

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

PER ANGER

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Martha Benoff
Date: October 21, 1986

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PA - Per Anger [interviewee]¹

MB - Martha Bennoff [interviewer]

Date: October 21, 1986

Tape one, side one:

MB: Let me just introduce you on the tape. This is October 21, 1986. I am Martha Bennoff interviewing Per Anger in Philadelphia. What you, we'd like you to talk about your experiences with Wallenberg, but as well as that, also I'd like you to talk about yourself, and not just hear about Wallenberg though certainly that's important. But we'd like to hear about you and your experiences, as comfortable as you are talking about them. In Budapest, your relationship with Wallenberg, you know, the pre-Budapest days, during '44, and whatever you are comfortable sharing would certainly be appreciated very much. If there's a place that you would like to start, by all means.

PA: Yes, well I [noise] in Budapest, you know, in, at the end of 1942 and, to work for the, there, I was assigned as Secretary to our embassy, or legation, as it was called at that time. And my main job at that time was dealing with the trade between Sweden and Hungary. It wasn't very much of a, we didn't see very much of the war in Budapest at that time, in 1942, '43. Hungary had already been out on the East Front and lost quite many soldiers there. I think they lost the whole army in some battles there against the Soviets. And so one had the impression that the Hungarians said, "Well, look here, now we have done our duty." And they tried after that to stay out of the war more or less, which, of course, annoyed the Germans and also led to what happened further, later on. And so in Budapest at that time it was, I think it was about the same situation as it had been before the war, and the same gay sort of, the music, gay life. The Hungarians are, as you know, people who enjoy music and are easy-going people and so on. So it was that atmosphere still prevailing. And you walked along the Danube, and you heard the Gypsies playing their music, and the good food and in the restaurants. And, of course, people knew that the war was going on but they sort of postponed the idea of being more involved again. So, my job was mainly to go on as, with the ordinary work in the embassy and the negotiations with the Hungarian government about the trade between our countries and support. And that went on for the whole of '43, I would say. And, of course, you noticed the discrimination against the Jewish people already then. It had never gone to that extreme, of course, as in Germany. The people were not deported, but they were, there was, you know, certain professions where they were not allowed, or at least there was a kind of limited admission for students, for Jewish students, in special professions, and so on. So there is no doubt that there were some, there was a kind of a antisemitic feeling also in Hungary, not as strong as in Germany, of course. And...

¹Per Anger is the author of *With Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest: Memories of the War Years in Hungary*, NY 1981.

MB: Could it be a feeling that people were able to ignore?

PA: Well it's, I think it, you noticed it, especially if you were a foreigner and came there. You saw it. But I don't think that the people themselves, I mean we had many Jewish friends there in the society, [unclear], of course, in Budapest. And when you were together with them, and so you would never give a thought of it, and they didn't mention anything. So, they went on with their business, and they were mostly in the business life which was where I met those people. And then they didn't complain very much about the situation. They, of course they compared the situation in Hungary with how awful it was in Germany and those countries who had been occupied by Germany, of course. So they thought that they were very well off in comparison with what happened to others. So, it wasn't till March, then, 1944, when the Germans then invaded, overnight they occupied Hungary, just to force them to fight in a more efficient way on the front against the Soviets, and also to persecute the Jewish people more and to take harder steps against the Jewish population than they had done so far.

MB: What did you see happening?

PA: Well then, what happened then was that when they marched in, the same, really the same day, the Jewish people in Budapest, of course, I was there and I wasn't at the countryside then, they understood what was going to happen, of course, from there. And they became rather desperate and they were queuing up and outside the neutral embassies, the Swiss and the Swedish, the Spanish, Portuguese, and the Vatican representation, and begging for, pleading for help. It wasn't very much, of course, we could do to start because it was a new, quite a new situation, you know. And it's in our instruction source, in the book of instructions I would say there is nothing said about giving protection to another nationality. We, of course, our job is to take care of the Swedes, and Swedish, our citizens. This was a new situation. Well, we didn't know how to handle it to start with, but finally we tried to find the ways and means to help. And we got authorization from Stockholm to give a visa to Sweden to Jewish people who asked for help. That is, we couldn't, of course, give the visa to 200,000 people who were in Budapest, but, so you had to have a kind of criteria to start for, to whom can you give it. I mean, to at least have a kind of a legal basis for this. So, we said, "O.K., we'll give it to all those who have relatives in Sweden, Jewish men married to Swedish women, and so on, and those who had cousins in Sweden and whatever, and also executives, the Swedish companies' representatives." So that was also a criteria we sort of established. And...but the number of people asking for help only increased every time, so, every day, so it was rather difficult for us to cope with the situation. We had started to issue, I found out an idea that to give those people a piece of paper, a kind of a little certificate, with a stamp on, saying that the holder of this paper has been granted a Swedish visa until he or she is able to travel to Sweden; there they will be under our protection. I mean, a rather illegal document to wish you in a foreign country, by a foreign embassy. Anyhow, we did it, and to our astonishment anyway we noticed that

many of these Nazi people, they were impressed with this document. So quite a few people managed to escape from being deported, in showing those papers.

MB: Why do you think that was? Why do you think that worked? You say to your astonishment they...

PA: Well, we didn't think that they, we didn't know they were that kind of stupid or what. But there were many illiterate people among them, see, and they were sort of impressed with this official, semi-official document they found. Not that everyone managed to get, to save their lives through this, but quite a few. And we counted around three, four hundred to start with whom we had been able to help. But then we couldn't, we were only a handful of people. There were, say, five people at the embassy. Imagine, it was the Ambassador, myself, the Chancellor officer, a girl, and a driver. That was the whole staff!

MB: And that was it.

PA: That was it. And so we had to put all ordinary work aside and just concentrate on this.

MB: Can you describe a little your, recall of your feelings as you went through that? I mean here you were, issuing those kinds of documents, and saving lives, and knowing that.

PA: Yeah?

MB: Can you describe a bit of what was going on internally for you in...

PA: The, well, yeah, internally it was, of course, a, some feelings of, "Am I doing the right thing now?" Because, "How far can I go?" Because, "If I go too far here, then we run the risk to be expelled from Hungary. They might declare us *persona non grata* and we won't be able to help anyone." So that was this balance, which was, intrigued me the whole time. How can we? And they were all scared that they will one day discover this kind of bluff. Because it was after all a bluff. We couldn't take any person under our protection really. And then the whole thing would explode and we would, it would be the failure of all our mission there in Budapest. So that was, of course, what I was afraid of. But God helped us and it didn't happen. And, but as I said, they, we couldn't cope with the situation because there were, the number increased to all kinds of people whom we wanted to help and who were entitled to be helped according to this kind of criteria we had established. So we sent for more staff from Stockholm. And that is the time which coincides then with the negotiations in Stockholm between the American Embassy and the World Jewish Congress on one side, and the Swedish Foreign Office, asking us to send someone to Budapest to organize this along more, draw the lines or draw the scales, to say. And, well, the Americans then offered the financial support for this operation. And so that is how Raoul Wallenberg comes into the picture. He volunteered for it and so on.

