

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Joseph Maier
June 22, 1992
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PREFACE

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JOSEPH MAIER

June 22, 1992

Q: Would you tell us your full name and your date of birth?

A: My name is Joseph B. Maier M-A-I-E-R. I was born on January 24, 1911. I was raised and schooled in Latski, Germany. What else would you like to know?

Q: A little bit about your family in Germany and what happened to you in 1933?

A: Now, my family -- that's an interesting question, had left already. My father left as a matter of fact in the mid 20s. He was an orthodox rabbi, had a lot of wanderlust, landed in the United States. My mother followed shortly thereafter with my youngest brother. In 1930, let me see, three brothers and two sisters followed them, joined them in New York. I remained behind because I wanted to finish my gymnasium schooling in _____. But one year later, in 1931, I was in New York on a student visiting Visa, but in 1932 I was again back in Germany at the University of Latski because I figured after all Hintenberg defeated Hitler. He was president and things would not go much worse. On the contrary I would be there to defend the republic you might say. I honestly felt I would have a chance, not only to go to the university, especially since I was very fortunate to have obtained a fellowship from Shotten Foundation to study philosophy, sociology and comparative literature at the university. I honestly felt I would have an opportunity to defend the Wiemer republic against its mortal enemy, the Nazis. And I could make my contribution in that direction, either as an intellectual, a young intellectual or as a fighter even. I loved that country. I didn't want to abandon it to the Nazis. I would do my very level best in order to defend it. If there were, as I had hoped there would be, enough allies who felt as faithful to the Wiemer republic as I did at the time. Does that answer your question?

Q: Yes.

A: In that very first year -- I remember you asked me what I did in '33. Well, it came '33 on January 1, -- I remember to this day, in January 1, 1933 I was in the hospital of the University, the University Clinic of the University of _____ recovering from an appendectomy when in the afternoon the Fuhrer's voice bellowed over the radio. I remember to this day what a shock this was. The nurse came in in order to attend to me, but I was profoundly disturbed when I heard Hitler's voice confirming what I had feared, namely that Hintenberg backed by the army and the conservatives had made Hitler chancellor of the reich. I had the dark feeling that dark times were going to befall not only Germany but the world, and that my own days in Germany were about to end. By the time I returned for the last of my three semesters at the University of _____ by that time that is by the time I returned which was in the spring, Hitler had already started the Nazification of Germany with a breathtaking reptivity. His coming as I said to power January 1, 1933. In February the reichstag was set on fire at the instigation of Goering

and Guthers, in March something else -- the so called enabling act was passed which I don't know whether you know what the enabling act means, it made Hitler practically the dictator of Germany enabling him that is to say an his cabinet to pass legislation which would practically lead to the destruction of the Wiemer republic to the rearmament of Germany, to the ending of the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and April, March came the -- if I remember correctly came the book burnings at the University of Berlin. On April 1, was the boycott anti-Jewish boycott which led to the looting of the stores and the beating and arrests of the owner of the stores and transferring them either to concentration camps or the Gestapo prisons if not to their early deaths. These were things that were happening by the time I returned to the university. By July, when the semester had come to an end I woke up and I wrote back to my parents who had been of course concerned since Hitler's ascent to power. This time, right know, I'm anxious to join you in New York. I've had enough. I'm in fear of my life. Please help me and send me the affidavit and the boat ticket. I want to leave as soon as possible. By September the Nazification had progressed further and I knew that Hitler had in the meantime had succeeded in abolishing all parties except his own. That the rearmament of the Nazis in the violation of the Versailles Treaty and the deception by wealth and stealth was going to proceed without any inhibitions by domestic certainly not domestic or from the outside. On September, in deed, 1933, in September 1933 I left and eventually landed in New York and joined my family.

Q: Can you tell me then what the professional route was that brought you from there, and we'll try to do it fairly briefly that brought you then to the role that you have in interrogation and intelligence. I know it's a big jump.

A: Well, I'll tell you very quickly what it is. From 1933, September 1933 when I landed here, from practically 1939 I was a student at Columbia University where I earned my masters and ph.d degrees, while also working as a research associate at the Institute of Social Research with all the principals of the so called Frankfort School of Sociology, Social Science, including Max _____, Herbert _____, _____, Henry Grossman, Franz Nuemen, _____ and a number of other people, but the principals were actually, the principal figures were _____ and Fran. Fran not so much among the principals but the first three were. I was a research assistant there, very happy there because this was an intellectual hothouse _____. It was at the time when the luminaries of the American Academy were still at Columbia. I still knew and learned a great deal and admired a great deal John Dewy. For my money still America's philosopher. The American philosopher, most represented American philosopher. And the other luminaries would be very much true of this generation of Americans any more, perhaps they do, but I don't think I need mention them here. I got married. That's an important date, to alicie Newman in 1937. I became a father of my only child, my daughter Doris, in 1938. In 1939 I became the research assistant more exclusive research assistant to Adoni with the Princeton radio research project. From 1940 to 1943 I was an assistant editor of _____, the German Jewish New York weekly newspaper where I

