United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Preben Munch Nielsen
April 16, 1999
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Preben Munch Nielsen, conducted by Katie Davis on April 16, 1999 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

Interview with Preben Munch Nielsen
April 16, 1999

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Preben Munch Nielsen, conducted by Katie Davis, on April 16th, 1999, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in Washington, D.C. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview, conducted with Preben Munch Nielsen on November 6, 1989. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr, for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. Will you just say your name, and tell us the date of your birth?

Answer: Preben Munch Nielsen, 13th of June, 1926.

Q: Can you tell us the name of your mother -- the full name of your mother and your father?

A: My father's name was John Harry, and mother's, Marea Dorethea.

Q: Can you spell that?

A: My father's, John, J-o-h-n, Harry, H-a-double r-y, and my mother, M-a-r-e-a D-o-r-e-t-h-e-a.

Q: And were they also from the town that you were born in?

A: No, they -- I was born in Copenhagen, but my mother died rather young, and I was together with four cousins, and brought up together with -- with my grandmother, in

Snagerstein. I was born in Copenhagen, in the hospital there, but lived practically all my life in Snagerstein.

Q: Di-Did you have any siblings?

A: Yes, a -- a sister.

Q: Her name?

A: Grethe, G-r-e-t-h-e.

Q: Okay. And when was she born?

A: In 1928, two years younger than I.

Q: Okay, okay, good. And c-can you tell me your grandmother's name?

A: She was born in Sweden, and her name was Augusta, A-u-g-u-s-t-a.

Q: Was she ma -- a maternal grandmother, or mat -- paternal?

A: Paternal grandmother, my father's mother.

Q: And what was her last name?

A: Em -- Nielsen, just like mine.

Q: So, you eventually took your grandmother's last name?

A: No, that was my father's last name.

Q: Oh, okay, okay.

A: My father's name was the same as my grandmother's.

Q: Okay. And can you tell me a l-little bit about what it was like when you were growing up? What -- What was your home like? What -- What did you do? This is maybe even before you went to school? What was it like living with your grandmother?

A: I cannot say that -- how it would be without her, because I've always known one life, and that was with my grandmother, and in a big family with -- with four cousin, which was more like brothers and sisters, and I had a very wonderful childhood. We lived in a big house, three stores high. My grandfather, he had passed away at that time, but he had -- had had a hotel in Elsinore, our neighbor town, and my grandmother was reasonable well off, and we had a wonderful life, and with much love. Of course that was -- might be a little bit more old fashioned. There were some thing which I saw later on, that our maids could do, that we were not allowed to do, but really we don't miss it. We had a very nice, very beautiful childhood together.

Q: What were some of the things that you weren't allowed to do? How was your grandmother old fashioned?

A: Five o'clock, was five o'clock, and when she had said something, she was a female dictator, so she was ra-rather strict, but I-I don't remember any time she hit any of us. It wasn't necessary, yeah. A blink with eyes, a finger lifted.

Q: [inaudible]

A: That's okay. So -- But w-we were not a-afraid of something, no, no, no, no, but that was the way -- that was the rule of the house and they -- the rules we had might be -- was a little different from -- from others. There was also a generation, and different from the way our maids were brought up and the way we were.

Q: Well, your sister was there, so your grandmother was bringing up six children?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So she -- Tell me a little bit more about her. What was she like?

A: She was a very heartful lady. She did new -- what she could do for helping people. But still she had -- she was Swedish, so there a difference between Swedish and Danish. The Swedes are lay -- almost stiff, and -- in their way of life, and she came to Denmark, very youn -- young and married my grandfather and they made together this wonderful hotel, and -- and she has always been in a commanding position, and she was that to her last day. So -- But our home was full of love and we had all the things we wanted to have to play. We had the big garden. We lived in Snagerstein, that is three miles south of Elsinore. We had -- From our windows we could see over the sounds of Sweden. We -- Every summer, we -- we wot out swimming and sailing. We had the boat very near to us, so we had it, really, a wonderful life. So -- A-And she was, of course, the manager of all the things, who make it possible.

Q: You said that she was -- that she gave things, that she reached out to people. Can -- Can you talk a little bit about that, what you remember of her as you were growing up?

A: No, really, I dow -- just know that people came and -- and what -- what they got, I don't know. But I know during the war, she was very helpful in many ways to people who had no clothes, because she gave, of course, what we ha-have left over -- be -- so, she -- she was very h-heartly in -- in her way of living. But the small details is difficult to remember.

Q: What do you recall about religion, growing up, or faith? Did you go to church, or were there any habits or rituals at home, that you recall?

A: My home was a typical Danish four wheel Christian life. You know, you go to church when you on f-four wheels, for baptism, for wedding, confirmation, funeral and Christmas eve. We were not -- Of course, we believed, but we were not church-goer, not church-goer. We -- No, I -- I really think that the only religious influence in the house was that grandma, every morning, 8:30, listened to the radio from the dume in Copenhagen, there was every day, a -- a 10 minute sermon. And that -- that was -- But, we were not church-goer. First of all, there was quite a long distance to church. And, by the way, my grandmother was not very fond of the minister. He was from what we -- I would call a very Orthodox, and very narrow minded part of the Danish church, called Internal Mission. That, you know, everything was prohibited, but you were allowed to put cream and shoke in the coffee, but not ter.

Q: Not to stir it?

A: Thas -- Hey wa -- Tha -- That's the right, that's right, that -- that part of -- of course it not -- not true with the coffee, but in that way, that everything was s-sinful. And that was too Orthodox for my grandma. And th-the sermons from the radio, that was something else, that was a more Reformed, and open form of religion. But, of course, the religions, the bages should be the same, bus all the outfits, which make the difference.

Q: What -- You've talked a little bit about the love in your household, and the -- the s -- the structure, the discipline. What else do you remember about values your grandmother taught you, or perhaps a sort of a philosophy, as you were growing up?

Q: There was no [indecipherable] kind of -- I really think that she thought that if we did what she did, it was okay [indecipherable] example. I -- I just think that's -- that was her idea. She was not a -- a big thinker. We had too much to do, but she was a good pe -- a good -- a good woman, and we loved her, and so I have had a childhood which was quite out of this world. When I hear about what's going on [indecipherable] well, that's a -- I enjoy to think back a-at that time.

Q: What did your grandmother do all day? You said there was some financial resources, was she working at all, fro -- a garden, or anything?

A: I understand you are a young American. If you have tol -- as-asked this to -- to a Danish girl in that age, "I have six children, I have a big house, and you say wh -- ask what I do?" I really think that -- We had, of course -- There was an aunt living with us, a- and she was so wonderful, and wa -- that was my grandfather's sister, never married, and was -- was the lady who took care of the kitchen and all this. And then we h -- always had a girl, a maid. But those ga -- a -- a big garden, you know. That was the only thing I hated, it was to pick up the leaves from the -- the -- the leaves of roses. That was a big, and a boring job. But there was a big garden, and my -- my grandmother was very interested in -- in gardens. So, she got plenty to do, plenty to do.

Q: I want to talk a little bit about politics. I mean, did -- did you ever hear politics discussed at the dinner table? What -- What were y -- her ideals, or perhaps even yours? At this point, you're 13 -14 - 15. How were you getting some of your political ideas? A-

A-And it doesn't have to be specifically with a specific party, but just ideas about how things should be.

A: You see that, in Denmark, we ha -- for all the years when I was young, mixed government between the social democrats and a radical party. And, you must recall that, in the 30's, after the Black Wednesday in '29, Denmark had had very -- indeed, very bad economical conditions. A big part of our -- our export was agriculture, and the first -- everybody stopped in Britain, was our biggest market, that was agriculture products. So there was a really big unemployment in Denmark in the beginning of the 30's, and there was, even then, not any tension t -- revolution or to Communism, all this, because there was a social welfare in Denmark. A social welfare, which was backed up even by the more conservative parties, so there was uni -- unity about -- to give the people who was not so good off as we, a helping hand. And after '36, it turns a little bit, and in '38, just before the war, we had a reasonable good situation, and of course the social democrat got the credit for that, and that is okay. And, at the same time, a certain Mr. Hitler, made his number in -- in Germany. We thought that Hitler was a clown. We und-underestimated that guy. His screaming, his completely directed reviews. He -- When we saw him in the picture -- the pictures of him, when we -- when we heard him in -- in the radio, on -- on film, or this newsreels, it was -- w-we couldn't understa -- we really thought the man must be crazy. And that gave Denmark an injection against narcissism, because that was also completely foolish for us to believe that anybody are supermen. I never forget, we as Danes, was so -- the best of all the Aryans, with our blue eyes, our blonde hair, and -- and

all this. And we couldn't u-understand anything out of -- and therefore, in Denmark, there was a feeling of certainness, that that guy could never be a threat. That was '36 - '37. There was a -- that w -- I say, here was not something I knew that time, because as 10 years old, you are not that interest. But, the [indecipherable] was that when he had passed the bridge over Rhine, the river Rhine, and taking over the old German socketbeat without, and he was shooting at him. Maybe the whole world could have -- be something else today, this day in April, in '99, where we talk about Kosovo. If somebody had shot at the German army crossing the bridges over Rhine in 1936, maybe millions of people had been alive today. I don't know, but I say it because that gis -- my impression what's right or wrong in Kosovo.

