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Interview : Beate Karsfeld

Q: When and where were you born? I am interested in hearing about your family, your first years of schooling.

A: I was born February 13, 1939 in Berlin, before the start of the war. My Father was in the army, he was not an officer, nor a Party member, and left for the war. Mother and I were left alone in Berlin in their apartment. The apartment was damaged and we went to some relatives who lived outside Berlin. I started Kindergarten in a place 120 Kms. away from Berlin and my first memories are from the time Germans were pushed from the Eastern territories, we were in (sounds like Boulangier), where were camps for Germans refugees. We lived there and I went to the Director of the Kindergarten obliged us to salute with the Heil Hitler and to sing Nazi songs. There was a time to play, we were children. I was not Jewish, so I had no problems. It was a hard time because we had not enough to eat, I remember that the City had a casern so there were a lot of German soldiers around the place, then my next memories when this part of Germany was taken over by the Russians, yhey came over and we were living in a little town in the country, where we thought they would not come. I remember the first Russians who came, they were on horses, and in this part of the country there were only children and women, I remember they took rings and jewelry and as it happens everywhere the Russians soldiers were they dug out jewelry and took whatever was interesting to them. This was my first impression of occupation in Germany.

Q: Be so kind to tell us about your education years post war. Do you remember anything being spoken in your family about the holocaust or what happened to the Jews in Germany in WW2?

A: Then after the above we returned to Berlin, because my Father had been prisoner of the English and he was liberated and he came back and I started school. I would say my family was a typical German family, not member of the Party, but they belonged to the silent majority when Hitler came to power and voted for him and at home they did not speak about it and I remember that in school some refugees came, we had 2-3 Jews from Poland and the children came to our class and we knew they were Jews but not much more. I remember also that the history teacher explained that the beginning of the 2nd. WW was because Hitler and Stalin had signed a non-aggression pact, but teachers were for Hitler, were mainly men and were careful explaining to children who could not ask them what they did, were you in the German army? During my time in school there was no mention of the holocaust, knew something about 2 Jews in class (Jewish problem) but not having any explanation it does not help to understand.

Q: So people were quite silent about it.

A: Where I was, Yes.

Q: Were you in East or West Berlin?

A: West Berlin.

Q: Tell me about education, high school, and then to Paris to study.

A: I left school before getting (name of ?degree,not clear)and did 2 years more in a professional school, started to work in a pharmaceutical company named Schering, it was very boring. I had a friend who came from Poland and settled in Berlin after the war. I was not feeling very happy, first I did not want to stay at my Parents' place, had the feeling I have to go away to look what can make a young girl happy so I decided when a friend of mine came back from London where she was an aupair; so I said I'll join you and we both go to Paris; so I left Berlin early in 1960 because of the need to find something else for the future, I took the decision against the will of my Parents, because in Paris a young girl could get lost and at this time in 1960 I met my future husband, whose Father was deported and was Jewish and was the first who explained to me really what happened in Germany between 1933-45 with documents and books.

Q: Very interesting. Can you elaborate how you met Serge Karsfeld, what did he tell you, how you found out about the holocaust, German involvement in WW2.

A: About Serge, we met going to the language school " Alliance Francaise ",he ended Science Politique and we met at the place where we both lived, porte St. Cloud where we still live there. He took the metro to go to Science Politique and I took the metro to go to Raspail Alliance Francaise, he spoke to me. I had a blue book which was used to learn French, so he ask, I looked very much like a German, so to start speaking he asked me: are you English? I said no I am German, that was the beginning of our conversation, we separated at Sevres Babylone station, I gave him the phone #where I was aupair, he said he will call me and called me a day later and offered me an appointment.

Q: You mentioned yesterday and I read in your book that the story of ? Hansel Sophie ?? influenced you a lot.

A: Influenced already my husband, my Mother-in-Law was not very happy that her son was dating a German girl and my husband has connections with a German association in the Camp Universitaire, so he had read the story of Sophie the young students and the teacher who combat Hitler with opposing fliers and giving their lives for that opposition, they were executed and their teachers too, so he said if there had been these youngsters who opposed Hitler taking the risk of being killed then the German youth is not guilty and this helped him very much to speak to a German and among his friends who I met later there was quite a bit of opposition against Germans, rich and well to do families could be tolerated but I was a German without education and poor, so I was saved and friends could see somebody as a wife.

Q: I assume many asked you how Serge influenced you, but I would ask the opposite question: how did you influence him during that year.