was by at the time the only American citizen and responsible for all the English language pages and columns as well as for the Jewish political and religious and learned subjects. From 1944 to 1943 I was propaganda analyst for the United States Office of War Information in New York. From D-Day until after VJ Day I was propaganda analyst for the Office of War Information, American Embassy in London, England, but more especially attached with a small group of American officers to the hush-hush BBC monitoring service located at _____ near Reading with a special duty of writing the so-called report about what the German people were allowed to read and hear by the government of what was going on in Germany and in the theaters of war for the commanders in the field, that is the report had to be written for the commanders in the field and the policy makers in New York and Washington. Let me say for one thing before I come to VJ day. For all that we won, and we too, that is the secret weapons that the Nazis unleashed onto the British Isles, the heightened sense and enhanced sense of living I have never experienced before or after. As I think about it as I try to recollect the war time days, my war time days in Britain were among the happiest of my life. I made also on my days off, good friendships in Oxford in Cambridge and found very much to be at home in the cloistered world of the academy. I never considered any other institution as free and so much a home as the academy itself. That's why I spent my life eventually as an academic at the University after the war and after the trials in Nuremberg. I was determined though all along and I so wrote to my wife in the hundreds of letters which she all saved, hundreds of letters which she all saved from England during the war, even before it was sure, that is in the middle-- let's see D-Day was in '44. In '44 I wrote I'm thinking about what we have to do the day the war ends. I'm determined in having a hand in the rebuilding of Germany and in the punishing of the war criminals but in salvaging the best of Germany and in building of the foundations of a just and lasting peace. I'm interested in spite of what I've learned about Maidonek and the extermination camps, in spite of it and because of it I'm determined to see that the criminals are punished, that justice is meted out not at the price of sacrificing millions of innocent women and children. Precisely because I remember what was done and what feelings dominate those who have suffered under Nazi terror. I wanted to save then and I want to save the world from any boomerang effects of a wrong policy of treating wrongly the defeated enemy. But I said to my wife, we have to remember that for our own sake, if not for Germany's sake we must lay the foundation for just and proper forms of democratic life so that the Germans become an essential constituent of a sound economy and a sound Europe at least in the west. Now, I hope you'll share my opinion, I said to my wife. My wife wrote me even more than several hundred letters. She wrote me every day. I couldn't write every day, so she probably wrote a hundred more letters than I did myself. I wanted to know all about our baby. I wanted to know all about herself, and I wanted to reassure her that I would do nothing without her approval, because it's a joint life that we have to live for whatever life will be granted to us.

Q: Can I ask you a question?

A: Yes, by all means do.

Q: Between say the later part of '42 and this period where you're looking toward the end. What was your sense of the news that was coming about, say the messengers about the exterminating policy. People like Yankarsky (ph) who came to England and to Washington. Were you aware of that kind of news or by the time you were with the Office of War Information in London, what was the atmosphere of knowledge about the policy.

A: I tell you, as I recollect now, I first didn't want to believe it all. I didn't want to believe -- I knew that the Nazis were our mortal enemy, but I could not for the life of me believe that they would descend to the depths of bestiality and barbarity to which they actually did. I didn't want to believe the first report. I couldn't. I said I've lived with these people. I hate them. I want to bring them down to their knees. I want to destroy the whole damn Nazi structure. I want to punish every one of the killers involved, every one of them, and I felt that I had a strong mission to do just that. For all that, I couldn't believe about any reports that there were by that time, about what was involved in the _____, what had taken place in the _____ conference. I couldn't bring myself to do that. As a matter of fact Aurandt and I both formulated against in our respective columns in _____. There is such a thing as a _____ project going on in Germany, and there are by now several books about what German writers abroad, that is outside of Germany were writing about Germany at that time. And somebody writing a dissertation about _____ discovered that Joe Maier, that is myself and Hanna Aurandt were among those people, but especially Joe Maier as a responsible editorial person in _____ for writing fairly about the Germans. Writing fairly about the new Americans that is to which he belonged to himself. Writing fairly about what is happening and ought to happen and what the Jews had in mind and deserved to have as they were dreaming of returning to Zion. They testified, in other words let me put it as simply as possible, that Joe Maier was, that is myself, was not only a good German, a good ex-German, if you want to put it, and fair, he was also a good American. He was also a good Jew and a good Zionist. Gosh, I committed no sins in their eyes. That's what I read now. And they quote me verbatim. When I saw the first dissertation quotations you know about this an old gentleman was writing the dissertation about the history of _____ during this war time period in Canada, I said I had no idea I was as virtuous as all that and I had written as cleverly as all that. I had forgotten about that.

Q: Were you still at _____ at the time of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising?

A: No, no, I don't think so. I was in London already from '44 -- you know, from '44 to D day until after VJ day, as I said. In the meantime, the Warsaw had happened. '43 it had happened, and that was about the time when I landed in OWI, that I began to believe the incredible, what I considered was incredible, that it was happening. That it was all true, that all these factories, extermination factories and corpse factories did exist that the Nazis did what I thought was impossible or incredible to do for anybody certainly not for my civilized fellow ex-Germans. That was a profound shock, and that of course made a

whole lot of difference in my feelings, but I never, even thereafter, waiver as I said before, in what my duty was. I wasn't going to emulate them. I wasn't going to exact retribution for retribution. I was interested in building, not in bringing down the rest of the world. Not in poisoning the rest of the world for all times to come, but for building a better world. During that period, that is during the period of our invasion of Europe and the beginning of our victory in Europe, I received a letter from my brother, who was in the CBI theater, China Burma India theater, and had learned from my wife who kept everybody in the family informed and sent them excerpts of Joe's letters, my letters that he thoroughly approved of what I wanted to do in Germany, go back and help in the rebuilding and lay the foundation for a just and lasting peace. He would like to be a part of it. He thought we were real people with vision and courage to do that sort of thing and he hoped that Alice, my wife, would be a party with us to do that sort of thing.

Q: So when did you set foot back in Germany and what did you find?