Q: Do you remember when you first began to form your own idea about Hitler? Do you remember listening to the radio, perhaps with your grandmother, or aunt, or perhaps other people, neighbors, or --

A: I can say the day exactly, the ninth of April, 1940, I woke up and -- because there was airplanes in the air. We had -- To see an airplane in that -- the -- in those days, that was something special, but here was lots of them, coming up from south, over the river Sund, and they were -- the destination were Norway, because that was the day Hitler occupied Denmark and Norway. And then they came back and they -- then went over Copenhagen, and we have heard about the bombardment of Wachau, in the year before, when the start of the war started, and afterwards, we got the -- the message that Hitler has threatened to bomb Copenhagen if we did not -- gave up and sign the treaty that let -- he should take

over the power and -- and all this. And we had that time, 13,000 soldier, that was all, and somebody was killed at the -- at the border between Ge-Germany and Denmark. That day I got my impression what -- a man who have made a non-aggressive treaty with us, and broke it, that man was no good, and he was certainly not a clown, but he was a threat. And from the -- that day, I -- I despised the man, and the regime. But I think that goes for many, many, many. I was 13 years, that ni-ninth of April, and it was strange because I had to go to the station. I went to school in Copenhagen, that was a dri -- a drive of about an hour or so, and non -- in the train, I've heard about it. We have to -- seen the planes and all this, but when we came to the -- to Copenhagen, we had to stop one station before Norbel, and w-w-w -- had to go out of the train and up in the streets, we heard the German soldiers. And that was a shock. I was really in shock. And -- But we could do nothing. [indecipherable] dreams that you can have a gun and shoot, all that. Well, wund -- it became a normal day later. Where we lived, we saw no German soldiers. I saw them when I was a-at school in Copenhagen, and I really think Denmark is a sha -- I remember that's the first time in all our history, we have lost all freedom. And I know it s-seems maybe a little pathetic, but freedom is something you don't talk about, and don't know exists until you lose it. Then you'll find out what it means. This -- To live, one day in a country with law and order, the next in a country where you do not know what is law and order, because the other set up what you have to be and say, that is difficult. All this -- For instance, with the news. From one day to another, we just had one side of the news. And that was the main reason that we young people, of course, guided by grown-ups,

came in -- very young in the illegal press work. As paper boys, we distributed -- and to me it was very clear. I went to school in Copenhagen, I lived on the country side in -- in Willet, so it was naturally I had some papers with me, and gave them to people who I knew would en -- would use them right, because that was all informations. W-W-We tried to listen to BBC, but the Germans make some disturbings jop, so it was very difficult. You should have seen all the antennas you tried to make, in order to get the news from BBC, three times a day. And, again, BBC was the truthful news media. But, maybe they'll be just as muss -- misunderstandings from their side. Beeb -- The -- The German's news from the different fronts, was always taken as 100 percent lies. But on the other side, in the fort -- in '40, what happened? Holland, Belgium, France fell. Dunkirk. It was a very, very sad time. It was very difficult to keep up this stee. That was -- And our government, we had a government at that time, the-they make collaboration with the Germans, which we didn't like. We -- We thought they were cowards. That's easy to say when you are not sitting at the fir -- in the first row, but that was a very shameful feeling, that we have failed, that we now saw that England was very, very hard pressed, and there was none in Europe, who could help. Never forget that on -- in the '40, they had still the pact between Stalin and Hitler. It was just -- there was no way out of it.

Q: C-Can -- Can you talk a little bit more about people felt about how your government reacted, and what they would have liked to have seen?

A: I think that most people, they thought, oh hey, comme ci, comme ça, it's going. We have still our steak every Sunday, and we have st -- still that and that. That's -- It's not

that bad, and that's -- But, the young people, who had -- out from the -- the point of shame, some other interest. We wanted something should happen. Of course, most of the people of that part, were quite young. They had no responsibilities. I cannot today understand that maybe I would had another meaning, another opinion of things, if I've -- had been married, and two or three kids. But, we thought that we did too little to show that Denmark should again be a free country. And that was -- But on the other side, every b -- I think that some Danes believed that Hitler will win the war. But there were never a great Nazi party in Denmark. The two -- two and a half percent, that was -- maybe three, was -- and many of them came because -- and that -- that's completely crazy --because of the pact between Germany and Soviet Union. And Soviet Union's attack on Finland. There was a fro -- Finnish feelings in Denmark, and we really found that Soviet Union and Germany were the same bad taste. And some people, they went to fight against Russia in Finland and some of these people later on, when Hitler attacked Russia in 1941, joined Hitler, in order to -- it should benefit Finland. Finland joined Hitler in that war. But there was this northern feelings for a -- a brother land, and -- but that -- that was only a few people in Denmark, most --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Preben Munc-Munch Nelson -- Nielsen. This is tape number one, side B. Okay.

A: The most people, they were completely indifferent. But then, time went on and we, from the [inaudible] started with distributing illegal papers, now started to print them themself. We got a -- a dummy from -- from one place in Copenhagen, had, by different person, got paper. That was a very big proten, to get paper for it, and then we made a copy, which we otherwise would have brought hundreds copies, then we made more self, and that's -- that was our very, very brave assistance, [indecipherable]

Q: I want to go through this step by step. Can you first remember wh-when this idea arose? A-And you talk about we, wh-who is we? If you could tell me who these people were, and -- and if you can think back, were you sitting around and you decided that, let's do this, or did someone approach you?

A: No, be -- Yes, i-it was -- the first thing was, that at my school in Copenhagen, that was the oldest school in de -- in Denmark, me -- the Metropolitan school. We had very good teachers. It was very national school, a very Anglo-Saxon kind of school, and there was -- there they started with connection to the university. And s -- one of my schoolmates had some of these papers, it -- brought to the school sometimes, and I said, "Can I have some?" Yes, and then it start in that way, and we were influenced by our teachers, very much indeed. And they -- to them, it was very important, because they were academic. They were Latin, Greek people. They could do that, they were experts -- they we -- were -- because of their background, very democratic. And that -- say, about the whole background in the school, and then, from [indecipherable] I started with two or three papers, and later on, we made them ourselves. And we, that is my mates i-in Snagerstein,

playmates, were people who, we had grown up together, same age, 16 - 17 years old, when we -- we got the -- it's a possibility to make our own paper.

Q: So at first -- I want to just go through this, a friend came with some papers and you asked for a few, and then you took them and distributed them, is that it?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: We gave them to people we knew would be interested in them. And then, later on, it's most -- quite natural that we made this 50 - 60 copy a month and brought them to people, and sometimes, if something special happened, we had one page, which they -- we brought out for -- I remember one of the main thing was when Stalingrad fell, it was a very, very hot number. And also, when there happened something in Denmark, the first murder. B-Because everything escalated. And --

Q: The first murder?

A: That was -- That was -- We called it a cleary murder. Where the Germans shot a Dane who have done nothing. Just killed him on -- If, for instance, w -- the -- the -- an informant for -- a Nazi informant was a danger for the resistance movement, he, after the case was seen really through, that there will be no mistake, then he was liquidated. And then, always, when one of this hi -- Nazi servants, they were shot, that was cleary murder. And then, that was completely innocent people. And normally, was more than one, this would be doubled up, or something like that. And also, when there was a big sabotage. And sabotage was -- I never was involved in that, but sabotage was also a reasonable

selfish thing that we did. Because when we -- not we, but when the saboteurs got the order from England, this factory is dangerous because they are making that. It is much better that we, in Denmarks, had people who set the -- the -- the bomb inside and blew it up. You see what happen when you have air attacks? We saved quite a lot of civil lives by sabotage, and it's much more precise. And the people who was working in the factories who were blown up, they were warned, and they came out. That means it was a human, much better way to be self-destructive, than to have the British and American aircrafts coming over and bombing. So, therefore, i -- sabotage was a very serious attack on the German war machine, and that was, therefore, that the Germans, in '43, the 29th of August, where there have been quite a lot of sabotage before, that was railway, it means that the transportation between Germany and Norway, which normally went through the Danish headlines, they were disturbed, and then the -- the Germans demanded that there should be again, a general punishment for sabotage and for carrying weapon. Then the Danish government said no, we can't do that. And the Danish government [indecipherable] Danish government resigned, but there was not appointed a ne -- new government, and the -- it m -- had the effect that the Danish administration continued, but the leader was not a political secretary, but the man who was chief of the office. And not elected, it was an administration, and that administration continued until the day of liberation, the fifth of May, 1945.

Q: A few more details about the period when you're distributing papers. When this young man who initially gave you the paper, did -- I mean, did you have to be interviewed, or checked out in some way to become a part of this network?

A: Only people they knew got it. It was not necessary, and af -- and whe-where I live, the school -- okay [indecipherable] schoolmate and the people I had contact with in my home Willet, I knew very well. So, it was not necessary to -- to have this check out. We -- We knew it was people who stand for.

Q: And yet, there could have been people who were collaborating secretly. Was there that fear at all? Did you have any misgivings, and how were you careful?

A: We knew who were Nazi in our little town. That was no prob -- we had one or two who had these crazy ideas, a -- but they were not member of society any more. They were ap -- only to they -- a -- a kind of outcast, we -- because their mentality was that long from ours. So, no, that was no -- there was n-no danger there. Peoples who came out of -- from somewheres, it could be difficult, but then -- then we could make an re -- in-inquiry somewhere, but it was never necessary, but we had people enough, the young people in Snagerstein was almost hundred percent involved.

Q: Ho-How many young people were involved, would you say?

A: I think we were n -- 15 in the little village.

Q: Okay. Now, is this something that your grandmother knew you were doing?

A: No.

Q: Why not?

A: Oh, well, later on she says she wo-would have been very, very sorry if we didn't had. But I think that was her fear for the consequences, and well, I don't know, I think that most fathers and mothers, or grandmothers, don't want to let something be a risk for their children. I -- What we did was okay, that was right, but why just you? I think -- I think that was that. But she would, without doubt, have denied me to do it, I suppose, I suppose.

Q: S-So you did have to be secretive. I mean, how did you -- tell me a little bit about that. How were you careful? Ho -- Where did you carry the papers? If you were dropping it off at someone's house, who you said would be interested, how did you do that? Give me a sense of how you did that.

A: Just like a normal delivery boy deliver things. You go to the door, knock at the door, give it to the right person. That's all [indecipherable]. Only once I was -- another man saw it, and that was a policeman who stopped me. But he was a policeman, and he'd come t -- later on, it meant something, because he stopped me b -- th -- I don't know whether it's the l-lights on my bike that was not okay, but he saw what I had in my briefcase, and uh-huh, good. Because that is the most important thing, that the Danish police, most of all, really was loyal to the Danes, not to the Germans. I must admit that in Copenhagen, there was a -- a group of police -- of people who was really Nazi infiltrated. [indecipherable] And -- But not in our area. Th -- know that the policemen there have known us for [indecipherable] children. So -- But that was the only time -- bu-but he

didn't take any of the papers. That was before we -- we ever printed it ourself, that was something I brought from the school.