- A” As I said, I spoke to him for the first time and that made my historical education, knowing what happened in Germany so but influenced I do not know, I did not influenced him because I explained my mother-in-law when I met her, I think I met her a year later, after we met and she was a person looking not what a person as a social function but what is a person itself. She loved me very much; but this is both things together, she is Jewish, I am German whose Father was in the German Army, the fact that we took part in the political life that was an opportunity that in Germany Kurt Kiesinger a propagandist and member of the Party was elected as German Chancellor, so all together we had prepared and I had been informed by him what was Nazi Germany, he knowing that German Youth was not guilty, he always said : you know as you are German you have to take your responsibility, because Germany is not all bad they have a heritage of marvelous musicians and writers, there are men of good and bad, and this pushed me very much and I think I took my responsibility. I gave him what he hoped, I was somebody German who decided to act.
- Q: I think he believed that when 2 people meet there is a 2 way influence, I don't think one influences the other, it works both ways. That is why I ask the question but I don't know my answer. When you started to work on your Kiesinger case were you in the Youth German Office?
- A: Yes, I learned in France that the German Youth Office opened in Paris I sent my cv and I was taken as a secretary, nothing else, so I belonged to the founding members of this French German Youth Office, my work was not such an interesting one, my day as a German what was of interest to me was to work in an Institution where there was Youth of both countries, to learn and at this time in 1966 when Kiesinger was elected.
- Q: Would you be so kind to trll us the story of the Kiesinger case. How did it start from your point of view, how it developed and of course the story of your involvement.
- A: When I saw in the newspapers in Germany that the new Chancellor was a member of the Nazi Party and adjoined to the Hitler propaganda for foreign countries , Serge said to me Beata there are some moments you can do something and he wrote for me a “tribune” in French and I brought these free tribunes to a French newspaper at this yime called Combat, it was a left newspaper, and so I was embarrassing to the Chief that I was a German who took the opportunity to let us know in a French newspaper that there was somebody in France who could not allow this man to represent the German news and will be the representative for the German government, so they published 3 tribunes and stated the German news can recognize a man, Willie Brandt, who was a freedom fighter but never a man like Kiesinger who is a danger to democracy in Germany and in one of the articles I said I was fired from my German-French news office as I had signed with my name not as belonging to the German-French news office, There was no reason for them to fire me, besides that they were against what I said and I was fired from one day to the other, this was finally the moment for me to decide if we are going ahead. The letter we received said if you take back what you said in the

article you can continue to work in our Institution, and we said NO. Then Serge remembered when his Father was deported he had a friend who came back who told my Mother-in-law when the Kapo was beating him my Father-in-law defended him and he was sent to the coal mines in retaliation and we said if my Father-in-law could in a situation where he was in danger of death resist to the Germans in a camp, an Democratic Partyextermination camp, how can we not resist and continue our campaign against Kiesinger, and so this was our decision, my husband was working at this time having a salary, I was fired and he helped me not only with advises but also with money and we started a campaign. I went to Germany to see members of the Parliament and Journalists, students, in order to say you know the situation where you have to protest, it is the first time after the war that the German Government is ruled by a Nazi and there is not a lot of involvement, Answers stated that he had been elected democratically and let's go. This was finally the decision that Serge and myself reached, so in order to say we can not do anything legally thn we have to change and discuss what to do. First interruptions in the Parliament when Kiesinger spoke, and I was arrested and there were news in the newspapers and they had to tell why I was arrested. The second attack was when we learned that there was going to be a Congress of the Christian Democratic Party in Berlin, very controversial because the students had protested stating that this Party will never have a meeting in Berlin. Will not take place At this time another lie, big demonstrations took place about that this Congress will not take place, so we decided something can be done in Berlin at the International Congress of the Party; so I left Paris without preparation besides having a photograph of somebody who promised to pick me and take me to the Congress Hall. So I arrived, not knowing what to do as we had forwarded all the documents against Kiesinger and distributed all over, so I was known as the woman attacking Kiesinger for being the German Chancellor and that is all, you learn in experimenting and it took about 4-5 days, so I had to go to Press meetings, to Conference Public meetings; I was unable to approach Kiesinger close enough to slap him, the action we had we had prepared to place the young generation against the older generation and slap somebody is not so easy, I did not want to do it in a hotel hall where you only face each other; we had to have the support of the public and the media and so the last day of the Congress, at closing and when Kiesinger had to deliver his last speech I had the chance with the card of a journalist to enter the Hall and to be in a situation across the Hall finding myself behind him and so when all these possibilities are given I took my courage and yelled "Nazi go out" and slap him, he turn back to me and it was dangerous for me because in the first raw he had his bodyguards, but with him standing behind me they could not shoot, he had no idea of what happened to him, who I was because as I said it was not the first time that I brought his Nazi past, I was arrested , then there was a discussion: " let her go because I was sexually not satisfied", a crazy woman, but it could not take because I was known with all my documents ,so he was obliged to suit me and I was put in jail, condemned the same day to 1 year in jail without suspension, and as I said before, it was in Berlin the City ruled by the Allies, I was a French Citizen, I