A: Well, I have to tell you first what happened when I got back to America first after VJ day. I insisted to my superiors that I had to touch base at home before I accepted any job assignments in occupied Germany. I'm absolutely willing and determined to accept such jobs, but I have to touch base. I have to see my wife. I have to see my little daughter. That I must do first of all. Make sure that they are alive and well. A few weeks after I came back home to a great hello and all the embraces that I dearly needed, I was in the employ of the war department as it was then called still. As a matter of fact, I had to and was invited to show up for an interview at the pentagon in Washington by a Colonel Dustair who was interviewing the right kind of people to function as simultaneous interpreters at the forthcoming Nuremberg trials. I thought I was the man for the job. As I think I told you before, I speak several languages, but I dream I curse and I pray in only two, German and English absolutely perfectly. There isn't a word that I can miss and not a nuance I would miss. I thought I was the man for the job and Colonel Dustair, a good guy, he thought that was right. I was the man for the job and he hired me on the spot. Shortly thereafter, I was in uniform and back on German soil in Nuremberg amidst a heap of rubble. In one damaged hotel to be our hotel I think it was called Adlog where all the American personnel -- not American personnel, the American Chief of Council personnel were located. Eventually, I was assigned another building. It was a heap of rubble. Nuremberg had been completely destroyed. Only a few buildings and in the surroundings suitable _____ for ourselves were left standing. It was a depressing sight but I was elated at the thought that I would get through the job eventually. The trial had not yet begun. The strange thing was that on the spots -- but what had begun were the pretrial interrogations. The preparation of the cases before the international military ruler by allied personnel. Allied personnel meant for me practically only American personnel. I wasn't surrounded by anybody else. On the spot in Nuremberg, I wanted to say, when it came to the assignment of actual job interpretation jobs, low and behold Colonel Dustair preferred for the prize interrogation for the prize interpretation jobs at the integrations regular army officers instead of lowly academic intellectual like myself. And I was profoundly miffed I can tell you. I said if I can't have the real job for which I'm qualified

I was absolutely certain and which he agree on I was, then I didn't want the job at all. Then I wanted to be assigned to the analysis section of the interrogation division, which I was eventually. Much to Colonel Dustair's reluctance but to my own satisfaction I was much happier and much more appreciated in the analysis section of the Interrogation Division of which I eventually became the chief. Now, you wanted to know when I finally got to interrogate Herz and to the document I turned over to _____.

Q: If you would explain a little bit about your nature of the task as an interrogator?

A: Oh, yes, gladly. As a member of the analysis section of the interrogation division I now actually had a chance to both analysis the materials that were disclosed in the course of the interrogations by any of the officers. I got the verbatim transcripts of --that is copies of the transcripts of the interrogations but also to participate in the interrogation and interpretation job myself. My main job though, and I liked that of course. That was up my alley really, and this is how I finally got to interrogate Rudolph Herz the culprit whose confession I gave to the museum myself. But I was not a principle interrogator not even of Herz. I attended a good many of the interrogations. As a matter of fact, I attended most of the interrogations conducted by my colleague Alfred Boothe. All in German. Some of the copies of the transcript you have in the museum collection which I turned over to you. All of these interrogations by Alfred Boothe were attended to only by the young lady stenographer, Alfred Boothe and sometimes myself, sometimes. It was during one of the -- all in German. We didn't have anybody else present, and most of these interrogations were concerned a) with the confirmations earlier of which he made earlier, to all sundry, including my boss's my immediate superiors in the Interrogation Division, that is the chief of the Interrogation Division, Colonel Ahmen, and my immediate superior Colonel Burkhardt. Substantively and substantially the confession he had made several times in earlier interrogations, but all the interrogations that were conducted by Alfred Boothe and myself were conducted in German only with nobody else present but the two of us and mostly Boothe himself. And they were concerned almost exclusively only occasionally with the repetition of the confession making sure he was still testifying under oath, but mostly concerned as I said with his, that is Herz's relations and conversations with the poison gas industrialists with whom he was dealing in the extermination of our people in the chambers at Auschwitz. It was during one of these latter interrogations that it suddenly occurred to me that I hadn't seen in isolation the straightforward in one sentence confession I Rudolph Herz during my term of office as concentration camp commandant of Auschwitz put so and so many Jews or had so many Jews put to death by gassing so and so by other means which I then had signed and sworn to before me. That was the only occasion that I extracted an _____ without much ado. Substantively let me repeat again, substantially in other interrogations by the four named superior officers of mine, Colonel Airman and Colonel Burkhardt that made the same statements against substantively, confessed too much more. As a matter of fact, most of the other statements involving other people and other personnel he had made in front of my larger groups than my own. I was interested in this unique statement on a piece of paper let's see how -- I have to tell you one thing. When I left after the

interrogation of Herz, I felt positively ill. I had to go to the bathroom and vomit, and that happened more than once. That didn't cease, but I wouldn't let on. I showed the same straight forward face. I wouldn't let the enemy see my face that I was moved that I conducted myself other than a straight American officer.

Q: Can you describe him, what kind of impression he made on you personally?

A: I tell you, that is not to believe. To me personally, who had dreamed of this kind of a job, that I would have to do it. I would force myself to do it, that I would face the deviling carnage. I had to discover that the devil doesn't look like a devil. The devil looks like a little man, which he portrayed himself as to a miserable creature who once he's rid of his power and glory and the whole aura that surrounds such people in power. Once they're bereft of the uniform, once they're bereft of their familiar environment, they are absolutely mediocre, familiar kind of little man, about the little, little man who portrays himself about a good father, a good family man, a good husband, who does nothing but his duty and he thinks of nothing but his duty. And even when he had horrible things, admittedly he had horrible things to do, difficult tasks, he called them, difficult tasks to do. He didn't enjoy them. It once occurred to me and Senator Jewry who did most of the interrogation of Herz and we had written all these articles together Senator Jewry and I which were published in the --oh I did have to tell you that separately, which were published in Jewish Journal, the New York Post, a whole lot of articles. If you're interested I'll tell you about it. They insisted on they were mere executive organs. Nothing ever was done on their own initiative. Executive organs of the Fuhrer. That's sheer executors of the categorical imperative of their superiors. Their superior being in the last instance the Fuhrer himself. Everyone of them as a matter of fact, including the military with the one sole exception. On occasion, Goering himself would admit he had actually signed the order and he felt he was responsible for order whatever the order was.

