heroic victims. And many of them were indeed very heroic victims and for all practical purposes were heroes. But they were there not because of what they had done but what they were born into, and that makes a difference.

So if they didn't have very much in common prior to the concentration camp, they don't have very much in common since they were in a concentration camp. And that is just a few reasons. I am sure there are more, why there is not a very homogenous, some sort of closely knit type of group of survivors.

And it's very unfortunate because I'm sure they could. I've made some friends, and I met a friend of mine -- and that is a terrible tragedy as so many other ones, similar situated ones -- who was in the same camp, although I never got to know him. He certainly didn't remember that we have met. And he was at the syn fuel plant also.

Just a few years ago, just a few

years ago, he committed suicide, hung himself in the garage of his house because of understandable problems which he had and so many other -- and it was a very healthy person. Nothing wrong with him physically except a great deal of despair and abandonment.

And that's what I'm particularly stressing, abandonment, and because people feel abandoned. And I certainly in some ways feel abandoned. You don't get any support because no one gives a damn that you are abandoned or not or how you feel.

And this is particularly in the United States here. Elsewhere I think it's not as bad. I find it even in Germany, even in Germany when I am among friends, they are much more supportive than those people I have encountered here. And if that is not an irony, I don't know what is.

Q: (BY MS. BENDAYAR) IS THERE SOME MESSAGE YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE OR SOME COMMENTS MORE YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?

A: Well, the message is do something before it is too late. Don't build monuments. Build places where people can live and congregate and interact and find support.

Q: GOOD POINT. ONE MORE THING OCCURS

TO ME. DO YOU THINK THAT THE CHILD-REARING METHODS IN GERMANY HAVE CHANGED IN ANY WAY?

A: Absolutely.

Q: YOU DO?

A: Absolutely.

Q: IN WHAT WAYS?

A: First of all, they are less authoritarian. And secondly, I think they are being more critical towards authority. And I think they teach them useful stuff, which I think can make all the difference.

And I think much more substantive -- and that's one of the things why I have not really seriously opposed my son going to school back in Germany, simply because I think he is getting a more proper education, better education than he would get here even if I would be able, which I am not, to pay for a private school. And that is one thing which makes it more palatable to me that he is there.

And so as far as that is concerned, I think there is a great deal of progress, particularly those people who are more educated, with some quite a few exceptions to the rule. But I think many of the people have seen and realized the errors

of their ways and try to somehow learn from the past.

And I think it has very much to do with that, that the media have played a very, very important educational role because in terms of my discussion with young people and also what I see there, there is so much, so much shown of excellent quality about the Holocaust, discussions and all that, which I think is only to be seen here on public television, and that also takes place here, but that not many people watch public television.

But there it is not -- public television is free because there is no commercial television. So therefore many people are exposed to that. And some people also complain about the fact that they are overfed with Holocaust material and complain about that. But what I have seen is primarily of high quality.

I have participated in the production of some of these things myself as a consultant, and I think there is a great significant contribution which is made towards developing insight and understanding about things which should be aired and should be reflected on.

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS
GROWING XENOPHOBIA?

A: Well, that is something which is primarily due to the changed socioeconomic situation, and also that East Germany -- and that's something which I am being very fearful of and warned against, in a way, when I was interviewed.

I just told what I think is important to recognize that East Germany was bypassed by any democratic process to begin with and remained a totalitarian regime. And by virtue of the fact that it has, they have quite a distance to go before they catch up.

And this disparity between these two Germanys -- politically, socially, economically, skillwise, professionally, and otherwise -- is going to take quite some time before it's going to be even keel.

And so this tension is precisely reflected in the skinheads and the xenophobia and the behavior of those people who indeed come from to a very large extent East Germany. Also because there is unemployment for the first time, and they brought in all the foreign workers from elsewhere. Now they can't get rid of them.

And now they have unemployment and unemployed people in East Germany who now say "We

don't have jobs." And here are the Turks. The Jews are no issue because in Germany you don't have more than 45,000 Jews living there, particularly in urban areas, not rural areas. Frankfurt and so forth. And so they are not -- they are no real issue.

But the other foreign workers, in large numbers, such as the Turks and beginning also gypsies and other people who somehow have not assimilated are the targets, and Vietnamese or some other people who came there and have not been properly integrated.

So that is something which has very much to do with the disparity, and also because of the changed economic conditions in West Germany due to the fact that they now have an additional burden which they underestimated in terms of what sort of burden it really would turn out to be. And it was just an unbelievable mistake the way they've done it.

Well, it was a political issue and also an issue of those people who wanted to have the glory and wanted to be in history as those who unified Germany again. But for what reason, for what price? And that's something which they don't see because the present chancellor is a person of very limited scope and limited intelligence.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD
LIKE TO ADD?

A: Well, I think I've added all I
could. Other than that, I think the only positive
thing which I have experienced in circles here, the
Jewish circles here, is precisely this sort of Oral
History Project, which I think is will hopefully play
a very important role after we have been reduced to
ashes. And I think it should be continued and maybe
developed further.

And I think as I said, something
needs to be done with those people who survived and
yet, because of their psychoemotional and existential
conditions, sometimes wish they had not survived. And
I think something needs to be done about that.

And then the people who have
neglected them and have looked the other way I think
should stop in their tracks and see what can be done
and what sort of contribution they can make towards
making their life -- the rest of the few years they
may still live, make it a little bit more livable.

Q: I HOPE SO TOO. AND THANK YOU VERY,
VERY MUCH FOR CONTRIBUTING ALL OF YOUR TIME AND
ENERGY.

A: You're more than welcome. It has

been a pleasure.

[End of videotape.]

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