MB: He was a volunteer for it?

PA: He volunteered for it, yes.

MB: O.K. And when he then came, can you describe a bit of how things changed in the embassy when he arrived, what kinds of things he put into operation?

PA: Well, yeah...

MB: And how he mobilized Foreign Services?

PA: Well, you see, yeah, then he, see, he then, he was the man, I knew him, of course, before from his younger days. And then also I met him when he came in business. He was a businessman in Stockholm. And he was working with a Hungarian Jewish partner in Stockholm. So he was very well informed also about the situation through his Jewish partner. So, I think, in his mind already from the beginning he was quite prepared for this. He had, I noticed when he came on visits in 1943 that he was trying to contact his Jewish partner's family, who, not that they had been deported, but they, there was coming on something they felt. And he himself, Wallenberg, I think he sort of thought of, "What can I now do to help them?" And so on. And perhaps he had prepared already a plan for helping them out from Hungary.

MB: Can you describe him a bit, just as a man, as a person?

PA: Well, he was a...he was not a he-man or a superman type. He was a, more looking like an intellectual person, a professor, like a professor, in a way. He was an unusual person, I would say. He was, but he was a great idealist and had a very strong inner strength—it was remarkable I must say—which he was going to show during all this time, which came. And he had a great sense of humor, which made it very easy also to cooperate with him. And he had all those qualities, you know, which I think was very good to have for that task. He was a very good organizer and...a clever negotiator. And he had the imagination needed to find solutions, you know. And...

MB: Did he have fear?

PA: Pardon?

MB: Did he have fear?

PA: Yeah.

MB: As you knew him?

PA: Well, yeah, he told me that, well, that's the example of that which I described in my book is when he comes, then on this mission in July, '44 and comes into my office and dressed in a, I don't know, a wind breaker on, and a rucksack and a sleeping bag. And I thought this was a rather strange equipment for a diplomat, you know. And then he took out a revolver and put it on my desk. "Look, here, this is the revolver, you see, but I don't need it, to touch it. But I think it's awful these sort of things. But you see I had to have it to give myself courage, because I am so scared." And, I think, it's all right to say that people who say that they are very scared, they are always very often very courageous. And that he was. He was a very courageous, very courageous person. And he took great risks, of course, especially toward the end of this. But all these qualities, you know, made him just very suitable for this task. He, an immense [unclear] imagination. When he saw these papers I had then started to issue, he said, "Well, this is fine, but we can make them

still better.” And so he invented [unclear] to take the passports in Swedish, in there the Swedish colors and Swedish coat of arms on and all that, with the same text, of course, as I had suggested before. And also, he even then negotiated with the authorities and got them to approve, to start with, to approve 5,000 passports. And that meant to have those people, the whole of those people, live in the houses. We had under our protection houses, we had bought or rented with the help of the American monies, you see. And then he organized it. Then he organized this job. He had, rather soon he got many volunteers who offered their help, and Jewish people who, of course, had no jobs any longer. So there was on his staff a few hundred. I mean, I would say two, three hundred people.

MB: How did he mobilize that? How did he mobilize that...

PA: Well, they came.

MB: That number of volunteers?

PA: They came to him, more or less. They knew, they heard about him. They came to him. So, to start with those executives in the Swedish, business people in Swedish firms, the Hungarian Jewish people, for instance, they, of course, were the first to come. And they became the, I would say they became the top...his next in command were a few of those executives. And so, that was quite an elite, you know, of a new staff of doctors and scientists and executives and business people. And he organized them, his officers, and they took care of that, and those, his staff, and they issued the passports, and they administrated the houses where the people were living. You know, there was quite a...something to do with, supply with food, and medicine and see that the whole thing works. Actually, we had, say, not only 5,000 people, but in all secrecy, we were perhaps hiding three times as many there. I mean...

MB: Can you talk about that, how that happened, how you hid the people?

PA: Well, I don't know that we hid them. They were living in the houses. The houses were under our protection, and happily enough the Hungarians never, you know, the authorities at that time never went in and controlled how many there were. So, these were the houses under the Swedish flag, and so on. And it's quite something, you know, to administrate houses with 15,000 people in them, you know, you see? So you can understand that those four, three, four hundred or what he had, the staff they had, it was a full-time job for them.

MB: I can imagine.

PA: And required organization. And that, he was a master in naturally, so he organized it. And that made him also free to act himself, in person, and to, and there he becomes this legend, you know, the man who goes to the railway station and then liberates people, then to, on the death marches to the Austrian-Hungarian border and all that. And I was with him many times and so I saw how he practiced it, and...

MB: Can you describe one experience that you recall?

PA: Well, it was, perhaps I'd better describe, an event which I, where I was, did it myself, because...

MB: O.K.

PA: Maybe that's more...

MB: Yeah, I'd like to hear that.

PA: I was with him many times, and I learned from him. And one day he telephoned me and said, would I. I knew, I know now that from him, that a train is going to leave from that and that station with so and so many people, for Auschwitz. "And I have no time to go there because I [unclear] and try to save people on another station. Could you do it?" And I managed to help that moment, so I went there. And I practiced the same there, and did the same trick as he always did. I said to the German *Kommandant* that there are, "I've heard that there are people in these cars who have Swedish passports, and you couldn't deport them from here. That's, it's not done." And, "Open the doors. I'm the Swedish diplomat." And I showed him my passport and so on. And they opened the doors and then I had, had the good help, that, by a Hungarian police officer, whom Wallenberg had bribed. Not, he hadn't bribed him in the way that he gave him money, but he had promised him to see to it that after the war we should sort of help him. And then this man, I don't know if he's alive now because he was not that young at that time, but he came to Switzerland afterwards. And I wrote a letter to him and, certifying that he had been a great help, that. So he was not a Nazi. He was just an ordinary policeman. But he was a very impressive man, a strong person, with uniform and medals on. And he was standing there on the platform, together with the German officers and all that. So, in I went in the car and said, "All in here who have Swedish passports," and there were only two, but then I said, remembering the Wallenberg way of doing things, that, "But, I remember that you were there. I saw you the other day when you got the passport. Have you lost it or what has happened? Don't you have any other documents showing that you have that Swedish passport?" And so they understood, and they showed their driving licenses and then the receipts or all kinds of paper in the Hungarian language, which the Germans didn't understand, you see. So I said, "O.K., that's enough proof. Come now, follow me." And so I handed them over to this police officer, and he said, "Oh, yes, come here," he said, with great authority. And he marched them, took them in front of the Germans and marched away, and we lodged them all in our Swedish houses. There were about 100 people at that time. So that is the way how Raoul Wallenberg did it, and I happened to do it at that occasion, just once. Perhaps I might tell you this, in connection with this, if you have, you have seen the film, the Richard Chamberlain film and all that.