am German and French, and if arrested I could claim my French Citizenship and ask to see the French Commander of Berlin to be transferred in front of a French Court and this was the argument told when I was condemned and I told my lawyer, who was a lawyer of the opposition at this time and his name was ??Mar,,? I told him to go tomorrow to see the French Commander, I think that because of the embarrassing situation he asked for " interruption " . I called home and said I will be released because they announced it immediately that this was the decision, the next step would be the trial and we had prepared documents, as at this time we did not want a trial of the slap but the trial of Kiesinger. I went to the Center of Jewish Documentation in Paris, there in the history section worked Joseph Billick?? Who had done Russian studies in Germany, Philosophy and Mathematics, was a historian in the Center and I asked: was I right to slap Kiesinger for his past? And he said YES, and he came with us to Berlin to be a moral witness, the Doctors were so afraid that now as a historian he would be allowed to talk about the Nazi Party, so they cancelled for the time being stating that it would take a couple of months, then W. Brandt came to power and I was amnestied, but I continued to work against Kiesinger because he was running for President of the Legislative body in 69, I slap him in 68 on November 7, and I joined the Leftist Party, the Communist Student Peace Movement and I said I will be in the spot that Kiesinger was running for in the Parliament and I was an official candidate able to follow him in the National campaign and where he came to speak I was there with my friends and we started shouting Kiesinger a Nazi and he had to resign and finally his party lost, he had to leave and W, Brandt replaced him. Even then not only my slap but my campaign, and at this time had not succeeded before to mobilize the German Youth, the slap was a big thing because, in Berlin, at the end of the Congress, the Youngs had not succeeded on the issue that the Congress should not take place and for them the slap was a satisfaction, I had a lot of students of the left behind me and at the meetings he could not speak because the shouts and rumors of the student's opposition and I guess it had made an impression on the German public.

- Q: I believe your article from Combat in which you praised W.Brandt was somehow premonitory because what he did later in Warsaw show you were right.
- A: Yes, certainly, and at the time W. Brandt was already out and had tried several times to become Chancellor and had a lot of problems and I was leading a campaign for him in France, for W<B<
- Q: I would like to go back for 1 second to the moment of the slap, were you afraid? It was an act of courage.
- A: Much more afraid to succeed, in the time before I was able to??,,? Must act in the moment, I was not sure I'll have the courage, not courage the reflex to slap, because if you are in front of a big room, a lot of people and you have to slap a man because at this time for me he was a Nazi, but if you slap a man before you, so, but in the moment you

have to act we never failed because it is the whole preparation, at the beginning we were completely alone and now we had a group around us, sons and daughters of the deported Jews from France, but we always were alone and had to prepare the files, do research, tie our leaflets, we never had a Press Attache who said Mrs. Karsfeld you have to go to this spot, it was always by ourselves, you have as they say in French “ debrouiller” an this was so.

END OF FIRST TAPE.

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Q: So you can say Kiesinger was your first case?

A: Yes, it was it was my first case and the most spectacular and certainly the most important for me as a German because it was the

slap given by all the Germans who fought with me against him and it was the slap against the Nazi generation, and as I always say even killing Kiesinger would not had the impact on public opinion as a slap, because it was in relation to thos who had voted for him who had decided to vote for him as a Premier Minister, and I think it is something I never accomplished again and it was a decision of the moment, it succeeded and for that I'll certainly end up in German history and though the German Politicians of today generation are very much opposed, even today, to the gesture; but I also became known in Israel and among the Jewish world, was proposed for a Nobel Peace Prize, I think that this gesture in Germany has shown that there is a new generation as W. Brandt and I could not have prepared myself for this from books, but could prepare with “ civil courage” as they say in Germany and I succeeded.

Q: It was very symbolic!

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Am I correct to say that the next case was the Achenbacker case blocking the nomination of Achenbacker to the Economic European Committee.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you describe for us this case, please.

A: As we had worked out the documents, we saw that Achenbacker was in the German Rmbassy, in the Political service and had been sending Telexes concerning the deportation of French Jews and Foreign Jews, and had signed telegrams, so we had known, we met the name of Achenbacker in the archives together with the search about Kiesinger and then we learned after W. Brandt becme Chancellor and was part of the Liberal Party in the Parliament and Achenbacker was a member of the Liberal Party, he had to make some processes in order to

have a big coalition, so we said a man like Achenbacker cannot be in Brussels together with all those from countries which had been ruled by German occupiers and it has to be a morality and we cannot take as a German Commissioner a man like Achenbacker, and I collected all the documents concerning Achenbacker and I went to see 6 members of the German Economic Unit and I went to see them in Brussels and France and said you know we have to take a decision and finally under the scandal the Germans said Mr. Achenbacker is replaced by Mr. Arendorf who became, up to today the Ambassador to London. So again, it was our decision to do something in order to avoid that a Nazi could be in Brussels to change the spirit of the European Committee.

Q: If my recollection is correct you were not arrested in the Achenbacker case.

A: No, I took my son Arno, at that time he was small. When I was in Germany where I had my meetings, campaigning against Kiesinger, my Mother-in-Law was often in charge of Arno when I was away, so I decided to take him with me, he was with me against Kiesinger. I remember there was a picture in the German newspapers, the 3 more important candidates, it was Kiesinger, Klafster and Brandt, and Karsfeld was Arno. Even when we followed Kiesinger in the campaign, the bus of journalists following his Mercedes and I with some of my group in 1 or 2 cars, and the journalists said : " you know why Mrs. Karsfeld had to follow, we could take her in the bus with the media which could be a good gesture, but I am afraid that Arno could bite me."

Q: It was nice historically, if I may say so, to name your son after your Father-in-Law who perished in Auschwitz.

A: This is Jewish law and my daughter is named after an aunt, sister of my mother-in-law who also died in Auschwitz. When my daughter was born she was called Lidia but the diminutive was Lida and my daughter is called Lida.

