

# MATTHIAS NEUMARK

## Filming

(No Date Given)

**Michael:** Tell us um, tell us a little about your background and why you came from Turkey.

**Matthias Neumark:** Yes, uh, I was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1927. Uh, the son of Fritz Neumark who at the time, uh, was an instructor at the University of Frankfurt, and his wife Erica. Um, my father had uh, em, embarked on an academic career and uh, gradually advanced at the University of Frankfurt to the rank of professor. Which, I think was in 1931, and his economic circumstances improved, uh, which when he and my mother married were very meager. And uh, in 1931 also, my sister arrived – who is roughly four years younger than I am. Would you lime me to tell you a little about the events that led to our departure from . . . ?

**M:** Why don't we begin by, give me a sense of your family background. Was your family Jewish, your mother . . . ?

**N:** My father was Jewish and, by the definitions of the Third Reich, he was certainly Jewish. He was uh, basically (*Fire engine sirens*) agnostic.

**Victoria:** Um, can we cut please? I'm sorry there's sirens. (*Sirens in background*)

**N:** Shall I continue?

**V:** Okay.

**N:** He was agnostic by conviction, and officially declared himself an atheist around 1922. Uh, I not aware that his mother or father were particularly religious, but I believe that they still professed to heir faith. My mother came from a Protestant family in Northern Germany. She was uh, from Hamburg where my grandfather was a uh, cork merchant which uh, meant that he had to travel a great deal to both Spain and South America. And, his second wife uh, actually was a German-Argentinean who brought three children to my grandfather, whom he adopted. I think that sort of summarized their family background.

**M:** Now, what do you remember uh, what do you remember as a child – not what you remember hearing? What do you remember as a child about the circumstances of you departure from Germany?

**N:** Okay, I, I have a fairly good long-term memory, and I remember things in quite, quite a bit of detail. I realized that certain political events were taking place in Germany. Uh, there was a great deal of hullabaloo marches up and the streets by various opposing political factions. Uh, remember uh, my parents getting some what worried about the uh, political situation. And, I also remember that uh, very suddenly my father left and went to Switzerland for reasons that were not entirely clear to me. Um, at the point in time it uh, it developed that my father um, as part of a group of German academics um, was invited to teach at the University of Istanbul. This was a fairly large group, and of course, he was in touch with my mother and advised her that there was a future for them somewhere else because he had been dismissed from his post as university, at the University as a result of a law that was passed in 1033 which was called the 'law to protect Germany civil servant.' And, as a professor at the State University, he was a civil servant.

**M:** This was the April 7<sup>th</sup> regulation?

**N:** Yes that's correct. So, my parents did not at that point in time have any great financial reserves, so obviously he had to look for an other job. And, he was certainly willing to uh, move to Turkey to fond a new existence for himself and his family.

**M:** Do you remember anything? Uh, I need to reload here . . . it'll just take a second. Yes sir, now we can start right back in. Do you remember . . .

**Dennis:** Camera roll, 56.

**M:** . . . uh, as to what was going on?

**N:** Well actually, the conversations did not happen between my parents, that we were going anywhere because my father and gone to Switzerland on the advice of some friends of his. Um, the uh, conversations must, or exchanges of letter about this new job must be between them. And, I certainly was not aware of any, of hearing anything but, I did um, know, hear from my mother telling me what was going to happen. And, there was a plan that we would visit the respective grandparents before this departure. Which, was for n indeterminate period of time. So, we first went to Hanover, which is where my parents, mother, my uh, father's mother lived along with his sister and brother-in-law and their children. And , we visited there, subsequently my parents had to meet in Geneva, in Italy uh, when they had secured passage on a ship to take them to Turkey. And, that passage for me was a great adventure. I mean, here I was six and ah half years old I've never done much travel except a little bit on the railroad. Uh, and here I was on a ship and, and we were sailing down the coast of Italy. Um, we saw Mt. Vesuvius. We say Mt. Edna, we went through the Straights if Sicily, rounded Italy and finally went thorough the Canal of Rith. Across the Pelepnosis of Grece. We stooped in Athens, Aroundimperious-the Port of Athens, and here at the ripe old age of six and a half, I had my first exposure to uh, Greek antiquity. We visited the Parthenon, above Athens, and I still remember a little of that. And, from there we proceeded to Istanbul, where we disembarked and uh, we then pole there where uh, found temporary quarters in Emarcion, in Moda – which was a suburb of Istanbul on the Asiatic side of Istanbul. And, that's where we spent a few

weeks until my parents could find housing, which they did. Uh, uh, how much further do you want to go on, on this?