MB: Yes.

PA: And I told the producer that it's a good film [*Wallenberg: A Hero's Story*, 1985]. He has perhaps, he has accentuated my role, I said to him. Because I wasn't sitting every day together with Raoul around this table and helping him and being his kind of next in command. Because we had them, of course, I went, I often helped him as often as I could. But we had there also many other things to do. We, this little staff I described to you became a kind of, the headquarters for quite a huge organization. Namely, you had the

Raoul Wallenberg sort of operation, all this, his, with this humanitarian relief work. You had the Swedish Red Cross, who also were working for the same purpose, but not to that great extent, because they were, had no, they didn't have the possibilities that Raoul had. But anyhow, they all also were working out. We had the Save the Children. And that Swedish lady was also trying to save Jewish children. That was three. And number four, which is also very important, namely that he had seven other countries' interests, you know. There was Switzerland and Sweden beginning in the World Wars, so I mean the First World War and Second World War. We more or less took over the two parties' sort of fighting [unclear] interests. I mean, you can't have your embassy in an enemy's capital. But that was. So, that buildings, for instance we had in Budapest the Soviets' interest. We had taken over that building, the Soviet Embassy here, the Finish with the, and the Dutch, the Norwegian, and all that. So we had, I had quite a whole department for that job. We had two Swedes on the top of that, Lars Berg and Carlsson was the name. Those were the whole time dealing with those very important questions of helping or protecting those nationalities, you see, or which we legally could do. So, all this, and here we were sitting then in the middle and trying to, my boss was quite old at that time, and so he gave me free hand to act. So my role was more or less to sit and try to coordinate this whole operation, all this which didn't prevent me or Berg or Carlsson or any one of those two, as soon as he asked for help, Raoul, if he asked for help, well, so we ran out as soon as we could to stand by and help with him. So that's how it worked. And the producer, when he heard this said, "Well, I know about all this. But we knew that you started this before Raoul came. And we couldn't portray all these Swedes here. We had to select one, so you may symbolize all the other Swedes." I tried to explain that to Lars Berg because I think he did a very good job also, you see. Anyhow, so that's perhaps a comment on my part to explain my role here, that I wasn't that sort of every day, sitting with Raoul and running out with him the whole time to help, because I couldn't do it. But I was with him on many occasions at the railway station and on the death marches and all that, and saw many examples of how he saved people. And...

MB: Where did you get the strength? When so many people couldn't do that, so many people didn't do that, where do you think you got your strength from?

PA: Well I think when you...first of all, you are young. We were thirty years old. Raoul was thirty-one; I was thirty. And so physically you could do it, because there was rarely a hardship in that way also. But when you get involved in this, you see, you, there is no way back. And I think that is very typical for what happened to Raoul, that he became involved in something which perhaps he, neither he nor I, had ever thought of being there, or taking that dimension. I mean, being, I mean, expanding to that magnitude, I mean, he...

MB: At the time that it was happening, did you realize the magnitude of it then?

PA: We didn't, no, no, we didn't, you see, really. We, but you were driven into it, in a way, and, of course, if you see people who are deported and suffering, of course, you helped. I mean, how could you help not, how could you hesitate? I mean, there was

just to do whatever you could, to help as much as possible. You know, sometimes you think that you could, you should have done much more. And it's a, I remember how paralyzed we were the first days. And I was living, we were, I was living in, well my wife and I, we rented a house where another, where a Jewish family also lived. And we had breakfast with them every morning and so on. And just a couple days after this the Germans arrived, they had disappeared towards the end of March, '44, then. And we wondered, "Now, what has happened to them?" And then we heard the rumors, "Well, the Germans have taken a few, not many, but they have taken a few prominent Jewish people in Budapest, a couple of hundred or something." And these were many of our friends, who were the industrialists and so on, well-known Jewish people. So I said, "Well, look," I went out and to see where they were. And I went, and I came to a place which was fenced in and with soldiers with machine guns. And within that territory, there I saw them. And I waved at them and they came closer to this fence. And they were [unclear]. "There is nothing we can do." And what could I do? I...and we were very, we had a, a wonderful girl who was quite, had, whom we knew, we Swedes, very well. And there was a young bachelor, a Swede bachelor, who was very much together with her. Not that they were going to marry and so on, but they were good friends. And she disappeared. And her father was the, he owned a big factory. He, and he was then taken to a labor camp. But she and her mother just disappeared. And we didn't know what to do. We asked the, we, I think we engaged a lawyer to stop and see who, "What can you do? Can you help?" And we, and the Swedish friend gave him money. And I went officially to the Foreign Ministry with a note saying that, "Here is a girl so-and-so, and she is a, we," he said, "I'm prepared to marry her." And, "Here we have a Swede who is engaged to be married with this girl," and so on. And the Foreign Office, they just shrugged their shoulders and they just, you know, they couldn't do anything. There, in there was the Germans. The Germans were working. And this lawyer managed to follow where they were. And we could follow how they were deported and just in the last minute, I managed, it was too late, he said, "Well, now I learned today that they were just handed over, they were just transported over to Auschwitz." If we had been able to, well we always came one day too late to find, to see where they were. I think that there could have been a possibility to bribe them, some guard, you know, some, to get the amount or what. Now see, all this, we had no routine for this. We didn't know how to do it, and our...

MB: You were just inventing it as you went.

PA: So afterwards you always think, "What could I have done? Couldn't we have it, tried to employ them, you know, at a house or something?" But then again, then we would have risked our own-

Tape one, side two:

PA: because I was hiding a Jewish person, which it was not allowed. And then I couldn't have done anything more to help. So it was all this sort of, so you had to be...

MB: That sounds like the true dilemma.

PA: Yeah, it's really, oh...

MB: To have to balance the...