Q: Am I correct to say that in 1970 you were jailed in Warsaw and in 1971 in Prague?

A: Yes, at this time I have to tell you that I became known in East Germany by the fact of documents concerning Kiesinger and documents I had from the Propaganda Ministry and these documents had been in East Germany in Postdam and when we started the Kiesinger campaign we did not want to go to East Germany and could tell their spies, so my husband went to the police in France and to the Ministry of Justice to say: my wife was fired from the German Office because she said that Kiesinger was a Nazi and now we have to prove it. I have to go to East Germany because the documents are there. I have to tell you I am not sympathetic of East Germany and I am not a spy but I have a need for the documents, but so you know East Germans are very happy to have young Germans taking the German Capitalists men and the German Nazi Party but also had their Nazis, not so important, and after the end of the war when the Russians came most of the Nazis told the anticommunists left Eastern Europe and part of them went to the Western Allies. Because of my Kiesinger campaign I became a heroine and after Kiesinger was defeated we turn to the Eastern part of the country and we saw there was anti-Semitism in Poland and Czechoslovakia mainly at the trial against the Nazis, the

government said that the biblical names of these youngsters were Jewish in order to say Jewish spirit and so I decided first to go to Warsaw to protest against the anti-Semitism of the Polish government, and for sure I was arrested, expelled the next day because I was an embarrassment for them and I repeated in Prague on the Wenceslaus square, was arrested and this time put in jail for 2 days and expelled and then I came back to East Germany the day I heard the doors are closed. They did not want to take me back because I was not right to protest against anti-Semitism in Poland and Czechoslovakia and so I said: you know I am not asking because I want to have a review for you, I have my own propositions and my own morality to fight against Nazis and you share my views, but to fight against anti-Semitism you have to share my views too and we are all Germans, East Germans too you belong to the German people, you are living today in the Eastern part but all Germany declare the war and the Jews and there was no more sharing my views and I said this must be all Germans fighting against Nazis and not allow former Nazis to have important functions and to fight against anti-Semitism and to stand on the side of the State of Israel and you know what was the situation of Israel if Germany and the United Nations in the end voted against it and I took my liberty even I became ??? but I am independent and I will always do all what my only conviction ask me to do.

Q: Could you tell me in a few words what was your involvement in the Lischka case, the former commandant of the ?SDE? in Paris, the kidnapping attempt that you tried to do with your husband?

A: The Lischka case was about his high responsibility for the fate of the Jews of France, the German who had helped with the Vichy government had decided the arrest and deportation of the Jews from France, 76,000 were deported, and after the Achenbacher case we learned that Brandt was signing a new treaty with France in order to obtain the possibility to dash the discriminators of the 200 sentences after the war by the military courts, but there were no ways to sentence them because as German citizens in France they asked to extradite them, but as German citizens they were not expelled to France, at this time the French Military Courts could still sentence them, and the French after the war had in a first review asked the German not to take care of them because they were afraid that sentencing them, in Germany in military courts in absentia, to life in prison or to death, but never caught, but Germany sentencing them to life, so there was a kind of blocking therefore no sentences in France or Germany. We had to find a solution. The treaty between both countries was signed and now needed the ratification by the German Parliament and who was blocking this ratification our friend Achenbacher leader of our Party, lobbying to stop all persecutions of these criminals, so we started a campaign to, with slightly illegal actions, we showed the big scandal and we started to assemble around us militants, Jews, fighters, deportees, and our action was to oblige first the German Parliament to ratify the treaty and the needs then went to Germany to demonstrate in front of the office stating that Lischka was the former Chief of Police in France, he was already the Chief of the Gestapo in Germany; in order to obtain the ratification, friends, young Jews in Germany demonstrated about the real criminals, ex-criminals to be put in German jails or expelled whatever but nothing happened. The public opinion and the press at this time was much more

favorable to us stating that the situation was not supportable, France also said how is it possible that Germany lets the criminals free and in Israel you can imagine the Press, and we had a couple of years to fight and finally the treaty was ratified, Mr. Achenbacher was expelled from his position as President of Commission of Foreign Affairs and then we had to struggle again with the German Justice to obtain the trial of Lischka who was a former Chief with Eichman and ?Einseimer? who was the deputy to the Chief of anti-Jewish, was a young man, all had been brilliant men who had studied Philosophy or Journalism and he was one of the worst physically because he arrested elderly Jews, took them from Jewish Hospitals and he was in charge of children in Drancy before their deportation. So we worked from 1971 when the treaty between France and Germany was signed to 1979 when the trial was open in Cologne. We had conducted several demonstrations putting our lives in danger but finally obtaining Justice for the criminals, we collected all the documents giving them to the French Prosecutor and to the German Prosecutor and finally the trial started. It was important, there were thousands of Youngsters coming from France to Germany, to Cologne, in front of the trial and we had shown our determination we will never tolerate an acquittal of these three men, we asked for their sentence. You asked about the kidnapping of Lischka, I said that from 1971 to 1979 we acted and when the situation was blocked I said: you know we are to kidnap Lischka and we will bring him back to France where the Military Courts can still sentence him in France, as we never been professional kidnapers, nor some young Jews, I had prepared a controlling timetable of Lischka, when he left in the morning to go to the office, coming back for lunch, going back to the office, with some information we had we rented a car, not a car for kidnapping because it was a sport car, you can imagine how to put a big man in a sport car and then the first attempt was done, doing it was not determined to hit Lischka so it failed, the group came back in the morning because we did not want to give up, that made a big scandal, people watching that we wanted to kidnap this man and we all returned to France and we sent a letter to the German Prosecutor saying you know there was a group of Jews who wanted to kidnap a man like Lischka who was a Nazi criminal so they had to do something, they were very embarrassed because they had known about Lischka in Cologne, and I said you know if you do not want to do something I can come to Cologne and tell you what to do, and I came with documents, presented myself to the Prosecutor saying here I am, so he was obliged to arrest me, so I was in jail, this was always to push a case of another criminal to be condemned not because we had sent a petition to the German Parliament or to the German Justice, but because we had put our determination, our own comfort and our own life on the spot in order to obtain this.