Q: Tell me -- What -- Did -- Did the newspaper that you had brought from the school, did it have a name?

A: That was Studentinus Iftatin, the Student's News.

Q: Okay. And when they actually got news, were they -- how did they get news and then put it in the newspaper?

A: Well, they had from BBC, and the national news, the -- okay, you know, that everything goes faster than -- than the lightning. So they -- First of all, what ha -- the criticism of the government, and we had very good writers. Later on, we saw -- saw one of the best journalists was in there, and authors and all this, who was forbidden to -- they couldn't get their stuff in the papers, and therefore, they came fra -- came through the i-illegal papers. Tha-That's the way you can communicate, and that was the only way. There were hundreds of different small -- small, illegal papers. There were some special from Elsinore, from the more -- there was a paper named "Information." After the war, it became a daily papers. And there was the Communist illegal paper, "Country and People." And there was -- fr-from the more li-left side, from the more right side, there was really quite a lot for -- for different -- There was a man, Nils Swanson, he made his own paper, called Ils [indecipherable] Jutland. H-H-H-He was from Jutland. [indecipherable] letters. And they were -- found through the nation distribution. They -- They were overall, because some got it, and copy it, and send it. That's the way it was.

Q: Gi -- You said that somebody be -- was a -- a -- a very good writer, and became a well known journalist. What -- Who is the name of that person?

A: Outsede, O-u-t-sed-e. He was famous. And many of the -- the -- the authors ra -- made articles in the -- in this illegal papers under nom de guerre. And that was -- the only way to -- to have your talk -- the normal papers had censorship. That was very difficult to -- to write anything against Hitler, against Germany. That was not allowed. And in the -- in the radio, the same thing. There was a -- a censorship there. There was a man with a finger on the button, that if something not special good for [indecipherable] you cut off. So that was -- And the papers had to follow the instruction, otherwise we would ge-get no paper. So it was rather - a little bit necessary, with the illegal papers, and all that. A little part of the -- of the truth. But the ne-newsreels, they were just about all the German riksers, all what they could do. But also they're -- Never forget, we came through it because of humor, too. Humor was -- was reasonable. In that time it was so that the cinema played twice a day, seven and nine in the evening. And always there was this German newsreel, and the -- one day there was, on the first performance, seven o'clock, the newsreel said, "And we had an attack on England, and we shot 110 enemy aircrafts down. One of our own are missing." There was a man sit -- from the halls who said, "Don't worry, guys, it'll be back at the nine performance." But, humor, I really think we -- humor has also something to do with surviving, and might be there, Jews and Danes are -- have a little bit in common. We don't like, for instance, a Jew -- Jewi -- stories about Jews. Well, we don't tell them ourself. We have -- There was also, in '43, Fieldmarshall Goering visited

Denmark, and he wanted to see a Viking ship. And then he went out where there was an old Viking ship, the [indecipherable] and when Marshall Goering came and saw it, he -- and he said, “Hm, is that all?” And the little man who was in care of the -- that museum said, “Yes, that is all, Fieldmarshall. But with this ships, we conquered England.” See, th -- such story, told in a depressed situation, give a little light, a little smile, and is also why you survive, reasons of survival, that, oh well, it bad, but it c-could be better, it would be better.

Q: Now, at this point, you’re very involved in these newspapers. H-H-How are you thinking? How do you -- What are you thinking about what you’re doing? Do you think to yourself, I’m a member of this informal resistance? How do you make -- yeah, make sense of what you’re doing?

A: Yes, but what else could we do? You see, that’s so strange that you all will -- shall have a reason. That is the only right to do. It has nothing to d -- with deep phil-philosophy, it was a must. Somebody had to do these things. And well, why shouldn’t it be me? All my -- my nearest friends do the same thing. We’re together in it, and okay, it’s also funny to cheat the Germans a little bit. I cannot -- I cannot go from that s-side of the story to that. It was irritating for the Germans to know that all their lies is not at all believed. And therefore, I always take what is coming from every general, in east or west, was some -- a little bit of okay, maybe, maybe. I hope it’s right, but --

Q: Did you -- Were -- Did you ever have an opportunity to choose to do something like sabotage, and what were your thoughts about it?

A: I was never -- never -- remember I was that young. Sabotage, that was for grown-ups. It means that should at least been 18. So --

Q: You were about 14?

A: N -- Yes, in -- in ’40 - ’41, f -- but when I started, i-it was in ’42 really, I was 16. So -- But no, I was never -- not any possibility. And that was also mostly a big town --

Q: Okay.

A: -- affair. Even if one of the most important groups -- no, that wasn’t sabotage, that was people received weapon from -- from air. The w-weapon which was sent down from American and British aircraft. Well, that was guns, that was ammunition, that was detonators and all these explosives. And that was mostly fr-from people from the countryside. They kn-knew -- knew the area, they was much better in position to hide this -- the different materials they got down. And -- But I’m -- I was never involved in that, too. And the reason why I was involved in -- in the October actions, was because of that policeman, wh-who -- he came one day and s -- that was beginning [indecipherable] and said go and pick some people out from the station and bring them, and he s -- gave me some addresses. And --

Q: Who was that policeman?

A: He was the man [indecipherable]. You got that book?

Q: We’re looking through a book that Mr. Munch Nielsen brought and will be part of his file, and part of the -- the Holocaust archives.

A: Mr. Chumla Larsen. The guy here, and he had the -- the big influence, because he was a police officer and had wi -- he was in the foreign police, and he had the connection with the Swedish Mr. Palmroot, you will see too him, in the book, because they worked together from the -- one from Danish and one -- one from Swedish side. And therefore, he was able to have more news, more informations. And he came and he was the founder of the group called Elsinore Sookgloop. Elsinore Sewing Club, it means nothing, but the child should have a name, and that was the name. And they were the owner of the book -- of the boat you see on this museum -- in the Holocaust museum. The fish -- the -- the 21 feet motorboat.

Q: Who was [indecipherable]

A: This si -- The Elsinore Sewing Club.

Q: Okay.

A: And that was used there in October, for transporting quite a lot of people. In October, Jews most, but later on, it was used as career boat, as gun running with -- from Sweden with weapons for the Danish resistant movement. And Danish resistant movement people had to go to Sweden, it was also -- some allied soldiers shot down over Denmark, who had the luck to go to the coast on Canova, and they -- they were -- we had more boats, but this boat was the only -- was -- still was there when the museum required it.

Q: Before we -- we move on to that whole chapter, I'm -- I'm just ask you a few more questions about the period in your -- in your life when you were working with your s- student friends and distributing newspapers. I wonder if you could -- In your initial

interview, you mentioned a teacher that had made an impression on you and guided you, and I wonder if you could tell us the teacher's name, and -- and more -- a little bit more about him. He -- He became a -- an important person in the whole situation.

A: Froida Yacobsen was the name. He was a social democrat. He was very, very soon in the action against the Nazis. He was a career between the Danish social democrat party, and the -- the German social democrats. He was in Germany very often, on bicycle and [inaudible] he was in the organization Matcha Otchie. And they helped many Germans when the party was forbidden by Hitler. And he was so anti-Nazi, and anti-Fascism. And of course, he was not a -- a real teacher, he was, what do you call it?

Q: An apprentice.

A: He was an apprent-apprenter --

Q: An apprentice.

A: Apprentice, okay. As -- A -- He should learn to teach and the-there were always a normal teacher together with him, but he has --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Preben Munch Nielsen. This is tape number two, side A. Okay, you were telling us about Froida Yacobsen.

A: Oh yeah. He was one of the men who started the Danish resistant movement, and when there was Council of Freedom, he was one of the first mem-members, and he made a tremendous job for the rest of the war, and had, together with people like [indecipherable] he wa-was later the -- the head of the Copenhagen University, a doctor, and many other people, they really administrated the resistant movement's actions. There was no power for them, it was just done. In '44, some of them were arrested, but they -- some of them wa-was freed again because of a -- a bombardment of the jail where they were. And that was -- Again that -- It's very difficult when s -- things comes by an air attack, because one of the bombs fell in a school, that French school in Copenhagen, where 150 kids were killed. It was -- Therefore, we were thankful for what the saboteurs did.

Q: Who was bombing?

A: That was the British. And the -- It was a mistake on the -- but, we see the -- the risk when -- when you have the -- the bombardments.

Q: If you could just help me understand a little bit. Did you understand that he was such an important figure when he was in your school as an apprentice, or was it later that you

understood what he had done, or -- and -- and -- and, if so, what -- what were you aware of him? I mean, what was he like?

A: He was a little man. He was very strong in gestures, and talking very loud, and he did not make silence about his hates to ger -- to -- not Germans, he loved Germany, but he hated the Nazis. He was a Socialist, and our school was very conservative, but he was a premed -- very fine teacher, and his idea about freedom was not to overlook. And first -- later, I understood -- I was not -- I -- I agree completely, because he was that kind of man who could do something -- aga-again these people were [indecipherable] or were -- were heart and people -- maybe a little bit of a demagogue, but well, he needed to be that on that time. It was a strange time, and later I met him many, many times. We had one meeting a year, that was the opening of a artist -- a gallery, where s -- thus -- a union of -- of -- not union, a company of artists, they show what they have done for the last year, and he was from Impa just like we, my wife and me, and we met there every year. And -- Until last year, he died a little -- year ago. He was 89, or something like. He was a marvelous pers-personality, and he really made us forget a little bit of the shame we had. We also had another teacher, he was the first man who really, in Denmark, wrote a -- against Fascist man, and the nasic idea. He wrote a book, “Plague over Europe,” where he defined what Fascism was. He was later on Secretary of Education in a social democrat government. So -- But he -- he had it -- he was more on the philosophic part of a ger, where he really f -- make us even more to dislike the Nazi philosophy.

Q: What would you say your teacher -- apprentice teacher, Froida Yacobsen, what -- what did you take away from him? What did you do, do you think you learned? You know, you -- you mentioned that you felt less shame, you were very proud of him, but di -- did you take away any other things from him?