PA: It's, it was a very, very, so, therefore, the Raoul Wallenberg action was the right one, that you tried and you man-, and he managed through his ability to get the kind of authorization or acknowledgment from the authorities, from the Hungarian authorities that we could have, we could issue those passports. A limited number and so on, that we then issued more than that. That's another story. But anyhow, we, he found the way of doing it in a kind of semi-legal way, see. And then, so that's how it went. And all these episodes, and when I was with him, and so on, I've been, of course, rather reluctant sometimes to tell about it and, or to write about it, because people will say, "That's, this is, this can't have happened. Miracles don't happen that way." But wherever I've come, you know, in the world, I've heard stories from those who were saved by him, and they are the same stories, along the same line how he, how Raoul Wallenberg blushed all the time, and how he came with his registry he had, with the fake names, and then he picked them off and had these people sort of admitting that, "Oh, yes, we have a passport," and so on. And there are two examples of how he, which I think are typical for how he saved people. One time, quite a few, and there was a Jewish doctor in Toronto who told me a story how he was a student at that time. And he was standing at the border line. He was being then deported by foot, now, to have marched this two hundred kilometers in the snow, and he managed to survive that. And so he was standing together with seven hundred other Jewish people, on the border between Austria and...Hungary—just to be handed over to the Eichmann *Kommandos* too, on the other side, to just to try to take over—when Raoul arrived. And he then said the same thing. "Are there anyone here, is there anyone here who has a Swedish passport?" And there were only then two who came, so, who had that, and they came forward. But then he immediately invented a way of saving the others, so he said, or the majority of them, so he said, "Well, but you will remember that the Hungarian government confiscated your passport the other day. You must have had this passport." And so five hundred people came forward. And he lodged them in a barn during the night, and had them then transported back to our houses the following day. This is one example how he always found ways.

MB: It seems like he would always have to find a slightly different way.

PA: Yeah.

MB: Otherwise...

PA: Yeah, certainly.

MB: Over time it would become...

PA: Yeah, certainly. Oh yes, yeah. And the other example is also a doctor. He was, I met him in Montreal a couple of years ago. And he told me his story. And that was, he was a student also. And he was already to, in a railroad car that must have been nailed like. And the train was just going to leave and Raoul arrived and he forced this *Kommandant* there to open the doors. And how this officer then takes his pistol and tells the students that if anyone here tried to come out who doesn't have a passport, who has a false passport, "Then I will shoot him." And then this doctor-then-student says, "This was a very good time for me, because I had a false passport." But I said to myself, "It can't be worse," so I lined up in front of Raoul. And then, when I came closer to him he was sitting there at the table with his big register, ticking off those people who had passports or he sort of, perhaps not all of them had it, but anyhow, they were among this group which he saved at that time. And I whispered to him, 'Sir, I have a false passport.' And when he looked up and said, 'Look here, oh, I recognize you. You were here. I gave you the passport yesterday. Pass on.'" And so he saved, with his right hand he [unclear], just saved one person's life like that. So, it's, anyway, we both agreed, that was a very difficult decision to take, many times. And I think you see one of these episodes in the film that, he says to an old lady, "I'm sorry, we have to take the children first," or something. But other words, you, he, the time was so precious, you know, and if you are involved in a rescue work, then it's the question of saving as many people as possible at the time. And if you get involved in every single person, you know, that they were queuing up, continued to queue up us, all the offices, but if Raoul Wallenberg would sit there every day and talk to each one like that, say, and try to save people like that, he wouldn't have been able to save those hundred thousands which he had saved.

MB: So he really could not be appealed to on an individual kind of basis.

PA: He couldn't. He did it. He, there were exceptions the whole time, exceptions there. And many, there are many Jewish people who tell stories about that, that he managed to run to a kind of Nazi headquarter and liberate the person like that. That he did, but that was rare moments, because he was the whole time involved in these, first of all these passports—but that had been routine, this, issuing those passports, and so on—and, but then, after all, during the death marches he saved say a couple of hundred every time. So, that's something which was more important than to sit in his office and scrutinize these applications and see if that was O.K. or not.

MB: When you talked with him about his missions, about going out, what kinds of, what did he say to you? What were his personal kinds of thoughts?

PA: Well, I don't know what you really...

MB: You're talking about the drive, that at a point you get so caught up in it.

PA: Yeah?

MB: That you're so much a part of the experience you can't back away from it.

PA: Yeah.

MB: I was just wondering, when he had his few private moments, his few personal moments, how he felt.

PA: Well, of course you got so upset about this Nazi sort of, that, he was, he got so, was so upset that something of that kind could happen in modern time, that it was so unreal in a way to see all this. So your reaction became very, very strong. You were always in your heart so, so angry. So you hated this. You hated. You couldn't understand that people could act that way, and that they just exterminated, tried to exterminate a whole race. But they did. Of course, we didn't know very much about it till, I would say till, I didn't know much about Auschwitz till, let's say, April 1944 when there came two witnesses back, two boys who managed to escape, who came up to the embassy and gave us the whole situation. And they had sketches also. And we looked and then we reported it back to the Foreign Office. I knew, of course, about deportations and bestialities and all that. But I wasn't very much aware myself about this way of exterminating people. And the first time I heard about it was in '42 or '43 when I had a very good friend, a Hungarian journalist, who had been out in the war, on the East Front. And he told me the story then how he in a village in, somewhere in the Soviet Union, where the Germans then, which the Germans had occupied, that he saw how two German soldiers executed 5,000 Jewish people who were forced to dig their graves first and so on. That was the first real witness report I heard. And I, as he was my good friend, a journalist, I had no reason to doubt, to believe that this wasn't the right version of it. So then I understood that they were, but I took it more as a, I thought, "You can't go on, execute, say millions of people like that, because you don't have the guns enough, and so on." But they, it was, this was bad enough, of course. So, then we realized, of course, what, that they are, that this was going on on a much larger scale in Auschwitz, when these people, these reports. We thought then that this is, would be a very interesting report for the West, to hear about that, for America, for the United States, and Britain, and so on. And of course then I realized later on that they had known it for quite a few years already. I think that they were, they became aware of this already in '43, I think. So was it. But, they did nothing, as you know.

MB: Yeah.

PA: The whole world, the whole world was passive. I think that's also, to think of how they failed, how it was more important to win the war—that's kind of the explanation—than to save Jewish people's lives. And they didn't bomb Auschwitz.

MB: Yes.

PA: They didn't bomb the communication lines. They didn't, the Soviets vetoed any negotiations with the Germans when Eichmann offered one million Jewish lives for ten thousand trucks and all that. I mean, you know all the stories. There are many examples of this. And the big Jewish organizations, and all those in Palestine, then Israel, and the big Jewish organizations, they didn't do much either. That is the tragedy of it.

MB: Yes. And you must have felt alone.

PA: Yeah.

MB: During all of that.

PA: We felt very, very alone, and we also felt that the Swedish government worried, was scared about the way we did it and so on. Of course, we had all the, we had, we were in a delicate situation, of course, with Germany the whole time. Not that the risk was very big towards the end of the war, that they would occupy us, but from the beginning we were in great danger the whole time, and so on. So it's interesting to see how the Swedish government, on one hand, they were very grateful that we did the job, because that gave them an alibi or sort of a, they could show off towards the Allies that, "O.K., we are not neutral; we are helping you; we're helping Jewish people." At the same time, they didn't give us the real tools for it. That is a typical [unclear] that, for this is, I shouldn't criticize my own government, but that, it shows you how cynical the world is and how there are the political interests are prevailing the whole time. And human lives don't count, so to say. And then they, of course, discovered, finally, that we were out in, we took great risks. So they got cold feet at home and towards the beginning of December, '44, when the Nazis had discovered more or less what started the, the Hungarian offices discovered our bluff, they invaded the Swedish Red Cross. That was the first start, and then they of course liquidated the embassy. But we managed to escape. That's another story. But anyhow, at that time...

MB: It's hard. There's so many other stories.

PA: There are many other stories. But at that time, the Swedish government came to think that we have to give them a chance to come back to Sweden. So they sent a cable to us saying that we leave it now to you to decide if you think it's best thing to leave now, or perhaps it's too dangerous for you, or part of you leave and you leave in part, or all the embassy back, and the others leave, or it's up to you to decide. I mean, that they know the responsibility for, and, of course, we had a meeting at the embassy and we discussed this. And everyone said, "Of course, we are going to stay on." Because when we had started this, the relief work now, if we would leave tomorrow, the Nazis would immediately discover, this was before they had liquidated us, before they had occupied our embassy and all, if we leave tomorrow, they would immediately discover this great bluff. Of course, we were all saying to them that that was the only card you could play with. We were all saying to them that you'll, we will recognize your government, you know, because you're very fine people. And then these Foreign Minister, Kemeny, you know, who, his wife played that role as you know in helping Raoul Wallenberg, he was kind of a fanatic person. But I could negotiate with him because he was the Foreign Office man. And so I told, the only card I could play with was that I told him, "Look here, we are soon getting the authorization from Stockholm to recognize your government and you, Mr. Minister, you will be the first Ambassador to Stockholm. I'm sure. You are so able," and all that. He was very proud, you know, to hear this, and all that.

MB: You really bolstered him.

PA: Oh, and you see. So that was how we played this game with them. That was the only play we, at the same time Stockholm had forbidden us, they had said, "By all means, we are, the Swedish government is never going to recognize that Nazi regime." So...

MB: Did you have any mixed feelings when they said, "It's your decision. Come home, or stay." And you said, "Obviously, we had to stay."

PA: We had to stay be-...

MB: You choosing a humanitarian effort and obviously...

PA: No, no, we...

MB: At tremendous personal risk.

PA: We had to stay because we couldn't, I mean it was quite logical to stay. If we would have left, the whole work would have been in vain, so to say. So we stayed on, and God helped us. We and nobody except Wallenberg, of course, but he wasn't killed by the Germans, so I mean, by the Germans or the Nazis. They didn't manage to get hold of us. We went underground when they attacked us, and we managed to escape and all that.

MB: How did you manage to escape?

PA: Well, we, that's a long story of course, and that's towards Christmas, then, 1944, when Raoul and I was called to the Foreign Ministry and they told us that we are going to evacuate now. The Foreign Minister is going to the western part of Hungary and you have to follow. You have to come with us. And no foreign embassies can stay on here now. And then we, and that was just what they wanted. They wanted us to get out from there, so they could have a free, more a free hand with the Jewish people, you see, in the last minute. And then the, our answer was of course that we have the instructions to stay on and we aren't going to leave. And so the answer from that part was, "Well, then you have to, then you will see what happens to you." I mean, it was a threat. So I went back to the embassy and told my staff this. And the Ambassador, he wasn't there. He was somewhere else at just that day or, I think he was invited somewhere, so he was not at home. And in the embassy was, there was then Lars Berg and Carlsson and the girls. There was those four, and the Chancellery officer, and so on. So I told them, "Well, look here. I'm not quite sure what's going to happen. It has never happened that an embassy is violated and occupied by those, even by soldiers or from the country where you are accredited. So, but I am not quite sure about this. And they, it could well happen that they will do something against us here."

MB: Did you feel responsible for them?

PA: Yes, very much. So...

MB: You were the senior with them.

PA: I said then, "Look here, I don't think we should stay on. We shouldn't sleep, you shouldn't sleep here." They were, the girls lived in a house just next to the embassy. So I said, "I'm certainly not going to stay at home in my flat tonight. I'm going to hide together with a Hungarian friend somewhere." And they all, they said, "Oh, no, nothing's

going to happen,” and, “tomorrow is Christmas and we are going to bake cakes now and have a party tomorrow for you here,” and so on. You know how it goes on.

MB: Taking care of you.

PA: So I, of course, that was very flattering, of course, that they were, also from that aspect, spending Christmas together. But I said, “No, well, do as you like it, but we have, I have a feeling that it could happen something.” And so I went with this friend and slept the night with, so I spent the night there. And in the middle of the night there was a big, I would say towards early morning at 5:00 or something, one of the girls telephoned me. Of course, I had given her my telephone number. She said, “Now they are coming here, and trying to, with a big bus, and they say they want to evacuate us to the western Hungary.” And I said, “Well, try to delay it.” I said to her, “Try to, say you would like to pack, and then take it very slow. And I’ll see what I can do.” So I rushed to the German general, who was, lived nearby there where I was hiding. And it’s an S.S. general. And he was asleep but his aide opened, and I said, “Here’s my passport. Now something terrible has happened. The Hungarian troops have invaded our embassy. That’s...I never heard of a thing like that. But you have the power in this city, and now you have to stop it.” And the aide went in and the general, he just sent the message back that, “It’s not our business. You’ll have to talk it over with the Hungarian *Kommandant* about that, because I can’t do anything about that. These are Hungarian soldiers,” he said. So I went to the Hungarian headquarters and met the general. It was very early in the morning, this, of course, but he...just happened to arrive. He was a very fine man. He was the Hungarian *Kommandant* of Budapest. He was an old type of general. And I said to him, “Look here, this has happened. And this is very serious. It could mean that it will be,” and I sort of excited him, “mean war now between Sweden and Hungary here!” [chuckling]

MB: You laugh now. I bet not then!

PA: No, not then! I love that. And him, he was very upset about it to hear this, a new enemy then! [chuckles] So he said, “Oh I’ll see what I can do.” So he telephoned to the government, and there was one minister left. And then, I understood from their conversation there was nothing to do because this means that, “Oh, the general will, you shouldn’t bother about that at all, because these are our Nazi police who have done that, and that’s nothing of your business.” So he came back and said, “I’m sorry. I can’t do anything.” So what did I do? Well, I went to my Swiss colleague. And he was a young man like me. He was in charge of the embassy, and he was just there—I still remember—he was there in his apartment, and just packing his Christmas gifts, and had his Christmas tree [unclear] and all that. And I told him my story, and, of course, he said, “My God, we have to do something. And how shall we arrange this?” And so on. And I was very upset. I was very, very upset. And of course I was, of course, now I felt the great responsibility for this, that. So, and then the time passed and oh, Christmas Eve, I think, the whole day, till the evening. And then everybody knew that we should meet at my secret place I have, I had. So, I was sitting there, and I had my revolver and then, waiting. And it was, I heard some

noises, I mean knocking on the door. I had to go, to go [unclear]. And I was certainly not going to give in like that. And that was Lars Berg coming, and Carlsson coming, and with the others. But the girls were missing. They were still missing. And then someone said, "Well, we have heard that they have been deported to the ghetto." Ah ha! And I told this, I told my Swiss colleague that, and he said, "Well, let's see what we can do." So he sent the International Red Cross, the Swiss gentleman, so he sent the Swedish, the International Red Cross man with his big car to the ghetto, who said to the people, "Look here, there is a mistake here. There are some Swedish ladies here who by mistake have been deported here." And he just picked them out right like that, in the very last minute, I must say. These girls, you know, they told me the story afterwards. They had been marched all the way to the ghetto. And first they were lined up together with the whole group of Jewish people, against the wall, a military barrack. And on that wall was I don't know how many holes from bullets. And then they were standing there and they discussed, "Now, should we shoot them now or should we wait, or," and so on. And I don't know how it happened, but somebody said, "Well, look, perhaps we'll take them to the ghetto to start with." Like that.

MB: Plucked from the hands of death literally.

PA: It's so that's how it happened, you know, and then how we then lived underground the whole time and how we...

MB: Where was Wallenberg during all of this?

PA: Well, Wallenberg, he had then at this time, he was hiding on the Pest side. See he was also alerted about this; so of course, well he was together with me when, so see he also felt that something is happening. So he was hiding there and was not captured at that time. Lars Berg's story is fantastic if you heard about that.

MB: No, I haven't.

PA: Well he and his friend, Carlsson, those two were in charge of the foreign interests, the other countries' interests. They were at home in the house where they lived, and they had their office in the Finnish Embassy's building, where we had the Finnish interests. And they were telephoned by some caretaker in the morning saying, "Look here, you have to come because the Nazis are here." So, there they went and Lars Berg was immediately arrested by the Nazis, by these [unclear] people, who said, "Now you have to come with me to, with us to western Hungary and you aren't allowed to stay on here," and so on. And Lars Berg then told them, "Look here, but I can't go like this. I have to go home and pack." So they allowed him to go home with a guard, and with the machine gun, sitting next to him and, just to drive home and to pack his things. But instead of driving home, he drove directly up to the German headquarter where there was a German general whom he knew, because we had also some contacts with those people. Because they wanted us also to take, we hadn't got the permission from Stockholm yet, but they wanted us to take over their interests when they were going to leave, you see. So he went up to the general and just jumped out of the car and told the general, "Look here, I'm a Swedish diplomat. You know that we are going to take over your interests, and look here, this man, this Nazi, a

Hungarian Nazi, he is threatening me.” And the general just gave him a kick out like that. And then he gave, and this was the funny part of the story, then he gave Lars Berg a big certificate saying that, “I hereby certify that Mr. Lars Berg is under the protection of the...” the big German sort of empire or whatever you call it, [chuckles] with a stamp on it. And we duplicated that in many copies so everyone got it.

MB: So everybody was official! [chuckling]

PA: Was official. That’s how he saved his life, and also lots of...

MB: A lot of ingenuity.

PA: And there are lots of... A fantastic story, I must say. So that’s how it all happened. And then, and Raoul then, to continue, then we were in hiding. We didn’t, we were not able to do very much, but we had contact all the time with Raoul, who came over to our side. We were on the Buda side, and Raoul on the Pest side. And the last time when I saw him, then when he came, it was bombed. And the city, it was bombed, and being bombed then the whole time. And there was rather a, not very pleasant to be out-of-doors and [unclear] because you never knew when you were going to be hit by a bomb. But he came and we had discussion there. And I told, I asked him to be careful and to hide, “Because I think you have done enough, now,” I said to him. I mean, “Now you have to think of yourself.” And then his, this answer he gives me then, which I was quoting in my book, that, “You see, I can’t go back to Stockholm if I don’t know where, if I am not quite sure that I have done everything possible to save as many people as possible.” And so, and then he goes back to the Pest side, and the day after they blow up bridges. Of course, the Germans are withdrawing then because they feel that the Soviets are advancing. And then these, I would say two, one or two days before they entered, well attacked the Pest side of the city, then...

MB: I want to make sure we’ve got tape here, yeah.

PA: Then he accomplishes this enormous task when he saves the whole ghetto. That is the end of his mission work, which is fantastic, how he then sends the message to the German general that, “I’ve heard that the Hungarian Nazi now planned to mass murder the ghetto, seventy thousand Jews. So if you don’t stop that, I will see to it that you will be hanged after the war as a war criminal.” And then he stops it. So there he saves these seventy thousand people’s lives.

Tape two, side one:

PA: Now, where were we?

MB: I want to hear a little bit about Wallenberg after he was taken by the Russian, what your understanding was when you got that, when you found out, when you got back to Sweden. And a little bit of those after war years, as far as, I know, your efforts, a lot of people's efforts, to find out as much as they could about him and his whereabouts.

PA: Well, first of all, we lost very much time to start with, because the Swedish government didn't understand, or didn't think that anything serious had happened to him, because the first report we received from the Soviets was that they had found Raoul Wallenberg, and that he was under their protection. That was during the fighting then, I guess, when they entered the city. And this was on the 17th of January, '45. They hadn't heard anything from us, from the other part, because we were in, the embassy people, so to say, on the, from the Buda side. And then we were completely cut off from the surrounding world by Christmas, because the Soviets were surrounding the city, and then they were fighting in the streets. Then they finally occupied first Pest, and then a month later, Buda. So in Sweden they didn't hear anything about us, and they thought that, I mean, my wife, whom I had brought home with our baby, she could read in the papers that, you know, Budapest is burning, and nobody is going to escape alive from that city. And it's like Stalingrad, you know, and so on. So that was, and the Foreign Office, they had written us off more or less. I understood that they were very surprised...

MB: I'm sure!

PA: When we came back. And so on. And then, but that hadn't, you see, then again, they would have said, "Well, look here, we gave them the chance to return, but they didn't."

MB: Did you feel supported by your government? I mean it sure doesn't...

PA: No, no, no, no.

MB: It sure doesn't sound it.

PA: No, no, no, no, no. Anyhow, I don't think that anybody felt supported. The Jewish people certainly didn't feel supported by their organizations abroad.

MB: For sure.

PA: And then, so they didn't, so when we finally arrived in Sweden, we were all, during that time, we were then a month later, then in February when the Russians came to Budapest, we were imprisoned then, and sitting interned, shall we say, you know, in different farmer's houses and so on, behind the front. This, the fighting was still going on, but they held us behind the front like that, isolated then, and it was not possible to communicate with anyone. And they didn't tell Stockholm that they had found us, either. But very late, then, they apparently took the decision to send us home to Sweden. So, we left then in the beginning of, the end of March, I would think. And we passed through Bucharest, where we had an embassy, and through them we were able to communicate

home that we were alive. So, the whole time—January, February, and March—nobody knew about us. And Stockholm said, “Look here, the concern is now about those, and Raoul Wallenberg, he...we know that he is safe.” So when we then arrived in Sweden in April, towards the end of April, ‘45, and Raoul is not with us, then people started to wonder now what had happened to him. And then we thought the whole time that he had long ago been back after he was sort of...

MB: You just assumed it, yes.

PA: You know, we assumed that he was in Sweden long before us.

MB: Right.

PA: So then we started to ask the Soviets, and the Soviets didn’t reply. “They, they were looking into this. We don’t know where he is, because those soldiers who found him, they have, they were killed in the action, and they don’t know in this confusion, you know, we don’t know anything.” And not till 1947, two years later, did we get an answer, official answer, from the Soviets, from the then Assistant, the Foreign Minister Vishinsky, saying that, “We have looked all over but we can guarantee that Raoul Wallenberg isn’t, he is not on our territory.” And when I came home, then, in, with this group in ‘45, of course, they asked me, “What do you think about Raoul? What has happened?” And I said, “Well, I am, I have a feeling that he has been imprisoned by the Soviets.” “Oh, no. The Soviets couldn’t do a thing like that to Swedish people. That’s impossible.” Well...

MB: Why did you think that?

PA: Well, I thought always, of course, I knew, I heard already then, I had heard already on my way, I think there are people in Bucharest who heard it, that the Swiss, the whole Swiss Embassy had been arrested. They took five Swiss diplomats and deported them to Lubyanka Prison in Moscow. And they, when I spoke to them after the war, they told me that they were quite convinced from the beginning that we were taken, because they wanted us as objects for an exchange if they, they had a feeling that they would need some persons of our caliber. They sort of collected VIP persons, you know, of course, diplomats are good to have because you can exchange them for...

MB: As pawns.

PA: For, yeah, exactly. So that was one reason why I thought. And I heard that there was one special department in that prison just where they’re holding the diplomats. There were Italian diplomats and, of course, Germans. Oh, the enemy diplomats of course, were of course there, but the, it’s never heard of that they used, grabbed neutrals also. And then also I heard that a Swedish journalist had been imprisoned in Moscow. He was in Berlin, had been taken into Moscow—I heard that the first days when I came to Stockholm—and that he had met someone who said that he had been in the same prison as Raoul Wallenberg. But the Swedish government didn’t pay any notice to the journalist because they thought he’s, you know, he had been in Germany so long so they considered him to be a Nazi person, and you can’t believe a man like that, you see, was their attitude.

MB: Sounds like there was just so much disbelief around.

PA: Yeah, there was, exactly. And the whole thing was these thoughts about the Russians, about the Soviets, not only in my country but in the whole western world, that the Soviets are those wonderful people because, of course, they had helped us now to win the war, and to defeat the Nazis, and *they* don't, can't do a thing like that! You know, there was kind of an illusion, a dream world people live in. And not till 1948 during the Prague coup, when they took over, the Communists took over in Czechoslo-, then one started to understand what they were aiming at, namely to take over the whole of that part of Europe and so on, even if it had been sort of decided upon in Yalta and so on, that there would be a kind of a border line. But apparently Roosevelt had believed in what was said to him, that these countries are certainly going to have their full independence and their own governments and all that. It was, of course, not going to be the case at all. So there was, eyes were opened then rather late. So the first years you couldn't say a bad word about the Soviets. Then you were looked upon as, you know, as a Nazi person.

MB: What were you doing in those three years then? You had this sense in '45, a strong sense, that he had been...

PA: Well, in '4-...

MB: Taken and...

PA: So, '45 when I said that, they said to me, "Well, look, we understand that you have gone through; you have had some hardships and for your nerves and all that, would you like to be transferred?" "Yes, I would be very happy about that." So we were sent to Cairo, my wife and myself. We had a wonderful, two wonderful years in Cairo, between 1946 and '48. In '48 I got a cable from the Foreign Office saying, "Now you are called home to the political department." When I came home, they said, "Look here, now, there are signs, some signs about Raoul Wallenberg, and now you'll take over that file." Well, I said, "What did I tell you?" No, I didn't say that, but I thought it.

MB: That's what you were thinking.

PA: So, that is the time when I started myself with the Raoul Wallenberg question, and going through the files, and trying to do my best. And what I found that the only way is is to speak the same language as the Soviets and to have an exchange for someone or to give them something or to... But the Swedish government informed me [unclear] that he has refused. They said, "We don't deal, we don't deal with matters in that way. That's not in our philosophy." And so it was impossible. It was quite impossible. So I resigned from that post and got another job in the Foreign Office. And since then I have not been dealing directly with, but I've followed it from a distance also. And, of course it, this all has been in my mind, the Raoul Wallenberg cause, of course. But anyhow, then after this first answer, then in 1947 nothing happened then. And when I took over, nothing happened because they didn't follow my advice. But 1951 then the first witnesses came back. That was, the Italian diplomats came back from Lubyanka prison, reporting that they had been with Raoul Wallenberg in 1945 and '46, I think it was. And so, there we started to get witnesses and evidence. And after that prisoners of war came, and there were

soldiers, one Austrian who had been in the same cell as Raoul Wallenberg. So, all this was collected and scrutinized. And then the Swedish, two Swedish judges went through the whole thing and declared that this is absolutely 100% evidence. And with that material the Prime Minister went to Moscow in 1956. And the Soviets then were very embarrassed. They said, "Well, we'll have to look into this," and so on. And again it took a long time. It took nearly a whole year till they came to their answer, when they couldn't deny then this. But they found out that we couldn't prove further than 1947 at that time. So they said, "Well, sorry, but there was a mistake, and he died in prison in '47." But it didn't last long till we had new witnesses coming forward saying, telling us that he was helping, he had been transferred from that prison to another. And so it was going on through all the years because we could follow how he was transported from Lubyanka to another, and he was in the Vladimir Prison in the '50s, and so on and so on. And there were also, reliable witnesses have sort of appeared during the years.

MB: Over all that time, why do you think they wanted him? Why? Why did they want him? Do you know?

PA: Well, and then—this is the question—why did they arrest him? And I think it's quite clear now that they, I always said that, my theory is that they could never understand that a Swede, that the Swedish-given diplomat, stayed on the battlefield to risk his life just to save Jewish people. There must be a pretext for it, or something. There are others. And then when they discovered that he was financed and got money directly from America the whole time, and corresponded with the United States, the Embassy in Stockholm and so on, then they were confirmed in their conviction that he was an American agent. And then he also declared to them when he was arrested, just before he was arrested, he told the Soviets that, "I'm going to stay on here now and I'm going to...build a new organization. And I'm going to have a new humanitarian relief work start, reuniting the families and all that," and so on. Then, of course, they said to themselves, "He's going to stay on here and spy on us." See? Now all this has been confirmed in a way that my theory is the right one when you have read the book, *The Abandonment of the Jews*,² which appeared here last year, where on one page they quote the State Department's quote about Raoul Wallenberg's mission, saying that the man in Stockholm, at the Stockholm Embassy, Iver Olsen who was the War Refugee Board's representative, and with whom we dealt all the time—I knew him well, and Raoul knew him, and Raoul corresponded with him, and he got the money through him directly and so on, quite officially and so on—so that the Soviets could follow that. And there [unclear]. But, in the same paper he said that this Iver Olsen was in the same time the OSS man, that is the implied CIA, the Secret Service man at the embassy. We didn't know that. And, of course, Iver Olsen didn't send Raoul as a spy. He had two tasks, Mr. Olsen, so this was his function as the War Refugee Board man that he sent Raoul, of course. But the Soviets of course don't make any distinction there,

²David S. Wyman, Pantheon Books, 1984, p. 241-243

and they knew, of course they knew that Iver Olsen was an American agent. So, consequently, apparently they said to themselves [unclear]. "Here is an American agent has sent another agent to Budapest to spy on us when we come into Budapest. And if we grab him, and he's apparently a key person in this, that we might be able to get valuable news about the American Secret Service system, you know, and all that." Now you'll say, "Well, we were allies, the Americans and the Soviets." But the Cold War had already started then, and the Soviets just, that's how it was. So there is no doubt that this is the reason for capturing Raoul Wallenberg. And so then he has been there for all the years, and the Soviets never give anything away if they don't get anything for it. And I don't think that the question has really been put forward straight to them, "Look here, what do you want now?" I think that is the question one should have asked them long ago. And that's what...

MB: By the Swedish government?

PA: Yeah, the Swedish government or any government. I would say that today we don't consider Raoul Wallenberg's case or Raoul as only as a kind of a Swedish concern. He is Swedish, of course, but he is now an honorary citizen in Israel, Canada, and America. And I think, and also these countries have the responsibility, and I think the whole world has its respons-, the whole western world has its responsibility because he has become a symbol for the fight for human rights. I mean, protocol was signed by the Soviets in Helsinki and all that. But I mean, if we want to stand up for human rights, I mean, then we actually we have to fight for Raoul, all of us. So that's how I feel about it. And the Swedish government is, of course, in a delicate situation now of being a neighbor to a super power of the type of the Soviet Union. So, I am not able to judge if they have pushed with the right policy because I am out of this. But, they apparently have their reasons to act as they do, and I, sometimes I have a difficulty to understand it. I have no inside information about how serious the situation is. We have, of course, the Soviet submarines in our waters and all that, which we have heard about and so on. So this is a very tense situation when you are just on the border to the Soviet Union, which perhaps they take into consideration when they discuss all kinds of matters with them, including the case of Raoul Wallenberg. So we have in our committee, of course, concentrated very much on first of all spreading the knowledge about him all over the world, to increase the pressure, the world opinion, on the Soviets, and all...

MB: Is that primarily what you're doing now?

PA: Yeah, yeah, to spread it around, and to encourage, of course, the committees we have all over the world to put pressure on their governments. We can't do it, of course, but it's up to, I think it's up to all those who feel for this cause in all the western countries of the world, to put pressure on their governments to do something.

MB: Have you seen any movement at all?

PA: Well, of course, we are very grateful that the United States has acted. I mean, President Carter raised the question in Vienna with Brezhnev. I think that was very

much on the request of Israel at that time. Israel, they don't have diplomatic relations, you know, with the Soviet Union. But we, on our behalf they sort of asked President Carter if he could raise it. And he raised it with Brezhnev. We know that President Reagan raised it in November, last year, with Gorbachev. And we do hope that that will continue now, and that in connection with this new situation after all, with open dialogue between the super powers, and the exchanges and political dissidents and so on, the Soviets apparently wanting to create goodwill in the west, that Raoul would fall into this picture.

MB: When was the last time that you heard of somebody specifically seeing him, knowing his whereabouts?

PA: Well, of course, the official, the people who came forward then who was known all over the world, and then caused the, one of the explosions after a long time of silence then in the '60s and the '70s, was this Kaplan who came forward in '78. And he, when he said that he had been together with Raoul, or seen Raoul in the Butyrki Prison outside Moscow in [unclear] '75. And other witnesses have indicated towards the end of '77, and I think there was one statement in 1981, also indicated that they had seen him as late as that time. Now, today, we don't have firsthand witnesses any longer. But we have single, still singles from there, where people coming have heard about him and so on. And they...

MB: Up, right up until the present?

PA: Yeah, yeah.

MB: Yes.

PA: Yes. And if he has managed to survive the first years and then survive, and then live that long, we have reason to believe that he is still alive because he is a very strong man, both physically and mentally. But he apparently lives there under the complete isolation. So that's...

MB: Why do you think it is that they do keep in that complete isolation? Why in complete isolation?

PA: Well, I think that they, and that started, you see, that isolation started already when we got the, when the witnesses came back, and, those who had been together with him. So in 1947 we have the reports that all of a sudden, all those prisoners who had been near him, sitting in other cells around or in his cell, they were all sort of deported in different directions. And they saw to it that from that on, he was never together with any other prisoner, you see. And that has gone on then for all the years, a complete isolation for him. That explains why he has never been able to send any messages out. So...

MB: Any final thoughts?

PA: No. Well, I think I've said most of what I had in mind. And we are sort of, we are not giving up, but we are still working for his release. And, as I said, the task for our committee has been two-fold. It has been to work on his release, and, secondly, to work for spreading the knowledge about his deeds to the world. Of course, I think it's very important for the young generation to know about this, and it should never be forgotten.

And it's very important that it's taken to the historical sort of, the education in the schools and universities about this time of our history. It's a dark period and part of the Holocaust and all that. And that if you will neglect this part in this history, you run the great risk that something of that kind could be repeated again. That's very, very important, that you all the time continue and talk about it and so on. Well, I think that's all there is now.

MB: I thank you. It's been a privilege.

PA: Very good then.