Q: Wasn't Goering skeptical about how they could have killed so many people at such a rate at Auschwitz?

A: Oh, he was skeptical, he had no idea about what was going on, the detail he denied knowing about. They all denied knowing the details. As a matter of fact, it turned out that the various concentration camp commandants and those responsible for this variously either exaggerated, probably exaggerated and exaggerated the numbers that occurred in one concentration camp compared to another. But Herz prided himself in conferences other concentration commandants of being able to accommodate and being anxious what he called _____, accommodating more of his victims than any of the others, and they were vying with one another who could kill more people at one full swoop than the others and more cheaply, more efficiently. Herz was the winner of that.

Q: So, can you give me some more impressions of Herz the man. I want to say since this man is signing a piece of paper to you that says he is responsible for the gassing of two and a half million people, is there any emotion in that for him?

A: No, he made a factual statement which he had wrote a factual statement which in fact he testified to earlier several times. There was no emotion. It was what he called a hard duty. He took no pleasure from it. He derived no pleasure. I said didn't you have fun doing that? I wanted to test him and see whether he was a sadist. He was no sadist. He was perfectly normal. He was doing his duty. I really believe he was doing his duty. He was doing his duty. He considered that his duty, and he shut his eyes to the abnormality of this kind of thing. To the incredible abyss to which human beings can descend in order to perform duties of that sort to which performance I think a normal person would revolt, rather than dying himself than do it himself. I always I figured I would rather commit suicide. I'd die fighting against the Nazis than do anything at their behalf. The slightest favor. I have to tell you something else. I have to tell you also that I was among those who were furious about those who helped among the Jews in the camps and outside the camps who did the listing and who did the helping and who did all the helper services, the so called kapos for the Nazis. I was absolutely furious. I said how can you do this to your own families, to your own men and women. Old men, young children and women, I said helpless as they are. I was absolutely furious and I couldn't believe -- I didn't want to believe at first that Nazis would be able to do it, but this man did it and thought it was his odd duty. He did it.

Q: Did he explain it, the duty?

A: Never in any other terms. Never in any other terms that this was a hard task. That he was told about that it would cost him a great deal of psychological energy and strength, but he had to do it for Germany and he had to do it for the Fuhrer, and there was nothing, I was finally convinced that he would not do, that he would not do for the Fuhrer. Absolutely nothing, but what he did do was more than anybody could imagine anybody able to do. He insisted he was a small cog of a huge machine. He had nothing to do with initiating, nothing he did on his own. He did not permit himself to feel any pity in the face of the hard duty to perform, which would elevate and guarantee the rise to last for a thousand years. Unspeakable glory, unheard of glory would come to the rise and to those who had helped to defeat international Jewry and international capitalism and international bureaucracy, and of course enemies of the rise, who are all in the service of the Jews.

Q: Did he talk about the responsible of others, Eichman?

A: Well, he only to those from whom he received his direct orders, and the chief of the office the _____ head office in Berlin was _____ was one of the chiefs and he had other sub chiefs there in their high security head office, but he never questioned their authority. He was invited to a report never to initiate any drastic steps but always to report such steps including the ones at the _____ conference.

Q: He was commandant of Sauxenhausen wasn't he at the time of the _____?

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- A: I don't recall. You could be right about this. I don't recall. I concentrated mainly on Auschwitz. To me that was the most heinous places, the most dreadful of places. The one place that I wish would never exist and would disappear and only leave the memory. The memory must be preserved. The memory must never die. The memory must never die, otherwise I don't care much about Auschwitz, but the memory must not die of what happened there. That's why it may be necessary to mark the place on the spot, too, this is where it actually happened.
- Q: You were in a room with him and only two other people, that's a fairly intimate situation?
- A: That's right.
- Q: What kind of exchanges happened?
- A: As I said, we had orders to conduct ourselves as American officers. I considered that a sacred duty I might say, too. I always stayed. I never fell out of line. At the interrogation of one _____, where I was the interpreter as well as the interrogator, there was short interruption in the interrogation and I shouted at _____ who was the immediate superior of Herz's _____. I really shouted and I roared and Colonel Burkhardt turned around and said, "What's going on Joe?" I said, oh, I just forgot myself. He tried to lie through his teeth. He denied something that he had said before that I interpreted earlier. I shut him up. That's the only time that I lost my proper cool. Otherwise I tried to keep myself cool.
- Q: You must have had feelings of revenge?
- A: I did. I did. I had to suppress them, but the only relief I found usually afterwards that's the only time I had a chance to go to the bathroom and vomit. I was sick for half an hour and tried to recovered. I said an American officer mustn't show his weakness in front of the culprit.
- Q: Was he going through details of what happened in the process in Auschwitz?
- A: Oh, we interrogated him and questioned him about all that. Oh yes, in great detail, in great detail. Who was involved in what. Who was involved, then what happened, with whom, at whose charge. Who was present, whose order. When did this happen, that happen, all the details where he was queried about. Anything that we can think about that we could read about we asked him about. Senator Jourey the colleague with whom I wrote the articles when we returned in '46 right after the war for the New York Post and for the big book thereafter and for the Jewish Morning Journal, which had to be translated from my German into their Yiddish, he did most of the interrogating. He was the one who really squeezed the juice out of him. Tried to get the most out of him. I didn't have the strength or the nerve to do this. I know I was going to feel ill and I had to stop and get out and vomit first.

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Q: You mentioned that he talked while you were about the relationship he had with some of the chemical firms that supplied --?

A: Oh, yes, oh yes.

Q: Can you tell us about that. He was quite proud of his set up wasn't he?