**M:** Well tell me about um, did you then enter a school?

**N:** Well that took a little time. I mean first of all I was, you know, just six and a half years old. Uh, my parents obviously could not send me to a Turkish school because I don't know a work of Turkish at that time. So, they were able to find uh, a German woman was married to a Turk, who was actually a certified teacher in German, but was now living in Turkey with her husband. And, she was willing to take me on as a private student. And uh, that's how I spent my first two years of schooling open about the three or four months that I'd been in school in Germany.

**M:** And then?

**N:** And she was succeeded by an other German teacher who happened to live in Istanbul. I'd eventually uh, my parents followed the example of a colleague of my father's who, had sent his children to a German school in Istanbul. So, from that period on I made a daily trip from Asia to Europe, and returned to go to school – by a ferry and subway. A very short subway. And, I attend that school until uh, November of 1938. At which time, my parents as well as the parents of some of my friends removed their children from the school because what was happening in Germany, which was Christmas Night. And uh, my dad, the school itself had undergone some changes. I think the German ministry of Education's felt that they had to replace some of the teachers that were there with younger, convicted National Socialist teachers – one of who became one of my teachers.

**M:** Do you remember being a kid in this German school and facing discrimination?

**N:** No. I did not face discrimination there. No.

**M:** Did you face any conversations with your fellow students about events in Germany?

**N:** I didn't think, there was not much. I knew that some of the students there that were German citizens uh, joined a Hitler Youth Organization uh, that was uh, in Istanbul. And, the teacher mentioned a moment ago, came to me and said, he said, "Matthias, uh, what aren't you joining the Hitler Youth Movement?" and I told him that "my father doesn't think very much of that organization," that was over, that conversation.

**M:** Tell me a little about uh, your father and what shape his career took . .

**N:** Well . . .

**M:** . . . in Turkey.

**N:** My father has a natural, had a natural talent for languages. He was uh, fluent in German and, and French. His French was, I would say letter perfect. Uh, he had acquired

some English and immediately set himself a task of mastering ;Turkish, which was a somewhat difficult language to learn for people. Because, it doesn't belong to the Indo-European group of languages. It belongs to a very small group of languages that include as far as I know Finnish and Major – which is Hungarian. And, uh, my father was succeeded in uh, mastering the language. And, I believe he was the first among the group of 70 or 80 academics that taught at Turkish universities to deliver all his lectures in the languages and very often had to correct, and he would correct their linguistic mistakes in the paper, over and above text matter.

**M:** What was his field?

**N:** His was economics. But, his particular field of uh, competence was uh, Public Finance. That, I think was his chosen specialty within the field of economics. And, he was in for instance, in uh, helping write the first income tax in the Turkish Republic.

**M:** Any sense about how your parents felt about being in Turkey?

**N:** Yes, I, I, I would say this, they were both young enough, you have to remember when they moved to Turkey, both of them were born in 1900, so when they moved, its easy to keep tack of 'em because of that. When they moved to Turkey they were both 33 years old. When you are 33, you are still adaptable uh, built a new circle of friends, not only the colleagues they had there, but also the people who resided there before Turks as well, as non-Turks. And uh, I think for them it was to some extent an adventure. I know it was for me, because I think looking back, I think the life that I led as a child in Turkey was made freer and less structured that it would have been if I'd been in Germany.

**M:** Were they aware at all to, do you know if they were aware at all about the events that were happening in Germany?

**N:** Yes, uh . . .

**M:** Do me, do me a favor and incorporate into your answer the question.

**N:** As, as far as their knowledge of the events occurring in Germany is concerned, number one is they did correspond. And, obviously the correspondence coming from Germany or being addressed to Germany were undergoing censorship. So, things had to be worded rather carefully. But, there was that, and there was of course uh, the press - not only German press, but also English-language press, Swiss press, French press and of course the Turkish press – where a lot of events were being reported. They were fully aware of what was going on, as I mentioned earlier, they were aware of the events of the Chrismal Act – which caused them to remove me from the German school. And, they were fully aware of the fact that things would go from bad to worse. And, this specifically um, impacted my father because he had a mother, a sister, a brother-in-law, and uh, a nephew, and two nieces in Germany. And, he knew the clock was five minutes to midnight. And, finally he convinced my brother-in-law, I mean his brother-in-law,

excuse me, who had felt he was invulnerable because he had been a decorated veteran of World War I, that it might be best if he and the others would come to Turkey. And uh, they could see the handwriting on the wall. They had already, arranged for their two younger children, they incorporated a transport of Jewish children that was organized by a Dutch organ, Dutch-Jewish organization. And, those two children left Germany in 1938 on this transport. They did not see their parents, not did their parents see them again till the end of the war.

**M:** Is this the Kinder-Transport?

**N:** Yes.

**M:** Yes, it was . . .

**N:** Yes, it, this was the Kinder-Transport. I don't know what the exact terms was, but I've tried to describe it.

**M:** Where did they go? Where did the children go?

**N:** The children were in Holland. And, then when uh, there was the collapse of the Allied Armies in France and so forth, they were actually taken by a vessel which was provided by some Jewish organization in England. They were transported to England, and they spent the rest of the war years there.

**M:** And, what happened to your um . . .

**N:** Now, the other members of the family which now consisted of my aunt, her husband, my grandmother and the oldest child of my aunt and uncle. My father was able to get visas for them to come to Turkey. And uh, it took some effort, but, uh, I think he, he had a pretty good reputation in the Turkish community and they were able to smooth away for this to happen. And, they arrived, I believe in early 1939. Sort of, just in the nick of time in Turkey before the war broke out. Because, since before the war broke out his would not have been possible. And, uh, my mother was a little worried about how my father was going to provide for four additional mouths. But, he managed. He was a hard worker and uh, besides that uh, both his sister and her husband were able to find work. Um, his sister gave piano lessons, her husband gave German lessons, and the daughter who was at the time I would say in her late teens, I can't remember the exact age, took a job as a nanny in a, in a Turkish-German house hold. So, they survived the war years in Turkey as well . . .

**M:** How did your um, did your father think of Germany during this period of time? Did he expect, was Hitlerism, was Nazism as aberration? Was he worried that it had taken over Germany?

**N:** All he knew was that Germany had been captured, so to speak, by the Nazis. Um, since with the outbreak of the war, he knew that this would not last forever. I mean, he

was not a pessimist. He did not believe that they would prevail. So, he felt, that it was just a matter of time before um, they would be defeated. But, there was anxious moments, with out a doubt. I mean, when you think of the years '41 to '43 – when um, Germans were winning almost everywhere until they were defeated at Stalingrad and the Northern Africa. Uh, it didn't look too bright, but I think he was enough of an optimist uh, to feel that uh, the Allies would prevail. And, in addition, I think this should be, this I would like to underline is Turkey at his point in time was uh, governed under the presidency of Izmet Inunu who had been . . .

**V:** Uh excuse me. We need to pause to reload the film.

*(Background talking)*

**D:** This is a new camera roll, 57.

*(Background talking)*

**N:** So, under the leadership of President, Izmet Inunu uh, Turkey followed a very astute foreign policy. I think Izmet Inunu realized early on that no matter which side he bet on, Turkey would emerge a loser. I believe that he was convinced that if he threw in his lot with Allies, prematurely uh, that there would be a threat of Turkey becoming a vassal state uh, of the Soviet union – which would happen in several other countries, as we know. On the other hand, even though there were still a number of officers and perhaps others who had uh, memories of very good relations with Germany, after all Turkey had been an ally of Imperial Germany in World War I. He was not about to throw his lot with the Axis powers because he was astute enough to realize they would not prevail. So, he maneuvered a very careful cour, course steering between both sides. Until, in early 1945 he found out that for Turkey to become a member of the United Nations organization which was to be formed after the war, that he would have to declare war on the Axis Powers, which in early 1945 he did. By that time uh, it was clear who was going to emerge the victor. And, while there may have been anxious moments uh, there were no direct attacks on Turkey.

**M:** How did you uh, how were you raised? Were you raised to see yourself as a German child living in exile, or a um, Turk, as a child living in Turkey of western origin? Were you raised to return to Germany um, what did your parents tell you about your background?

**N:** As for my parents telling me what to become, what to regard my self as, I would say this was contrary to their nature. They were both um, imbued with a sense of letting children make up their own minds. We've would have heated discussions about various subjects and it was never, "this is so because I say so, I your father. . ." "I your mother say so." But, they encouraged us it engage in political and other debates with them. As far as what to regard ourselves as, they didn't have to tell us that. They let us form our own opinions what is clear however is that their influences certainly placed me, my sister less because she was quite a bit younger. Um, under German cultural influenced, my parents

had uh, rather large libraries of German literature – not only classics, but uh, current up to lets say, the advent of national socialism. They subscribed to a Swiss newspaper and the language at home generally would be German. There was no question that culturally, at least uh, my heritage and that of my sister was German.

**M:** Was there any sense of Jewish heritage?

**N:** No. I think I explained to you that my father uh, was an atheist and uh, he, he had no great felling for any particular religion – Jewish or otherwise. My mother although, nominally a Protestant, and remaining nominally Protestant all her life um, was not a great preacher of the Bible. My sister at one point uh, had a close friend who happened to be Catholic and she sort of like the idea of going to a church with her Catholic friend. Um, my parents did not oppose this, you know they let her do it. And uh, I don't think it left any lasting impression on my sister.