Q: How long did they keep you in jail in Cologne?

A: The first time I was in jail for 3 weeks, by the way I was together with somebody H. Brownstein who had been expelled from the United States, had been married after the war to an American soldier, left for the US, was living in Brooklyn and she was aware of a guard of the Maidenek Camp and was in the same prison (Osendorf), she was an elderly woman looking very friendly, she was knitting for a service in the prison, you would never thought of her as a guard in

Maidenek, she was sentenced for life in a trial in Germany to push another case, but in order to attract public opinion, the fact she was in jail at the same time I was in jail.

Q: I will ask you, please, to talk about the Barbie case, this is a case strongly linked to your name and to Serge Klarsfeld name and I think it was as famous as the Kiesinger case, it is highly symbolic and very important for France coming to face its past, also for Germany. So if you be so kind tell us at length the Barbie case.

A: The Barbie case started when we were in charge of the Lischka, the criminals sentenced in absentia in France, as Klaus Barbie he was too, he was the Gestapo in Lyon and by the way in 1980 he and Lischka were sentenced to 30 years term of jail, but at this time while we were in Germany to obtain the sentence for high responsibility for the fate of Jews in France started the Barbie case and it started because the Jewish Documentation Center received from the Prosecutor in Munich who decided to close the case of K. Barbie to satisfy the group which decided to end the past regime in Germany in a court in Munich for executing resistant fighters and for having deported the 44 Jewish children from Izieux, France to Auschwitz and the Prosecutor who studied the file, not quite a lot, but still what was determined for us the decision was set: we cannot sue K. Barbie, the Chief of the Gestapo in Lyon, for the killing of resistant fighters as it cannot be proven, later we found it was not so, and for the cases of the Jewish children for the Prosecutor there was no proof that K. Barbie, Chief of the Gestapo in Lyon, in 1944, in April 1944, a couple of months before the liberation of France, had known that the Jewish children, most orphans because their parents have been deported before, had known this meant gassed, so if you can say that Barbie can send children who are not able to work, who are not sent for labor, what was the direction of the prosecutor in Cologne that Lischka and ?????? they also had to prove that in Germany they had known that deported Jews were for this and not for pleasure. So we decided that the decision of the prosecutor to wait, gave no hope because we knew Barbie did not live in Germany and was somewhere in South America, but we did not know where and we decided we have to wait. I went to Cologne not to Lyon (excuse me) and I mobilize public opinion, Lyon was the City in France but Barbie was not known for the killing of Jewish children sent to Auschwitz, he was known because he had killed Jean Moulin, the Chief of the resistance in France, there was a group of the friends of Jean Moulin, so I started saying we have to do something against this decision because we cannot tolerate that this man can be morally acquitted by the German prosecutor; and I had resistant fighters, young Jews, and we went to Munich, we had collected new documents, there was somebody in Lyon a lawyer whom we met and we said you have to help us, we have to bring the proof to the German prosecutor that Barbie has known, if not nothing can be done against him, yes he said I remember one day I came to see as a Jewish leader, came to see Barbie, and said the Jews will be executed please perhaps you can put them to be sent to East, as a change they can survive and Barbie replied executing on the spot as all the same anyway death, it is proof that sending children of Izieux to Auschwitz meant killed but not only this arguments were needed for the German prosecutor, there were demonstrations of resistant fighters, and the youth Mme. Biguy ?????? ?????? that children were deported from the children's home, she had been deported