A: No, he was -- let me say this. We tried the interrogators, the interrogators in the interrogation division, mostly my colleague Senator Joury tried to squeeze him as much as possible and especially then afterwards in the intimacy of the just the twosome or threesome with Alfred Boothe, who were the individuals, what's their names of the gas industrialists, when did you advise them of their task. Did they ever ask what you needed the gas for? They didn't especially ask me but they must have known they admitted they must have known for what purposes was because it was in the vicinity and anybody knew about this and everybody knew what it was being used for. The industrialists themselves who denied involvement could never been shown to have been actually been asked that they were told by the concentration camp commandants that they were used for the gassing the culprits but it was clear on the face of it that they knew about it. They must have known about it because everybody else did know about it, and the chimney smokes and everybody knew what the fires were about. What the smoke was from. This was no child's play going on. This was no fire festival of any sorts. No fireworks, everybody knew what the smoke signaled.

Q: There were competitive bids by the chemical firms weren't there?

A: There were. There were two chemical firms. IG_____ was involved one time and there's a Hamburg firm that was involved at one time. You have it all as I've written it in my articles there. I'm much more specific on the basis of the documents and of my immediate recollection of the interrogations. Who was involved, what firms, -- since I was going to publish I was going to be pretty sure that I can't be sued for libel. I knew what I was talking about and had the testimony at my fingertips and my clear recollection at the time. There couldn't be any doubt about this. Right now, I'm an old gent, I tried to be an old turk.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: Are there some other defendants at the trial who made a big impression on you?

A: I must say the whole lot of them with one exception made the same impression on me, a very said and drab impression. The one exception because he had an extraordinary i.Q. was _____, the former _____ president. He had a very good i.Q. yes, but you know what the strange thing is, he wanted to be interrogated as he was eventually by a Colonel who eventually became a U.S. District Court Justice. He was up on economics and he wanted to be interrogated on his economic brilliance and specialties and all that sort and insisted on having an interrogator to whom he could really disclose what his contribution was to both the building up and the undermining boring from within of the Nazi government until he was booted out. The only man with a superior i.Q. who impressed me as such sat there in the dark of the open military tribune asked by a mistake on our part, he was associated with the wrong kind of club. He said as if the whole thing didn't concern him, just this motley crew over there, rightly so, rightly so, but I associated with them. He was acquitted eventually. I saw him on the streets subsequently to. I didn't want to talk to him. I didn't want to give him the satisfaction that he got off without punishment because he had also helped them. He was early,-- he belonged to the early conservatives who joined with _____, aristocrats, the Nazi government, you know. He was among those who persuaded Hintenberg too that everything was going to be fine until he found out better and had to be put on ice himself. But he was put on trial for helping the big shots into their saddle. It was the right and just thing to do. Compared with the job of course performed by the others, his was minor, a minor crime compared. It was a big crime. I wouldn't have let him go scot free, but compared to the crimes committed by the others, he impressed me by his intelligence and by the nerve he actually had and a sense of humor too and dissociated himself publicly by gesture and position and posture from the rest of the crew. But the rest of them as I said, sad and drab mediocrities. Sad and drab. Physically unattractive, no disgusting, especially _____, who insisted on talking to us in English most of the time, which he knew fairly well. His German was miserable. I talked to him in German and tried to correct him several times, but none of his sentences were ever completed. Most of the time they ended help me, I don't remember. This man had an important figure at the time he was in power. Now, the whole lot of them including the military were just sheer sad and drab mediocrities. The only one who as I said who admitted on occasion responsibility for what was done over an order that showed his signature was Goering, but he too was an inferior being and the tip off that signaled that inferior being was his demeanor and attitude toward I don't know if I mentioned that before toward the big four. To the French, the weakest of the Allies, he was patronizing if not scornful. To the Americans, he tried to impress us as a kind of guy who would be a good fellow to the bucaneeering Americans who were suckered on Hollywood films. To the British who are precise, cold, correct, he tried to emulate a gentlemenlines because he respected the British, but when he saw a Russian, he winced. The minute the Russian officer entered the interrogation room, he winced and cringed slightly. He knew of no posture that would

impress a Russian. He was scared to death of any Russian and every Russian that entered the room, the interrogation room. And that, let me tell you, was true of the whole lot of them. The whole motley crew. I had no respect for any one of them, and I couldn't in as much as I tried to show even a spark of sympathy for any of them, I couldn't. And I'm not a harsh man myself. I can sympathize. I can empathize, but what I saw there imagine me empathizing with a disgusting creature like Striezer. It was impossible. The way he appeared he struck me as belonging to an inferior animal kingdom like rats and vermin more than anything else. I had a physical disgust actually towards most of them. I would have hated to be touched by them. I didn't shake hands with anyone. There was one exception among all the people that I interrogated myself and that was _____. _____ SS general, young, university educated, gangster, but handsome, intelligent charming courteous differential, respectful, especially of a fellow academic, which he recognized in me immediately. He almost succeeded in deceiving me. You know I'm the kind of person who was brought up to regard Latin and Greek, if not Hebrew as the proper guise, the proper garment of the truth. I thought anybody brought up in what I called _____, in the humanist spirit could be nothing other than a humanist scholar and a benefactor to mankind and person interested in nothing but the welfare, the well being and happiness of mankind. He also succeeded in deceiving me into believing that he really belonged on my side. That he was really interested in salvaging and making available to me what was to be made available in way of searching and finding the truth for the benefit of those who were responsible now for building a better world. He almost succeeded in doing this until I found out about his background, which was shortly thereafter. Shortly after I had thoroughly interrogated him, he had in a manner of speaking my sympathy. He was my favorite culprit. He was the one person I felt at ease with and to whom I offered a cigarette. I didn't do that to anybody else. I tried to make him feel at ease, and whom I interrogated. Now, that's very interesting, who I interrogated on side interests. I was also interested as a Zionist in making sure that Israel would become Israel, that is that the Zionist of course would prevail, win, and win as much as it could. And that some of the hopes and some of the hopes of the surviving Jewish people could be fulfilled. So, I interrogated him about well he must have had and did in fact have access to the _____ of Jerusalem. When did he meet the _____ in Jerusalem I asked him and under what circumstances and where was that and what was the subject discussed at the time, for what purpose. Well, substantively the end of the interrogation was substantially came out of interrogation is all he wanted from the _____ was intelligence and all he shared with him was intelligence. And I said well wasn't the _____ interested in the final solution so called of the Jewish person to applied to be anywhere Jews were a railroad could be found even in the far East. Oh, no, he'd never ask him about that with no word. I said well, tell me in truth, you know it's all over now, tell me what happened. No, I can't tell you doctor. I can't tell you, he said. Well, then tell me something else. With whom else did he work, and what else was he interested in. Did he have any plans about the final solution? Didn't he promise he would try to execute final solution designs also carried him in Jerusalem or in Palestine. Nothing of the sort is known to me, no sir, nothing. Well, I couldn't pump him for more. It was all over. Eventually I had found out that this was a man who joined from