A: Yes, but his idea that you have to stand up when thing is not right. You cannot just, as a good Christian, turn the left chin, when you are beaten on the right. You have to -- and under these circumstances, during the war, during occupation, you had to stand up and show that you -- [indecipherable] things, that we'll not -- we'll be bound of -- and especially because the ideas they wanted us to believe in was all against our ideas, against our belief. It was opposites all what we have learned to love and -- and believe in. So, he gave us this -- the maturation, what to do. If you want to be a full man, you will have to do something maybe you don't dare to do. But you do it. That's the only way we -- we can survive. It was, in 1941, '42, '43, up to '45, a matter of survival. It wa-was about the future of our country. If Hitler had won the war, okay we as Danes, maybe would be -- ha -- been the next ins -- command after the wonderful SS. To me it's -- the greatest fun is to see these wonderful Aryans, Hitler and Goebbels, in the -- in the front. But that should be the types and samples of the Aryan future [indecipherable]. I don't buy it.

Q: At this point, what did -- At this point, what is going on with the king of your country? D-Do you ever see him, and what do you think about how he's conducting himself?

A: The king of Denmark was, as typical Danish kings, not true intelligent. But he was a very stubborn man, and he was stubborn at the right time. He was an -- no would ever

deny that, the gallant pawn for Denmark. He made a fantastish way out of delod. He -- in the start, when he rode through Copenhagen every day, and the Germans soldiers, they saluted him, he looked to the other side. And he -- Once, a German ask people, “How c-come that your king is riding here? Where’s his guards?” And the underlings answered, “We are the g-guard.” He could do that, he was respected. He -- He did it wonderful his -- he stood up. I know that’s a story about him that -- that he would wear the yellow star, if -- if -- but that’s not true. There was never a yellow star in Denmark, but the story is good, and if the situation had been so, he would have done it, no doubt, no doubt. But the -- that’s one of the stories who are not true, but in a way, bear a bit of truth in -- in the self , because he would have done it, no doubt. He never talked about Jews or Italians, he talked about Danes. My citizens are Danes, and -- and that’s all. He was the first king ever to visit a synagogue. And that was before the war, but you see, i-it’s -- that’s a game that, it’s to show that the Jews were a part of the Danish society.

Q: He used to ride his horse -- when you’re talking about riding, he was riding his horse. Did you ever see him?

A: Yes, many times.

Q: Describe it.

A: Yes, but you see, he came from the castle, through one of the streets there, and ladies, they went out and [indecipherable] out, you know, turn, turn. That was Denmark coming, and nothing else, and he did it in a marvelous, good way. But then, one day he s -- fell off the horse, there was something happening, and that was the last time. And then, from

August -- August 29th, he had to give up his guard, and police troops came in, Danish, in order to -- to protect him, but from that ti -- we didn't see him. And that was again that he was -- yeah, his leg was hurt, I don't know whether it -- it was amputated, I -- I just know that he couldn't -- couldn't walk and -- but he was a marvelous king, from '40 to '45 -- '47, he died, in '47. And he was very beloved, and he was married to a German princess who se -- from the ninth of April, never would receive any relatives on the castle -- of the German relatives. That was -- But our -- We have very good fa -- good royal family. Oh well, we have had it since year 900. King Gom the Old, so we have grown accustomed to their ways.

Q: His -- His name was King Christian?

A: The 10th.

Q: The 10th?

A: Yes.

Q: I-I -- I want to see if you recall, when you first began getting some inkling that things were shifting in the country, specifically with -- that -- that Jews might be rounded up by the -- the Nazis? Do you remember how you heard about it or who told you?

A: That policeman who came and said to me, I have heard rumors about -- that somebody has been arrested, and -- but at that time, it often happened that Germany stopped some people and -- and then they were arrested and sent to -- to Germany. But now it was a whole group. The Jews, the -- and well, I was first aware of it the day when I was not asked, but told to go pick these people up, and bring them there. And --

Q: And you -- where were you? Were you at home at that time?

A: I was -- I was at home, a night, making my loy for next day's school, and then he came and said, do that and that, and I did, and that was a start.

Q: Do you remember approximately when that was?

A: It was in -- in be -- the beginning of October, second, third of October, and it was strange to see these people come there, with their trunks and completely out of their -- know, they were, in a way, rather quiet, but you -- you could see they were afraid, and -- that was -- that was really the first day I really fully understood what we were fighting for. What the -- What's it all about. And well -- But then, when they came to the different houses, with people I knew, of course. Okay, come in, see so and so, and so on. No Christian asked them -- later on, when I ask why we should do that. Because we knew everybody, we knew where there was a dog, we knew how -- yes, because who maybe would bark. We knew exactly how to find every path in the wood. We knew also, how you can go from one garden to another, without going on the street. So, that was -- that was the first assignment we got, and w-we were, let's see now, fif -- well, 10, anyhow, who did that first. And then, the day after, I remember we should go there and there. We had 11 places from where there was -- people was -- boats was sailing from, and we went down with it, with the people on it. Everything was -- the only thing, one of our doctor, Doctor Gasfeld, he had sometimes to give an injection to children, in order to keep them quiet, and that was --

Q: To make them sleep, or --

A: And that was, he said, [indecipherable] thing that he ever have done, because it was not his patient, he didn't know the condition and yes -- but he did it, and -- and never forget that, there was no losses. All the passenger we had, came out. And that, luck -- we had the church letters, we had the hospitals. When the day came, you know that i-it was leaked by a German, the s -- the Jewish society would not believe it. And --

Q: You're talking about at the higher level, that a -- a German told a Dane that -- that -- that Nazis were going to round up all the Jews in early October.

A: That was Mr. Dukfitz, he was a member of the German litigation. He was a Merchant Marine diplomat, and he had -- was told there would be two boats coming in to pick up the Jews. Maybe he was okay, infilled by the Danish civilization, so he told it to -- to two Danish politicians and they went to the Jewish societies, to the mosiac society to the synagogue, they wouldn't believe it. But when they related this news to the fact there had been burglaries in the different organization, and the only thing missing was --

Q: Burglaries, in the --

A: Burglaries, yeah. And -- And the only thing missing was the register of members of the synagogue, they saw it. And then we have the story about Rabbi Milcher going in and said, "They'll be no service today." It was ju-just before the new year, the jo -- ho-hoshonah?

Q: Roshanna -- Rosha -- Rosh Hashanah.

A: Rosh Hashanah. The -- Just be -- before that, and -- and there was quite a lot of people. So, when the Nazi came, there was no people left. Of course there was -- the --

there -- it was not possible to -- to evacuate the Jewish old age home, because it was just behind the synagogue, and the synagogue was always guarded by -- by Gestapo. So they couldn't bring these people out, and it meant that when they came, that morning, and on that night, quite a lot of the people from -- from the old age home, were taken and brought to -- to Germany.

Q: I want to ask a few more details about what you're assignment was. So, you were at home, and this policeman that we've mentioned, comes and tell -- gives you an assignment. Where were you supposed to pick up the group of people? What -- How did you pick them up, in a car or walking? And did you do it right away? Was this something you went and did right away, or how did it work?

A: [indecipherable] within one hour, they should come, and I went to the station, and they came there, and --

Q: The train station?

A: The train station, yes, and I, of course asked, "How shall I know them?" "You will know them," he said. And they came there, and okay, you know, very confused. They have got the message that -- and then the -- the only guy -- man they saw was a guy 17 years old, come along. And we went to these families and stayed there, because I -- I was also -- I would get new orders later. And brought them to the -- to the people there and from other stations, Elsinore, Esbeger, Snagerstein, people came, they have got ex -- explanations, you go there and there. And then the Mr. Chumsen, who [indecipherable] see there, he was the man who combined -- in two or three days, he combined all the

different groups, because many -- there was a private fisher, we belonged to the resistant movement, and so, out of nothing, came a fleet. Really, there were quite a lot of boats going o -- further up at the coast, the big fisher boats, they could take 50 at every trip over, and that was -- but our boat had been there before, because that -- that [indecipherable] used to -- since the 29th of August, where we shipped soldiers, Danish officers, because that's -- they started -- Danish military battalion -- no, that's regiment, I joined that, later on, after coming to Sweden. So, it was -- the -- we had our boat, and that boat was in use all the time, and then a couple times, I was asked to go with a -- if there was something very important, and later on, I too -- because I was a culear, I had letters from -- I don't know who, but I knew who was the receiver in -- in Sweden. But, i-in the first time, it was so, that the people came up, and they have been hidden, the -- the Jewish refugees come up, they have been hidden, for instant, in the hospital, becau --

Q: This was the first time you were asked to do it?

A: No, the first time, no, no. But people came from hospitals, they came from ev -- anywhere. In hospital, there are always places or rooms where they connect the different -- different parts of the hospital. That was warm, there were -- and they had plenty of food, and they stayed there for a couple of days, three, four days, and then, for instance, if there was a funeral from the hospital, first was the wagon with the body -- and there was lots of taxis, and they go from the hospital to the cemetery, but a car, one on one, make another direction, and that way, they came out of the hospital, without being -- it was natural there was many cars.

Q: Oh, you're describing how you snuck people out of the hospital?

A: N-Not me. Resistance --

Q: Not you, but the resistance movement?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And that gave the possibility to get up to the coast, and that is one of the ways. Other ways was by ambulances, they were going up there. But, the most came by -- by train. And that's, see, especial in Denmark, we should not have passport for driving train -- to go by train. We had some different -- There was a quite different situation in Denmark. We were -- We had more freedom, in a way, if you can call that freedom, that you can drive a -- a train without a special passport. But we could do that, and -- and people came by themself, and every time -- Goldberger -- Professor Goldberger, he ha -- has been very involved in this -- this museum, he told that his father was cantor in the -- at the synagogue, had taken out his beard, that is --

Q: Shaved his beard.

A: Yeah, shaved his beard -- beard, and that is, for him, very, very, very important, but when he was sitting in a train, he had tried to find a way to get out, and was in the train back to -- to Copenhagen, then the -- [indecipherable] came and they said, "Oh, hello Cantor Ricoff." So, but that was -- at the trains, there were no special guard. And by the way, I don't think that the most of these crazy SS men, Gestapo, knew what a Jew looked like. One thing they wouldn't understand, that anybody would help a Jew. That was a

very big surprise, they thought, it's very easy, let them hide, w-when -- in no time they will come up and we take them as sitting ducks. But they didn't come, and it gave us, really, at least one week where they just hesitated, and -- and that -- that was a mood in the people, they re -- that was the first time we -- a li -- forgot a little bit of the shame and -- and really thought, okay. That -- That was the result of it.