to Auschwitz but survived, she and I started a hunger strike in front of the prosecutor office saying we are not leaving this spot as long as you open the Barbie case and the documents he did not want to look before, but as he saw these 2 old Jewish women sitting there in the street with blankets around them, he could not because these 2 old ladies may collapse, so he said I'll look at these files and decided to open the case. This was the first moral step he had, newspapers carried the news, one came to a man who lived in Lima Peru, and saw the photo of Barbie, photo during the war and he said: you know I think he looks like a Bolivian businessman who is living in Chile and he contacted the prosecutor, he contacted me and sent us the photo of the Bolivian businessman, then Y went to see the German prosecutor and said: you know there is a possibility that this man is K.Barbie and he said Mrs. Klarsfeld you will do your work in France and find witnesses against K. Barbie and the identification of this businessman and I will try to get all the information about Barbie concerning his family and the identity of this Bolivian businessman K.Eitmann?? they are completely identical in the personal information about the Barbie family and so I said all the thing to do is ask France to ask for the extradition of Barbie to Lima, but did not want so I decided to take the information and go to Lima and see the Minister of Justice. I came to Lima, Barbie left for Bolivia and I followed him there and the proof I had were so strong, I saw Justice in Bolivia, saw the Director of Police and they were convinced that the businessman Eitmann was K> Barbie even though Barbie continued to deny on TV I am not K. Barbie, I have never been in France deporting Jewish children but finally he was obliged, and again this was on the spot as we learned later the American Secret Service and the French they alol had known that Eitmann is Barbie and living in Bolivia, but again we had to move public opinion, to make it public and this was my first trip; my second trip as we had no success in order to obtain the extradition of asking France, and I met a second Jewish woman Mm. A. Brunell??? Who had been deported by order of Barbie from Izieux, her husband had been executed by Barbie in Lyon and we demonstrated and ask for the support of the Bolivian public opinion to ask Bolivia to extradite him to France and unfortunately as Bolivia was ruled by a dictator we had no chance, but we followed the Barbie case, as I say, it always takes a long time but we never gave up and in the 80's the dictator had to go and a socialist came to power in Bolivia and we had now another approach to the government of France, Mr. Mitterand to do something in order to obtain the expulsion of K.Barbie from Bolivia to France and you know from the very beginning to the end we are always involved and pushing, so Barbie was expelled to France and there was a trial. We published a book with Mr. Rivieux??? Because Barbie was represented by a defender ??Verges??who is anti-Israeli and who already claimed that the children of Izieux deportation was false and we had to prove that the children lived there, were deported and killed, we published the book,the children of Izieux, in the US too, andhe was sentenced to life in prison because due to our efforts from the very beginning to the very end.

Q; Thinking about Maitre Verges, what was his motivation?

A: He is one who likes to be "avocat du diable", you know he has no morals, he came from the left a communist, moved to the right, he is anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, and so he saw the case of

K.Barbie and Barbie would say lots of things prejudicial about fighters who betrayed Jean Moulin.

END TAPE 2

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Q: Let's go back to the Barbie trial and specialy to his lawyer, how did he work, what are your feelings about him, why did he take this case?

A: I think he was taken by the fact he would have a case, also he might had a sympathy for K. Barbie and he was paid by the daughter of Barbie who tried to collect money for the defense of her Father, it was a ??? in Switzerland who did work who helped ?Forcette? to get some money to defend K. Barbie, he also was anti-Semitic, had a sympathy for Barbie, and he also wanted to have a scoop, and the scoop was to say that Barbie would embarrass whole France because he will reveal the secrets of the French resistance, who betrayed Jean Moulin, this had not been reviewed before, so we always said we are very much affected by this declaration, which is not true, because Barbie has nothing to say, he still knows but he forgot quite a lot too, he had said already in interviews, in his memoirs, and therefore no new information was available. When finally the trial started all were convinced that he is a liar trying to attract the media on this trial and on himself, because he is a man full of himself, his client, I would say, is a second person, first Verges ? then his client, he advised him very badly, not to come to court, for us good because Barbie would have been for in every session been able to embarrass the witnesses or to embarrass the deportees who survived, and it was good for the people who came to testify not to have this killer in front of them. But it was a position of Verges? And too often with these kind of lawyers who want a political significance, never working the files, did not look in the Barbie case, did not look in the files and he obtained life in prison, the maximum he could obtain for his crimes.

Q: If Barbie could have been in court could he have received a lighter sentence than life in prison.

A: I would say that if Verges would have looked at the files he could have gotten less than life in prison, if K. Barbie would have had the attitude ???? and the man asking for "pardon" I am sure that in front of the jury he could had another action but he was full of himself, aggressive,

arrogant against the witnesses and the survivors and embarrassed doth Verges and K. Barbie's party with young people and they decided the penalty.

Q: For the Barbie affair you travelled several times to Latin America tracking him down and to convince authorities of several countries to cooperate with the French authorities for extradition, my understanding is that you were involved in other activities in Latin America, specially in the mid-eighties on issues like protecting against torture, we can remember cases in Argentina, am I correct?

A: Yes, I have been as a German to the upper class, because as always not as an Argentinian, the disappearance of people, and among them there were Jews, There was a terrible anti-Semitism, so I went to protest to the effect that people are disappearing and I started to bring the message as a German who always fought for justice. I brought over my message, but in these cases you cannot change immediately something, there were lots of protests, I am the person, I made myself so, But I am not a Minister, had any political functions, but if people with political functions would take the same decision, not to go just to see the Argentinian Ambassador in Paris, but to go on the spot to protest the message would go through around the world, would embarrass the dictator you are fighting, so I took the decision to go to Argentina as I did in other countries too, to say what I am saying on the spot. Which means I am not afraid to come and say to the enemy on the spot.

Q: With your permission let's go back to Europe and talk about the Waldheim case, you were heavily involved in this case and we would like to hear what happened.

A: We had been approached by different journalists, during that time he was Secretary General of the United Nations, and they asked us about files against Kurt Waldheim, but you know he was not a big spot in the Nazi career, so in our field we had no information about K.W., we sent the journalists to Wiesenthal, he had documentation, he is in Vienna, will know about his Nazi past which certainly would be in Vienna and Wiesenthal should know, then the people came back to us saying that Wiesenthal said he is a pure man he has nothing against him. So, later, many people in Vienna had known his career during the war, so we finally, we never became involved why Wiesenthal never gave the documents, he had known certainly at the time, it was that he did not have the documents or wanted to protect Waldheim I cannot be sure, but when

Waldheim was running for President in Austria and the Jewish Congress started to do research in the archives in Washington and it was revealed that he was a newsman and knew what had happened to the partisans who gave information, so it was like in the Kiesinger case, that it was that the ??? unfortunately nobody knows, the people who could influence the decisions of the UN did not know his past, but now that he was running for the Austria Presidency people said he could not tolerate and had to do something. Information was known and leaflets were published about his past, nobody could say we do not know what Waldheim had done during the war, and I decided as always to go to Vienna, to Austria and mobilize on the spot, so I went there with a couple of addresses of movements, I got some youngsters around me, young people of the left movement; by the way in one demonstration we had to pose as Kiesinger and in the office of that movement I found posters where they were marching a couple of months before, when there was the war of Lebanon and Israel.

Q: Would you be so kind to explain what is your perception about Simon Wiesenthal lack of reaction, to put it mildly, in regard to the Waldheim affair? What was the motivation of his cautiousness?

A: As I said either he had no documents, but I do not think so, because when Waldheim was running for the Presidency suddenly all the Socialists in Vienna, in Austria, had the documents on Waldheim and they used these documents hoping that with the past of Waldheim as a war criminal the Austrians would not vote for him, but unfortunately they did, thus the documents were known and certainly Wiesenthal had the documents too, but you know living in a country like Austria he had been close to the Party of Waldheim, believe me they met together at receptions, so it is embarrassing. I think S. Wiesenthal said once that's my home Vienna, he had never been attacked, our car was bombed, I received a bomb when I returned from Bolivia, it was a bomb with 500 grams of dynamite and 300 grams of nails, unfortunately my Mother-in-Law and my husband were at home, I had gone to a Conference to the South of France with Arno, so they did not open the parcel, if they had opened it both would have been killed. So, maybe he did not want in a place where he had a good life, he did not want to embarrass, so he did not do anything against Waldheim, and even when everybody was convinced he never had any aggressive campaign against Waldheim.

Q: Let us with your permission leave Europe to Damascus, Syria and talk about Alois Brunner, who was he and why you went after him.

A: Alois Brunner is certainly the worst of all the criminals around, who started deporting Jews from Austria, from Berlin he deported the Jews from Salonika, 46000 Jews from Salonika, he was the Chief of Drancy camp in France, he deported the Jews from France, he then with a group of Austrians went to the South of France when the Italians retired and the amnesty was signed and lots of Jews had taken refuge in the Southern part of France when it was ruled by the Italians, and so when the Germans took over it was Alois Brunner who was sent down to make the great round up of Jews, by the way my Father-in-Law was amongst them, he was arrested by the Brunner team , my Mother-in-Law, the children and his sister Georgette survived by a miracle, he ended his career at the camp of Sareth in Czechoslovakia and all the testimonies we have confirming of A. Brunner shows him as a brutal man, totally anti-Semite, not only the documents he had signed during the war, i.e. towards the end when people of the Social Welfare went to meet him in order to ask not to arrest the Jewish Children around Paris in Children's homes and they pleaded why deport them at the very end, but it was to fill up the trains for deportation, so Brunner's arguments was that these children must be arrested because they are future terrorists, one day they'll look for vengeance of their parents' death. As a way also about his motivation and anti-Semitic hate of Jews when he was in Damascus interview by a paper of Munich (the Bunde) he said he had no regrets and he would send the Jews again to death and they are the devils of the earth, he never was ever hiding his feelings against the Jews. So, this man after been harbored in Egypt went to Syria and we had the first approach to him when my husband decided to go to Syria as a Jew and saying you know I am Jewish but I want to tell you that the worst killer of the Jews is today in Damascus under the name of "Fischer", so the Syrians were very much embarrassed, he had no visa, meeting at the airport and finally decided in order to cut the Brunner case to expel him and then as we always do, we do not give up, and went back to Syria. I have been twice, once I mobilize on the spot, I was standing in front of the Ministry of the Interior asking to let the Jews leave Syria and extradite Alois Brunner, my husband was in Syria again and we were both arrested but we tried on the spot but Syria is a country where it is very difficult to find a connection with (journalistic) reporters, if someone of the reporters wants to make news about your protest they are cut by the secret service, by the censorship, , so we did mobilize on the spot in a very difficult and dangerous country, we had mobilize outside, we had obtained friends from the Jungen? community to block for 2 years big financial aid for Syria because the Jews during this time were not allowed to leave Syria. Alois Brunner was not extradited but arguments by the Syrians are the following: because they all had to approach lots of politicians from European Countries asking them about these cases and about Alois Brunner, we do not know this man, he is not in Syria. So what do you do? So there are all these reports of the secret service of Germany, of France, and the interview of The Bunde when he was photographed in Damascus, what more do you want? The Syrians took the attitude we do not know this man so don't bother us, so we obtained the blocking from the Jungen?Parliament financial aid. Serge obtained from the French Justice from the commission? Have to go to Syria and to look around, get films and documents on American Television on the Brunner case, but you know there is an end for us

because we are unable to act in a country where there is a dictator, Assad is a dictator, an Arab dictator, he has a sympathy for Alois Brunner, because he knows quite well where he is, and also we had no support from western politicians, mainly as Syria belongs to the group of Allies in the Gulf war, there was no more hope, and even though Chirac was the President and was the last one who approached Assad asking about Brunner, there is no answer, sure you can obtain something if you make a political or diplomatic boycott of Syria, perhaps you could but no other countries even America would take the risk to embarrass Assad because of Alois Brunner. It was possible to obtain the expulsion of Carlos the international terrorist who was first in Syria then in Yemen from where he was extradited but for Alois Brunner, even the Israelis, as today, there are more interested about actual terrorists against Israel meaning Arabs, so the case of Alois Brunner was never a priority for them. So I do not know, as was said Brunner might be dead, I do not think so, I personally do not think there will be a solution that Brunner will be transferred to a tribunal in a Western country. But even though he will die in Syria, no doubt about it, it means that Syria was until the end a country with Assad who harbored and protected one of the worst criminals of the Jewish people.

Q: Let us now move back to France, July 1993, Rene Bousquet the former Police of Vichy was shot, this is why he was never brought to trial, a trial that was scheduled to start, but never took place because he was killed. Can you tell us your involvement in the Bousquet case?

A: It started before in the 70s., in order to unmask his (delegue) second in the occupied zone Jean Leguay, at this time he was still working for ????? in the United States. I announced that the first time when I was in the States and he was indicted, he died in his bed and after his death French Justice made public the indictment and said that if there had been a trial against Jean Leguay he would have been sentenced as criminal for crimes against humanity and this was a big success for us because he was considered a criminal this way. Bousquet as the Chief of the Vichy Police, we obtained all the documents and delivered them to the French Justice because he had been sentenced and he was then excused because he had helped French Resistant Fighters, although there was this new evidence against him it was the opposite of Jean Leguay who was indicted and so in France I think Serge did a lot with the publication of the book called Vichy-Auschwitz to show what was the role of the French Government and the French Police in the arrest and deportation of the Jews, because very often in France you have directives, I remember our butcher, a woman she liked very much my Mother-in-Law knowing that she was Jewish, she said you know it is terrible what happened to the Jews in France, the Germans did it!! It is not true you know, most of the Jews in France were arrested by the French Police and this I think is the case of Rene Bousquet, because all these indictments made a lot of articles in the newspapers and in France newspapers have been very helpful to educate French Public Opinion and to show

them what was the responsibilities of the Vichy Government and in the Bousquet case unfortunately a crazy man killed him and I certainly feel it would have been better to have the Bousquet case instead of the case of the crazy man of ??? was unable to make a political trial, the French did not want to make a political trial but our work was very important , as I said these trials, as in Germany too, they are extremely important to form public opinion, because the newspapers, the books, I cannot tell you how many books are written about Klaus Barbie, my husband says I'll never write a book about the criminal men but about the victims and this has been very helpful even if Bousquet and Jean Leguay had not been sentenced in front of a tribunal, but the French population understood who had been those criminals, what they had done.

Q: You are certainly right saying that the Bousquet case was highly symbolic because it exposed one of the important institutions of the Vichy Government the Police, and the same was probably the case of Paul Touvier who represented the Militia and in this case too you were involved and your husband. Can you say a few words about it?

A: It was my son who took over to represent most of the associated plaintiffs in the case of Paul Touvier, but I remember it was about 20 years ago, he was still hiding with a group of (???) International League against ??? anti Semitic, he was still living near Chambéry we were demonstrating in front of his house but he had already left because he was hiding among the ? integrus? Catholic Church, they were harboring him, he had already at this time to protest??????and he was amnestied by President Pompidou at this time as you remember President Mitterand also had said in different cases no more trials against French Collaborators, of French High Officials in order not to embarrass the Civil Peace in France, that was the explanation given, not to divide the French population pro and anti Vichy and so we started at this time and he was arrested and even though when arrested in the South part of France and the Police from Paris came over because the Police of the Cote D'Azur did not want yo act, there was information going around , because the Police told us the KLARSFELD GANG will come and kidnap him, so the Police in Paris, so our fame, but the most important I think is the trial when my son defended most of the associated plaintiffs. It was stated that: In the case he decided to execute the Jews because they were Jewish and in this case he did not act under the Germans but took this direction himself and this was a big struggle for the defending line of Paul Touvier who was sentenced to life imprisonment.