

Peter Engleman

Filming

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Peter Engleman: Without the third reich, are we on? Without the third reich my wife and I would have never met because I'm from Prussia and she's from Bavaria. They just don't like each other. But we both met in Istanbul and, uh, after the first acquaintances which were while we were still living in the center of Pari-Istanbul we, uh, then got to know each other in Bebek and we both went to the American college. Her father was a ear, nose throat specialist at the, uh, University of Istanbul and, uh, he, uh, uh, was a medical doctor in charge of the ear, nose, throat clinic and his, uh, his, uh.

Micheal: He was also recruited as part of the East German immigraes.

E: Yes he was of the same group, uh, well they were different groups of course the University group was distinct from those who worked for various government agencies but he was among the University professors who went to Istanbul and had the oppurtunity of building up the faculties of a University that was completely changing it's complexion because **Kama Lota Turk was completely changing the education system, he was changing the writing, he was changing the laws, he was changing virtually everything in the country making it a Western oriented country. And it was a great challenge to, uh, to do that and, uh, and the people that were fortunate enough to come to Turkey in those years really had interest in work and I felt my was excited about what he was able to do.** And, uh, after the five year contract was over he continued working in Istanbul for a Brittish CPA firm and for various industrial agencies and, uh, made a living there until he came to the United States in '46.

M: Now your Father-in-law, was he also Jewish?

E: Yes he was Jewish. He was Jewish of similar kind in that they were non-practicing Jews but they were aware of being Jewish and very much of (incomprehensible word) the situation in Virspuck where they came from and then, um, Munich where the Grandparents came from. This was of course part of the nest of where Nazism grew first.

M: And what years did they, what year did they immigrate..

E: They came to Turkey the same year we did. I think in '36, uh, maybe a year earlier. But in '36, uh, we met for the first time and, uh, her father was a successful, uh, surgeon, ear, nose throat surgeon and ran the clinic until his five year contract was up. Now, there is a, uh, rule in Turkey that medical doctors who are not University professors cannot practice unless they are Turkish citizens so they did have to leave the country. He went to Palestien in 1943. And, uh, that was a year after Erica had graduated from college. I was still a junior in college.

M: And, uh, tell us how you met your wife.

E: Well basically we met in this small group of German immigrants that went on excursions together and trips together but the main, uh, association and our getting serious about each other was when we both went to college. We were really college sweethearts in that sense. And we had a five year engagement which I don't recommend to anybody but we got engaged in 1940, uh, 2 when she had graduated. Her family went to Palestine and then..

M: She went with them.

E: With them, yes, and we stayed at

M: So she went with them.

E: She went with them to Palestine and she she worked in Hifa as a secretary. I think for the British army but I'm not sure. And, uh, I went on to college graduated in '44 in the same class as Berland Agevet. He was arts and I was engineering but the same vintage. And I was fortunate that the entire civil engineering department at that in that year was, uh, uh, MIT oriented and the, uh, acceptance at MIT once I came to this country was, uh, no problem for me at all.

M: Now when did you know that you were going to be not returning to Germany but going to the United States?

E: We never really knew until we got the visa. We we didn't know where we were going to go until, uh, uh, things cleared up at the end of the war '44, '45. When I had graduated in '44 the, uh, the possibility of coming to the States was, uh, um, became open because at that time transportation started up again. But during the years '43, '44 you couldn't travel anywhere. War was going on all around us in the European side, on the European side and the Mediterranean was closed, even the Atlantic was closed. When my aunt finally went to the States, from Turkey to the States, she went via boat to Odessa than via Manchurian railroad to the Pacific via Tokyo ended up in San Francisco and wrote her a little booklet that I think you have a copy of from the golden horn to the golden gate which, was, uh, quite an exceptional, uh, trip for a lady which we at that time thought was very old. She was fifty-five I think. But there was no way to travel out of Turkey until '45.

M: When you were growing up in Turkey how did you feel about Germany?