Q: You were sitting up straighter --

A: I'm a little bit proud --

Q: -- just now, when you did that.

A: -- a little bit proud of it. And -- But, on the other side, we had all the luck. In 1943 -- no, in 1942, the Norwegian Jews was taken. Sweden did not help, would not help. But in 1943, after we had el Alemaigne, where Rommel was thrown out of Africa, we had Stalingrad. Rome had surrendered and the master of the sky was the allied aircrafts. There will be no, no risk for Sweden for a German attack. Germany, or ra -- ja -- Sweden accepted to take all Danish refugees in. Remember one thing, all Danish refugees. I -- Is very important, because we had some not Danish Jews, who'd been in Denmark, coming up from Poland. Not many, but they were ha -- ha -- was in the country the ninth of April, when we were occupied and pa -- they stayed there. But that was the cr -- we'll always see that in the -- in the book --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Preben Munch Nielsen. This is tape number two, side B.

A: And -- Where did we come to?

Q: You -- You were just talking, I think, about the circumstances which had changed, which perhaps made this possible.

A: Yeah, because what happening was that now w -- the Swedes gave all Danes free pass to Sweden. But we'd had these Jewish -- non-Danish Jews, but together with quite a lot of refugees, came also Danish police people. You must remember that in 1943, and before the war, it was very seldom a Dane had a passport. We could go without passports as -- into Sweden, Norway and Finland, and that was normally what was done, that was before the charter explosion and -- and people did not -- I remember when my uncle, wh-who lived in Paris in the 30's, came back to Denmark by air, it was in the local papers, that -- th-that -- so it wa -- so seldom was it. But the Danish police, they issue a passport to most all the refugees, and when a girl, Jewish, from Poland, non-Danish resident, she got a Danish passport. That way, she was under the promise from si -- from Sweden, that all Danes were able to come in, and she tells it -- about it in -- in my book. So -- But, again, the whole situation in Ochabol was very uncertain, a -- but also, there was something, I don't know, who saved -- there was -- as a Christian, I can say a guardian angel. We had the time, we had the warning, we had the church, and out of nowhere, there was a fleet of boats, and that is, to me a sign of something, I don't know, but the meaning was that there should be no Holocaust in there.

Q: I wonder if you could tell -- tell me a few more details. I want to fi-finish the story that you -- you were told by the policeman, one evening without warning. You went to the train station, you recognized the group of people, the group of Jews coming. What did -- Tell me where you took them. And presumably, you hadn't had a chance to call your neighbors and say you were coming by, so tell me how that worked.

A: They have already been in contact with the policemen, and that was no -- that was later on, when more came -- more refugees came than expected, that we just went to the next door, and it was never denied. Come in and let's -- We never took more than three in -- we have seen in at -- a little town, north of Elsinore, Gilleleje, where 80 people was taken on the church loft, and that was because of a girl who was dating a German soldier, talked, because of ignorance. And then Gestapo came and took these 80 people. And that was the most that were taken, and just like the -- together with the people from the old age home, the greatest number. So far, I remember about 600 were sent to Germany, and 60 died. None of them came -- of the [indecipherable] came to Auschwitz. And I really think that -- that's also very important, that we had no government, but we had that administration. And then, they got to go to Red Cross -- Danish Red Cross, the possibility to visit Auschwit -- no, Theresienstadt. They knew it will be used -- misused in propaganda. The Danish part of Theresienstadt was painted, they got dressed up with plants outside, but of course, the prisoner was not allowed to speak alone with -- with the delegation coming down from Denmark, but they should speak together with a German officer, and the only language, of course, German, was allowed. But this delegation had

two very important -- very important results. The first, that it was allowed to send gift parcels to the prisoners. That was some va -- why someone send clothes, some food, not much, but just that was give the different for starving to death and just starve. They sent school books to the children, so they could have some formal education down there. The next, and the most important then, was that none of the Danish prisoner should be sent to Auschwitz, or the other extermination camps. And the German kept it. And just before the war was over, I think it was March or April, ’45, the white buses came and took -- that was the Danish resistant movement, who demanded that it was not only the Danish resistant movement people who should be brought back from Buchenwald, or what -- the other name, but also the Jews in Theresienstadt, so they came home before the war, not to Denmark, they had -- they was not allowed to be there, to Sweden. And from Sweden they returned, in ’45, in July, I suppose. A-A-A month or two after the war, and they come back to their homes, and --

Q: Th-Th-This week that all of the activity’s going on and -- and you’re very busy, did you stop going to school that week, and tell -- and were you working pretty much all the time? H-H-How many people did you pick up, would you estimate, in -- or maybe how many trips did you make?

A: I -- I -- I can’t recall. I -- That was a 24 hours job. Of course, picking up from the station, that was only until 11 - 12 o’clock. There were no trains pa -- in the night, but to bring them round, to -- and then maybe sup -- go down to the beach and wi -- cause now, there’ll be -- there’ll be a transport possibility. That was -- And that’s the first time my

grandma smelled there was something. But at that time, one of my cu -- my oldest cousin, he went to America already, in ’39, and he was in the American Air Force. And my -- He was also [indecipherable] my cousin. He flew -- He was refugee in, oh that was in ’43, in beginning of ’43. And then, in end of ’43, I had to go to Sweden, because of the -- something happened in Denmark, some were arrested, and then I had to stay. But, that was, of course, pretty much the job, and -- but the worse thing was, when s -- when the refugees had tried to hide themselves in the wood. And then we were young people, who knew every path. We knew exactly where would you hide if you -- and -- and -- but it took longer time to get them. And th-they were afraid un -- beca -- in that [indecipherable] in that way that we were speaking Danish to each other. So -- And the refugees could not understand what we would, that no German soldier dared to go into wood. They walked together two or three, but through a wood? No, no, no, no. It was too dangerous, no lights, no nothing. No. When they have seen, often before, that was the way the Danish resistant movement had some of their weapons, by knocking two soldiers down and taking their rifles. So -- But, in a way it was -- when a -- I look back, it was without any excitement. That was -- I understand the refugees, how it must be awful, awful, awful. But I -- All the things we have, and now the view of life and death in -- during a war. We accustomed to death. When you hear about Stalingrad, 400,000 killed, the millions, they [indecipherable] after the war, we really understood that six million Jews, so and so many Gypsies, and 10 million Russians was killed by Stalin, and -- but that was, in a way -- let me say I -- I thought we did a good job. I was satisfied that we

have done it, and when we waved goodbye to -- i-in a way, have we fulfilled what Eichmann would have? To remove the Jews from the Danish bot? Isn't that completely ironic? That, in a way, Hitler had a result. But, there was one thing that is more important. They came back, and they were welcome back.

Q: In your years, did you ever come across someone who recognized you and said, "You took me over on a boat."

A: The only [indecipherable] is my wife's maid. They graduate together, no. We --

Q: Tell that story, tell that story.

A: Yes, that's -- We were here in New York some years ago, and -- here at the museum, and then we were asked if we knew any Danish Jews living in America, and Sonia had the girlfriend, th -- they graduate together, and she came -- ask her to gi -- if they had some material, artifacts, to the museum, and they did. And then we came in and talked about it and she have been over in our boat, in the boat. So, at the meeting here, after the museum was opened, about Denmark and the rescue, she could tell about the boat up here. She came over, and I could tell how it was to have that boat, and -- but that was only a-an -- she was, of course, a little girl at that time, and -- 10 years old, maybe -- may -- no younger, eight years. And I-I-I can't recall all that, and she couldn't, of course not. But, it was a job who was done secretly. You did notice [indecipherable]. The less people knew, the better. And quite a lot of the thing was in darkness. Remember, it was ju -- we have black -- what you call black-out, we -- it was not allowed to show lights from the houses, and when we went from the houses, down to the beach, it was through

these passes. We knew, so we can go on scene from there, where they have stayed, the shelter, and down to -- to the beach. So -- And the most of the people were thinking of anything else. Why, that was the last part, which they thought was the most dangerous part. What I think was, I couldn't ag-agree that wa -- w-we never discuss it, but unsure -- we were never hundred percent sure, out there, we could see the enemy. So -- But -- But most of -- of the people never m-met again. It was -- You must recall that from Denmark to Sweden came totally, over 20,000 refugees, from resistant movement, the searchers from Germa -- German army. Only one-third of all the -- the refugees w-was Jewish. Yes.

Q: Essentially, at some moment, you were a refugee, correct?

A: Yes, it happened so that later this year, when the refugees -- not more were Jewish, I continued to -- to work in this way, that I was a career. I got from -- still from my school --

Q: A courier.

A: Yeah, courier. I -- From -- Came, got some letters to deliver in Sweden, because we have the route, I was in charge to do that, and one day, I was told when they come over from our liaison officer, Mr. Pallum, the -- the Ger -- Swedish policeman, that I couldn't go back because something had -- some had been arrested and -- and well, I was 17 years old, so I maybe thought that it was too dangerous, so I went to school in Sweden, graduated. I have a Swedish family.

Q: Where did you live?

A: In Lindsherding. That's in wi -- it's, oh well, if -- 300 kilometers north of -- of the -- where we -- we have our -- at Helsinbor, th -- 300 kilometers. And I graduated and from there I went directly into the Danish brigade, and was a soldier.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the Danish brigade. You've mentioned that, but I wasn't as -- sure what that was, because -- are you saying it existed in Sweden?

A: It was so that after the 29th of August, in '43, the Danish gen -- staff -- general staff, sent some Danish officer to Sweden, in order to, if it was possible, to make a regiment over there, because most part of the refugees was from resistant movement, and they wanted to do something, and there were military force built up with the Sweden's acknowledgement, and paid by the Danes, of course, and under command of General Jewingeres, and British general, we were s-str [indecipherable] to serve to the six army. No, the eight army, under ja -- Montgomery. And we were supposed to be -- to land in Denmark, if there was -- and when -- an invasion on the Danish.

Q: So you were training to be a real ground troop?

