

Interview with BERNARD WERTH
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Q: LET'S START WITH A TOUGH QUESTION. IF YOU COULD, GIVE ME YOUR FULL NAME, AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN.

A: My name is Bernard G. Werth. I was born as (Gunter), that's what the G. stands for, (Bernhardt Werthimer). I was born on December 4, 1921, in Frankfurt Germany.

Q: BERNARD, TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, BROTHERS, SISTERS -- HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN IT, AND WHAT KIND OF FAMILY LIFE DID YOU HAVE?

A: Well, we had a very close family relationship. I had one sister, who is still living here in San Francisco, and other than that, my father, (Franz Werthimer), who was born in 1887, in (Beul), near (Boddenbodden). My mother's name was Jeannette Erma Werthimer, nee Oppenheimer, and she was born in the Rhineland, in a little town called (Cowabicklehime). My father had an older brother and an older sister, and my mother just had one younger brother.

Q: AND WHAT ABOUT THE FAMILY LIFE IN YOUR HOUSE? WERE YOU RELIGIOUS? WHAT KIND OF SCHOOLS DID YOU GO TO?

A: Ok, as far as religion is concerned, we belonged to a reformed congregation, the (Vesten) synagogue in Frankfurt, and the Senior Rabbi was Dr. (Salegman) who I understand was very well known as a leader of the reform movement in Germany. The other Rabbi, under whom I became barmitzvahed, was Dr. (Saltzberg), who later emigrated to London. We weren't really religious. My grandfather was fairly religious, he went to an orthodox synagogue, but my father's family was not religious. We kept a kosher household primarily for my grandfather's sake. We used to go to synagogue on the high holidays. Later on, after the Nazis came to power, we did go to synagogue Friday night and Saturday morning.

Q: WHY DID YOU CHANGE AND START GOING TO (SHULE) ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAYS?

A: My parents changed and I had to change with them.

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK THEY CHANGED?

A: Well, I think they all became a little more religious when Hitler came to power.

Q: WHAT ABOUT CULTURALLY? WERE YOUR FRIENDS, AND FRIENDS OF YOUR FAMILY JEWISH? OR DID YOU MIX WITH ARYANS?

A: Primarily Jewish. I had some non-jewish friends when I was a little kid that I played with, but basically my parent's circle of friends was jewish.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER? WHAT WAS HIS VOCATION?

A: He was a banker. He had a high school education, and then he worked at a private bank in Frankfurt after his apprenticeship -- in Germany you had to go through an apprenticeship -- he went four years to a bank in (Calsre) which is on the Rhine near (Boddenbodden), I am sure you've heard of (Boddenbodden). After that, I think it was the turn of the century, he came to Frankfurt and started to work with this private banking firm and he stayed with them until they were forced to close in 1938. He interrupted his employment with that bank for four years between 1914 and 1918. He volunteered for the German Army, like a good German jew. (Laughs).

Q: NOW WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NAZI RISE TO POWER? HOW DID IT EFFECT YOU?

A: Of course, going back to 1930, I was nine years old. I

remember we were living in the outskirts of Frankfurt, we had a house there. I remember my father saying that these lunatics, if they do get into power and elect a chancellor, they won't remain in power very long. Like many German Jews, he thought the German people were smart enough to see through the Nazi program and the Nazi propaganda after a while. Then of course when Hitler came to power in 1933 my father thought it wouldn't last for long. However, I remember very clearly, on April 1, 1933, we got a call from Berlin from my father's oldest brother who was a patent attorney in Berlin. You may recall, April 1, 1933, the Nazis boycotted all the doctors and attorneys offices all throughout Germany. Of course my uncle's office was boycotted too. He called that evening and said he was leaving Germany, and they did leave Germany in '33. He was one of the early Jewish immigrants. And that's despite the fact that my uncle belonged to the very famous body guard of the Grand Duke of (Boddenbodden). He belonged to this body guard regiment. Of course that was mobilized before the war even started, in 1914. I think my Uncle had something to do with the capture of fortifications in Belgium. He earned his Iron Cross already in August, 1914. He thought that as a war veteran with an Iron Cross that they wouldn't touch him, but I guess he was wrong. He told me later on that when he crossed the German border in to Spain, he wore his Iron Cross. I don't know whether it helped him or not

to get across the border.

Q: AND WHAT ABOUT IN YOUR FAMILY? YOU STAYED?

A: Well, let me - I mentioned that my father volunteered. When my father was three or four years old he had diphtheria which left his left leg kind of weak. For that reason he was exempt from military service when he was a young man. But then, in 1914, he volunteered anyway and they accepted him. He spent four years in the trenches with the field (atortory). So he felt that as a volunteer and as a veteran that we would get some benefits out of it. One of the benefits that I had for the time being, as a son of a war volunteer and veteran, was that I was allowed to go to continue to go to public schools. At that time, in 1933, I went probably to the best high school in Germany. It was the (Mustashula) in Frankfurt, which was a (Gymnasio). They called it a reformed (Gymnasio). It had nothing to do with a reform school. They called it a reform school because they had changed the curriculum. The normal curriculum in a (Gymnasio) in Germany started with Latin and Greek, then French or English. They started the other way around. I had French first for three years, then they added English, then Latin. So they had a more modernized curriculum. It was an excellent school, and I went there, and I was the last jew in that school. When I graduated in 1937 I was the

last jew in that school. When I first started there in 1932 it was just like (normal) high school; better than fifty percent were jewish boys. But then by 1934 most of the kids had to leave. They were transferred to the (philantropine) which was the jewish high school, because their parents and their fathers did not serve in the first world war. For some reason I was allowed to stay there, and I felt it was a good school and I wanted to stay there. Besides, I had a stubborn character and I figured, until they threw me out, I wasn't going to leave.

Q: AND DURING THOSE YEARS FROM '32 TO '37, WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE BOTH IN THE SCHOOL AND AT HOME IN TERMS OF ANTI-SEMITISM?

A: Well, the school was rough. The kids used to beat us up. Of course, after a while there was only two of us left. They used to grab us and throw us in the sand pits, or tie us to the trees and play Indians and Cowboys. I remember we had a Walnut tree in the school yard. As you know, when you peel walnut and rub in against your skin, the skin turns brown. And they used to paint me (*Werth points to both sides of his face*), and unfortunately, for some reason the teachers never interfered. It was a good sign of the times that they didn't want to. They were afraid. Interesting thing...my math teacher, who turned out to be an old party

member, when I passed him in the streets he acted like I was thin air. But in the classroom, he treated me just like any other kid. He gave me the proper grades, but outside the school I was nothing. That really shows the mentality of some of these people. When he was a teacher, he acted like a teacher. As a party member, he wouldn't even recognize me as a human being. Which was very interesting. Then I had other teachers.

Oh yes, I had an art teacher, his name is (Shaeffer). The reason I mention his name is because later, he opened the (Shaeffer) school for design in San Francisco. The interesting thing was, shortly after Hitler came to power...let's get off the record for a moment. *(Pause, camera goes off, comes back on)*.

I was telling you the story of Dr. (Shaeffer) my art teacher. Let me first give you a little description of Dr. (Shaeffer). He was at least 6'1" tall. A big man. I recall, when we didn't behave properly he had these big hands, and he came around and slapped you. He didn't mind slapping you. And he was strong, you felt it. It also impressed me that he was sitting at his desk peeling tangerines - popped the whole tangerine in his mouth. He was a big guy!

So anyway, shortly after Hitler came to power, we were filing out of class. He came up to me.

Towering over me, he says, "Are you a jew?"

I got very upset and afraid, and I snapped to attention and said, "Yes Herr Doctor."

phrase? (Werth says German phrase - speaking as Dr. Shaeffer) That means, "You don't have to go along with all this shit!"

Shortly there after he disappeared. We didn't know what happened to him. He wasn't there, we had a substitute.

Three or four months later my private English teacher said to me, "Do you recall Dr. (Shaeffer)?"

I said, "Yes, he hasn't been in school for six months."

He said, "I just got a letter from him from New York. He was a social democrat all his life, and he was afraid the Nazis were going to slap him in to jail sooner or later. He realized he had to come either to England or the United States, so he took some lessons from me in English. But he asked me not to tell you because he was afraid that if you would open your mouth, give away the fact that he was learning English, they might arrest him right away."

So anyway, he went across the border at night, ended up in New York, and later on, apparently in San Francisco.

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I didn't know that. I belong to an organization, *The Council of 1933*, here in San Francisco and we had a meeting at the Jewish Center in early 1950. I was going up the stairs to the center, and here is this guy going up the stairs next to me who looks like Dr. (Shaeffer).

So I said to him, "Pardon me sir, uh, Do you happen to be Dr. (Shaeffer) of the (Mustashula)?"

And he looks to me, "How do you know?"

I said, "Well I think I used to be your student in 1932, 1933."

He said, "What's your name?"

I said, "Then it was Werthimer, now it is Werth."

"Can't recall. Can't recall."

Well, we chatted. I went to my meeting. He apparently had a class at that center. At about 9:30 I happened to run into him again in the hall, and he says to me,

"You know, come to think of it, I think I remember you. As a matter of fact, I think I have some of your drawings."

I said, "Dr. (Shaeffer), you've got the wrong guy, I couldn't even draw a straight line."

He said, "Ah yes! That's right! I was always interested in primitive art!"

So anyway, he told me that he was teaching at UC. He opened the Shaffer school for designing in San Francisco, and he was also teaching six months a year for Frankfurt University. He only passed away a few years ago. So that's one little episode from the school I went to.

Yeah, things were rough in school, particularly later on when there were only two of us. They always liked to gang up on us and beat us up, and the teachers usually didn't interfere.

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER ANY SPECIFIC INCIDENTS THAT STAND OUT IN YOUR MIND?

A: Well, tying us to the tree is an incident. Grabbing me by my feet and hands and throwing me in the sand pit. You know we had the long jump - the sand pit. That was great fun.

Q: WHAT ABOUT AT HOME. YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS. HOW DID IT

AFFECT YOUR HOME LIFE?

A: Well of course the tension increased, particularly in 1936 or 1937. He lost his business in the ~~(Rhineland)~~. We had moved into town. My father felt that it wasn't safe to live on the outskirts. So, in 1936, we gave up our house in the outskirts and moved into town, near the center of town, fairly near the Opera House in Frankfurt. But we hadn't figured on having my grandfather moving in with us so we took a smaller apartment. We had just a bedroom for my sister, a bedroom for my parents, a bedroom for myself, a living room, dining room. We didn't have an extra bedroom. So, when on short notice, my grandfather moved in with us, he had to move in with me. That created a lot of tension; when you have a young boy who wasn't very religious and an old man who claimed to be very religious moving in together, that created a lot of tension.

Q: ACTUALLY, TO BACK UP A MINUTE, WHY WAS IT PROBABLY MORE SAFE TO LIVE IN TOWN THAN TO LIVE IN THE OUTSKIRTS?

A: I really don't know whether it was safer. My father believed it was safer. I think there were more Jews around there. There were probably a lot of middle class people living around there. He felt there would be less chance of gangs coming in, breaking into your house, breaking the

windows, smashing the doors. I don't know whether it was safer or not.

Q: AND, WHAT ABOUT LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR DAD'S WORK, OR YOUR MOM TAKING CARE OF THE HOUSE AND SHOPPING, AND HER FRIENDS. HOW DID THE NAZIS START TO CHANGE THE WAY HOME LIFE...?

A: One of the things that changed - we had always had a maid. Of course, in 1936 I think they passed the Nuremberg laws. We no longer could have a non-jewish maid in the house. I remember we had a jewish girl living with us for a while, and then my mother had to take care of the household by herself towards the end. Of course, that was one change. You might not think it was that big of a change but in those days it was, I can tell you.

In as much as my parents had mostly jewish friends, it didn't effect their social lives too very much. The non-jewish boys I palled around, they with wouldn't have anything to do with me anymore, and then when we moved to town I didn't know the kids there anyway. So I only got together with relatives and a friend from school.

As far as my father's work is concerned, it didn't seem to effect it for the first few years. In 1938, the boss left

for London and my father was left with the task of liquidating the bank, which he did in 1938. So that of course created a lot of tension in the house. My father was at that time 55. Yeah, 55. And he realized, here goes my career, and I am probably going to have to emigrate to England or the United States. That's pretty tough, to start another career. Who wants a banker in the United States. He spoke English, so that helped. He was a banker for the British (Consul General) in Frankfurt, which helped. I'll tell you a story about that. And in 1937 I started to work as a clerk apprentice in Germany, for a leather firm in Frankfurt, which at that time was still Jewish. It was Aryanized six months later, in early 1938. And then, at the (Crestalda), November 9th, 10th, I was given notice that I was kicked out of the firm because it was Aryanized. Of course my father's bank was in the process of liquidation. He had to close up shop.

When I came home on November 10th after being kicked out of the firm I worked for, my father was home already. My mother was telling me that she had heard from other friends that the SS were rounding up all Jews 16 years or older. I said to my mother,

"I ain't gonna stay home. They're gonna have to find me."

"Well you can't do that. I wouldn't know if they catch you. I wouldn't know where you were gonna be."

I said, "Mother, whether I stay here, or they catch me in the street, you won't know where I am going to be anyway. I am not going to stay home."

So I hopped on my bike. I think I didn't look very jewish. I bicycled around Frankfurt and I thought, where can a jew hide out where they wouldn't look for jews. And I saw black smoke. I said, "Oh, they're burning down my synagogue." So I went there. I stood in front of the synagogue and watched
Sp them burn down the (vesten) synagogue. They didn't look for jews there.

Sp In the afternoon they went on to the (Burnishstrasa) synagogue which is a very famous synagogue, an old synagogue that was built in the old jewish quarters of Frankfurt. I watched them burn that synagogue down too.

And then it got dark. In November it gets dark at 5:00 O'clock. I went home and my Dad had been arrested. They couldn't find me so they couldn't take me. That round up terminated that evening so I never went to the concentration camp.

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Coming back to the British Consul General -- Soon as my father was arrested, the next day, my mother went to see Consul Smallborn, was his name. He wrote a letter to the Gestapo, that [said] as soon as he [Werth's father] would be released, he, the Consul General, would give my parents and family a transit visa to go to England where we could wait for our permanent immigration visas to the United States. We had a number. I am sure you are familiar with it. A waiting number. We were supposed to get our immigration visa in about 1940 or 41 - we were told. This transit visa would allow us to remain in England for 1939, 1940. With that letter she went to the Gestapo. My dad was released in 10 days. He was one of the early ones to be released. He was home, I believe, on November the 20th, with double Pneumonia. The doctor who treated him told my mother that if he had stayed there a couple of more days, he would have been gone. He had been very lucky.

My dad and I left Germany on January 1, 1^a939. We went across the border into Holland, and then into England. My father's brother lived in England at that time, and my cousin, his nephew, and another cousin. Two cousins. They helped us stay there. I worked in England as a trainee, but my father could not work. He was supported by the family that lived in England.

Q: WHEN YOU SAY YOU WENT ACROSS, WAS THAT BY TRAIN?

A: By train.

Q: DID YOU GO STRAIGHT THROUGH, OR DID YOU STOP AND STAY WITH PEOPLE? HOW DID ...?

A: No, we went straight through, across the border in to Holland (Americk) and then into (Hook van Holland), and then we caught a ferry to England.

Q: AND WHAT ABOUT...YOU MENTIONED YOU HAD A NUMBER. EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT THAT NUMBER WAS.

A: Well, when you register to, apply for an immigration visa to the United States, because of the quota system, they give you a number. It's a waiting list. They tell you, 'based on the number of people on the waiting list, based on the number of people we've got on the waiting list, it'll take two, three, four years before we get around to you anyway. By that time, you better have all your documents in shape.'

You have your affidavit, which you had to have. In other words a certificate from a relative or a friend in the United States that you would not become a burden on the

public, uh, whatever it is. Welfare.

Q: NOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOM AND YOUR SISTER? WHEN DID THEY JOIN YOU?

A: They had to liquidate the household. That wasn't as simple as it sounds. They had to make a detailed inventory of everything they wanted to ship out. With that, you had to go to the police, and you had to pay a 100% duty for everything. They valued everything and charge you a 100% export duty. That's one way they could get the money out of the jews.

After we had paid, and they put all their stamps on it, the moving company was then allowed to pack the stuff into big "lifts" they called them - these big boxes, which were then shipped to San Francisco. My mother had an Uncle living here, and my mother's brother had settled in San Jose. So we knew we were coming here sooner or later, so we had that shipped already, early to San Francisco in 1930, where it was stored until we got there in October, 1940.

And then my sister and my mother came by plane in February, 1939, from Frankfurt to London.

Q: NOW GOING BACK A LITTLE BIT TO 1936 AND THE PASSING OF

THE NUREMBURG LAWS. ASIDE FROM NO LONGER BEING ABLE TO HAVE A JEWISH MAID, WERE THERE ANY OTHER LAWS? WAS THERE ANY OTHER EFFECT ON YOU OR YOUR FAMILY? FOOD OR STARS OR ANYTHING?

A: No. They all liked to sell. Jewish money didn't smell. They all liked to sell to the jews. Of course, sooner or later all jewish businesses were liquidated. It became impossible to go to the movies or to the opera. Jews didn't want to mix; to go to the theatre. You know after a while you couldn't go to the movies. They had a sign there: "Jews Not Allowed." (*Werth repeats the sign in German*) Same thing with restaurants. More and more restaurants had the sign on there. You couldn't go to pubs or restaurants.

In 1936 or 1937, I think the Jewish community started a symphony and gave concerts at the (Vesten) synagogue. As a matter of fact, one of the guys who started it, who conducted the symphony, was Steinberg - of the Pittsburgh symphony later on. William Steinberg. He was a young man. In the early 30's he was the conductor of the FRankfurt opera as far as I know. Then in 1936 or 1935, when they kicked him out, he helped start the Frankfurt Jewish Symphony. Many of the players came either from the opera orchestra or the symphony orchestra. There were quite a few jews in those orchestras. Apparently it was a pretty good

orchestra. I remember going to some of the concerts. It was William Steinberg, later on of the Pittsburgh Symphony.

Q: WHAT ABOUT IN TERMS OF GOING OUT ON THE STREET - YOU PROBABLY INTERACTED WITH OR HAD SHOPKEEPERS WHO WERE ARYANS BEFORE HITLER CAME TO POWER. DID THEIR ATTITUDES CHANGE?

A: Some did. I remember distinctly one friend of my dad whom he had befriended during the war. He refused to stop coming to the house. He was one of the few who said "I don't give a damn. I was a friend of yours during four years in the trenches. We used to see each other. Why should I change? The hell with them." That was a great risk to him. He was a very simple guy. He was a carpenter. He belonged to the Union. I think if they would have found out that he was coming to the house he might have been kicked out of the Union. And you know, if you lose your membership in the Union, you probably couldn't work.

But many of the non-jews just started to pull back. They just didn't want to take the chance of being punished.

Q: ANYTHING SPECIFIC, OR ANYONE YOU REMEMBER SPECIFICALLY?

A: This guy I remember specifically because he had the courage to say, "I'm coming to visit you. And you come to

my house." Which after a while we didn't because my father felt he didn't want to jeopardize the man. He had children, he had a wife, he lived in an outskirt of town, a small town. Of course if somebody would see the family going to his house, they would report him. I mean, it probably wasn't that dangerous for him to come to our house because we live in the middle of town, and people just didn't know each other that well. I am sure you have that experience. You probably don't even know your own neighbor next door. But in a little village everybody knows everybody.

As I said, I had very little contact with non-jewish boys, because shortly after I started high school Hitler came to power and kids weren't associating with jews.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR SISTER'S NAME?

A: Paula

Q: AND WAS SHE OLDER OR YOUNGER

Wd⁷ A: Younger. She went to the (-----), to the jewish High School right from the beginning.

Q: LETS LEAVE GERMANY UNLESS THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD.

A: No, not necessarily. One thing I didn't mention. After
Sp the (kristalknof) I think I was one of the very few boys
over 16 still running around town. I volunteered to be a
runner for the jewish organization that helped families to
get out of town, to prepare the documents. I was the runner
who took the documents from our office to the police
station. I remember - you might think I am making these
things up but I don't. I was a miserable little kid anyway.

One day I went to the German police station and this
official says to me, "What the hell is a German boy doing
working for these God damned jews?"

I said, "I'm jewish."

He said, "Oh come.on. Don't make those God damned stupid
jokes."

I said, "Do you want me to prove it to you?" [Werth points
to his groin]

He said, "Get the hell out of here!" Because, you know,
non-jews were not circumcised. That was right in the end of
1938 just before I left, about four or five weeks. There

were no jewish men around.

The other thing I wanted to mention to you was that in 1938, I think that a decree came out, when all jews had to bring all their valuables to the police. Silver, gold, valuables, everything. That guy who sent our furniture out later on was a customer of my dad's bank.

He said to my dad, "Look, Mr. Werthimer, you know we go to Switzerland all the time. Why do you want to bring all your wife's jewels to the police? Give it to me, I'll have my wife take it across and then when you get to England, or to the United States, write me a letter and I'll send them to you.

So after we arrived in 1939 my father wrote, Dear Mr. So and So, we are living here now, and we were expecting a package to arrive sooner or later. We never even heard from the guy.

In April 1945 the Americans took Frankfurt, and I happened to be with Military Intelligence. I took a trip into Frankfurt and visited that gentleman. At first he tells me, he does not have them any more. After some going around, some threats, he says he doesn't know whether he can get them. They are in a safe and the building is all in

SP shambles and in ruins. I took my (carbine) off my shoulder, and I unlatched my safety, and I said, "Tomorrow morning I am going to be here. You either have the jewels, or you're going to be an awful sorry son of a bitch." The next morning he had the jewelry.

Q: WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE IN ENGLAND?

A: I lived for a while with my Uncle. I got a job, believe it or not, as a glass cutter in a mirror factory in the east end of London. We were making cheap mirrors for Marks and Spencers, a big department store, they're still in existence. Shortly after the war broke out in September of 1940...I still remember Mr. Chamberlain making his speech...my Uncle had a heart attack and passed away. I had to move out and find my own place to live. I lived on my own until I left England in October '40. I lived on two pounds and ten shillings. That was my weekly wage.

When I got to England it was a different feeling. You could walk around. You didn't have to worry about being beaten up. You could go to a movie, and you didn't have to worry about if you were jewish or not. You could go into a restaurant, and it felt good! You could be out at night, You didn't care whether you could walk the street late at night. And I belonged to a jewish organization that was

sponsored by the St. John's Wood synagogue which was on, I'm
Sf trying to remember the street, I think it was (Maidavale),
near Hyde Park Corner. I used to go to dances. Met some
girls. I actually had a pretty good time in England.

wd? Once the war broke out, things got a little scary. I spent
a lot of nights in the subway stations. In April of 1940
when the (fom---) war ended, and the German's invaded the
low countries in France, they really started to bomb London.
They closed the factory down and I was out of a job. Just
about that time, in May, we got our visa to come to the
United States. My parents tried to get a ticket on the
boat. We were told that, because my sister was under 16, we
would have to wait until October. They could only take a
certain number of children under 16 on each boat because of
the torpedoing and the danger. There had to be a certain
ratio of grown ups to children.

I remember saying to my folks, "Why don't I go by myself? I
can go by myself. I want to get the hell out of here. I
lost my job, so lets get out of here." So I got on a boat
in August 1940 which left Liverpool for New York. 200 miles
out, we were torpedoed. I spent about three of four hours
in a life boat. When they picked us up all I had on were my
pajama and my housecoat. I had my papers with me, the
German passport which included the American immigration

visa. And, we were landed in (Gurock) in Scotland.

Somehow there was a rumor around, that the reason this boat had been torpedoed was -- oh, this boat had three hundred refugee kids on board: evacuees who were supposed to be taken to Canada. And somebody started a rumor that the reason this boat was torpedoed, although it wasn't a convoy, was there was somebody on deck making morse codes with a flash light. Baloney.

So, when they picked us up and we got to the police station
Sp in (Gurock), and they showed my German passport. They
accused me of being one of them that sent the messages with
the flashlight. I remember I gave one of the policemen a
stupid answer, and the next thing I knew there was a fist in
my face.

Sp Anyway, they stuck us in the prison of (Grenock). His
S; majesties prison of (Grenock). I remember there was a
number of us on the top floor together with a Polish
wt (General).

I ask the one of the guards one time, "What is this Polish
wt? (General) doing here with us? He is an ally of England!"

The guard said, "Well, he made the wrong comment to one of

the big shots at the war ministry."

I said, "What are you saying?"

He said, "They were on maneuvers and somebody from the British war department was watching. The General said to -

I don't know what he was - one of the ministers, he complained about the lack of supplies and equipment. He said to this guy, 'What you people need here to get you guys off your asses is another Hitler.'" And the next thing, he was arrested and was spending his time up there with us.

The other interesting thing was, it was a very easy prison. I asked the guard one time, how come he didn't have anybody breaking out.

He said to me, "Laddy, they're not breakin' out, they're breakin' in."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "These are not ordinary criminals. These are merchant marines! They've been torpedoed a number of times and they've had enough of it. They don't report when they are supposed to, so they are AWOL, and they get three months here. They are very happy to be here."

Anyway, somebody brought up our conditions in parliament, and the next thing I know, I was released. Before they let me go home to London, they took me, because I was the one who got beaten, to the Police station in (Gurock), and the captain apologized.

In October of 1940 we all came over here. We made it. Although we were bombed in the harbor at Liverpool the night before we left.

Q: ON THAT TRIP FROM LIVERPOOL IT WAS YOUR WHOLE FAMILY?

A: Yes. The second time. Yes.

Q: AND HOW LONG WAS THAT CROSSING?

A: It was about 10 days I guess.

Q: AND WHAT WERE THE CONDITIONS ON THE BOAT?

A: Not good. The boat started to list because it was taking on some water. I think the boat was hit in the harbor. It was listing pretty badly when we got to New York. The food was terrible. It was an old boat. The cabins were terrible.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ALL YOUR ... OH, YOU HAD SENT YOUR POSSESSIONS AHEAD OF YOU, RIGHT?

A: Yes. My father and I left Germany with 10 marks in our pocket. The money that was in the bank in Germany was later confiscated.

Q: SO YOU GOT TO NEW YORK WHEN?

A: In October 1940.

Q: AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A: We spent four weeks in NY with my father's cousins. Then we spent a couple of days with a cousin of my mother's in Chicago, then we came to San Francisco. On a Greyhound Bus! From New York to San Francisco on a Greyhound bus, forty dollars a piece. I remember that.

Q: WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO ARRIVE IN NEW YORK?

A: Well, it was a great relief to get off this boat. To get out of the war zone. Of course I was anxious to get to work. I wanted to get started. I wasn't too happy spending all this time in New York. I had no money. And of course

my father had to rely on all these relatives. So we couldn't really see much. I know I visited the Metropolitan and I went to the Museum of Natural History. But I never went to a concert. I didn't have any money. I stayed with relatives, on a little couch of a cousin of mine. So we were anxious to get to San Francisco, or actually, to San Jose, where my mother's brother lived.

We had nothing but trouble. 200 miles west of Omaha, it was night, it was raining, the Greyhound bus hit a passenger car head on. Killed the three people in the passenger car. Disabled the bus. It was a big bus of course. So they had to come and pick us up and take us back to Omaha, where we got a night's sleep. That was the only night we stayed in a Hotel all the way coming across.

Q: AND YOU ARRIVED IN SAN JOSE? WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE THERE?

A: Well, I've got to tell you another little story. You might even know the people involved. When I was still in Frankfurt, when I was a kid, I belonged to a sports club. We also had a chess club. I used to play chess with a young
Sp man by the name of Henry (Weil), and his brother was Ernie
Sp (Weil), the owner of the Fantasia. When I arrived in San Jose, who was there to greet me but Henry Weil. I said, "How did come to be here?"

Apparently, he had come to San Jose a year or so earlier, and he had befriended my Uncle at the synagogue. One time, they had invited this young kid, who was all by himself, to come to their house for dinner after Friday night services. He saw the picture of my parents and my sister and myself on the mantelpiece. And he said to my Aunt, "I know this, isn't this Gunter Werthimer?" And my Aunt said, "Yes, and if you'd like to pick him up he is arriving in a couple of weeks." That's how I got re-acquainted with Henry Weil.

Q: ONCE YOU GOT TO SAN JOSE DID YOU STAY WITH YOUR UNCLE?

A: No. My uncle had a duplex. They rented a duplex, and they lived upstairs, and we lived downstairs. We got our furniture, and we lived downstairs. I was able to get a job as a lumber handler with (Chime) Lumber Company in San Jose. I was making a hundred dollars a month, which was pretty good money. I remember the rent on this five room apartment - it was a bedroom, a small dining room where I had my bed, a living room and a kitchen, and my sister had her own room so there were two bedrooms, one for my sister, the other bedroom for my parents, and I had a folding bed in the dining room. And that apartment cost us 25 bucks a month, believe it or not. So with a hundred dollars a month, we were able to live on it. I worked at (Chime) lumber company

from November 1940, until August 1941.

And then I moved to San Francisco and started to work for
Sp (Haas) Brothers. The reason I got that job...My father was
wd? learning the banking business (----?----) and there was a
young man there by the name of Max (Lilienthal) from San
Francisco. He was learning the banking business. And my
father kept in touch with him all those years. And he
invited the family, after we arrived, to a bar-b-que in,
either Palo Alto - or maybe it was - no it had to be Palo
Alto, they had a big place there. There I met the president
Sp of (Haas) Brothers - they are no longer in existence - by
Sp the name of (Milia) (Lilienthal). They told me they'd get
me a job as a clerk and I could move to San Francisco.
Which I wanted to do. I didn't see any future working as a
lumber handler. It was hard work. Two of us had to unload
a box car of lumber a day, and stack it in the lumber yard.
Even in the middle of summer, and that was tough. I know I
swallowed a lot of salt pills in the summer.

Sp - So I got a job here at (Haas) Brothers, working for the
-(Haas) family. I ended up working for the (Haas) Brothers
Levi Strauss. That's the other side of the family.

Q: WERE YOU SUPPORTING YOUR FAMILY AT THAT TIME?

A: I was supporting my family. My father finally got a job as a bookkeeper I think in the Fall of 1941. And he was working for the catholic church until his death. He got a job with (Novitian) winery, which was run by the Jesuits. They were also running a high school there, for boys, and they also had some connection with the University of Santa Clara. My dad became his accountant. And he worked there until 1947 when he passed away of a heart attack. My mother was a nurse during the first world war. She got her licence and became a practical nurse, until she became sick.

Q: WHERE WAS SHE WORKING? IN SAN JOSE?

A: Yes.

Q: IN A HOSPITAL?

A: No. She was a practical nurse. She went into private homes, after people came home from the hospital.

Q: DO YOU REMEMBER THE ADDRESS OF YOUR DUPLEX IN SAN JOSE?

A: It was on South 23rd Street. Later on they lived at 1515 Iris Court, which is in Willow Glen, another part of San Jose. They are both buried in San Jose. There is only one jewish cemetery there.

Q: NOW, LETS SEE, YOUR IN SAN FRANCISCO, WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE THERE?

Sp A: Well, as I said, I started to work for (Haas) brothers. They were a wholesale distributor of groceries. I started as a (cost) clerk. Later I got promoted at the age of 22 in charge of the billing department. I was making more money than some of those guys who worked there for 15 years. That is where I met my wife. And to use my father's phraseology, I though marriage was going out of style and I got married before I was 21. I'm still married to the same woman.

Q: TELL ME HOW YOU MET HER, AND THAT STORY.

A: She was working in the export department as a secretary. That's how we met.

Q: AND WHAT WAS HER NAME?

A: Mary Ann Epstein.

Q: WAS SHE AMERICAN?

A: Actually, she was born in Berlin, but her family moved to Hamburg when she was a little baby. So she considers herself a Hamburger. She was the only child. She came over

in 1938. My mother-in-law, her second marriage was to an American whom she met in Hamburg who was representing some American business in Hamburg. She married him in 1939. They first went to London, and then came to this county in 1940. He was working for Oscar Meyer, you know, the sausage people, and they lived in Madison Wisconsin. During the war while I was in the Army she, and later on the child, moved back east. So she lived in Madison with her step father and mother, from 1943 until 1946. We came out here again early 1946, and Henry Weil got me a job at (Corette) of California. He was working there.

My step-father went back to Europe. It's an interesting story there too. Please don't think I'm making it up. It is honestly the truth. As I said, I was military intelligence. I was with the fifth army division. First with Patton, then with Hodges, the first army, then with Simpson which was the (---?---) army. We were in combat practically all the way through from July until May the fifth, just before the armistice day. And we never had any furlough. So after the war, after the thing stopped, I got a three day pass to go to Paris over the fourth of July.

So I quickly dashed off a note to my wife; "Hey! I'm going to Paris!" So I got there on the third of July. As I jumped off the tail end of that two-and-a-half ton truck somebody

says, "Bernard!" I looked around, and it was my father-in-law. He was with the first boat load of American businessmen to come over to Europe in May. He knew General (Gavin) of (Shave) headquarters. So he went to General (Gavin) and said, "My son-in-law is coming to Paris, can you tell me where they are going to (billet) him. So he told him. And he was waiting for me. He was a different sort of fellow from what I would have expected, but I really saw Paris. He knew Paris. I saw all the interesting sights, including sitting in the General's box at the race tracks.

Q: LETS GO BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO. I'D LIKE TO HEAR WHAT YOUR LIFE WAS LIKE THERE, AND THEN GOING INTO THE ARMY.

A: At first when I came to San Francisco I lived in a boarding house. And in 1942 I got married and lived on 1770 Pine Street, between Gough and Franklin. We had a little furnished apartment with an electric stove and a dishwasher, believe it or not. It was a kitchen and a dinette and a big living room with a big closet where you rolled out these beds out of the closet. And that was it. I worked and my wife worked for a while, then she became pregnant and I had to support her on \$220 a month, which you could do in those days. Then I was called in to the army shortly after my daughter was born, and she moved back east.

Q: WHAT WAS ARMY LIFE LIKE.

Sp
wd? A: The basic training at camp (Robert) kind of rough, but I
wd? never missed a hike. Then I went into advanced (infantry)
wd? training at Fort Ord. There I was called up because I spoke
German. I was supposed to go back east to (Kit), one of the
camps for training as military intelligence specialists.
Somehow our - there was a group of 17 of us - orders got
wd? mixed up. When we got to (Mead) back east, they didn't know
what to do with us. So they put us in the infantry
replacement outfit, and I was shipped over to England. I
Sp
wd? landed on (Omaha) beach in early July. I joined the fifth
army division on the (line company) until I was transferred
to a military intelligence later on.

Q: WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

I was interrogating prisoners. I was doing, uh, not
strategic, but tactical interrogation. In other words, we
weren't interested in what life was like back in Germany.
We wanted to know where is that 88 that is firing on us?
What is the disposition of the troops? I was on the front
lines with the lead company, the lead platoon. As soon as
they caught a prisoner, I had to try to find out where they
wd? had their observation posts, where they had their (turkey),
where they had their mortars, what the disposition of the

troops were.

Q: NOW EXPLAIN TO ME HOW THAT WORKS. YOU LANDED AT OMAHA BEACH...

A: First I was with a rifle company. I was in combat.

Q: AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

A: I was transferred because once we got closer to Germany they needed intelligence people with German knowledge.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR WORK DAY LIKE? DID THEY USUALLY BRING PEOPLE IN AND SAY "QUESTION THEM?"

A: Day like? I was usually with the lead platoon. There was fighting going on. In fact I was captured. I was captured by the SS on April 20. I was with the lead platoon liberating Luxembourg City. I was right with the lead platoon.

Q: AND WHEN YOU WERE CAPTURED, WHAT HAPPENED?

A: I was scared shitless. I was stupid. As a military intelligence person I should have known not to carry stuff on my body. Particularly not an address book with German

addresses on my body. So as soon as I hit the ground I picked out of my pocket and stuck it quickly in the ground. We were guarded by some young kid who had been wounded a couple of days before. The Germans didn't have sulfur or penicillin, and the kid started to get blood poisoning. He had that red streak running up his arm.

So my buddy says to me, "Bernard, don't talk German. If they find out you are German and Jewish the SS will put you against the tree and shoot you. Just let me handle this."

He asked me, "How do you say this German." Then he went to the guard and said [*pointing to imaginary wounded arm of guard*], "Bad, bad, whoa, bad. Soon it will be kaput [*makes a chopping gesture to indicate amputation*] kaput. We got (vunderkok). You come with us, we'll fix you."

So he helped us escape. He showed us how to get out. He knew where the guards were. We walked out, then we got fired upon by our own guards. We lost one guy - he got killed. That was in North (---?---), near (Stendall), near a town called Kloltze, which is now in East Germany. I was captured on April the 20th, 1945 Hitler's birthday. I got away that night. So I wasn't there very long.

The reason I got captured, I was with a reconnaissance

platoon. We were supposed to reconnoiter in a line of departure they called it. We were supposed to make a push in a north easterly direction towards Hamburg. The british were not on our left hand flank. They were way behind us. There was a big German pocket and the Germans were filtering in through our left hand flank. The fifth armor division had me pull back from the Elbe river. We were supposed to push in a north easterly direction towards Hamburg to help the british out. They usually reconnoiter the area to see where the German forward positions are, because that's where you start pushing forward. That is what they call the line of departure. I was in the end trying to find out where the Germans were. I was with that lead platoon with about 20 guys with jeeps. That's all we had. We ran into this town of Klotze, and we turned a corner and all of a sudden I was staring at the German tank. The German soldier jumped out from the tank shouting ("Amska, Amska Amska!")

So you asked me how was my day. There was no day. When there was something going on, you went up there.

Q: HOW LONG WERE YOU DOING THAT?

A: I was transferred October 1944. The first couple of months I was with the infantry company.

Q: AND HOW LONG WERE YOU DOING THE RECONNOITER INTELLIGENCE?

A: From November 1, until the war was over in 1945. The war in was over in Europe on May 8, 1945. They signed the Armistice, I mean the surrender.

Q: BERNARD, WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO BEING BACK IN GERMANY?

A: I happened to know the Germans. I believed there were no good Germans. Particularly when you talked to them. Nobody ever belonged to the Nazi party. They had nothing to do with it. They didn't know what was going on. They claimed to have never heard of the concentration camps. They may not have heard of specific incidents at the (Ray-shi-stadt) but there were labor camps all over Germany where they had forced labor. Working at the factories. Don't tell my they didn't know what was going on. My father was in Buchenwald which was right outside of Germany. Which I visited by the way, shortly after it was liberated.

I saw still inmates there, I saw there were ovens. I didn't get to Belsen-Bergen but I knew it was there. I visited that in 1972 with my son. Of course he didn't see anything

besides mass graves. All the buildings were gone. My mother's cousin was there towards the end. She was liberated from there.

Q: WHEN YOU WERE AT BUCHENWALD, WAS THAT WITH THE ARMY?

A: Yes. I mean I was on of the soldiers. I think that I just, when we got there I just grabbed a jeep and went there. Because we were stationed at (Erfud) which was not too far from the camp.

Q: CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU SAW? YOU WENT THROUGH THE GATES AND THEN WHAT DID YOU SEE?

A: Barracks, with still inmates in their white and black stripes. They showed me the place where they had the ovens. This big thing with these big iron gates where they shoved the bodies in. I was sick. I didn't stay there too long. Some of the people seemed pretty emaciated.

Q: WERE YOU AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING BEFORE YOU ARRIVED IN GERMANY?

A: We had heard about the concentration camps. We certainly knew that. The jews were disappearing. Were shipped off. I knew about it. I didn't know to what

extent. How bad it was. I didn't hear about the mass killings and gassing. That we didn't know.

Q: WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THAT?

A: In the army days when we were over there. When the Russians liberated Theresienstadt, we got closer. When they liberated Buchenwald and the British liberated Belsen-Bergen then it became open knowledge. I am sure there were articles in *Stars and Stripes*.

Q: AS A JEW, BEING IN THE AMERICAN ARMY, GOING BACK TO GERMANY AND WALKING IN TO A CAMP AND SEEING WHAT HAD HAPPENED...DID IT CHANGE YOU? DID IT MAKE YOU BITTER?

A: I never lost my bitterness. I used to go to Europe quite often. But until 1972, I never set foot into Germany. The reason we went there, my mother still had a cousin living near (Hanover), half jewish, and she wanted to visit him. So I took my wife and my younger son, and went into Switzerland, France, and then into Germany. That was the first time I set foot in Germany. To this day I won't speak German to the Germans. They can speak English.

Q: WHAT WAS IT LIKE BRINGING A CHILD THERE?

A: Well, I think this Belsen-Bergen made a real impression. He didn't see anything but these mass graves, but they had these photographs, I think taken by the British, of the bulldozers pushing these bodies into open mass graves. I think it left a lasting impression on my young son, to the extent that he became really interested in Israel. He spent a year in Israel. He worked for the ministry of justice over there for a year. In the (---?---).

Q: WHEN YOU WERE BRINGING UP YOUR CHILDREN, BECAUSE OF YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE NAZIS AND THE HOLOCAUST, DID IT MAKE YOU BRING THEM UP IN A SPECIAL WAY?

A: I am not religious. I don't even belong to a synagogue. I belong to a Jewish humanist society. But I don't go to synagogue. My daughter was confirmed at Temple (Emanuel). My son was barmitzvahed with Rabbi Goldstein at (Shers Israel). And the one who went to Israel finally got interested in Israel life. He refused to become barmitzvahed. He became barmitzvahed later at age 21, or age 23.

Q: DO YOU THINK THERE WERE THINGS THAT YOU TAUGHT THEM THAT WERE DUE TO YOUR EXPERIENCES?

A: Maybe indirectly. I just tried to bring them up as good

citizens, as honest citizens, to do the right things, to be honest. To be law abiding citizens, which I think they were. I never had any problems with them, with drugs or anything else. But I am not very religious. To some extent it was a reaction to my grandfather's doctrinaire behavior. He wanted to force me to observe everything, and I didn't want to.

Q: DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

A: No. I believe in something bigger than what we are. Some supreme force. But not what you read about in a prayer book.

Q: LET'S GO BACK FOR A MINUTE TO THE ARMY. ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXPERIENCES THAT YOU REMEMBER SPECIFICALLY, LIKE MEETING WITH GERMANS, OR EVEN ATTITUDES WITHIN THE AMERICAN ARMY?

A: As far as Germans were concerned, we weren't supposed to meet with Germans. There was no fraternization law enforce. The only time you only spoke to a German was when you had to. In other words, you just stayed away. I didn't want to get three months in the (berger), or get punished because I talked to Germans. I wanted to get home.

There was a certain amount of anti-semitism in the American army. My commanding officer in the military intelligence was born in Germany, and was not a Jew. In fact, he came out of Hamburg. He told me his family emigrated to the United States in 1930. I remember that we rejoined the division in November, 1944. I happened to be there one evening when he came in (seeking his charge quarters) of the battalion headquarters.

Sp He walked in, introduced himself, "I'm Captain (Georgie)." He looked around the headquarters tent. I had put up a big wall map of the Western Front which I had overlaid with plastic. I had penciled in with colored grease pencils the positions that I could learn from intelligence reports that we were getting from (Shafe). We penciled in our positions and the German positions as far as we could know.

He said, "Oh that's a nice job. Who did this?" I said, "Oh I did sir." So he points to the map, to the central part of Germany, and he says, "When we get there we're going to have a good time. I have a lot of friends there."

I snapped to attention and said, "Sir, as far as I am concerned, none of these sons of bitches are my friends." So I started off on the wrong foot. I didn't know he was German actually. From then on in, he and I didn't get

along.

I was due a promotion, and I even complained to the regimental commander. He says to me, "Werth, I know you have *Sp* more stripes coming, but (Georgie) refuses to recommend you and I won't go over his head.

Q: WAS IT DIFFICULT TO BE BACK IN GERMANY?

A: I didn't like the fact that I was in the army. As far as the Germans were concerned, I felt kind of good that the Germans were getting what they had coming.

Q: WHEN YOU WERE INTERROGATING PRISONERS, DID YOU FEEL LIKE...?

A: Well, I didn't believe in atrocities. I remember I threatened a German officer one time. I told him to go run. I was going to fire at him because we in a real tough position and we had lost a lot of people, and I really wanted to know where the artillery fire was coming from. But he wouldn't run, and I didn't have the guts to pull the trigger.

I remember - In fact I've still got the pistol at home - we captured a doctor, medical core. When I frisked him he had *Sp* a (luger) on him. I said, "What are you doing with a

Sp (luger) on you. You're a doctor. Medical corp personnel are not supposed to be armed."

He says to me, "I don't use it for combat, it is a Sp (knoddenpistol). In other words, when I find a wounded man and I can't help him, I shoot him." I've still got that gun at home. He was a German doctor.

Q: THINGS HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH HAVE THEY? WHAT ELSE DO YOU REMEMBER?

A: That's about it. That's enough.

Q: WHEN YOU CAME BACK YOU WENT TO MADISON, WHERE YOUR WIFE WAS?

Sp A: I was discharged at Fort (Sheriden), which is outside Chicago. I spent a few weeks with my wife in Chicago, and in Madison. Then we decided to come out to San Francisco. We didn't like the climate in Chicago. In January the wind of, is it Lake Superior? Lake Erie? Whatever, that wind coming off the lake was awfully cold. I just didn't like the climate. I wanted to come back to San Francisco. I had a job waiting for me at (Haas) Brothers, which I didn't take. I started work for (Corette).

Q: WHAT DID YOU DO FOR (CORETTE)?

A: I ended up as their Finance Vice President. Actually
Sp the company grew and finally it was called (Colcub)
industries, and it expanded all over. We had factories in
Canada, Europe, Chicago, Wisconsin, Texas, New York, and I
Sp was the Financial Vice President. In 1979, (Lemar) bought
us out, and shortly thereafter I quit. I was with them for
30 some odd years.

Q: WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOU CAME BACK AS FAR AS JEWISH LIFE.
DID YOU BELONG TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AT ALL? WERE YOUR
FRIENDS JEWISH?

A: Sure, primarily jewish. As I told you earlier, I joined
the Council of 1933, which was primarily german-jewish
refugees. It was a social group, that helped people get
their restitution money. It was primarily a social group.
They organized a congregation, they organized high holiday
services. But it was primarily a social group. It helped
people know what the latest developments are and the
restitution laws. It is no longer in existence.

When we came to San Francisco, we had a hell of a time. At
first, we moved in with my parents in San Jose, and I
commuted to San Francisco, which was not very pleasant.

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Then we finally found a sub-leased room, couple of rooms, from a sailor and his wife on Fell Street, right off the ramp there. You couldn't find a place. If you had a cat or a child or a dog, they wouldn't rent to you. So we stayed there for couple of months until my wife couldn't take it any more. They were miserable conditions. We found a ^{Sp} little apartment in Richmond California, off (Cutting) Blvd., which was a wherehousing project which I think Kaiser built to house the shipyard workers. That one section was taken over by the University of California. Primarily young students lived there. It was fairly clean, and we moved in there. We stayed there from May, until October '46 until we bought a pair of flats here off Judah and 29th avenue. We've lived in the sunset ever since. Not in same house.

Q: YOU HAVE THREE CHILDREN?

A: I have a daughter who was born in '43. She went to, in ^{was?} those days (---- ----- ---- to go to school) and she went to UC. She is a physical therapist. She lives in Holland. Her husband is the President of a small subsidiary of Dupont company in Holland. Her name is Margaret Solberg.

Q: CHILDREN?

A: Two boys, named Peter and Andrew. Peter is graduated

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from Stanford. He is now a pre-med student. He has to make up some stuff he didn't take at Stanford here at State University. He hopes to go to medical school in another year or two. He just spent a year teaching English in China at (Quay Lin) University, central China. The other one is still down in Texas at (Rice) University where my daughter lived before they were transferred to Holland. He taking physics and aeronautical engineering.

Q: YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD OF THEM.

A: Yes, they are all very good students. Peter just came home with all A's.

Q: YOUR SONS WERE BORN WHEN?

A: My son was born in 1947. He lives in (Bellevue) which is near Seattle on the East side of Lake Washington. He is the chief financial officer for a firm there. He started a family kind of late. He has a four year old daughter and a two year old son. He is forty-three years old. He started late.

The other one, the attorney is only 31. (--- --- --- -----
-). He is married but no family. They are buying a house. They can't afford kids.

Q: DID YOU BRING THEM UP WITH ANY RELIGIOUS TRAINING?

A: Very little. No. Because I certainly didn't believe in it. As a matter a fact, we never even celebrated the seder. The last couple of years I finally gave a seder service.

Q: WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE DID THEY GROW UP WITH ABOUT WWII AND THE HOLOCAUST? DID YOU TALK TO THEM ABOUT YOUR FAMILY?

A: Well, they knew what was going on. We didn't make a specific effort other than what they heard... Of course Steven heard much more about it. Steven is very active at AIPAC (the American-Israeli Political Action Committee). He ^{was?} is on the board of the (berliner?). I used to be quite active in jewish affairs. I used to be on the board and an ^{SP} officer of (homoterras?) - Have you ever heard of that? - which was later absorbed by Jewish Family and Children's Services. I was on the board for six years at the Jewish Family Children's Services, I was the treasurer. I am still on some committees at Jewish Family Children's Services.

Q: NOW THAT THEY ARE MARRIED AND HAVE THEIR OWN FAMILIES, WHAT IS THEIR LINK TO JUDAISM?

A: Well, none of my in-laws are jewish. My son's wife

converted and the children are being brought up jewish. My son in law never converted. Actually, when I asked Peter the other day, "What do you tell them when they ask you what religion you are?" He said, "I am jewish." But they were not brought up religious either.

As a matter of fact, my daughter was married at the Unitarian Church at Geary and Franklin. And the other one, although he says they have agreed that if they have children they are going to be brought up jewish, she is not going to convert.

Q: AS LONG AS THEY ARE HAPPY DOES IT BOTHER YOU?

A: No. I am a very... Well, one of the daughter in laws just converted to judaism, but my son in law in Holland - I couldn't ask for a better guy.

Q: WHAT ABOUT MODERN DAY EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND GERMANY REUNITING. ANY THOUGHTS ON THAT?

A: Yeah. I love Germany so much I would like to see two Germanies for the rest of my life. But it is not in the cards. It is not in the cards. Some people claim that Germany has lived with true democracy since 1945, for these 45 years. They say the younger generation has learned a

lesson. It is not like this phoney democracy of the Weimer Republic. Maybe the Germans are going to moderate their behavior. Hopefully, they will be tied to the EEC, the European Community economically in such a strong way that they will have no reason to start anything. I think the worst thing is to cut them loose from NATO - NATO I don't believe is going to last for very long. But to cut them loose from the European Community, because then they are liable to form a central European block, not connected to the east or the west. And that is where the danger is. That is why I think the government here has to insist that they are somehow tied in with the western economic community.

Not necessarily NATO. I think NATO, as it was originally designed, is dead. We don't need it any more. The military alliance. I think Gorbachev is right. He considers it a threat to his community. Like he said, they lost 20 million people. We can't forget. But, I really think, unless Germany can be tied in to the west, really tied in to the economic life of the western world, I wouldn't trust them. If they were all by themselves, a very strong central European Economic block on their own? They probably would be looking for (---?---) pretty fast.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE USSR. DO

YOU THINK THAT IS GOING TO INCREASE AS THE COUNTRIES GAIN INDEPENDENCE?

wd? A: Well, the lunatic fringe is of course still (in existence?) but I don't know to what extent the churches have something to do with it. I don't have much love for either the catholic church or the other orthodox church. You might want to cut that out.

Q: WITHIN THE UNITED STATES ITSELF, WHEN EVER THE ECONOMY GOES DOWN IT IS OFTEN BAD FOR THE JEWS. DO YOU FEEL SAFE HERE?

A: Yes. I think, at least here in San Francisco, that it is such a multi-racial society. In fact, the whites in San Francisco are now a minority. I don't think you are going to find that they are going to take it out just exclusively on the jews. There is still discrimination against the blacks, against the Central Americans. There is always something going on. But I don't think there is going to be the tide of anti-semitism that is going to single us out at the exclusion of everybody else. I think this country is just too multi-faceted, too multi-cultural.

Q: HOW DO YOU SEE AMERICA? ARE YOU GLAD YOU'RE HERE?

A: I am glad I am here, but I have certain concerns about this country. We are not as strong economically as we used to be. Unless we get our trade deficit under control and start saving more and plowing back on our economy, we are going to get weaker and weaker. The Germans, who save much more than we do, are much stronger, can afford to buy up our real estate property, our companies, who can modernize industries and become more and more competitive. It is the Japanese and the Germans who are able to save. Our savings rate is what, 3 or 4 percent, on top of which we have this deficit. We are getting weaker and weaker economically. Unless our friends in Washington wake up, we are going to be in trouble. The Japanese are financing part of our deficit right now. Where would we be without the Japanese buying ^{up?} our (bonds?). It is in the long range a very serious problem.

Q: WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

A: I've been there a few times. They too have to learn to work. The last time I came back I said to my wife, "A good dose of unemployment would do them good." They don't want to work. They are using all the Arabs for the tough work, like plumbers and carpenters. We, the Israelis have made a mistake, in my opinion, from the moment they captured the West Bank in 1967. They keep putting up more schools, and

more Universities, and they educated them, but they wouldn't let them expand. Have you read the book by this guy Friedman, From Beirut to Jerusalem? He describes how the Israeli (gabord) keeps a thumb on the West Bank and Gaza strip population. They can't really start a business. They can't do any banking in our traditional sense. They have banks where they can cash checks, but that is all they can do. They can't go in to business without permits. They can't change production without permits. They can't do nothing. They are being held down economically. And they are starting to revolt. It frustration.

He wrote this book. He talked about it. How many soldiers were there in the West Bank for how many years? Just a few thousand controlling a million 200,000 Arabs? Just a few. The population was actually very docile. But they became frustrated. They kept them in these concentr...these refugee camps. And the excuse was that they didn't want to move out. That's baloney. Have you seen some of these camps?

Q: I LIVED THERE FOR FIVE YEARS.

A: Oh, you lived there five years. Where did you live. Near Jericho?

Q: Yeah

wad?
A: And I drove around, along the Galilee, up towards the (---) where there are a lot of Arab villages. And I could tell you, I drove around there in a car, with my son. I could tell every time I came in to an Israeli village or an Arab village. The moment you came into an Arab village there was nothing but potholes in the streets. Every thing was run down. There probably was no plumbing. And these were Israeli Arabs. There was discrimination going on even towards the Israeli Arabs. I am not talking about the early 70's, late 70's, 80's.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WE'VE MISSED?

A: You've been pretty thorough.

Q: IN TERMS OF SUMMARIZING, IF YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO GIVE TO PEOPLE BASED ON YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE, WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

A: After I retired, I told my wife, what I want to do is to be involved in the social scene. As I said, I worked quite diligently with the Jewish Family Children's Services for six years. I was the treasurer. I spent a lot of time there. I am still on a number of committees. I am a state

Sp (w?) ombudsman. I go out to the (Rhodeislander) hospital to see that the patients are properly taken care of. I belong to the Executive Service Corps, which is an organization of retired senior executives who provide consulting services for non-profits. I was involved in doing some work for the California Historical Society. They had some problems. I also did some consulting job for the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. I am now involved in trying to develop a marketing program, and some budgeting for a corporate nursing school.

So I am trying to pay back to society for the opportunities that we had. I came here with absolutely nothing. With just a high school education. I was able to get more education. I became a CPA. I had a good job. But I had the opportunity. That is all you really need is the opportunity. And I had that, especially here in San Francisco. So I am trying to return something to the community. I think that is hopefully what people should be doing.

Q: WHERE DO YOU THINK THAT SENSE OF WANTING TO GIVE BACK COMES FROM?

A: Well, from jewish tradition, number one. Basically from jewish tradition. Certainly it is how I was brought up.

Don't be concerned too much about the almighty mark or the almighty dollar. There are other things you ought to consider. I like to go to concerts. I like to go to plays.

Q: SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE BUSIER IN RETIREMENT THAN YOU WERE WHEN YOU WERE WORKING.

A: Actually, I am not too busy. When I was at the Jewish children and Family Services I used to spend two or three days there. We had some problems.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY, YOU KNOW, FOR THE FUTURE?

A: As I said, I hope for the future when we can overcome some of the racial problems in this country, and solve our problems with the deficits. We can overcome the lack of savings. And hopefully we can increase our productivity, in other words, find a way to educate our youth. Get rid of the drug problem which is terrible. I don't know the answer. I don't the answer about educating our youth. We don't have enough school help coming up. That's another problem. How many kids graduate from high school these days? These are problems. And the people in Washington and Sacramento are not addressing them. We've got to change the way we run our election campaigns. Finance election

campaigns.

Q: THAT IS AN INTERESTING THOUGHT.

Sp A: Absolutely. Look at this guy (Duremburg). He was considered Mr. Clean when he first got started. And look how he got perverted. Because he had to run against this guy from the (Dayton) family. You know, the (Dayton-Hudson) family? From the department store? He ran against them for senator. They raised millions of dollars, and he was a poor guy. So what are you gonna do? He had to sell himself. And he became a crook. It is really a sad, sad story when you look at (Duremburg's) background, how he got perverted by the system.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF JEWS IN THE COUNTRY?

A: I hope that the jews don't disappear from the scene as they are now. I mean it looks like...At least in the West. A demographic study done by the Jewish, the uh, the (Tamalia) Federation indicates that, at least in this area, the jews are the most assimilated community in the United States, and that mixed marriages are the majority, as far as I remember. I hope this trend doesn't continue, that jews start to disappear. Because I think the jewish tradition

and jewish history can help guide humanity.

Q: GOOD. I THINK THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO ASK YOU, UNLESS THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU HAVE TO ADD.

A: NO.

Q: [TO SECOND] IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

SECOND: YES. DID YOU EVER KNOW YOUR GRANDMOTHER?

A: I knew one grandmother. My mother's mother passed away in early 1924. No, no, it's very hazy. My father's mother died when he was very young. He lost his mother when he was 12, and his father when he was 13 or 14. The only one who lived a very long life was my wife's mother. She just passed away. She was not quite 99. I knew my grandfather, my mother's father. He died in Theresienstadt in 1943. I ^{sp} got the death certificate through (Viat Veshev) when I was over there.

Q: DO YOU STILL HAVE IT?

A: Yes. I have it at home. If you want it I can get it for you.

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Q: We'll just put it on videotape. That and the picture of you at school.

A: I challenge you to point me out in that picture, with all the (groins) around. So where did you learn to interview? Did you train?

Q: Well, I'm a video producer and...we can cut at any time.

CUT TO: Photos and documents.