E: In a sense ambivalent because we did have German culture. My father in order to maintain that read to us, uh, once or twice a week every novel after Wassman, the whole Joseph, Joseph knows read aloud to me in German. Other German literature was read to me at home because, uh, I had no other cultural background and he wanted to maintain that and music, of course I had violin lessons and I was part of the string quartet which was not always pleasant but it was German culture being carried on. And, uh, then I, uh,

had my first English literature course after I got accepted at Robert College and, um, and uh, one and only year I was a Lawrence freshman. And from then on it was engineering and (cough) as you know Robert ...

M: But, who did you root for to win the war?

E: Oh, no question but that we were always hoping that the ... We were afraid the Germans would invade Turkey like they invaded Greece and we would have to flee and, uh, that was really the main concern and we saw the ships going through the Bosphorus from the Russian coast or the Bulgarian or Romanian fields that were heading for Palestine and we knew what flight was and we knew what the travelling without a passport was so we were just, uh, praying every day that they wouldn't invade. And then, uh, fortunately in Turkey in the, at the end of the war did join the allied side. And I had no trouble booking a passage on a liberty ship that had come to Turkey on the way back from Odessa where it had delivered raw materials to the Russians. I was in Ismere loading tobacco and went directly from Ismere to Norfolk, Virginia.

M: Did there come a time when you lost your Turkish citizenship?

E: I never had a Turkish citizenship..

M: I'm sorry your, uh, German citizenship.

E: I, not, I, uh, I had a German passport at one time and my, I think I still have it in a drawer somewhere but it ran out and I didn't have a piece of paper to which anybody could give a visa when I got my American immigration visa so the consulate in Istanbul issued an affidavit in lieu of passport which was two pieces of white paper attached to each other with a red ribbon and a red seal and my photograph and a description of how tall I was and who I was and then the second page was the visa.

M: How do you feel about Turkey?

Victoria: We need to reload now.

(People talk inaudibly in background for about two seconds. Tape stops and begins again)

Dennis: This is, uh, new camera role 61.

(People shuffle about for three seconds)

D: Ready? This is, uh, new camera role .. 61. And, take on gentleman.

M: How do you feel about Turkey?

E: Well, very positive. Turkey to me even though I wasn't born there is, in a sense, like home. Where you spend your teens that the landscape, the landscape to which you feel

totally attached. I don't feel that Germany is my home in any sense. I left there at age twelve but had some very negative experience in the last though I came back there at the end of the war... The German occupation, er the U.S. occupation forces and had to deal with German personnel in 1946 and '47. So I, I made my peace in the sense that I, uh, had to deal with Germans as as people later on when I was at an international agency I had to work with Germans as colleagues and, of course, you lose your prejudices at that time and you work automatically but as far as my feeling to Turkey is concerned it ... Turkey did us a tremendous favor and gave us a tremendous opportunity. I don't believe I'd be the person that I am, uh, either culturally or individually if I hadn't had that opportunity. And now in my senior years my seventies that I do more painting I feel that somehow the tradition of the Ottoman art, the colors of the mosques and the tiles, the architecture and the landscape of the Bosphorus are having a continuing influence on me even though I don't go there very often. I have gone there on business with the World Bank, I've gone there on vacations, I've revisited Robert College, Bebek, and I have, uh, great, you know, positive, memories of Turkey.

M: And how did your father feel about Turkey? Your father and mother really feel about Turkey?

E: Well when they first married my father told his bride that I'd like to show you Turkey someday because it's such a beautiful place. That was in Germany, Berlin, '33. When he took her over he took her over there for a period of a decade and, uh, they had a very positive feeling because, uh, he had a five year contract at a time when the world was in flames and, uh, many Jews' families lost close relatives. Basically if you take my wife's family and my father's family, uh, there was a good, uh, quarter to a third that perished in the Holocaust and we were safe from that we stayed in Turkey and I never saw a shot fired. I never saw a bomb drop. We were just terribly fortunate in addition to, of course, getting an American education, which helped me later on.

M: Can you take us through some of the, um, professors who were in Germany at that time? Tell me a little about Alexandra, um, uh, Alexander Whistow.

E: Oh, Alexander Whistow was the father of my best friend in Turkey. His son Dan later came to this country and became a professor at, uh, Columbia and University of the State of New York I think. His died about four years ago. But, uh, he was one of the most brilliant persons I knew and his father was a, uh, as Matt mentioned he was a philosopher and writer. He wrote a very deep book about the historical location of the Predent. That's the, uh, uh, "Ol Schpit de Gatten Dout" is the title of the book I have it on my shelf. I must admit I have never read it. It is very complicated. But he was a great and he had tremendous I remember his tremendous files. His office and his home was a circular, semi-circular wall of windows looking at the Momora and below the windows there were these black files all the way around and he had the most fantastic recourses in his home as a, uh, uh, researcher and a professor at the University. His wife, uh, was his third wife lived with him, uh, uh, was one of the people who made the greatest effort to, uh, maintain some, uh, German cultural presence among the teenagers that were there and she organized once a performance of, um, uh, the first part of Gerta's Faust. "For Shpee

Loft and Tay Otta." Which, uh, we did and, uh, my wife Erica was the Lostia Prezone in that and Dan Resto was the poet and, uh, Gotelock Kerr was, uh, the director of the theater. So there, this was a three person act of a very famous play. And it was performed rather well I thought, uh, among this small group of immigrants in somebody's home.

M: Did you have any interaction, uh, with, with, preservation of German culture? Did you have any interaction with the, um, other Germans in, uh, Istanbul? The non-immigraes?

E: The non-immigraes... After the, uh, after the German school the first three years, uh, the first three years that I went to the German school I would say no. The the, uh, interaction that I did have following the German school was this religious class, protestant confirmation class that had a very, uh, very dramatic ending for me, personally. I was, uh, taken out of the German school as I mentioned in November '38 and I was confirmed in this German church in, around Easter '39. While I was taking these English courses I, but I was very, um, a great believer, a great protestant believer and I studied the Bible and I thought that minister we had was a great minister until one Sunday I sat in church and, uh, the sermon was over and he gave, uh, a prayer asking for God's of the furer and victory of German troops in Poland. And my religious empire came tumbling down and it has never been completely reconstructed since.

M: Tell us about Professor Arndt.

E: Professor Arndt was chemistry I knew him mostly because of his son Walter who was uh, uh, in this country at this time who married on of my good friends and good friend of my wife. Uh, he professor at Cornell. First Arndt was known among the German immigraes for his tremendous sense of humor and his long repertory of jokes. And, largely, jokes involving language. German and Turkish language. But he was a very dynamic person and he is one of the few who had been in Turkey before the Hitler regime. He had been working on establishing the chemistry faculty at the University of Istanbul at a time that nobody thought of Hitler and, uh, he then came back later on.

M: Tell me a little bit about, uh, Professor Hielbraun.

E: Hielbraun, Professor Hielbraun lived in the same apartment house that we did for awhile and, uh, his daughter, Agnes, was a very good friend of ours as well as of my, uh, future wife. Uh, the Halmans and the Hielbrauns were great friends. Professor Hielbraun's, uh, wife later died and he, uh, did marry a Turkish lady who was with him at the faculty. But the greatest memory I, uh, have of the Hielbrauns is, uh, in Istanbul at Agnes' wedding, at his daughter's wedding. She married one of my Prof's at Robert College, uh, Ray Pierson, and uh, Ray and Agnes, uh, are living in Connecticut at this time in retirement but they were at Robert College for a long time and at other schools there is another American school in Turkey where they taught before coming back to this country for retirement.

M: Let's go through Carl Helman.

E: Carl Helman was, uh, a ear, nose, throat specialist at the University of Istanbul. He came from Vicksburg, uh, they had been in Minster for awhile but his basic family background was in Vicksburg. And his, uh, wife's parents were from Munich and they were very musical family. Everybody sang or played the piano or both. And, uh...

V: What was your relationship to Carl?

E: Well, first of all his daughters were part of the teen group in Bebek. I had no direct relationship to Carl Helman because he was the professor and, of course, a generation above mine. His family.. He and my family were friends. Good friends and they met very often, largely for music in the evenings or for the festivities that were, uh, taking place in spite of the war. There were festivities I remember in 1941 I believe it was somebody turned seventy and for some year for, for some reason, uh, everybody decided that we were going to celebrate the seventieth birthday of Mr. Bah who was also a German immigrant who lived in Bebek. And, uh, the Bah family gave this big party were, there were all kinds of, uh, performances I know I played the harmonica and people sang. There was a, uh, large festivity totally, you know, out of context with the world history at the time. But we had all been sort of pins, on pins and needles about the Germans invading and it was by that time pretty clear that they were not going to invade. The battle of Stalingrad was on and we were all sort of giving a big sigh of relief.

V: But you, he became... This was your father's ...

M: No that's not him.

V: Wrong one.

M: Wrong one. Just take us for one second let's go back for... Why did, uh, Rusteau have to leave Germany?

E: Uh, Rusteau I believe was a, uh, one of the prominent German non- Jews who was anti-Nazi and left just because of his political convictions. I'm not sure if he lost his job in Germany before he did go to Turkey but he did go to Turkey, uh, not because he had to leave Germany. He might have had other persucution, however. He did lose his German citizenship I do know that because his son lost his citizenship with him then had trouble when he came to this country on his student visa and spent some time at Ellis Island for a time.

M: And when did Arndt leave?

E: Uh, the Arndts came to this country, I'm talking about Walter, Arndt, um, son, and they came to this country I think considerably after...

M: No, why did they leave Germany?

E: Oh, well they... You know I can't tell you. It might of, I think one of the wives of Mr. Arndt, I think he had, mm, multiple marriages, I'm not sure of that either but he, I think, was somewhat Jewish related. But he was also a absolutley anti-Nazi even though his field was chemistry there were people who just couldn't stand...

M: Did his humor reflect anti-Nazi?

E: Nazism wasn't anything we joked about. It was too close to home.

M: What about Professor Halberg?

E: Halbraun?

M: Yes.

E: Um, he was biologist...

V: I'm sorry we have to reload. Sorry.

M: I just want to get through some... Why these people left...

V: No, I know but we have to..

D: Do you want to do that sound only in which case we don't need to reload? Or, uh, if you want to do more pictures that we do.

V: Uh, what...

(Sound cuts out and returns again)

D: Okay, and through. And let's roll sound please. So this is new camera roll 62. And were gonna pick up right where we left off, Micheal. And then let us remark.

M: Anytime. Okay, Professor Harlan, why did he have to leave Germany.

D: Oh no, I wanna ...

(Two or three people talk at once)

E: Professor Harlan left basically because as a Jewish, uh, doctor he could no longer practice in Germany and he got the offer of becoming a head of a department at the University of Istanbul. Which gave him an oppurtunity to continue in his practice and do something for the development of the University of Istanbul.

M: Now, now you mention that professor Arndt had a tremendous sense of humor, did he, uh, tell any jokes about Nazism.

E: He had a great repertoire of jokes that had to do with language, Turkish and German, but Nazism was not anything we joked about it was, it was too close to home and I think, uh, you'll find very few people, uh, who remember any Nazi jokes of the, uh, group that left Germany in the 30's and 40's.

M: Tell us about Julius Hirsch.

E: Julius Hirsch... I know only that he was, uh, I think he was bacteriologist, I'm not sure but he lived in the neighborhood he was Jewish also and his two daughters were, uh, a little bit younger than the teenage group that, uh, we were part of. And these age differences that Matt pointed out earlier are very important at that stage. But, um, both his daughters ended up in this country and, uh, one of them married Walter Eppenstein who was an engineer. Also had gone to Robert College and, uh, taught engineering at University of Troy, Detroit...

M: Uh, tell us a little bit about your father in law, Clemens, uh, Holtsbaster.

E: My, not, not my father in law my ... Holtsmaster was an architect doing the ministries and other work in Ankara who, came to, uh, Istanbul for the summers. He used to rent a large, sort of a palace – like house in Carabia which was a beautiful little suburb lovely located in the woods and he used to do his summer work there with his whole studio. And one summer I had just finished surveying at Robert College. I got a job with his office to do the contours of a mountain on which the memorial for Kim Alotta Turk was to be built. And he took part of the competition among architects. He did not win but I had the pleasure of working in his office for a whole summer doing the contours of the mountain on which he was going to put a model of the proposed memorial.

M: And why did he have to leave Germany?

E: I don't know that he had to leave. He was very German but he had this tremendous contract of building the uh, uh, he was, I think he was a well-known Austrian architect who was hired to design the ministries in Ankara. And one time about two years ago I met a Turkish architect in this country who said he worked with Halstsmeister and he drew every little one of those hundreds of windows that you see in the Ankara bearocracy. Very much like downtown Washington.

M: Tell us a little bit about Ferdinand Mason.

E: Ferdinand Nason was a famous surgeon when he arrived in Turkey. Uh, Jewish background he had been, uh, assistant to a German surgeon named Sourbough. Uh, in Berlin and it was a well-known entity on arrival in Turkey. I know him particularly well from the time that he, uh, uh, lived in Manhattan. My wife worked in his office as a secretary. Uh, he had a practice on Park avenue. He did very well in this country after leaving Turkey. And then went to Basil where he had the last years of his life.

M: And, uh, Benhold Lansburger?

E: I know Lansburger only through my brother in law, Peter Bach he was a close colleague in Ankara, I didn't know him personally but the Asyriologist and the Hitydologists were, uh, at the same faculty at the University of Ankara and I think Lansburger was sort of the core, the beginning of the whole fac, faculty development and was given credit by my brother – in – law for being the center and basically getting him established with the museum, the Hitadt museum in Ankara.

M: And Kurt Goswind?

E: Kurt ... I don't know him. Sorry.

M: Alfred, uh, Canteratage?

E: **Alfred Cantarage** was a wonderful person. He lived in Bebek right across the street from laid to live, part of it the time. He was a dentist, he was, uh, very left, he was known as a communist and, uh, there's a book out that you should see if you haven't seen it yet. It's, uh, written by a Nazi who wra, wrote about this whole German group and described their activities in Istanbul at the time and he's one who's vocal presence at the time was commented on by this Nazi. He said the, uh, um, de-nationalization of Kantar which is definetely to be considered and that's, I have that in print in a German book. He was very outspoken, wonderful fellow, great sense of humor and also one of the few people who really were intimately connected with the teenage group who went up the mountain Uluda to ski. Great sportsman.

M: Tell me about, uh, Joseph Eagleshammer.

D: Could we pause for a moment?

E: Because I'm a ... Hmm...

(People shuffle about for four seconds. Tape stops and starts again. More shuffling)

E: Oh, Eagleshiemmer is that the person you want to know about? He was the eye, the professor of optomology, I'm not sure what the proper word is but he was one of the top professors at the University of Istanbul. His wife was one of the group of German immigrae professor's wives who, like my mother and Matt's mother, went up to Uluda for skiing in the winter and, uh, they were good friends and my parents and when I came to this country, uh, they were in Boston. They had arrived in this country and he was practicing in Boston I believe. And I remember then I, when I got drafted, uh, after the first term at MIT I parked my violin at their house because I didn't know where to park my... Couldn't take violin along into basic training camps.

M: I asked Matt before, um, when you see a movie on the Holocaust or when you visit a museum or see a film, a show, um, what do you what pers, what pers, uh, what's something personal you take... How does this impact upon you?

E: I avoid them as much as possible. It wasn't until last year that I went to the Holocaust museum for the first time. I'm not a masochist I, I saw it I'm a Holocaust evader. I didn't live through it, I got out in time, I was fortunate, and I just couldn't bear going there. As many of my friends did until a year ago when I got asked about information about Turkey and I went there and I was your colleague kindly guided me through the, uh, top floor. And it was tremendously impressive because the top floor was all movies and newsreels of Berlin in 1936. And I had left Berlin in 1936 as a twelve year old and my uncle on my mother's side had taken me to a soccer game at the Olympic stadium and I had seen a lot of these parades and I had seen Hitler from a distance once on that occasion. And I've never taken on to soccer for some reason.

M: How did, uh, growing up in Turkey during this formative period, how did that affect your life?

E: Fundamental I think it was really a complete change I would be a totally different person if it hadn't been for this experience of immigration, experience of living in a different surrounding. It made me, it enriched me in many ways, it gave me basically me whole circle of friendship in the early years of my life. I found my wife there and, of course, I did have the opportunity of going to the American college there but it was a completely new experience that I wouldn't have had until later in life when I got a job with the world bank. Having lived nine years in a country of that type in a different culture enabled me to be more effective on the staff of that institution.

M: Take us to your parents career, uh, your father's career 1945 to '46 what happened to him after the war?

E: To, to my father?

M: Yes, your father.

E: Uh, my father continued working in, uh, Turkey for this British CPA firm until he got the visa to come to the United States, immigration visa in '46.

Side Two of Audio Tape:

E: But they started at rock bottom when they came here. Uh, he, uh, my father first worked in the garment district in an outfit called shorts and shirts and he counted stock and my mother did housework and babysitting until my father found a job at with the International Committee of YMCA's where he became, uh, an accountant, uh, head of the audit department after awhile and had, uh, had a career up to, uh, 1955 so he did very well in comparing to where he started but eventually immigration for my parents started when they arrived in New York.

M: One other, uh, question I'd like to touch on. What happened, um, what contacts did your father have with any family that were left behind in Germany? Did you lose anybody during this period of time?

E: Yes, yes well his mother and, his mother and his, um, sister came to us in Turkey. His mother died in '41 I believe. '40 or '41 (coughs). They came sort of last minute in '39 and his brother who survived the war in Berlin was married to a non-Jew, one of the courageous non-Jews who reportedly went to the headquarters of the SS in Berlin and said you're not going to take my husband. And he survived the whole Holocaust in Berlin. Part of the time working in labor camps, I gather and he, uh, his son the same way. His son was half Jewish as I am he survived the war in Berlin and he died unfortunately right after the end of the war, got hit by an army truck on the streets of Berlin. But my cousin, who's his son, lived on in Berlin studied architecture and became an architect on the staff of the city of Berlin and essentially is still a Berliner.

M: Uh, last question that we haven't touched. Is there anything you want to share with us?

E: Well, I think we haven't really mentioned sufficiently the wisdom of the Turkish government and taking that opportunity that presented itself in the late 30's in getting top talent out of Germany. Willing to sign five years contracts and staying for longer to build up the new republic in a Western oriented way. That was a tremendous opportunity for Turkey it was a great generosity by Turkey it was also tremendous challenge for the people who were able to come. I think that's fundamental, the role of Turkey in our lives. And I think we hadn't really touched that enough and it's one of the points that really I'd like to close on because it's the way I remember Turkey.

M: In, uh, film, uh, in television, they sometimes say that's a wrap.

E: (Laughs)

M: You can't do much better than that.

E: Thank you.

M: Thank you very much.

(Inaudible sounds for five seconds. People talk and shuffle about.)

END OF TAPE

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