A: [indecipherable]. Yes, we ha -- we had really commander training, it was very hard, but still we have that -- we had a purpose. We had really that idea to come back and fight. To have the sin from the ninth of April away. But -- And in that, of course, there were many Jews. Young Jews.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Yes, of course. They were Danish citizens. So that was the same -- you si -- you see, that's also maybe the difference. No -- No, that's not difference, because quite a lot of Jews were really wonderful German soldiers in the first World War.

Q: And the Polish.

A: The Polish, too, yes. So, their loss. So we -- I started there, just after I graduated, and was -- I think it was end of March from '44, and we returned back in the fifth of May, 1945.

Q: Were you hoping that you would be able to go while the war was still on?

A: Hope to do what?

Q: To fight.

A: Well, that was the purpose. Later on, that was strange enough, because we only had very small fights with the Germans, and I suppose we lost 10 or 15 men, or something like that. But we were a little bit disappointed. We -- It wa -- Again, luck. I -- I -- I don't know how we shall d-describe, not only the Jews situation, but oth -- the other Danish situation. That was something that kept em from the disaster. When you came back to Denmark, it has not towns ruined by bombs. We -- We had the possibility to -- to live, we -- so it -- i-it was something very strange. Not a rich country, but not a poor country, not a destroyed country. And it's a country which not had an internal fight between left and right. And we were so lucky that the Russian invasion stopped before our border. Only one place, on one of the isles, Bornholm, it was bombed, because a German commandant

would not surrender, then they were bombed by Russians. And the Russian took Bornholm, and stayed there for so and so long time.

Q: Describe how you got back to Denmark. When were you told that you should mobilize? How did you get over with your brigade? And -- And perhaps even when you actually got off the boat, how did your -- your fellow citizens react?

A: Well, we were mobilized long time, because from [indecipherable] after the Odenna offensive of -- in -- of pard -- Christmas, ’44, we were in red ale-alert, always should be no distance from -- from our weapons. Then we were brought down, transported to our camp in south of Sweden. And then, in the night and I can tell you that Denmark was an ixtas, the fourth of May, that it was said on BBC. The German troops in Holland, northwest Germany and Denmark, has surrendered. And we stood there, of course, happy. But then, during the night, we went to Helsinbor, went into -- to a fisher boat com -- [indecipherable] over, a small -- Maritimcota from the fleet, and later on, the ferries was used, and we came into Elsin-Elsinore and families standing there, and crying. It was wonderful.

Q: Did you know anyone in the crowd?

A: Oh, that was my hometown, yes. After 10 minutes, I was in my own hou -- home, just for five minutes, to say hello.

Q: What did your grandmother say to you?

A: Welcome home. Oh, wa -- It was -- It was a day.

Q: And then, you said you just had five minutes. Wha-What was your assignment, where did you have to go off to?

A: Oh well, we should -- we had two assignments. First of all, our -- we were an infantry battalion, we went down to the boat line between Germany and Denmark. We have to see that the Germans came out of Denmark in order, and not stealing too much. And we did that for -- until July month. We had another -- We have some pioneers -- engineer soldiers, and they should be in command of getting the mine fields clean. And that was, of course, the German soldiers who -- who did the Dutch job, but our men was so [indecipherable]

Q: You kept the German soldiers so that they could help you sweep for the mines?

A: Yeah. I know that is not quite doing the Geneva co-committee, but well, they have put it down, let them take it up. So -- But w-we -- That was a really smooth affair down in -- in -- in -- in their borderline. There was only few accidents. Some German soldiers tried -- that was SS soldiers, tried to go behind the lines, because they knew that they will be in special camps, and we caught some of them, but the most they -- old men, to me. They came there, going with their baskets and there no future, they couldn't see anything. That was not the -- the very strong army we have seen Hitler, that -- what he did to his own, that is remarkable. But they followed him.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Preben Munch Nielsen. This is tape number three, side A. Before we move on too much into the post war era, I wanted to ask this question, and you've certainly touched on it many times, but why do you think the rescue of Jews, fellow citizens, but they were Jews, was so successful in -- in your country? Why do you think that was so?

A: It was obviously the only way we can do it, the only way we could live. That's, as I said before, 20,000 refugees, Danish refugees was in -- in Sweden, one-third was Jewish. Whether you're -- Whether Dane, Jewish or non-Jewish, thas would be the same. We had to do everything we could to save Danes from the fate, to go to a concentration camp. We knew about the concentration camps in 1943, not the -- the whole truth, but we knew that these people will live in agony, I -- we nee -- they had to live in humiliation, they were starve -- you couldn't do that. And especially not the Jews, because they were absolutely innocent. There was very few Jews in the Danish resistant movement, because that was an agreement, that we wouldn't have -- we wouldn't know, the people who decide that -- that because of a Jew was caught, we should see a Crystal night in Denmark. We couldn't have that. One of my good friends, [indecipherable] Israel, he lives in Israel now, he was one of the guys who took -- broke in -- in the synagogue, and took all the silver. The Torah scrolls, they were all hidden in a Danish church, remember that, all hidden there. But -- There was quite a lot, and they were afraid. And he was one of the few members of the -- the resistant movement, and together with other Danes, he took the silver, send it to

the commanding chief of the German troops in -- up in Narveek. It came, because then would it go to Elsinore. And in Elsinore, it was taken by the resistant movement, and -- and -- and -- and hidden ti -- until the war. The synagogue was not touch by the Germans. This -- The Jewish prisoners interationta was not sent to Auschwitz. Why? Because SS, Gestapo, the Germans, have seen how we reacted. And we were -- Denmark were rather important as distributor of food to Germany. And it mean, if they did something, it will be closed. The Danish railway sabotage was qua -- rather good. At the same time, they were building up the west la -- la -- the lansing line, or what, west wall what do you call it? And it was so much sabotaged in Denmark, by putting sugar in the concrete, and it wouldn't harden. You know that? And they have seen -- they have seen the result that -- but they never would have believed, helps the Jews. They must have been completely out of their mind.

Q: Do you ever think, or have you thought, or discussed this with anyone, that if -- if in other situations, in other countries, if there had been a similar kind of organized -- well, a similar kind of resistance, let's say, and an attempt to save Jews, that things could have been different in other countries?

A: First of all, that was -- that is not right, with organization. The success was because it was not organized. It was private -- I mean, here and there, but of course, later, and during the time, it was organized. What I really mean is that if the Pope had done something in the 30's, maybe the situa-situation have been different. To me, a situation -- I -- I am proud that the only church who really condemned, was the Danish church. That -

- And it was not just words, because many refugee found a shelter in the vicary, and many Danish priests were in connection with the resistant movement, and that way, were helping the refugees to Sweden, send them ta -- send them to -- to other people who was -- but naturally, if there have been con -- people have condemned this, but who want to help a Jew?

Q: You've talked a lot in this interview, mentioned that -- the feeling of shame, of not doing enough, and then a -- and then how that -- that feeling shifted, when people -- Danish people began to do so much. In the -- In the era after the war, I -- I wonder if you could talk about that, the Danish people came out of the war feeling that really, you had behaved, you had done the right thing. Many people have come out of the war feeling maybe that they didn't make good choices, and as -- I -- I read a quote that the Danes did not lose their souls during the time of Hitler. And I just wonder if you have any thoughts on that, I mean, whether -- whether you disagree with it, or -- or if it sparks any other thoughts?

A: I never gave it a -- a thought, because we come -- we came back and we have been involved all the time, and I know that it was, as I said, with my grandmother's blessing. I think the main thought in Denmark, oh, God be praised. We had a very cheap travel. And -- But we learned from it. Denmark went into NATO. Today we are in Kosovo. We -- I learned -- to me for -- for instance, that the eur -- eur -- European union is very important, I z -- have worked for -- and the European movement for 35 years or something. That was -- NATO and that European movement was in order to avoid war.

We have seen the war, and in the -- the years after the war, we saw the casualties, we saw the million, we saw the result, we saw the con -- the concentration camps and -- and if continued in -- in the Soviet Union, where a gulag -- where Stalin killed even more people than Hitler. But, I thought, naïve as I was, that unity in Europe could make us a better continent. And I really think we have achieved quite a lot in that way. I really think that for the first time in history, there's not being a war in 50 years between central European states. We have, of course, now down at the Balkan, but we have not have this war between England, France and Germany. England an-and -- and France, to be the master of Europe. We have had this union which -- and my idea of a -- a union is what Charles DeGaulle said, a Europe of the Fatherlands. We are Danes, we are French, but we are Europeans, but we are not going to be directed from Brussels. We have our own parliament, but we have so many common interests. We have the now -- which Denmark, not are in yet, the eril -- the economy, but we will have it [indecipherable] in some years, we will also be member of the European -- have the Euro as our currency. And I really look forward to that. But the question that we should have been proud of ourself now, I really think there was, in Denmark, very much self criticism of the way we behaved, the government, the -- the work. They worked too much together with the -- with the German authorities, but on the other side, we did not lose ourself, that's right. The -- I was not less Danes when I returned than before, I really think that. W-We had a much easier time during the war than most part. Only Sweden had it better. Yeah, they -- that -- so -- and after the war, I really think that we have made very, very big progresses. We -- And the

situation between the nations in Europe is much better than it was before, and so we have learned by the war, f-for Denmark to go into NATO, that's okay. That's just like to make a garden on the inlands eyes of -- yes, because we -- It's so long time we were a wild Viking nation, we still remembered.

Q: You've mentioned Kosovo once or twice, and I just ge -- like to get you to sort of elaborate a little bit on that, and I must remind people listening to this, that it's April 16th, 1999. It's about two weeks into a very -- a very fierce bombing of Kosovo and of -- of Serb -- Serbian forces, by NATO. So, I would just like you to tell us a little bit more about what you think about the decision to do that, and -- and why y-you think it's important or not important.