**M:** When you were growing up in Turkey . . .

**N:** Yes.

**M:** . . . where did you think you were going to spend your future?

**N:** At that age I was not thinking very long term. I had no idea. As the years went on, yeah, I really did not know because my parents themselves did not know where they would spend the rest of their lives. Suffice to say that educationally I veered towards said, Anglo-Saxon part of culture. I attended an English high school in Istanbul. And, subsequently went to an institution which had been founded by Americans in Istanbul call Robert College – which provided a four year college education in both the arts and sciences as well as engineering. And, uh, I attended that particular college. So, all my institution at that point, with the exception of certain subjects that under Turkish law had to be taught in Turkish and there were by the way; history, geography, and Turkish literature. Um, I did have those particular courses in Turkish and I had become quite proficient in Turkish.

**M:** Who did you root for during the war?

**N:** No question, the Allies. As matter of fact, they were one or two members of the particular group that I was a member of, namely the children of the immigrants that actually enlisted. One of them enlisted in the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army and fought in Northern Africa. And an other one who happened to be the son of a professor in who's house I lived and who had immigrated to the United States in 1958, uh, landed in Germany as a U.S. paratrooper.

**M:** Now, if, if, I were to ask you as a fourteen year old . . .

**N:** Yes.

**M:** . . . and your as fourteen year old in 1941 . . .

**N:** Um, um.

**M:** . . . so let me ask you as a fifteen-year-old in 1942. You're culturally German, why were you rooting for the Allies? How would you answer that question?

**N:** Because they represented justice and what was right.

**M:** And how did you feel about Turkey?

**N:** Turkey became a uh, a second home to me. I mean I spent the most formative years of my life there. Um, I certainly did not feel a strange there because I mastered the language. I had a lot of a Turkish friends and uh, it was wonderful place to live. It was probably a better place to live then, than it is now because of over crowding, etceteras, in areas like Istanbul. Uh, I could not imagine having spent a better childhood anywhere else.

**M:** I've been good, I'm gonna, gonna press you now . . .

**N:** Yes.

**M:** . . . that includes the fact that your parents were living in exile . . .

**N:** Yes.

**M:** . . . your aunt and uncle, you grandmother is living in exile, your um, being raised as a refugee as a boy and you consider yourself having a wonderful childhood.

**N:** Yes. Well, I was lucky when you think of the alternative might have been. I was very lucky. But, quite aside from that, I would way as a child you don't dwell on might had happened to me if I had stayed there or what ever. But, you look at what actually happened to , I had a wonderful childhood there.

**M:** How aware were your parents . . .

*(Cough)*

**M:** . . . what was happening to the Jews?

**N:** They were quite aware, and that's why my father made huge efforts to get his relatives out of there.

**M:** Did he ever talk about it at home?

**N:** Yes.

**M:** Tell me your conversation, did he . . .

**N:** I mean . . .

**M:** . . . give me a sense how talking to your father in 1942-43, what would he be saying at this point?

**N:** He would say, "the Nazis are in the saddle. They've managed to, to get Germany into a war they were going to lose. They are doing horrible things," and "we hope this will end soon." And in '42 things didn't look so good cause the Germans had advanced almost as far as Moscow. Uh, they grabbed huge stretches of Africa. They had over taken Europe, or let's say their opponents in Europe, and I would say things didn't look that great.

**M:** Tell me a little about um, your parent's social life. Who was coming into your home, what was happening . . .?

**N:** Okay.

**M:** . . . who were their friends . . .?

**N:** My parents were both very social individuals. They loved company. Uh, they loved entertaining, they loved going out with their friends. Um, they were both uh, avid bridge players, which is something they passed to me, um and they, they led a very active life and they discovered new things all the time. I mean, they explored um, Turkey to some extent, not to the extent that I was later able to explore it, but to some extent. Um, the immigrant group amongst themselves would organize lectures.

### **End of Tape**

### **Start Tape Two**

**N:** . . . at play. He became a member of a Turkish um, cultural organization which was called The People's House, that would have an orchestra and he played in that orchestra. So, uh, and, then in addition to that, there was a very active social life with both um, colleagues and non-colleagues.. because, there was a colony of Europeans in Istanbul not all of whom were German. There were some Dutch, we had uh, I know my parents were friendly with a particular Dutch couple. And, they had a lot of Turkish friends too.

**M:** Tell us about Chestler.

**N:** Yes, I am. Gaog Chestler was a fascinating individual. Gaog Chestler um, originally, um, came from East Prussia. He served as an infantry-light officer in World War I where he was severely damaged more through dysentery than through wounds. And uh, he was a very many sided individual. I had the good fortune to spend four years in his house because he lived in an area that was closer to Robert College – which I attended for four

years than where we lived. So, I commuted from his house. His interests uh, his basic interest had been economics and that's how my father became an economist, because he happened to attend a couple of lectures back in the '20s that Gaog Chestler gave in Yerna. And, that's what made him decide to become an economist. Until then he decided he, he was going to study literature, German literature. And, uh, Chestler being a very vocal and out spoken individual very early on got into trouble with National Socialist and uh, was slapped into a concentration camp . . .

**M:** Was he of Jewish origin?

**N:** No he was not. He was slapped into a concentration camp because he couldn't keep his mouth shut and was a vecicious opponent of the regime . . .

**M:** But, he was not of Jewish origin.

**N:** No he was not.

**M:** He was not of Jewish origin.

**N:** Chestler was not of Jewish origin. Um, he, uh, he was able to get out of that camp with the aid of uh, some intervention by the British Labor Party. Um, which also later on helped on other colleague, Anne Stroiter to get out of the concentration camp. And, he was able to go to Turkey. He uh, was an economist as I said, his other interests included: geology, literature, and the arts; particularly painting and sculpting. Uh, and uh, current events. He had a rather interesting household which consisted of himself, his son Godfried; who was a friend of mine, a Russian Captain in the air force, in the air force of the White Russian Army who had been severely injured during the Russian, during the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. And, who found asylum in Turkey and who ran the household. Uh, there was a uh, Indonesian student of Chestler's who couldn't go home because the Japanese had occupied Indonesia, and who Chestler had taken in and thirteen cats.

**M:** And you.

**N:** And me. (*Laugh*) So, it was an interesting household. And uh, interesting, an interesting side light of a year earlier we were trying to figure out what kind of conflicts that might have been between people who were, lets say German citizens until this all happened, who might have sided with the National Socialists and now Chestler, obviously was an opponent of the regime and he was in Turkey because of that. He had four children. Two daughters and two sons. The oldest daughter who also attended the German school that I mentioned to you earlier fell under the influence of a younger teacher who was, uh, about National Socialist, who convinced her that she should return to the Reich. Which, one dark night she did. She not only went herself, she took her younger sister who was the same age as I was, and who had been in the same class as I. And, the mother who was uh, somewhat retarded or she had, lets say she had some kind of a mental problem, along with her. So, Chestler suddenly was there and the only people

that were there were himself and his younger son. His older son had already immigrated to the United States back in 1938. So, there was an um, example of a schism within the family. Um, there's, there's a happy ending to this story, if you'd like to hear it. Um, Chestler he, um, returned to Germany after the war. He was reunited with his older daughter who in the mean time, had become an acquaintance with one of his assistants where he was a professor in Germany, and who had convinced her of the error of her ways. With his younger daughter, who had been just a pawn in this who thing, and his wife had died during the war. And, his older son returned to German soil as a U.S. paratrooper.

**M:** Do you know of your father's work during this period of time in Turkey?

**N:** Yes. I'm quite aware of what he did. Number one is uh, he wrote extensively and produced a number of text books within his subject. Which were written in Turkish and I can still see, see him arguing with assistants about the wording in Turkish of some what he was trying to say. And, generally he was right because he had just, his instinctive fell for language. So, he uh, uh, he wrote extensively, he did some consulting work for the government. I think I mentioned he was instrumental in uh, working on Turkey's first income tax. And, he acted as a consultant to the government in the area. He maintained uh, correspondence and exchange of literature, etceteras with colleagues in France and in the United States . . .

**M:** And not in Germany?

**N:** No. He would not have been able to, shall we say . . .

**M:** He would not have been able to . . . ?

**N:** He would not have been able to freely exchange correspondence with colleagues in Germany. He had no connection with them. I mean, except those that were per, personal friends. Uh, but, those were perused that was a personal correspondence. But, if we are talking about, I thought you asked me about his work, I mean work related things say, no. But, he, he'd, he was always a very international minded and outward looking individual because of his knowledge of language. Uh, this was facilitated and uh, later on this uh, resulted in his twice being invited to Columbia University for a semester guest professorship and also receiving the Order of Palm Academic, from the French Academy.

**M:** How did he feel of his him in Turkey, was this his future, did he suspect he was going back?

**N:** He didn't, I don't think he made any long range plans. I think he, his attitude was, "you know, let's wait and see." He felt some what constricted because of his international outlook of living in Turkey during the war, you know the only place he could really deal with what, what was happening in Turkey except by correspondence. But, as soon as the war ended he expanded his horizons again and participated in many international bodies that pertained to his particular field.

**M:** Tell me about how you felt that the war ended.

**N:** Great! (*Laughter*) That is the only way I can describe it. We knew it was going to end, and it ended. And, it ended well. Certainly it ended well for us. It uh, obviously did not end well for other people. I mean to give you a specific example, um, I believe my mother had two step brothers, who were the sons of the widow that my grandfather had married. And, uh, one of these step brothers was immediately drafted at the outbreak of the war, a, got killed in the second week in Poland. So, you can imagine that left an impact. The other son on the advice of my grandfather claimed Argentine citizenship because he was an Argentine citizen by birth, um able to substantiate that visa with German authorities and was never drafted, and spent most of the war years in Spain – where he worked for my grandfather buying cork. He subsequently immigrated to Latin America and uh, lived in Ecuador.

**M:** Did you have any Jewish relatives that uh, . . .

**N:** Did not survive?

**M:** . . . Yes, did not survive the war?

**N:** Yes. Um, some of my, my father's father had four brothers and one sister. And uh, among those uh, four brothers and one sister, I know three were exterminated. And, uh, several of their children were also exterminated.

**M:** Do, do you remember conversations with your father and mother after the war in which the question was asked, 'what now?'

**N:** No. I think, I think that it was an issue of 'what now.' To answer your question, 'what now' for whom? For them or for me?

**M:** Both.

**N:** For me, it was fairly obvious. I had embarked on my education. I completed college and I felt and my father felt that in order to uh, uh, to further advance my education the best thing for me to go would be to go to uh, graduate school in the United States. And uh, I applied at both Harvard Business School and the Walton School of Business. I was accepted by both and wound up going to the Harvard Business School. So, that pretty much took care of my immediate future. As far as my parents are concerned, I think my father, after the war was able to expand his uh, horizons a little bit because it would become possible again. He made his first trip back to Germany in 1947, at the invitation of the Allied military government. Uh, as an advisor, as what structured changes etceteras, could be made in the German System of Higher Education.. um, and I still remember him coming back with some rather grim reports of about the German landscape in the cities. At the time he had some photos that showed piles of rubble. Um, aside from that as I had mentioned, he was quite active in several international economic organizations and he made trips to England, etceteras, to France, after the war. And, he

felt good about the fact that once again he would uh, communicate and work with colleagues in other countries over and above his uh, Turkish colleagues.

**M:** When did he decide to go back to Germany and why?

**N:** Uh, he had been invited uh, to give some lectures at the University of Frankfurt which had been the university at which he taught. And, in 1950 or '51, I can't tell you the exact date, uh, the university extended to him and invitation to accept a chair, a chair in economics with the particular field of financial policy. And, he felt at that time eat, you know, at this point he's approaching, he's already passed 50, he's looking at his old age he felt that accepting that position would offer him more security – financially. Uh, he felt that uh, his financial security in Turkey was somewhat limited, you know, small pensions etceteras. And, he could see the galloping inflation that was occurring in Turkey. And, he also felt that would be more in the middle of things rather than on the peripherally. That was one reason. The other reason, which he expressed to me, was a feeling that he could participate in the education of a new generation of Germans. Which, and he always enjoyed teaching both in Turkey and Germany. And, uh, there are the two main reasons that uh, caused him to accept this invitation. My mother initially opposed strongly.

**M:** Because?

**N:** She had, my mother had two reasons for opposing the move. The first reason was that she established, she had established a very good friend, circle of friends, close friends in Turkey. Uh, she loved Turkey, the, you know, the natural surroundings etceteras. And, she felt comfortable there, even though she had never learned to speak Turkish as well as my father. And, she hated to move again, number one. Number two, and she verbalized this, said, "You know, I didn't know if I could feel comfortable walking down the street and suddenly I see some gentleman there of a certain age range and I ask myself, 'what did this son-of-a-bitch do during the war?'" and, uh, she opposed to move initially even though she was not Jewish.

**M:** And how did you feel about the Germans at this time?

**N:** At that time? I, I had no great feelings – pros or cons. I mean, I've, I've moved thinking things were going to change. Um, I was living in the States. I was busy trying to build a, a career, a life – I got married very early. And, uh, I really didn't think about Germany as a concept at this time.

**M:** And what were your father's feelings late in life about Turkey?

**V:** Can we take a break? He needs to reload now.

**M:** Sure.

**N:** Sure. Twice as much. That's a good question. I'm looking forward to answering it.

**D:** And now we're changing to camera roll 58.

**V:** Where is everyone?

*(Background talking)*

**V:** Rolling?

**M:** How did your father feel about Turkey?

**N:** My father had the most positive feelings about Turkey, uh, that you could imagine. He uh, went back to Turkey many times after returning to Germany. He maintained contact with Turkish friends and colleagues. Um, because he had mastered the language he um, was able to appreciate uh, reading Turkish periodicals and Turkish books, etceteras. And, he never forgot that what Turkey had done for him. And, I think one of his uh, favorite moments was returning to Istanbul once with the, then as I recall, um, President, not Chancellor, but President of German who uh, who brought a clock be placed in front of the University of Istanbul uh, dedicated to the memory of the Germans who found asylum and taught there. And, he felt that, that was a wonderful occasion. But, he, he, he loved um, interacting with Turks, uh, uh, interaction was quite different than inter, interaction with, with, uh, Europeans. And, he loved it. He loved the basic democratic spirit in Turkey – where it was not a crime if uh, the cab driver addressed you in the first person rather than the more polite third person, instead of saying ‘ you,’ said, you know, ‘tho.’ And uh, he, he loved a lot of the food in Turkey. I think the only thing that he didn't love was when it got pretty hot in the summer, because he was basically a cold water, uh, a cold weather individual.

**M:** And, how did you feel about Turkey, how do you feel about Turkey?

**N:** I felt, I still do, I feel uh, Turkey was my second home. Maybe my first home before the United States. Um, I relate to uh, the people. I uh, think uh, during a couple trips I made with my wife, she felt the same Turkish uh, hospitality and friendliness when she was there. Uh, give you an example. Uh, we were somewhere in Southern Turkey and watching some people harvest grapes. And this woman put some grapes on a, on a plate and brought them to us and said, "Please have some grapes."

**M:** Tell us about Professor Ristal.

**N:** All right, Professor Ristal was a very interesting individual. Probably one of the fu, uh, most interesting individual, individual that was my privilege to meet during, you know, fairly early childhood, uh, the Ristals lived on the same street that we lived on in a comfortable apartment. Maybe two, three hundred yards from where we lived. And, he was a very uh, an unusual man. You have to, he came from an old so-called Purssian-Yoka family. Uh, several of his forebear's had been uh, generals in uh, the German army during the uh, time of the uh, Imperial Germany. He himself, I think served as an officer in the army during World War I. My father only made it to a private. And, uh, he uh, he

was married to a uh, a German woman of noble dissent, who was quite younger than he was. He's been married before, once. And, uh, his field had happened to be economics. And, his approach to economics was more of one of social economics, if you will than just the cut and dry numbers. Somewhat of a philosopher, I would say.

**M:** And what did he have to do with German?

**N:** Same reasons – opponent of the regime. He wasn't gonna' tread, tow the party line. When he was uh, he was not uh, a racially discriminated against. Shall we say. I object to the term 'racially discriminated' because for me, Judaism is a religion, not a race. And uh, he left because he was an upright individual.

**M:** And what was your relationship with him or his son?

**N:** Well his son was quite older than I was. His son was probably three feet taller than I was. Because, uh, (*Laughter*) his son was sort of the epitome of a uh, Turkish burris, that a made the rounds after suddenly all these people came to Turkey from Germany. And, I would recite the verse in uh, Turkish to you but, I don't think you would understand it.

**M:** Why don't you recite it in Turkish and then translate it.

**N:** Okay. In Turkish it goes like this, it's, it's a typical Turkish rhyme. (*Sings the song in Turkish.*) Which means: 'Their hair is yellow, yellow. Their eyes are blue, blue and they have stork's legs.' And, he was the epitome of that because he had, he really had stork's legs.

**M:** How tall was he?

**N:** I would say six-six, six-seven. Which is very tall, even here.

**M:** And, in Turkey it was . . .

**N:** It was super tall! (*Laughter*) Stop!

**M:** Let's touch on one more issue . . .

**N:** Yes.

**M:** . . . then I'll give you the opportunity to . . .

*(The background talking is incoherent)*

**D:** Let's straighten your tie a tiny bit.

**N:** Okay.

**D:** Thank you.

**N:** Yes?

**M:** Um, you've held four citizenship's?

**N:** That's correct.

**M:** Tell us how you . . .

**N:** How progressed from one to the other? Mostly by my uh, doing. I was born a German citizen. When we came to Turkey uh, uh, I was on my mother's passport. I guess so, you know I had a German passport citizenship. And, then in the year 1938 or '39, I forget the exact year, uh, the German government in it's infinite wisdom decided to strip my father and his family of a German citizenship. So, suddenly we were there in Turkey, no passport. Which is not a comfortable position to be on, to be in, any where in the world. I mean, imagine being an illegal alien in the United States. And, uh, a friend of my father's said to him, "Look, you know Itd Yd Binish," who had been an economist and who was then the President of the Czech government in London, "write him a letter about your predicament, maybe he can help you out." So, my father did. He got an answer he said "Yes, we would be glad to issue you a passport to you and your family and uh, fill out the following documents and send us the pictures," and so on and so forth. That happened. So, suddenly we were Czech citizens. I mean, it was legal. And, then two or three years latter uh, the Turkish government decided to offer my father Turkish citizenship, which h was delighted to accept, and we all became Turkish citizens. And, then finally after I immigrated to the United States, back in the early '50s, I, I forget the exact year, I applied citizenship and was granted citizenship and I was sworn in, in Tampa, Florida at the time.

**M:** Just to close out your uh, what did you end up doing after you finished Harvard? Give me uh . . .

**N:** I had . . .

**M:** . . . sense of your . . .

**N:** . . . I had a pretty checkered career. Uh, first of all after, after I finished there, I had uh, no resources, I had some debts resulting from you know, from my studies there. And I had a wife and uh, a baby coming along. And, uh, the only thing I knew how to do, the jobs I applied for which were basically at that time, and MBA from Harvard didn't amount to what it amounts to today. Uh, to give an example. . .

**M:** They give you \$100,000?

**N:** No, the, the median salary for my class, which was the class of '49, was \$350. Not per week, but per month. And, I've seen that statistic so I know it's not fiction. And, uh, the kinds of jobs that I was offered, say as a trainee for some company or what ever, would

pay maybe 50, 60 dollars a week. Which certainly was not enough for me. But, I had learned the trade in the United States during the summer between my first and second year at the business school. I worked as a waiter in a friend's restaurant on Cape Cod. So, I knew how to wait on tables. So, my very first job after getting my MBA was to work as a waiter at Howard Johnson's in New York. And, I did that for about a year then I moved to Florida because I felt, at this point perspective employers in that area would say, "What have you done since you got out of school?" So, I felt I better go into a new market. So, I went to Florida, and uh, on the second day I was there I was hired as a Junior Executive Trainee by a local department store which happened to part and parcel of Allied department stores. And, I spent five years there. And, Florida was notoriously low-pay. And, uh, I felt that the money I was making was certainly no reason to stay there. I hated the hot climate, I was ready to leave. So, uh, I said I'd go back to Boston. I had a sister-in-law who offered me, offered us – my wife, child and myself, shelter. And, I wound up in Boston. And, I uh, took a job that would permit me to really go around and find something. Which was selling roofing and siding, where the hours are very flexible. So, I sold roofing and siding for two or three months and then uh, got a job with a company that manufactured and sold equipment for stores. Primarily food stores. And, I stayed with this company for about five years. And, your, did reasonably well and learned a lot about retailing, particularly about food retailing. Before that I knew department store retailing. And, one fine day a friend of mine showed me an add he said, "Matta, here's a job designed for you." And, this add was for a person with a good knowledge of the retail food industry to work as a consultant in Europe. Requirements were: that knowledge and experience, plus at least two European languages – all of which I had, and I started working as a consultant. I worked for this company for fifteen years and advanced to the number two position in the company with a promise to take it over someday when the owner was ready to retire. But, the old, art took, old, the son also rises and came to work for the father and I left. And, then I worked for a major diversified supermarket chain that was active in supermarketing department stores, home centers, etceteras. Rather large company, five billion plus sales a year. And uh, I left, when I left there and retired at the ripe age of 60 I was uh, Vice-President of Business Development. And, felt my career had ended well.

**M:** Any thing we didn't touch on? I want to touch on women, but I'm gonna wait for, for Robert.

**N:** For Robert?

**V:** Peter.

**D:** Peter.

**M:** Peter.

**N:** Oh.

**M:** What about Robert's College?

**N:** The uh, I'm trying to think. I think what I'd like to, to concentrate on a little more is what it was like to live in Turkey at that time.

**M:** Please.

**N:** Because the Turkey of the '30s and '40s is not the Turkey of the '80s and '90s, or thousand, uh, 2000 and something. Uh, the country was beautiful. Um, where we lived was beautiful. Um, I enjoyed being outdoors a great deal of the time. I had a lot of good friends um, I just felt very much at home there. There were a lot of things that I found rather interesting and stimulating. And, I, I developed a fairly early sense of humor, and there were a lot of things that was somewhat funny too. And, uh, I guess since I had, what you might call a somewhat German cultural background, the difference I guess fascinated me between the rather structured and stiff European slash German background and the more relaxed way in which things happened in Turkey. So, that was an other aspect of my life there that I felt uh, was poss, looking back now, I just can say, I don't think any of my children had . . .

### **End of Side One.**

### **Side Two of Tape.**

**M:** Tell me when.

**D:** Anytime.

**M:** You think the Holocaust, when you think of the Holocaust, do you 'gee that impacted on my life?'

**N:** It certainly had an impact on my life.

**M:** What did the Holocaust have?

**N:** The Holocaust certainly had an impact on my life. Um, the impact was that I didn't remain where I would have remained otherwise. The impact of it for me, was personally positive. Because I was able to enjoy a life that was much richer and fuller than it would have been otherwise.

**M:** Let's uh, now bring Peter in and uh . . .

**N:** So Peter gets the hard chair.

*(Lots of background talking)*

**End of Single Interview with Neumark.**