day one, which was very early at the beginning of the war the SS, and that he had become one of the favorites of Himler himself and that he ended up as a general in charge of intelligence of _____ office four in charge of security and intelligence of the _____ Security Head Office. I also found out eventually that he was the guy who was supposed to kidnap in Spain the Duke and the Duchess of Windsor. That he was I found that among the documents too, and charged with _____ about it and _____ said make no mistakes and he checked things with _____ as well as with Hitler directly. And that he had succeeded even during the so called _____ period, you know right at the beginning before the invasion of the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. He had made contacts in the Netherlands at the German Dutch border with two British intelligence officers posing himself as an anti-Nazi among the military, anxious to come to terms with people trying to make peace on the British side. He succeeded in kidnapping two of these officers while misleading them and bringing them to Germany. They were kept there until after the war. I found out about this I would have loved to interrogate him about that about his involvement with that. I never got a chance to do that at all. But among the more interesting I think for our purposes, for me and trying to help Israel and the zionist course, was my interrogation of _____. Adolph Eishman's immediate subordinate. He was one of our witnesses in Nuremberg too, in my charge. I had occasion to do that without any court reporter, without any interpreter present, at the request of my superior officer, Colonel Burkhard, or was it Colonel Ahmen, I forgot which it was, to interrogate this _____ together with Gideon Wolfer, at the time, in British uniform, British officer. Subsequently it turned out to be _____ among the first labor party representative of Israel at the United Nations. Together with him, I interrogated the _____ and alone without anybody else in German only _____ about the whereabouts of Adolph Eishman. What Eishman's role was everybody else knows. I don't have to repeat that. He played a major role for which he was eventually judged in Jerusalem. But the search for Eishman began in my office in Nuremberg, and it was highly appreciated at that time. Not that it led anywhere. We did not succeed in getting out _____ probably because he didn't know where Eishman had disappeared to. He, as I said to the just about a year ago to a German t.v. reporter who interviewed me in connection with a film about Hanna Aurandt, who was a close friend of mine, about Eishman, I said you know the search for Eishman started in my office, and I didn't know at the time where Eishman was in spite of the fact that I had his immediate subordinate in my custody and could pump him to the nth degree, but we didn't succeed in doing that. We pumped him for a lot of information involving Eishman, involving to the extent that he was accused and had to respond to all the accusations before the court in Jerusalem, but something interesting that I asked and that I interrogated about was disclosed in the course of that interrogation. I asked him can you tell me why when it did not make any military sense at all that your Fuhrer insisted on having the Jews transported when transport was very difficult from the west all the way to the east. Why didn't you kill them right on the spot. You had plenty of concentration camps in Germany itself. Oh no. We couldn't do that. The German people wouldn't take to it, wouldn't like that very much. But in the east you'd have more appreciation for that sort of thing. They would have sympathy. After all,

they didn't like the Jews there either. They have a long history of not likening them. That to me, was a profound shock that there were people among those who suffered under the Nazis who had even were grateful at the same time, if not grateful, but showed sympathy to the Nazis for one task, the kind of destructive work in which they were engaged against the whole world. That was a profound shock, and a severe lesson. There are enemies in our own ranks and we have to guard against them, and be mindful of them. There are also allies. He never said that we suppress the Poles, _____. They had an anti-Slav population policy which the Poles suffered plainly of them. They're not the main culprits but they were and there is no question about it and he was truthful about it. Plenty of people who profited from and sympathized with the destructed work against the Jews among the Poles.

Q: One of the things that I wanted to ask you about was going back to Herz's testimony about slave labor, about the use of concentration camp prisoners. Do you have a particular recollection about his responses on that?

A: Well, I tell you, there was a selection process taken place. You're aware of that? A selection process taking place and Herz testified as to that too. I don't recall any particular details about this, but he testified to the fact that there was a selection process taken place when the shipments came in. You know when the trains landed in Auschwitz. Here where the people were too old and couldn't be used for train for labor at all and they were put on one side and on the other side those who were destroyed. Women and little children were to be destroyed right away. Some women not who could do some heavy labor. So, my own little cousin, my aunt and my little cousin, two of my little cousins, survived because they could be used a slave labor. My aunt was a very strong woman, but my uncle, her husband, perished. And the older of the two little cousins died, too, on his way. The interesting thing is you know when I was in Nuremberg and after the war in the course of the Russian advance against Germany and my aunt and two of my little cousins, two little children managed to escape to the dp camp in Berlin, and they can tell you and testify as to details of how things proceeded. My uncle had in the meantime perished and the older one of my little cousins had also perished. But the three of them, my aunt and my two little cousins, the younger children managed to escape to Berlin. And my aunt said, oh I just heard there's going to be a trial in Nuremberg. Go to the American commander, go to the American officer she said to my little causing, and ask him to permit you to phone the palace of justice in Nuremberg and ask for Doctor Maier. I'm sure Joe is there among the judges, something like that, and sure enough one day I sit in my office. That was before the trial had actually begun and I got a phone call my little cousin Billy called me up and said in German we are here and my mother and my sister we are here in Berlin in the dp camp. I said stay where you are. I'm going to have my travel orders cut. I'm going to be there day after tomorrow if I get my orders cut and get you out of the camp. She knew that I would be there. She knew when I left _____ I'll be back and it was after a terrible time. This is not going to be forgotten. I'm not going to leave you in a lurch. I get a little bit upset when I think about this. You'll have to forgive me. I eventually managed to get them to the United States. My aunt worked here. She

died last year. She was an old lady. That is, she was ten years my senior, she wasn't that old, at least in years. My little cousin is a full professor now at the University of Colorado Political Science, and expert in French politics and German politics. He could testify to you what happened right there in Studthoff, where he was with my aunt, one of the other concentration camps. There happened to be also a relative of my wife's who I eventually got out of, when she landed in Frankfurt, I happened to be there and I got her to join her sister, whom we had previously given an affidavit. She managed to escape to the United States before American's entry into the world. I managed to get her here too. She died too, she lost her husband in the concentration camp.

Q: I understand you went back to the village of _____?

A: _____ is the village where my wife and my sister-in-law and my mother-in-law and my father-in-law and their families were born. They had been citizens of _____ for a couple hundred years. Yes, I managed to go there. I'll tell you when. Shortly after the Nuremberg trials had begun and it was over and it was in the French occupation zone and I had to ask for French permission, the French colleagues and said to go into the French zone. _____ is on the left side of the Ryan, on the French side of the Ryan. It's situated between _____. In the French zone, I had to ask, as I said to my French commander and French colleague in Nuremberg to give me permission to go there and of course one of the Generals gave me his car and we had an American driver. We drove there with the American flag. I'll tell you that was a sensation. I was the first American to land there and those who remembered my wife and my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law and my father-in-law because my mother-in-law was the first woman to be elected to the local community council. The first woman, she was the leading woman in the village, and there were a good many members of the _____. They were there to see me to watch me and there was an old mate of my mother-in-law's who had worked for my mother-in-law's mother, and dressed like my mother-in-law's mother who was there who my mother-in-law assured me was absolutely reliable person and a democrat and anti-Nazi who saw me. I found the house. I should authorize them to take revenge on the Nazis and throw the Colonel out of power and come in with my own troops, put the Colonel out of commission and declare a social democratic government here in _____. I mean it was all too fantastic. I said that's the way to deal with allies. I can't do this. I'm a guest of my allies right now. They are full fledged allies they are in charge. Whatever I do is with their permission even though my driver has the American flag there I said. I represent the American government and the American Army and I do this honorably. I said no fooling around. I said I'm not in charge of anything else. This is a thoroughly private visit. I come to see and put into order and remind you to see that you have to put everything that was stolen or illegally by force acquired or anybody involved in a commission of a crime or robbery has to return everything, safeguard everything until the rightful owner comes to claim it. I'll come back in a fortnight to check after that. And after that they invited me for drinks and we had plenty of drinks and we were a group of about six or seven men then and these people looked through the windows who was marching down there, and I was

marching to _____ and eventually back to the house where my bride was first born. And there was a grand hello and a welcome of course by Lena, who was a friend a little older than Alice my wife and a welcome to this day she speaks of that house as our house. As she said from the very first day and offered to return it. I said I'm not going to take any money. You honestly and rightfully bought it and my mother-in-law will not claim it, but it's nice to be here and I had to sleep in my mother-in-law and father-in-law's house and eventually when I brought my wife two years later or three years later when I came on a research grant, I was already a professor by that time, I lived in -- we were welcomed in that house -- and we slept where Oma and Opa used to sleep, that is where my mother-in-law and father-in-law slept. That was the place which was reserved for us whenever we came. It looks a little difference now, but from day one, I learned from the when I was there the first time, I said I want the cemetery to be brought in order. I'm going to come back and I want that cemetery, whoever is around here make sure the cemetery is brought in order. I want every stone to be put where it was. I don't want it to be made smaller by an inch. I want a fence built around it. I said I want to recognize it because I'm going to be there and my wife is going to be there too. We want to see that this what we call _____, that is the burial places of our fathers and mothers are kept in tact. They testified for our presence for hundreds of years. I wanted that to be brought in order. I said I'm going to hold personally responsible for anybody who disturbs or fails to do his duty in that regard. I'm going to tear out everything and I can do that when I get furious about it. So, they were sufficiently intimidated but they needed, because I was talking mainly to my friends who were at my disposal and took me there took great care to take me to the cemetery to see what needs to be done, what has to be done and who has to be in charge. For years thereafter, I followed up on that. And every time that we went as we did in the last couple of years until only recently when serious illness befell both Alice and me, my wife and me, we used to go over there pretty regularly. _____ to the cemeteries to look after things were properly done. My niece, who is your colleague at the memorial museum never fails to pay a visit when she has a chance to go to Germany to the house in which her grandparents lived and which her aunts and I had spent some time and had good times as well as sad times.

Q: Do you have any thoughts about spending time longer in Germany after the war?

A: I tell you I had an opportunity after the war crimes trials ended to become a control officer in Berlin in charge of radio and press and talk to my superiors about that possibility. I once was interested in building up Germany. It would have involved of course taking permanent residence there, and it would have involved bringing my family over, that is Alice and my little daughter over and live to be sure decently as a matter of fact in one of the villas that were not destroyed in _____ near _____ in Berlin, if you know the place, where American officer personnel were _____. It was a very tempting thing. I wrote to Alice about it. I said would you be willing to come? She said no, it's not for us to be even tempted to be profiteers of the victorious army of which you are a member. For better or for worse, I don't want to expose our child to any possible attacks to Nazis hiding somewhere around the corner or under the rubble of a

completely destroyed city. I think if you're really interested in the academy and your last chance for an academic career is immediately return home. Come home as fast as possible because lots of American boys will be going to the university now. They're on the G.I. bill of rights. There'll be jobs available at the American universities and your job will be there I think. My wife had the right instinct all along. I followed that instinct. I always trusted her instinct. It was given to patterns. Once I made up my mind I had a theory and believed firmly in the theory, but patterns and theories are worth less than the sound _____. They have a better instinctive sense of judging the character and feeling out an opportunity or sensing an opportunity and knowing people better. She was a much better judge of character among the university where she after all spent a lot of time through, than I was. I was a student mostly interested in ideas and in patterns as I said. Finding fool proof devices, something like this. She trusted sound instinct. I thought I had better follow her advice and returned home. I was a bit unhappy because I had less power than I had when I was in Germany where things were done at my beck and call where I could travel and had my travel order card as long as I was in the army and in uniform. I could go most anywhere in Europe. I traveled very often to Britain because I had become as I told you make good friends there during war time and I felt that that was in a sense coming home. Anytime I had a deferment I went to Britain or I went to Austria or I never traveled that much in Germany. I got to know more about Germany than I ever known as a youngster. I stayed put in _____. I was afraid to move to _____ where we eventually had to move. I would have stayed on the spot where I spent my childhood because I was attached to that. I hated to go places. Well anyway when I came home in '46 I was a bit unhappy but Hanna was there and she got me a job with the _____ and so Hanna _____ and I worked on the _____ edition in the original, and my job was to write the dust jackets and read all the works of _____ and write the dust jacket for every volume and proofread the major translations of Jewish _____ for which few others could do, but I could do because I knew German. I knew English. I knew French. I knew Hebrew. I knew Latin and Greek. I could check all the sources which Hanna made me do, which I did of course. Until in '47 I got my job at Rutgers where I spent the rest of my academic career, 35 years. I became emeritus in 1980. We have 12 years ago, but I tell you I have worked more in the academy and written more since I'm retired because I not only taught every summer at Columbia University I became associate of the University seminars that is the faculty seminars in the early at the end of the 50s and I've been the chairman of one of the social science seminars _____ on context and message of the social sciences for the last 20 years and I'm being reelected. I was reelected last May for the final session for the coming year. I have prepared my program for the next year, in case I survive it but I've prepared all the work to be done, all the planning to be done for next year for my successor.

Q: It sounds like a very, very rich career. If you can take one more questions.

A: Oh yes, by all means, two more if you want.

Q: Tell me what you thought leaving Nuremberg or looking back on it at whatever point, how you felt for the search for justice at that point, what kind of views did you have of the justice?

A: I'll tell you. I was involved on occasion in discussions with German attorneys, German defense attorneys, the attorneys for the about the international and the legal basis for such a tribunal, and they said my goodness you fellows -- they suggested very courteously a proceed on the basis of retroactive law which is forbidden in your constitution on which your practice all together. My argument at that time was this was such an extraordinary situation what happened when we came and what we faced at the end of the war is a _____, a legal vacuum. We had to establish and give teeth to for the first time international law. Henceforth, we have to set an example first and for all times to come to set an example that such crimes will be punished by one authority or another. I may feel, I don't know if we have done a full measure of justice especially in the subsequent trials as the industrial ones were involved. I think they got away with murder. I think some of those who employed slave labor got away with murder. I think I must say even though I liked him, our first high commissioner McCloy, pardoned a lot of them. I didn't have a good feeling about this. Maybe he was justified. Maybe that was all necessary. I was also interested and that's how I quieted, how I softened my pangs of consciousness, interested and give me a chance for the _____ to Western Germany. Give them a chance if they conduct themselves as they have conducted themselves properly not only in the restitution questions. I mean restitution claims by the German citizens and German sufferings and non-citizens, Jews who had suffered in the _____ in Germany, but I done also a good deal, more than any Jewish source, including the whole American Jewish effort, to rebuild, to help Israel onto its feet economically. I think for that I was willing to bargain to soften my own conscience, but not at the price of forgetting what happened. As a matter of fact, what I'm interested in now, as President, I don't know whether you know that. I'm the president of the _____ Association for the Preservation of Jewish Culture and Monuments in Europe, especially in Germany, Austria, Poland, including Italy and Western Germany and Poland didn't have a chance because it was under communist rule. I didn't have a chance. I hope eventually to get a chance to visit those shrines, those monuments physical monuments that are capable of preservation of rebuilding. So that generations of Germans and other Europeans will learn that we were among those who dwelled among them and what was committed was against us was _____. Forgive me. I told my German friends who helped me with this, and there are plenty of them, every time I say it you must learn that doing that kind of job, and helping me do that kind of job, by searching out the history of the smallest German Jewish communities, not only recreate, I can't do it anymore and the likes of me can't do it anymore. I want German students to learn Hebrew to learn Latin and Greek to be among those who rebuild in scholarship by rewriting and rediscovering the smallest of the German Jewish community and the whole holy Roman empire of the German nation. Not only in Germany proper but what used to be called the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The Jewish buildings are there so that one day these young Germans will tell the story was what

happened was a _____, a _____ as I call it. Only then will the Germans have come to terms with their own past. Only then will I recognize ultimately _____ has been effective. Only then will I be satisfied having done my duty and in deed I have found such friends who are working on this, have been helping, and this I am still trying to do. This effort the task on which I am almost exclusively engaged, as long as I'm engaged at all, as long as there is breath in me.

Q: Thank you.

A: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you about it, and forgive me for failing to control myself. Thank you very much.

Conclusion of Interview