A: I said before what would happen if, in 1936, we had seen the French attack the German -- the Nazi German troops. Maybe million of people's life have been spared. Every time we stand against a dictator, you will see that he do whatever he want, and blame always his enemy for what is done. Now, that was the only way out. We had, in order to still live up to what we are taught, that we are our brother's keeper, we must attack people who deny other peoples their freedom. And I can't see it co-could have been done another way. Maybe I -- I -- I will not talk about sending in today, ground troops. What happened today is that a fanatic man dec-decide hundred of thousand people's fate. It's -- It -- He is really a dictator, he's really danger -- dangerous against the -- the world society, and to me it's quite clear when you see the only people who support him, is the former -- people from the former Soviet Union, and China, and both

of these countries have severe problems when it comes to human rights. And human rights is one of the thing we mut -- we cannot adjust them. We cannot say that human rights is for Christian, not for Muslims. So I really think that's it. Go without saying, we have to fight against what I call the evil.

Q: The what?

A: The evil.

Q: I'm going to sort of go back a little bit. I wonder if you can tell us anything you remember right after the war, about trials of collaborators. And I know that there were some i-in -- in your country.

A: Well, I was against these trials, because the collaborators who was taken, was a small fish. And because of the -- the punishment they got, the lowest punishment for four years, all the small, easy cases, they got four years. But, when the big cases, where the real criminals came up, oh well, then the softhearted Dane has said, that was too much. The people who got the four years, they served their time. The others, they got maybe two years, three years, and nothing hap -- and we had, of course, the severe examples, the killers, the informers, and -- and some of them were shot. They deserved that, but the whole s-system of laws we had, first of all, it was against Danish morality to have a law which punished things what has happened already. You cannot have a law going backwards.

Q: They had to enact new legislature for this?

A: [indecipherable] l-l-l-legislation, but th-their excuse was that the Council of Freedom, in ’43, had said, if that and that are done, it’s an offense, and it will be punished after the war. But, it was not a government, it was -- that had no power but okay, the main ideas in -- in the law was exactly what the Council of Freedom has said, but the Council of Freedom had not included this small, unimportant guys, they would have the criminals, they would have really crimi -- the people who broke our law, who was traitors, but that was a small, completely inno -- not innocent, but ignorant people who was punished out, and that was -- and then, if you were lucky and first were taken prisoner three years after the war, and have done serious crimes, we would not have the death penalty. Children, be at five, six, seven years, and well, that was wrong done. The idea was right, of course you sc -- you have to be punished for thing you do, but it was done in the wrong way. They hit the wrong people.

Q: What -- What about in your town, or Elsinore, what happened to the -- there weren’t as many, but what happened to the handful of collaborators there?

A: Oh, they were arrested, but wha -- I must say, I’m ashamed of one thing. Quite a lot of the girls who dating German soldiers, ti -- they were captured and they cut all then painted swastika on the ma -- I -- I was very upset when I saw that, and that -- that was, to me that’s -- that’s a shame on -- on the people who did it, I -- was very brave to cut -- take the hair off a girl, that’s -- no, but it normally was people who never had done a single thing during the war.

Q: The people who were -- who were looking for revenge, had ne -- I'm not sure what you said.

A: I said that the pe -- the people who -- who did that, never did a single thing until the war, they were -- they just find out how -- that was funny, that was -- okay, that was people of the street, and I'm very much ashamed of that. But it happened in all towns all over Denmark that wrong people was taken prisoner, and wrong thing was done to -- to -- to women.

Q: So what do you think was going on there? Wh-Why did that happen?

A: Because of the ligisation. First of all, because the Council of Freedom wanted to avoid the Night of the Long Knife, as we had in other countries, where --

Q: The night?

A: Of the long knives. Where, in France, for instance, where many was killed when the liberation came. Also private problems was taken [indecipherable], then telling this is because of -- of the war, he is killed or she is killed, he had done so and so. That was -- Therefore, the Council of Freedom wanted to have law, so the people who did something wrong, should be punished, but not private, this would be by the official authorities. And we did that -- we did that. The only thing was when the judges of the street, and that went the wrong way for quite a lot of -- of -- of the girls. S -- I don't like what they did, I think that was completely wrong, they -- but punishment, not that way, not that way. That is the -- the jury of the streets, we -- we can't have that, not in a society wh-wh-who wants to have law and order.

Q: How long were you active in the brigade, after the war was over?

A: Oh, for two months, about two months. We were dismissed the 10th of July.

Q: Okay, and what did you do then?

A: Well, when I -- Just enjoyed life. For more than a month, I just went around looking good friends up and meeting girlfriends, and living a life, and -- and then, in end of August, the hard work started, I started studying, I went through -- I went to the mercantile, and --

Q: The Mercantile?

A: Yes, I ha -- merchant high school. Then, it took three, four years, and in the meantime I got married, and --

Q: Tell us -- Tell us a little bit about your wife.

A: My first wife.

Q: Your first wife.

A: Nice girl, and we met, by the way, in the summer of love, summer of freedom, summer of everything. The summer the sun was up 24 hours a day. So we [indecipherable] you know. It was out of this world. That was -- And well, many of these [indecipherable] coming the first years was maybe a little bit too early for us. And then my -- the last year at school, at university there, I started in my father-in-law's company and stayed there until '81, long time after we have been divorced, and that -- that made a rather quick way out of the ri -- was many direction, by now I was 28, and --

Q: What kind of company was it?

A: We are selling chemicals, we are selling products for paint and varnish, plastic and all this industrious, and medical. And in -- in 1960, I ki -- had my divorce. We had three -- three children, a boy and two girls, and he is now a -- well, is -- is an old guy now, and he is, of all places, in the re -- what do you call it, taxation? He's a lawyer, and they sit there and -- but ki -- he is a very, very keen civil servant. So -- B-But that's not my way of life. But w-we -- w-we -- I see him two or three or four times a month, he lives not -- not so far away. And then two daughters, one is a teacher, and the other is studying, now it's art [indecipherable] studying all their life, and had a wonderful time. And they live both in Copenhagen, in the same -- s-same apartment house as my former wife. They bought that -- They bought that some years ago, and they -- they are living, and they are both divorced, my daughters, I hope, soon, because I want to have more ch -- grandchildren then. And then in '60, I suppose, '61, I married Sonia and we have three sons. The oldest is now main director in our company. [indecipherable] son is director and been working since '81. And then a son who's a journalist, he has been here, and who'll -- who'll be back in May, to New York. And then the youngest who has just been in onwha -- enwise -- enwi --

Q: NYU?

A: NYU. Started on a film course, he wants to be a film maker. And we live in Esbagere, very near to where I was born, and we have the -- the -- a good reason to go to Washington once a year, and we -- I'm making quite a lot of speeches now, in America, and that's very good.

Q: I want to ask about the speeches and why you come here, but before, do your children know a lot of your history and wha -- and what you did during the war, and if so, when did you tell them about it?

A: As I told you, this is not a issue in Denmark. When we are talking about what happened during the war, the -- we will always have this -- our debt, was it the first or the second World War? That is not an issue, because how could we behave in another way? That's -- Th -- My children, when they see -- for instance when the groups of Jews are coming to Denmark, are telling that and that, they -- they can't understand it. Why? Wh- What could you have done else? So that's -- that's not an issue in -- in -- in our speech, in our home.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Preben Munch Nielsen. This is tape number three, side B. Can you talk a little bit about when you first began making speeches about this?

A: Oh that's -- I really think that's about the time with the -- with the boat, when -- '89, I suppose it was, that Professor Leo Goldberger asked me to find a boat. We have been together somewhere and -- and then he -- he asked me to find, and then I make -- and there was an interview in one of our papers, and the day after, the boat is here. And that's the boat, you know, and that was fantastic. And then -- And then, the boat it built oak on oak, and it was from pre-war, and you don't find them very often, because they were -- it

took quite a lot to make it clear every year, for the season, so -- but the -- the guy who had it now was the third owner of the boat in this -- almost 50 years. So it was -- And then --

Q: Let me just clarify something. You've mentioned Professor Goldberger before, he's Danish?

A: He's a Danish. His father was cantor of the synagogue in --

Q: Okay, that's right.

A: -- in -- in Copenhagen.

Q: So, he is involved with the museum, and -- and he contacted you and said, "I -- We would like to find this boat," and he sort of gave it to you as a job?

A: Yes. Not the boat, but a boat.

Q: A boat.

A: A boat, and we found the -- this boat and my surprise that it was our boat, was minst -- that has been placed for 50 years, for all the years, in Elsinore, and I have boats in that same harbor for many, many years.

Q: And you didn't know that --

A: No, no, no, no. Because it was changed a little bit. The -- And the -- th-the name was quite different, and that is, you see, el -- in -- in Elsinore port there, the marina, that's 1200 boats, so you can't -- can't see the -- know them all.

Q: How -- How did you search for the boat? Tell me what you did.

A: Oh, well I just was interviewed and asked if anybody knew about a -- a b -- a boat from -- from the October ’43, and then he came with it and said, “I bought that from Tormul Larsen,” so it was so -- so easy to -- to go back and find the real thing, and [inaudible]. We had some wonderful pictures the day it was taken up from the harbor and put on the truck for -- dispatched thing to -- to Baltimore, I suppose it was, yes.

Q: Okay. Do you remember when you found this particular boat and you actually went to see it? Can -- Can you remember back what it was like to walk back on it?

A: It was wonderful, because when I saw it first, oh it was ugly, it’s ugly. And -- But then I saw the captain, and there was one thing different, because there was another engine, and that engine was bigger than the engine that was in the boat before. And, but also the same thing. You could -- You couldn’t remember. And Tormul Larsen, who was the -- the man who owned it after the war, said he had many good hours in that boat.

Q: Did he -- Did you get a chance to go out on it?

A: Yes, [indecipherable]. But only on the last -- the last trip from -- from -- down to the harbor where it was put on the truck, and sent to -- to America. And then I saw it in Baltimore, because we had very, very keen discussions about the color, because the paint that was used on the boat in that time, was made of fish oil. We hadn’t -- We had no mineral oil to do it, so it was fish oil who was -- that was the -- the main part of it. And that was fine to -- to find the -- it was gray, in order -- and non-reflecting, you know, not -- no gl -- [indecipherable] should be non-reflecting the light, in order to have it more hidden, when they were sailing, as they go, one wi-with the water.

Q: And so it -- Was it brought here on a ship, in a container?

A: In a container, on a ship.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. But that was not our business, because we di -- it was delivered on the pier.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about -- about when you speak. You said you do it quite often now. What do you find people are interested in when they hear you speak?

