

Leonard and Edith Ehrlich collection

Introductory note by Anatol Steck, Project Director in the International Archival Programs Division of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

These summary transcription notes of the digitized interviews recorded by Leonard and Edith Ehrlich in the 1970s as part of their research for their manuscript about the Jewish community leadership in Vienna and Theresienstadt during the Holocaust titled "Choices under Duress" are a work in progress. The project started in April 2016 and is ongoing. The summary notes are being typed while listening to the recordings in real time; this requires simultaneous translation as many of the interviews are in German, often using Viennese vernacular and/or Yiddish terms (especially in case of the lengthy interview with Benjamin Murmelstein which the Ehrlichs recorded with Mr. and Mrs. Murmelstein over several days in their apartment in Rome and which constitutes a major part of this collection). The summary notes are intended as a tool and a finding aid for the researcher; researchers are strongly encouraged to consult the digitized recordings for accuracy and authenticity and not to rely solely on the summary notes. As much as possible, persons mentioned by name in the interviews are identified and described in the text; however, as persons are often referred to in the interviews only by last name, their identification is sometimes based on the context in which their names appear within the interview (especially in cases where different persons share the same last name). In case of the interview with Benjamin Murmelstein, unless specifically stated at the beginning of the tape by Leonard Ehrlich, it is not always clear whether a particular interview segment continues in the correct order or, as the interview was recorded over several days, a particular interview segment continues where the interview was concluded on the previous day. It is possible that the individual interview segments are not in their correct order. – Washington, D.C., July 2016

RG-50.862*0018

Oral history interview with John Renner

Oral history interview with Rabbi Leo Jung

Oral history interview with Rabbi Forhand

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[00:00:04 - 00:33:00] Interview in English with **John Renehan (?)** in New York, a half-Jewish survivor from Vienna, who emigrated to Santo Domingo via England. Lived there in a Jewish settlement. Emigrated with his wife from Santo Domingo to the US. Interview begins with a discussion about Austrian politician Dr. Karl Renner and the annexation of Austria to Nazi Germany. [Interview terminates at 00:33:00]

[00:33:16 - 00:57:02] Interview with **Rabbi Leo Jung**, former Chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), recorded on November 12, 1979 in New York. Leonard Ehrlich mentions that Dr. Margarete Feiler referred Leonard Ehrlich and Edith Ehrlich to Rabbi Jung. Leonard Ehrlich and Edith Ehrlich ask Rabbi Jung about Benjamin Murelstein and Josef Loewenherz but he states that he does not remember them. Ask Rabbi Jung about other contacts from Vienna and what his dealings were with the Jewish administration in Vienna but Rabbi Jung remembers little. Edith Ehrlich discovers a family lineage with Rabbi Jung. *[NOTE: Rabbi Leo Jung became JDC Chairman in March 1943. Rabbi Jung resigned as chairman in 1978, 35 years later, after holding the longest Chairmanship in JDC history. Source: JDC]*

[00:57:06 - 01:34:45] Interview in German with survivor **Rabbi Forehand (Vorhand?)**, recorded on November 12, 1979 in New York. Spent most of the war years in Bratislava, 1943-1944 in Hungary, 1944 back to Czechoslovakia. In December 1944 deported to Sachsenhausen. Lived in Prague from 1945 until 1949 before his emigration. Recommends that Leonard Ehrlich and Edith Ehrlich contact a man by the name of Charles Richter who is knowledgeable about Vienna, whose father-in-law was Julius Steinfeld *[NOTE: Julius Steinfeld was an anti-Zionist and orthodox memembr of the Jewish administration in Vienna under Nazi rule; see: Doron Rabinovici, "Instanzen der Ohmacht: Wien 1938-1945"]*. Rabbi Forehand (Vorhand?) discusses rescue operations, including the ships sent down the Danube. Organized Aliyah Bet. Talks about Julius Steinfeld's activities, including his interaction with Adolf Eichmann. Discusses contacts between Jewish community in Bratislava and Jewish community in Vienna.
Sound quality: Excellent