

Brutalizer. Do you think that the forms of child raising and the Prussian aspect of Germany made a larger contribution, or made it more fertile ground? I'm thinking of some of Ellis Miller's work.

Well, my notion is after all these sort of research and reflection is that the socialization process which took place in Germany and in some 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 they will question authority, that they will question belief systems which indeed are myth 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. That is my conclusion.

Now, I use myself as an example for that, because I didn't buy into any of these sort 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. I'm not going to be persuaded to accept that, and I think that's what I'm doing 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 Holocaust lecture series or what have you to become true believers. And so that's the crucial step. Step number one. And also, may 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 type of prisons, which are obviously counterproductive, and total institutions-- what we call total institutions-- in which other people simply have to act upon assigned roles.

These sort of things, once they exist, provide outlets for human disruptiveness. 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.

I'm thinking how to go back and follow how you came to be the educator and involved in the Holocaust aspects that's on the state. But in the '50s, you went to Freiburg and did your doctoral work there, but you must have, I presume, come back to the United States somewhat after the doctorate was through or--

Well, the same year actually. I finished my doctorate in '68, and that's when I came back to the United States to teach at Sonoma State. 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, and so I actually assumed his position rather than the position which was available to me which was vacant, and which I think is a shame. But that's what happened, and then I--

In the sociology department?

Yeah, and then I stayed for reasons which still escape me.

Did you start right out teaching Holocaust-related courses?

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 anything to do or certainly not supportive. They still are not supportive, and that is something which I think is unforgiving.

Why do you think they're not supportive?

I don't know. I think they are dreadfully ignorant and insensitive.

Defensive against the [INAUDIBLE].

Insensitive.

Well, I would say defensive. In other words--

Defensive maybe too, but I have not encountered any more insensitive individuals than I've met there in terms of my profession, in contrast to people I've met elsewhere. Just like Philip Zimbardo who is exceedingly understands the problem and has devoted a great deal of his effort to share insight and share understanding to this sort of dreadful problem. So I haven't had any help whatsoever from the Department whatsoever.

So when did you begin to teach--

Well, I started the first class sometimes in the early '70s or mid '70s, and I had no takers. No one came.

Did you just introduce this by yourself?

Yeah, well, I just offered that. No one came.

No one?

And then I just was, of course, disappointed, and then I waited for a few years, and I started again, and then I think the class-- the first one was when you came which was in 19--

'84?

'84. And before that, I've had maybe one or two trials and nothing very much developed. And so the first more full fledged class with sufficient number of students was at that particular time. It was, as she said, 1984.

About a dozen of us, I think.

Did you have difficulty with the department or the university to teach this?

Well, it just 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 historians. They are much more sympathetic than any of the sociologists or psychologists I've encountered so far. And so they cooperate and are very supportive.

And this Dean, who is a historian, is supportive and has been very, very kind to us in making things possible which other people I know, they are not at all interested in or just they felt was just unnecessary sort of reminders of unpleasantness. I find it very disappointing exceedingly. I mean, it's one of my great disappointments in life that I've 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 religion in which Sonoma State is and all that, in 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 a feeling that in this part of the country, I don't think this is a subject which people would be interested in studying.

Do you think there was anything special about the timing or the climate of things?

Well, yes, I think that 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.

But this burgeoning of interest in the mid 80s, I wonder if there was anything special happening that drew more students

to the class.

Well, politically, you had Cambodia. You had genocide taking place in different parts of the world, and then some people consciously or subconsciously respond to that, and therefore, may be more susceptible to developing interest in the area. But by large, I found with the exception of a lecture series, and there we have people who just look forward to units, which they would fit into their curriculum. And that is something which happened just in the last year and will happen this year. So how we can fit that in, we are not terribly interested, and they are very upfront. They're not very interested in that, but you know, it just fits in, and so we might try to.

Yes, in this case, we're talking about students in their 20s?

Yes, mostly.

And undergraduates?

Mhm.

And when did the lecture series begin?

About eight years ago.

How did that get initiated?

Well, that was initiated by the Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust, and that's a communal organization. Communal organization of American Jews who, for reasons which are not clear to me, just are motivated to do that. Well, I've got some notions, but I mean--

Are you willing to say?

Oh, well, I mean, -- may be guilt, because they have not really done very much to assist those who were under pressure while they could. Some of them are fairly old and haven't done very much for anyone. They're not doing very much for me personally either for that matter. So I think it's very guilt as 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.

Do they do anything else other than the lecture series?

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

Yom HaShoah.

Yom HaShoah and--

Kristallnacht.

And the Kristallnacht. Kristallnacht which commemorate and all these sort of things they try, which is not easy because not that many people are interested in it and want to hear about it. Some years ago, there was some interest in the local radio broadcast station interview with us, and they were supportive, and they had one event which was exceedingly well attended. I couldn't go, but that was supposed to be very successful.

So yes, they are trying. And then, of course, what now we will be trying to do simply because of the law, we hope to-- with the help of getting some money for it-- to have lectures or 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 is a law that this needs to be taught. So that may be a productive.

But you see, there is also 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 I mean, it's important. But I think much too much time is spent on the descriptive part and not enough on the interpretative part. And that's what I'm trying to do, and that's not always well received, because it is 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 essentially the sensationalist and satisfies whatever curiosity they may have.

And so we see that also in our students, because the students, when they respond to the student faculty assessment 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 eyewitnesses of either liberator's and what have you. So they seemed to be the most popular, and that tells you something. That tells you something that people want to hear the descriptive part of that and not that much interest in the interpretation of it.

Well, above the immediate experience, I think, probably--

Oh, yes, well, I'm not discounting the importance of it, but I don't think they know.

Yeah.

Because it doesn't get us any farther. We need to understand what can be understood. You know, prevent. Otherwise, it's all for the birds. We stimulate emotions maybe and disturb people, yes. But I mean, it's not going to change anything.

I feel like you're doing both though.

Yes, I think you need to do both in order to make it clearer to the people, and that is something which I've seen also in my present class, the Holocaust and genocide. The 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, how are you going to talk about the real thing? You know, that should tell us about your experience and all that. I'm 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 the interpretation which will develop the insights necessary for them to act in everyday life to prevent is exceedingly difficult.

And to develop a pedagogy which will do it is a work for a lifetime. And since we are the generation and I'm 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 not very many people are interested or capable or equipped to do that. 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, which is, I think, the next best thing. 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.

Yes.

And that's why I'm willing to do what I can to do my share.

And thank you.

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 that responsibility, if it will be assumed at all.

Do you think this could happen again?

Well, obvious. It's happening. It's happening all over the world. You just look at Iraq. You 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 whole problem is that we have politicians who are utterly ignorant and unqualified to even begin to understand the complexities that are into power.

That are into limelight. They are into satisfaction of their personal needs without being properly educated and socialized to assume the responsibility for this tremendously consequential role they assume. And talking about role models and people who really have attained that is-- the one I keep on mentioning to people who will listen as Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic. The sociologist, the humanist, the philosopher who was a philosopher king. In that case, he was a president.

And to some extent, he 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 became very very ill towards the end. But he had the vision and the understanding, and I think potential as a potential president who probably could have grown into his position. It was certainly John F Kennedy, whom I've encountered back at Berkeley when I was there when he got his honorary doctorate.

I sat just [INAUDIBLE] and just observed him and didn't talk to him, of course. I didn't have a chance to talk to him. But anyway, just was able to and Adlai Stevenson was certainly one. But other than that, I think Harry, old Harry Truman, I think had potential and probably would have listened to some of the survivors if they had talked to him, but those people we've had in recent times forget it.

Just a sad commentary to what shouldn't be. And so I wish I could teach people who will have a-- or could become potential leaders on a large level. And that obviously is other places [INAUDIBLE] 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. An example is old Henry and he played it right. Look at his Secretary of State hid with an accent, and yet he made it. Why did he made it? Because he's been in war, certainly.

He's a very good mind, and I think that he's that dreadfully ? adequate ?. I mean, that's another point. But he's 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 the time, until he came into power 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, he was used as an informant and as a person to inform the president and the special position instead of being put into some sort of a business. [INAUDIBLE]. He had a special status given to him by President Roosevelt by virtue of the fact that he was a Harvard man with tremendous contacts.

And his name was Putzi Hanfstaengl, who has written a very interesting biographical account relating to the association, his association, to of Hitler, which I think first appeared in English before it actually appeared in German. It's exceedingly readable, and I think a very accurate account. So Putzi Hanfstaengl 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 with a Nazi Goring and they 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 we escaped and via England came to the United States and became a wartime advisor, so to speak, to the administration.

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 and different enclaves?

Well, I think largely, they've assimilated, and certainly are still a very formidable influence in terms of making

contributions to general-- if you will rightist mood prevailing in these countries. I think they certainly are 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're no longer around. So if I had, for example, not interviewed all these SS generals in time, very shortly afterwards, they all died.

I wouldn't have had a chance to see and then I realized that very soon. And that was too late already almost when I started. I should have started much earlier, but I just simply didn't have the means to do that. And so I don't think they are any force anymore by virtue of the fact that they are not very much around, and I don't think their children will perpetuate anything extremist.

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, which is-- identity, which is an unpleasant one. And so they will be susceptible to any sort of ideology which tells them that they are superior and not inferior.

So I mean, that's a tremendous danger, and I think that was very functional in the case of the Nazi Germany, because there you have a vanquished nation which used to play a very major role in European history well, you know was the war for the first time, because before that, they were very successful in winning the war.

And having to come to terms with that-- just in their identity and self-esteem. So Hitler-- I think it's just unbelievably brilliant sort of stroke to say, hey, you're not inferior, you're superior. and you think you're inferior and these are the scapegoats responsible for the misery, and you are victims because you are such fantastic people blemished with mischief, and that's because you're superior.

Now if I feel inferior, I want to believe that-- I certainly will accept that as an alternative-- a viable alternative, and feel better. And I think that is the momentum which should not be forgotten. I think it's exceedingly-- a very important ingredient in terms of detection of any sort of movement which resembles the sort of racist situation, because who are the people who are attracted to such belief systems-- are people who are failures in some ways and have low self-esteem.

Hitler certainly did, and most of his followers were losers. And so if I say you're not a loser, you are a winner and you're superior, my God, I'm going to jump on the bandwagon and feel better for it. And say what I can do I'm going to prove to you that I'm not a loser, that I'm indeed a superior person who's 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.

I think you were going to talk about the connection of the CIA and the SS.

Well, the very important thing that Karl Wolff cooperated with the CIA in the so-called 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 Allen Dulles, [who at that particular point was the American intelligence representative in Switzerland.

And that particular operation 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've done a lot of research which was used and made available to them, because they've hired me to do that as a consultant Didn't get any credit for it.

So during that Operation Sunrise, Wolf-- 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 fanatic Hitler supporter to a traitor by cooperating with Allen Dulles to have a special treaty.

So that the German armed forces and the situation there would be ended. And he was one of the prime initiators against all sorts of obstacles, and even went to Hitler to get his approval. And made it very palatable to him so that he has more or less seen ok. Although Himmler and Ernst Hermann Himmler who was Heydrich's successor-- 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 interests of Germany, and put it in such a way as people see he's a very brave individual who was getting the so-called OK. And then continuing to do what he did-- namely, negotiate with Allies via Allen Dulles.

And succeeded so that, indeed, they've had an armistice relatively before the general armistice, and thereby-- and that goes to his credit, whatever his motives were-- whereby thousands of people's lives were saved. And the interesting thing is also that 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 to prevent that other people were deported to [? just ?] get them exempted, or just see to it that they would not be deported. And intervened for these people who were not full-blooded, quote, unquote, again you know, who were not real full Jews, but partly Jews, but enough to be deported.

And they almost had a duel because he intervened and Eichmann simply-- even though he was a mere Lieutenant Colonel, and he was a full general. and Wolff was -- 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.

Is this the information that--

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 [INAUDIBLE] only after the war.

But that set-- that brought about the context of the SS what later became the CIA. And so that's how that developed. That was one of the first contacts.

That was really a positive outcome.

Yeah. In this case, it was 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 SS rank and full uniform 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 activity.

And that only came up in the early '60s 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 SS 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 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.

So that was not his major occupation and function, but he intervened on the part of the SS 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 SS 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, and very specifically saying these things.

And thanked 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 of aiding the destruction of Jews who were sent to Germany, and sentenced to 15 years.

These other SS generals were not brought to the trials?

Yes--

They also--

--as witnesses and what have you.

But-- no, I mean charged.

Oh, well, the charge-- whoever they could find some documentation and all that, that is something which either happened locally in case of [Personal name] or through the center of the judicial system which brings war criminals-- that is to say criminals against humanity-- to justice, which is in Ludwig's book. 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-- which was kind of a moot situation-- I was a witness, and I was interviewed back in Freiberg By an -- attorney-- well, he was actually a state attorney-- bear witness against Josef Mengele.

And then I was also a witness, and I was interviewed by a very pro Nazi consul-- or vice consul in San Francisco in connection with one of the concentration camps I was in to also be a witness, and give an account and this man was just so unbelievably hostile it was not even funny. And I told him a few things to just he was a all in all, a real SOB

And you could see where his sympathy was, treating me just like you know and just unbelievable. And I really should have written a letter to the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, and complained about that.

Anyway, so I was a witness in these two situations, and nothing has come of it. First of all, they didn't hold of Josef Mengele. And secondly, although I know that he actually went back to Germany, and I know that from eyewitnesses with whom I talked from the town where I did some investigation in that 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. And people saw him and nothing happened.

So I gather while you were teaching regularly at Sonoma State, several summers, you would go back to Germany and do research.

Yeah. Well, also I had some Fulbright fellowships and I've had Alexander von Humboldt fellowship last year for three months. So I used that time to do whatever I can. But I mean that's all fine, and I guess it just requires a great deal of time to dig and find and all that.

As I said, most of the people who really were perpetrators are all dead by now. 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're still around. And also I try to interview, and talk to, and visit, and do whatever I can in order to learn from them what can be found out.

And one of them is the editor in chief of the so-called [German magazine name] which was the official SS news report which came out. I think it was a weekly paper, and which had a circulation of one million. And he's still around, and he knows a great deal.

But he's very defensive. 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's something which is quite interesting. That some of the wives are very protective of their Nazi husbands. And the interesting thing is that the Nazi husbands shed their old wives, and they got a lot more recent editions of wives generation-wise.

And many of whom have not even consciously experienced the Third Reich. And this one is one of them. A very



attractive woman who with whom he procreate some children.

And she's very protective of him, and so she really gave me a hard time when I was to see, which he promised to do, and she prevented it. She prevented it. It was last summer.

You mentioned a bit ago that at one point, you were interviewing someone with your wife. And I wonder, was your wife American?

No, my wife was German.

She was German.

Yeah, and I met her at the University of Freiburg.

I see.

And so she knew Karl Wolff very well, and what -- 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 during this-- primarily my experience in concentration.

You interviewed Albert Speer also?

Yeah, 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 [INAUDIBLE] conversations.

And what was your impression?

Well, my impression is that he was a very highly intelligent person who was an expert manipulator. And 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.

But I came in He just 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 you were responsible for slave labor, and I think you were also my boss.

He said, no, no, no very defensively-- no, I was not your boss. It was Hermann Goring. He was your boss. I was not-- that was not my-- [INAUDIBLE] in that Bleichhammer when I was a slave laborer. That's not something-- it was not under my jurisdiction. It was Hermann's jurisdiction.

Very defensive about that. And of course, he was the boss of other slave labor camps. They made rockets which thousands of people were killed, and worked to death.

And so somehow, he played his cards very skillfully. And he certainly was-- 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, reflected on that, and wanted to put poisonous gas in the bunker in which he had this sort of air system which brought in fresh air, and he wanted to put-- and all these sort of things.

But I and the people who knew him just simply laughed because it was known he was 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, does it? So then he somehow dissociated himself from his role as early 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 skin by making claims which were kind of laughable-- ridiculous. So no, I didn't see -- and that's something which also I said, well-- I even talked to the president of the Federal Republic Lubke and I was, and I was invited along with other Alexander von Humboldt-- people who had fellowships there. This Alexander von Humboldt fellow, he invited us, and he was a talkative individual, and all that.

And he was accused-- Heinrich Lubke the president, was accused of being responsible for constructing barracks in concentration camps, and he was publicly accused of that. And then I had a chance talking to him privately -- in the White House in Germany.

And I asked him, Mr. President, are these accusations-- I'm very interested on research. I would like to know what-- oh, well, let them talk. There's nothing to it. And if there is nothing to it, so it's very easy for you to say I'm not guilty.

Why don't know you-- well, don't let them talk-- I don't care. And then we discussed things further, and he was very evasive in a way. He said, obviously, that he was taken with [INAUDIBLE], no question about it.

He was not a dreadfully clever person to begin with-- not a very intelligent individual. And then he said, well, Dr. Stein, or professor Stein, or whatever he said, there was only a handful of Nazis in Germany, and that was just about something which was just unreal, unbelievable. A handful of Nazis in Germany. Heinrich, I quote him in my book.

And so after the war, just like now, you go to Czechoslovakia, no one is a communist-- and afterwards no one was a Nazi. I wasn't a Nazi. No one was a Nazi. You couldn't find any Nazis anymore. You can't find any communists.

What about your wife? What were her politics as she understood them growing up in Germany?

Well, I mean she was the daughter of a Prussian officer who was just an absolute chauvinist German chauvinist. And [INAUDIBLE] somehow, and I was very much aware of it. say, my God, what the hell am I getting into?

And so, yes, she was-- he was a person when she came after two or three years, or whatever-- went to see him and visit him. So instead of embracing her, or kissing, or just what normal people will do, he just shook her hand. That's all.

Nice to see you. Nice to see you. How are you? That's all. Just absolutely no feelings, no nothing.

And that's something which I should have taken more seriously. But I thought, well, Maybe once again..? overcome ?.

What was her name?

Ulrika. Was she your age also?

No, she was not my age I'm happy to say. At least that part was not bad. No, she was 14 years younger than I. I liked to follow President Mararyk's advice to associate with women or somebody younger than I for reasons which do not escape me.

And so when did you get married?

In '68.

And when was your son born?

Hmm?

When was--

My son was born in '79.

So obviously, you were married for quite a while.

Yeah, quite a while.

What's your son's name?

Ingemar.

Was he born in the United States?

He was born in San Francisco I'm happy to say. And he just is totally identifying with that and very proud of it-- that he was born in San Francisco.

How did your wife--

And on the 22nd of April. And I just really pushed it. 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 I said just hold on, hold on. Just give it a few days.

[INAUDIBLE]. Not a very pleasant memento.

How did your wife react to being in the United States?

Well, not well because she didn't like them.

She didn't?

It was not her cup of tea, and she never adjusted.

Did she have any interests of her own? I mean, certainly during that long period before your child was born.

Well, primarily having an easy life relatively speaking. Not working too much and catering to her own interests, wherever they were.

Did you about your Holocaust experiences?

Oh, yeah, very much. I mean, she typed the 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 sort 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 I -- eventually, if I'd done what I think I want to accomplish, then I have other interests and all that, and don't want to dwell on it permanently to be sure as long as-- 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. I feel obligated to them to do what I

can, which is less than they could have done if they had lived. Because very many of these people were 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 Fredy Hirsch, Fredy Hirsch, and then the other one was Gustav Schorsch.

And these people were absolutely role models to me and significant others, not only because of their humanity, but because the intellectual brilliance, and leadership, and backbone profile, and courage, you name it. And just about all together, 13 of us, and I'm the only one who survived. All the other ones died, including all the other leaders-- two of the particular youth groups.

And that is an unbelievable loss. An unbelievable loss not only to me personally, but also because there were, what I would consider, the better people. And that also helped me somehow to consider the possibility that, indeed, that the other people have not returned, and that those of us left are not exactly the cream of the crop. And that's something which I suspect is the case.

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.

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, 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 in 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 strong.

Do you think--

Like, for example, poor Mrs. [? Horowitz. ?] I'm saying Horowitz.

Broken accent.

So I mean, it's just a struggle, and I'm getting very tired of that struggle. Do you think this was the wedge that came between you and your wife?

Well, yes, it was certainly an area, a wedge, yes There's no question about that.

And I gather that Ingemar is living fairly nearby?

Well, very fairly nearby in Germany at this point.

Oh, in Germany?

So she returned to Germany with your son.

Yeah. She wanted to return for quite a long time.

So you really lost his presence also.

That's right, which I think is a very serious matter, which I never would have done to anyone, under the circumstances especially. I wouldn't have done. But that's what is happening.

And how it will develop in the future? Well, I've had him here last summer. He didn't want to return. And I said, well, I'm going to run away and wait until the plane has left, and then I'll come back and use the money for the plane ticket, because he's so very European, very thrifty, penny pincher because that's what he learned from me.

Penny pincher because that's what has transpired by virtue of the divorce and things of that nature. And I just lost both 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, and just to recuperate is virtually impossible at this point-- my age.

Well, financially-- do you mean emotionally and psychologically as well?

Well, that too, but I'm financially-- emotionally and psychologically, but also financially because everything which I worked for, which was quite nice and comfortable, just goes to attorney fees or to some of the things. Dividing off of property and all that 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.

So did you actually get divorced yet?

I'm in the process.

Right now?

Yeah.

But you sound as though you've been separated for a while.

Oh, yeah. We've been separated for a while, off and on.

But now--

And all the time she went back to Germany [INAUDIBLE].

And how often are you seeing your son? 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. But so far, I've been able to see him more than normally by virtue of the fact that I have these sort of assignments back in Europe, and which were paid. So financially, it was feasible because they paid the trip, and they paid for my stay there, and I was able to make a bit of money. But that may cease. That may-- it's not something which I can depend.

Have you talked with Ingemar about your Holocaust experiences?

Oh, yes. I've talked to him the first time. I've-- of course, he's seen my books when they left in '89. So he's seen my books, and Hitler, and all that. And so you know, looks at some of them.

And I-- 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 a movie which I participated in, and was a consultant, and was doing-- which was Hitler, Man or Myth.

And I showed that to him, and I showed him the short strip 50 minutes of liberation of concentration camps. And he said, why did you show me these terrible things?

I said, well I just feel that it's just about time that you know what I've been through, and we can talk about it. And he talks, and is getting more and more interested in it. And he reads and said in class and all that, I've read this and about-- all this.

And so he just keeps on telling me. But again, I'm very careful not to force it on him. Last summer, I felt it was time that he would face up to some of the things so that he gets some sort of a feeling for it in fact, because my wife never talked about it to him-- about that.

And somehow, tends to avoid this, and deemphasizes [INAUDIBLE]. 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's ready for it, and not burdening him unnecessarily when he cannot digest it.

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

But again, that is not something which I would force. I hope that this will develop-- whatever is best for him. And I know this place is right now-- we don't have much of a rosy future to look forward at this point.

So there you go. So I mean, it's a problem. Certainly, Germany is everything [INAUDIBLE] for so many reasons. So it's a problem.

Is he learning about this in German schools too?

Hmm?

Is he learning in German schools too about this?

Well, he hasn't so far, no, because it was not part of the thing. you know but -- I think now, he's an age where they probably will you know. and he'll let me know about that for sure, he knows.

And I talk to him over the phone every two weeks for at least an hour-- just about an hour anyway. And he writes to me, and we write to him. He doesn't write much because he's dreadful lazy.

People who are very, very intelligent, and that is a handicap because if things don't come easy to him, it just simply leaves them. because everything tends to come easy to him, and he's not used to working hard. He's got kind of a lazy streak.

And so writing-- he doesn't like to write very much. And he wrote me because he enjoys using the typewriter. So now I guess because he has now reason to do something which he enjoys, he probably will be writing more. you know this sort of thing.

I think I'd like to take a moment and ask if other people would like to ask you anything. up to this point before we--

Yeah.

How about you, Brian?

[INAUDIBLE] notes here. When you were talking about the-- I'm interested in how you perceive a kind of a schizoid character to the German people at the time that you were doing your interviews. This-- 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?

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'm stressing quasi-- democratic we have to which they had to adjust. So they sit between two chairs, so to speak, because they had to-- they were functional. 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 the glory of 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 think that's indeed what they are because they live in two worlds.

You think that 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 and--

Well, in a way, yes, because so many of them were used by the CIA because of the anti-communist fear. That is to say the communist fear and the anti-communist activities. And because that was more of a situational event-- transcended all the other previous considerations. And therefore, they didn't care whether some of the Nazi 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, it's just-- no morality I don't particularly. And I wrote about these things in one of the books [INAUDIBLE]. And just there is no morality.

It's just a totally opportunistic thing which they think they'll do in order to further the United States. I think they've caused more damage to the United States than anything else apart from the financial losses, which is enormous in terms of-- so--

From a sociologists point of view, how do you view the phenomena of someone like David Duke who has repudiated his past, but is not believed by the public?

It just-- he's no reborn Christian, and I don't to what extent it is authentic or not. I think the man is-- in terms of the type of long history of activity, and in the Klan and other thing, You know, not a very viable individual is in my eyes.

I don't care how many times he's been reborn. Well, I mean, the other thing, it's a barometer of our times. And if a person actually can become a serious candidate for the governorship with this sort of background, I mean, that's enough to really cause you to stop and think what is going on in any case as far as the attraction people of that ilk have.

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

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.

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 it responsibly. And I don't know whether they-- I'm not-- and I've talked to some SS people about that too. And said, hey, we have got a right as anyone else to see the errors of our way.

And I think we need to look at it also this way. And I'm not doubting that some people genuinely have seen the errors of their way, except that I think we'll get to -- you talked about Speer a little bit earlier-- a moment ago.

And Speer was playing very, very clever cards in order to get off the hook. And you can also make believe something which you then will believe yourself is not a lie, but is 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'm the one who discovered-- Bernard Shaw and other people-- we have a situation-- that's 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're not given any tests. 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 themselves to what extent they have qualifications which they claim to have.

And to be sure, many people would 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 civil service examination. Those people will become the most powerful people. We just take their word for it.

I mean, it's just absolutely unbelievable. It's scandalous. It's incredible. It's ridiculous. And it's not that much of a deal, because we've got enough expertise to develop these tests, and administer them.

And people who are really experts in the field, and do it in a way which will be exceedingly objective. Why on earth don't we do it? It's totally inconsistent. Well, it's obviously because the powerful-- those people who have a potential to be powerful can avoid all this sort of unpleasantness.

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 indiscretion in their background. The Kennedy administration-- there have been innuendos about that for 20 years now. How do you view that from a sociologists point of view?

What do you mean Kennedy? I don't know specifically what you're alluding to?

His connection with the mafia and--

Well, I don't know whether he had connections with the mafia directly. I doubt it very much. I think he had a girlfriend who was-- or the various girlfriends. The chances are that someone will have had a mafia connection. You know it's a realistic possibility.

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

But many people are precisely very 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 that we permit it. And I think ever since Kennedy's assassination, it's been-- everything else has deteriorated.

And I think Kennedy-- I don't care whether he was a womanizer or not-- I think he had a potential as statesman. I mean, I'm not a judge of his personal life, and I don't want to be as long as he has done things which are responsible, and learned, and improved. And I think he would have gone into a very substantive and important statesman.

That's all I had.

How about you? Do you have anything to analyze? Carol, do you have any questions or comments?



I have two last things. I think we've done really well covering a lot. But two things I've just been pondering here. One is that the tattoo that you have on your arm which is characteristic of a survivor, and which--

Auschwitz survivor. Specific the other ones were--

Different-- yeah.

No, no, because I've got two numbers. I've got the Dachau number which is not a tattoo, but is a number which I was given when I came to Dachau. And then I got to Auschwitz.

And the notion of the tattoo is that people with a tattoo were not to get out ever. That was the notion. That these people were there until they died, and never to be release.

So in a sense it's a mark of death.

Yeah, absolutely.

And 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-- I mean, I was in Vienna, I saw one, I was in Lucerne, Switzerland, I saw one.

When I was just in--

You were in Lucerne? Really?

Yeah. When I was in-- yeah, and I talked to him. Excuse me-- not Lucerne-- on the way to Lucerne on the train. In New York, I just saw one-- a tailor-- and we talked. He was from Mauthausen. And it had such a powerful effect on me whenever I see someone with--

But he didn't have a tattoo-- it was because he's not from Mauthausen? Did he? Hew must have been in Auschwitz.

That's what he said. Well, he was in Auschwitz, but he says he got it at Mauthausen.

Oh, yeah. But I mean, the tattoo he got in Auschwitz.

It was different than yours. I think it had a "B" in front of it.

Yeah, because he came later.

Yeah. But anyway, what I wanted to talk about was that I feel that knowing you and any other survivors that I've known, there's just something so-- the impact of having a tattoo 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 as an adult. And I know you've mentioned to me several times the effect of having to hide it, for 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 reveal you were a survivor in this tricky situation.

Yeah, it was a tricky situation.

And you've talked to me about--

Also during the summer when I was asked to go to SS rally, and I was also a guest of honor therefore, because I was -- a general-- SS general who invited me. And I sat at the table for the honored people, and I was perspiring-- something dreadfully hot.

And I couldn't take off my-- and that was an SS rally of 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 or something-- 1,500 to 1. They could have clobbered me with some degree of ease.

And then I was thinking of the time you told me when you were, I think, in New York applying for a job, and a woman said, don't tell people you're a survivor-- you will not get employed.

That's right.

And this was in-- I don't know if it was the '60s when it was that you were [INAUDIBLE].

That was in the '50s.

In the '50s?

Did you ever consider having it removed?

Well, I discussed it --- that actually -- with my father and my father's solution was that he put a Band-Aid over it. And then I was in a very tricky situation last year, so I put a Band-Aid.

I remember that I put a Band-Aid over that, and they immediately were like, what have you done to yourself-- what happened to you?

It must have been a large Band-Aid.

Well, a small one-- a relatively small one. What happened to you? You can not-- that's OK. I mean, it's not-- your normal sized Band-Aid.

And so they asked me what happened to you? oh my god, I said, oh, well, it's nothing.

It's nothing-- right. [INAUDIBLE].

Anyway, so-- but I never you see -- the thing is because it would be-- 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-- 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 oh, it's GI Joe. You've got whatever they thought was the number. you know, he didn't [INAUDIBLE]. And another one when I went swimming back in Freiburg they said, hey, I know what you're wearing. I know because my brother was also-- my older brother was also in the SS.

[LAUGHTER]

Oh, no.

And some you get a different interpretation. And they call it say, hey, what is it-- you know a telephone number? I say, sure, you can call it.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, it's wonderful you have such a sense of humor about it. But I guess my point was that it has a terrific impact on me when I see [INAUDIBLE].

Well, I'm sorry about that.

[INAUDIBLE]. Don't be. Because to me, it feels-- there are some people that find it a taboo subject. They don't bring it up. They look at you, they know that you're a survivor, and they're afraid to bring it up.

Yeah, I get these sort of glances.

People respond to you in all kinds of ways. Some people are hostile because you're wearing it-- because you have it. Some people are supportive and sympathetic, and immediately drawn to you because of it. And then other people look the other way because it's kind of disgusting to them.

That's right.

And I guess that--

I have grin and bear it. And that, to me, is one of my least problems to be perfectly honest with you.

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, or your jacket. I can handle that. I won't have any more serious problems in life. I tell you I'm well off.

Speaking of that, one of the things that I wanted to kind of recap was what you feel have 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, it's about impossible to imagine a different life than the one has had, have there been other--

Yeah, well--

[INAUDIBLE].

--I suffered a-- you see, I'm a very athletic 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 could 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.

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

Although, some people are generous enough and don't view it that way. Certainly, my wife didn't mind that, and I give her a lot of credit for that, and some other ladies with whom I had an encounter didn't. But I mean, it would bother me for sure.

I don't 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, to me, 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, I was there by myself, and now I'm seasoned, and somehow I don't care that much anymore for some reason or another.

And there are some young kids at the ocean and the beach, and then I was taking a shower. It was a cold shower after you come from being out of the ocean, and it's sort of a beach resort situation.

Some small kids said-- and they looked-- look what he's got-- look at his feet and all this sort of thing. So I was reminded of that. I mean, I find it very curious and charming in a way that they responded the way they did-- in some sort of a very nice way in a way-- in -- awe of that, and somehow in an nice-- not in a vulgar, but kind of admired-- look at this strange things.

And but I was reminded of that. Years ago, it would have embarrassed me-- it would have bothered me. Now it doesn't anymore because I don't care that much anymore for some reason or other. But aesthetically, yes, it is something which I consider to be a flaw-- a very serious one-- a handicap.

One more last question, and that is-- it's not a question, although you may take it that way. I'm concerned because from working with you for these eight years, or however long we've been working together, even though I value your work very highly, and I think that you've done a remarkable job of transforming your experience into constructive social work, and 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 would hope, hasn't quite gotten the attention that you would hope for, and I continue to be troubled by this. I'm not--

I continue to be troubled by it.

Yeah. I'm not sure if there is something specific we can do about it, because it may just be a matter of time before enough people understand what you've done, before they understand what you've tried to accomplish, the kind of courage that you've had to have going into these situations with 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-- Sonoma State instead of Harvard, or that you've 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've done.

You've published all these things, you've done all this media work. Somehow, it's not quite enough. And I guess I'm asking--

I'm not contented and you're not going to talk me into it.

No, I'm not trying to. I would never do that. What would it take?

Well, first of all, get that type of recognition which would generate 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, you see, well, whom do I have as a co-worker or someone I work-- well, the best-- one of my best assistants-- you are the best I've had so far. And then I have to say that my best ? assistance ? are from SS people. They are the ones who really support me, and that's kind of ironic. All the Yids around here, they just ignore me.

Why? Because I'm dealing not with the 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 buy and create some awful monuments, and say now I've done my duty-- done my duty and my responsibility. It's easy way out. And I see that particularly in American Yids, which I don't find particularly very attractive, because they have ignored and continue to ignore the survivors. They haven't done a thing for them, or very little, if anything. And I find that totally intolerable.

You mean American Jews [INAUDIBLE].

That's right.

The American Jewish population in general.

Yeah. Nothing. I don't remember that I've been ever invited by a Jewish group with the exception of one when we went together back in the-- what was it-- back in Santa Rosa-- the ? pink palace ?.

B'nai B'rith.

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-- by any people whom I'm working with, any of the people who-- the alliance or anything.

Not a single people asked, well, 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 well, come back later, maybe you come back again, or-- nothing has been done for me ever.

So it's easier. That's why 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. And very many of the scarred and traumatized survivors are cumbersome.

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.

What about the question of social life between survivors?

That's another thing. For example, when you go to Europe and all that, 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's no real meaningful support group of survivors. It is something which is exceedingly problematic, and I've 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 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's no real place for them to congregate.

They don't have a place to go to. If someone-- instead of some sort of bloody monuments-- and I mean bloody monuments-- 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 that has not-- no one has thought of that. And with all the rich people here who could afford it with ease-- inexcusable.

Thoughtless-- just a thoughtless as they were during World War II when they didn't come to any aid whatsoever, and were ashamed that-- and, as a matter of fact, opposed to the fact-- that some European Jews would come to the United

States in order to enhance anti-Semitism.

I was wondering-- I remember you making a reference back some time ago to a group carried on by [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah. Well, that is a group which I was referring to. It was a totally unsuccessful group. I considered it to be totally unsuccessful. The only two-- there were two people who [INAUDIBLE], and they wanted to continue. All the other ones had left because they felt they just didn't do anything, and it went several years. And just was absolutely nothing-- nothing which would have changed their predicament. Nice talks and all that, but nothing of permanence has developed which would have changed predicament.

And no social relationships?

Socially, none-- zero. Perhaps more among women than among men.

No relationships for--

Yeah. And there is a Berkeley group. They have 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've had within the [INAUDIBLE].

But you don't participate in Berkeley group?

Well, I mean, it's a-- I've not been asked really, number one. And number two, even if I'd be 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 in Berkeley, and one of my best 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.

? Do you ever... ?. Go ahead.

My question has to do with this concept of European survivors seem to bond more successfully than American survivors. One of-- my question has to do with Americans relationship with history.

We're 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?

I don't know whether this is the reason why people who are survivors tend to congregate more readily back in Europe. What I think maybe should be said that most of these people who have more functioning and functional organizations back in Europe are primarily people are non-Jewish inmates.

And they were there for political reasons, which motivated them differently to stick together simply because they had common persuasion. Either they may have been political, or religious, or whatever-- or homosexual [INAUDIBLE]. And therefore, they have something in common. They fought for something, and all Jews were there because they're Jews.

And therefore, they don't really look back at their presence there as heroes. They've never-- survivors are not viewed-- really, survivors are not viewed as heroes either by the Israelis.

Heroes are viewed as people who were rescuers. They are the heroes and not the survivors, you see, and they are the ones who are celebrated. The survivors are being kicked about.

Simply because they-- well, [INAUDIBLE] of course-- I was in the underground. I didn't do very much, but I certainly was doing something when I was a boy scout and all that. And we did so a lot of things, and I certainly did what I could.

Also in the camp. And certainly did quite a bit of sabotage. There's 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 in Bleihhammer where I did a lot of sabotaging and a lot of things which would have just-- a minor infraction of that, if they had caught me, I would have hung. There is no question because people were hung for lesser reasons than what I'd done.

But they are not viewed as heroes because they didn't fight for it, because they're victims. But merely because they are victims doesn't mean they were not heroic victims. And many of them were indeed very heroic victims. And for practical purposes were heroes.

But they are 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'm sure there are more why there is not a very homogeneous-- some sort of closely knit type of group of survivors. And it's very unfortunate, because I'm sure they could.

I made some friends, and I've had a friend of mine-- and that is a terrible tragedy-- as so many other ones-- similarly situated ones-- who was in the same camp. Although, I never got to know him-- he certainly don't remember that we had met-- and he was at the syn fuel plant also.

And just a few years ago, he committed suicide, and hung himself in his garage-- in the garage of his house because of understandable problems which he had, and so many others. He 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 way do feel abandoned-- you don't get any support because no one gives a damn whether you were abandoned or not, 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 when I'm among friends, they are much more supportive than those people I've encountered here. And that's really-- if that is not an irony, I don't know what is.

Is there some message you would like to leave or some comments you would like to make?

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.

Good point. And one more thing [INAUDIBLE]. Do you think that the child raising methods in Germany changed in any way?

Absolutely.

You do?

Absolutely.

In what ways?

Well, I mean 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's 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's there. And so as far as that is concerned, I think there is a great deal of progress, particularly those people who are more sophisticated, educated, with quite a few exceptions to the rule.

But I think many of the people have seen and realized the errors of their way, and try to somehow learn from the past. And I think, very much to do with that-- the media have played a very, very important educational-- because in terms of my discussion with young people, and also what I see, there is so much shown and excellent quality about the Holocaust discussions and all that, which I think is only to be seen here on public television if-- and that also takes place here. But not many people watch public television.

But there, it is not public-- television is for 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 they complain about that.

But what I've seen is primarily of high quality. I participate in production of some of these things myself as a consultant. And I think there's a great significant contribution, which is made towards developing insight and understanding about things which should be reflected on.

What do you think about this growing xenophobia and--

Well, I mean that is something which--

--violence?

--is primarily due to the changed socioeconomic situation, and also that East Germany-- and that's something which I've been very fearful of and warned against in a way when I was interviewed. I just thought 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 the disparity between these two Germanies politically, socially, economically, skill-wise, 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 are of-- come from a large extent East Germany also, because there is unemployment for the first time. And they brought in a lot of foreign workers from elsewhere, and now they can't get rid of them, and now they have unemployment, and they have unemployed people in East Germany who now say we don't have jobs, and here are the Turks.

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

But there are other foreign workers in large numbers such as the Turks, and the beginning also Gypsies, and other people 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 will 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.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Well, I think I have added all I could. And it's just-- other than that, I think the only positive thing which I've experienced in circles here-- in Jewish circles is precisely the sort of Oral History Project which I think 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 the emotional and existential conditions have not-- and sometimes, wish they had not survived. And I think something needs to be done about that.

And 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-- or the rest of their life for the few years they may still live, make it a little bit more livable.

I hope so too. And thank you very, very much for contributing all your time and energy.

You are more than welcome. It has been a pleasure.

It's very excellent interview

[SIDE CONVERSATION]