A: First of all, si -- I must say that what I'm speaking of, is why Holocaust failed in Denmark. We are try to give the historical perspective, to give all the good thing which happen, with -- with the dates, the time. It was in '43. With the help from the German, with the -- the position in Denmark that everybody would help a Jew, that it was not something uniqued. I want to give that forward, and then, the question is, of course, how did you do it, and all this and -- and I try to te -- also, in humor that there's been very funny times. For instance, some of the -- the refugees, they had to stay, because they couldn't move the pe -- move the hospitals. And then a nurse asked the -- the -- the doctor, "What disease shall we write on the chart here?" "Oh, call it German measles." You see, that's -- that's typical Danish, typical Danish, that if we can have a little bit of joke, a little bit fun, and also to take the -- the atmosphere. These people lay in their beds, had maybe a depression, they were afraid and all. And then, call it German measles. They-- It gives a better atmosphere. So -- And then they asked the story about the king and the -- the -- the yellow star. And then, the -- always says, why was they not arrested? Well, because, as I say, nobody of these guys, knew a Jew. They had to ca -- th -- from

the gossip papers and all this. And also try to tell that -- that w-we -- we had food enough in Denmark, we -- it was not under same control and that it was not an organization. It was many, many different people who tried to help and okay, there must have been a guardian angel in one way or another, whether you believe in angels or not.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a little bit about, because I think this is in your first interview, and i-i-it's just in speaking to you again, you're clearly asked over and over, why did you do this, why did the Danish people help the Jews? And you -- you, over and over, try to convey why you did it, but you're also trying to convey a kind of disbelief, almost, that you get asked this all the time. Almost like a frustration, and --

A: No.

Q: No, not -- But I thi -- But I think it's very telling, ab -- it i -- it's telling of who you are.

A: Well, I really think that what we did was a matter of decency. Could I have been able to look and see myself in the mirror if I had turned my back? It was in '43, we knew about the concentration camps, we knew that we had the possibility. We knew that these people were innocent people. I think that's -- that's motivation, must be valued, also for the people who ask. It's enough for me. I don't think we made something unique. I will never be able to live a -- a country where you're a hero because you give a helping hand to a fellow citizen. Or unique be-because you act in a decent way. You see, that's -- that's the whole thing that my belief -- that's why I'm not for democrac -- lif -- I'm not for dictatorship. I want to be democratic, but I cannot eat oysters and drink champagne if my

next door neighbor starve. I cannot enjoy my freedom when my next door neighbor, an -- because of nothing, because of innocent work, are punished, because he -- he is a Jew. It shouldn't be a crime. And we -- And we cannot accept that. And therefore, I -- I really find that it was just a matter of decency. And that is why we don't talk about, that's not issue. That my children, they would have hated me, if I had done nothing.

Q: H-How do you make sense of the fact, though, that so many other people do? That they want to applaud you for what you do, that they do single you out, that they do talk about it? I mean, how do you make sense of that?

A: I'll have to answer with a joke. Once there was a man who came to me and said, "Why are you always so happy?" And [indecipherable] say, "Okay, in the morning, I s-stand up, go out, shave me, and see me in the -- in the mirror." "I do the same," he said. And then I ask, "Yes, but you don't see me in the mirror."

Q: Let me see, h-how did your initial interview with the museum come about in 1989? D-Do you know who recommended, or did you offer to do an interview?

A: No, no, no, no, I was asked to -- to do it, and because we have been on L Street there, several times, and because I was involved in the boat. And -- And maybe Leo Goldberger have said I should -- could give some -- some views on this. And today, because I'm the only survivor of the -- of the rescuer, not only, but you know.

Q: Almost only.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Y-You come frequently, and you've participated in a celebration at a s -- a synagogue nearby. I wonder if you can tell us a little bit about that.

A: They have a -- They call it a Garden of Righteous, and every year they honor a person who have helped the Jews. And I was honored some years ago, and I can mention that Professor Kaska is one and Frau Welnber another, so I'm in a very wonderful company. So -- But I find that a very beautiful day and we meet quite a lot of the good friends we have here in Washington area, and we love to be here. And one thing more, it's at the right time. You see, time means something. We come here and have spring two weeks before we have it in Denmark, and we long for spring, after gray, very dull winter, to land in the airport here, 20 degrees Celsius, go down and see green trees, lots of flowers blooming [indecipherable]. That's wonderful.

Q: What do you think of the current -- the last few years there's bis -- perhaps an intensified interest in -- in the Holocaust. There have been documentaries, and of course, the movie "Schindler's List," which won many awards. A-A-Ha -- What do you think of all of that? D-Do you think there is a genuine interest, or is it perhaps maybe just a kind of a fad, or how do you make sense of it?

A: It's very difficult, because we have seen, after the war, many thing which goes near Holocaust. We see it today in Kosovo, we saw it at Rwanda some years ago. We see it in Sudan, Muslims again Christian, we see that in India. We see that in the former Soviet Union. I think that it's also the interest in -- in avoiding -- avoiding a new Holocaust. Therefore, I -- when I participate, many times, it i -- a part of an Holocaust education, and

I really think that the Holocaust education maybe can give us some answers how to avoid it. I mean, education is one of the things, when you see round the world, people living next to each other in different countries, they believe the other country will do that and that and vice-a - versa. And they fear it, they don't know. The more we're able to know about our neighbor countries -- neighbor countries, it will help. I don't believe that we are able to make countries love each other, but could we, through education, make them hate a little less, we would had achieved quite a lot. But, I think it's so important, with the Holocaust education, and a part of the Holocaust education is also "Schindler's List." Last year here, we watch a preview of a picture about the Danish rescue of the Jews, and it was not so special, truthful, but it was a good story, and -- but it gives the impression all the time, that we can do something. Not to avoid it, but to dimin-diminish the results of it. We -- We must do something, we must learn people to do what we, as Christian or Jews, are taught. That we are our brothers and sisters keeper. If we live up to that, I really think that it will be a much easier way to live, and a more lucky world.

Q: How -- What is the situation in your country now, with Jews? Is -- Is it similar, has it shifted in any way? Have you ever seen a period where there was some anti-Semitism?

A: Never. I can tell you, last time there was anti-Semitism in Denmark, was in i -- 1813. And there was something unique, because th -- that -- this year, 1813, the Jews got full Danish citizenships and were allowed to trade on the exchange. And some of the Dane -- other Danish -- non-Jewish merchants there, were very annoyed about that. And they hired some people to beat the Jews. And some of the Jews were beaten badly. But, the

king made an action. The people who was hired was jailed, and the merchant who paid them was fined very hard. Since that day there have been no anti-Semitism in Denmark. And I -- There won't be ba -- for instance, we have lots of literature in Denmark written by Jews, but all in Danish. In other country, y-you will see, in Yiddish or in -- in Hebrew, but the Danish -- by accident Jewish, authors, write in Danish. They're a -- an important part of our literature. And therefore, the Jews are not something different. They are not living in ghettos, they can be your next door neighbor. They are -- During the war, during the occupation, one of the chefs of the department of Social Affair, was a Jew. Today, y-y-you don't -- y-y-y-y -- that is -- that is not a question to put because why should there be?

Q: Well, in preparing for this interview, I did read one thing that right after that war, that there was a -- a few situations of anti-Semitism and that people attributed it to the Nazis had sown some seeds, and -- and then it -- it kind of was pushed away again, but that -- that it was hard right after the war, and some people were grumbling and saying, oh, everything's the Jews fault. This I read, but I think that it, the source of it was Rabbi Melchior. And he said that it was very short-lived, but that it -- it -- there was just that moment, and I -- so I was curious about that.

A: Well, normal -- normally I quite agree wi -- I don't know the -- we have several Melchior. The -- The rabbi who said in the synagogue in '43, was the other -- that was Marcus Melchior, and his -- hi -- that he wrote, "That was a Golden Heart," when he returned. And the other, Ben Melchior, he just retired last year, and I haven't seen that,

about that, but maybe something I have overlooked, but today, that's nothing, nothing. I -- - Because everything we were against, as a nation, was nascism, and I will be very unhappy to believe that one of the most nasty things with nascism, should have been survived id -- in Denmark. I think that's -- No, well I -- I can't -- I can't understand it.

Q: H-How -- How is what you did and many, many others of Danes, how is that commemorated in your country?

A: Not at all.

Q: Not at all.

A: Why should it? Why should it? We have our Friends of the Sound. We meet once or tw-twice a year, and we have our tradition.

Q: Oh, Friends of the Sound is your -- re-really, your -- the group that did all this work with the rescues and the boats, or --

A: No, no, no, that -- that is -- that is a -- a union of all this who did.

Q: Okay.

A: Because ha -- Elsinore's Sewing Club is one, and -- but the Friends of the Sound was founded by t -- Mr. Thompson, he was an innkeeper and he died in concentration camp.

Q: And what do you do when you meet? The Friends of the Sound.

A: What I do?

Q: What -- Wh-What -- What does the group do when it meets?

A: Having a yearly what do you call it, yearly meeting. We are a society and we have election about who shall be the chairman, and on the very, very high level. And then we

have a good dinner, and we have some songs and -- and we are still, the few of us, still able to drink a beer or two. We -- But we have a -- that's a reunion every year and that's in -- that's really nice, but it is hard to be the president, with less and less members.

Q: And just one last question. A-A-As people who really remember the experience pass on, do you have any -- how do you think your -- what you did will be remembered? I mean, how will it be remembered correctly, as you would have liked it to be?

A: That -- That was a bunch of people, because there was many women in it, who act in the only way you can act, if you want to be a decent person, and nothing more. Because it must not, if we want to avoid Holocaust, be heroes or unique who do that. No, that should be the normal man, because he can avoid -- the hero cannot but maybe save a couple o-or two, but that must be the normal man who understand it's possible to avoid, without being a hero, because we are not Rambos or Schwartzenegger, or VanDamme or what. It -- To avoid Holocaust is, you will have to use the normal person. And I -- If I shall be remembered, it's that I did a reas -- a decent thing and that was not more what you can demand of everybody. Still remembering you are your brother's keeper. There we are.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: You're welcome.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview