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Zunterstein, Alfred and Eva oral history interview

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Interview with Alfred and Eva Zunterstein by Steve Hochstadt
Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project
Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewees

Zunterstein, Alfred and Eva

Interviewers

Hochstadt, Steve

Kahn, Michele

Lixl, Christine

Transcribers

Beideman, Sandy

Hochstadt, Steve

Date

5/28/1995

Extent

2 audiocassettes

Place

Salzburg, Austria

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Biographical Note

Alfred Zunterstein was born July 25, 1922, in Vienna. There he joined the Hakoah Sport Club and the Betar. He left Austria in October 1938 with his uncle and cousin. His father Josef was arrested on Kristallnacht, and soon he and Zunterstein's mother Stella and sister Hildegard followed to Shanghai. The family started a uniform factory in Shanghai, and lived at 802 Tongshan Lu. Zunterstein served in the Jewish regiment of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps and was a youth member of the Pao Chia. He was a champion boxer.

Zunterstein met Eva Mannheim at the Jewish Community Center in Hongkou, where they were married in November 1947. She was born in 1929, and had come to Shanghai with her German parents, Werner and Hilde, from Italy, and attended the Kadoorie School, and then the Gregg School of Business. After the war she worked for the Joint Distribution Committee and he worked for the U.S. Air Force as an aircraft mechanic. They left Shanghai in 1949, and lived in Wyoming

for 7 years, before moving to the Seattle area, where he worked for Boeing. Later he began a career as a creator of metal sculptures. He died on June 11, 2005.

Steve Hochstadt: Yes.

Michèle Kahn: Okay.

Steve Hochstadt: Start wherever you want . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Well . . .

Steve Hochstadt: . . . and all details are, are wonderful.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . to make, to explain things in a logical fashion, I'd like to give you a little bit about my background and my thinking and philosophies that I've developed. Although it seems, it seems rather unusual that I left when I was only sixteen years old, and left my parents and went on to China without explaining how I've felt, you know, what motivated me. And I'm a typical product of this stormy time that existed in Austria in the, in the Thirties. I was brought up at an early age to resent the reactionaries that had kind of taken over Austria. You know, Austria was essentially a, a very progressive state, especially Vienna and the surrounding area, especially, and this is, after all, where I lived. And ideas of some of the modern thinkers were brought out, like child raising methods and philosophies and, and the [unclear] school systems. And the communities for the workers, they built big blocks of, of houses that were constructed so that a family had relative comfort and sanitary conditions, way out of proportion of what it used to be in the monarchy.¹

And I can identify with this Austria. It, my father was a socialist in the sense that he was a business man, but he belonged to an organization that was called Sozialdemokratische Gewerbetreibende.² Which is itself kind of a, what you'd call a push-pull type thing, *Gewerbetreibende*, well, that's an independent business man, but *sozialdemokratisch* means you for the social progress and so on. And from the very, he always instilled in me this understanding of freedom for the working man, free to, you know, to be able to work for a better living for himself, and social justice. It's important to me, or to him, but he instilled it in me. And I'd go in the Ringstrasse in the first of May and I raised my fist, you know and I, I, I sing the "International" and I felt really, you know, identified with that, you know, to a large extent.

And all that kind of broke in pieces in, in my formative years, because I was only about, I mean, the Justice Palace burned, I was only maybe five or six years old, but I already heard my father talk about it and others talked about it, how, how the Heimwehr and the police came, they shot into the workers and they killed people just for, you know, very obvious un-, unjust reasons, you know.³

So then the Thirties came and the Thirties went, but they didn't really, they hadn't completely gone. [chuckles] It came to the time, the critical time of total break down in, in Austria's independence. And there I, you know, I took this almost like a personal loss. So that's my background, you see, so a lot of the actions that I talk about later on maybe are because I had this strong sense of justice and a, and a desire, you know, for freedom and free situations in a country that's so beautiful and, and so endowed with, you know, all the things that we, we, so sentimentally call, you know, beautiful, beautiful Austria.

Well, what do you want to know now? What should I . . . ?

¹ The Karl-Marx-Hof was built between 1927 and 1930 as municipal housing for workers, including extensive open space and many amenities, including laundromats, baths, kindergartens, a library, doctor offices, and business offices.

² The Verband der sozialdemokratischen Gewerbetreibenden und Kaufleute Österreichs was founded in 1919 and dissolved in 1934.

³ In July 1927 leftist demonstrators set fire to the Justizpalast and in retaliation the police killed about 80 demonstrators.

Steve Hochstadt: Tell me about events leading up, tell me about your experiences in '37 and '38 and events leading up to your decision to leave or your family's decision that you would leave.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, the, the decision to leave at such an early stage as I did was basically because I felt threatened. See, I, I went to school, *Fortbildungsschule*. As long as I went to, to, we had school in Renngasse, which was called *Lehr- und Fortbildungsschule* or something. It was one of the, I think it was a glorified *Hauptschule*. And I got by real well there, most of the fellows in there, were, were very friendly, you know, didn't have a whole lot of hazing for being Jewish or anything like that. But then later on, when I went to the *Fortbildungsschule*, I became an apprentice, because my father didn't see any future in me going to Gymnasium, you know, and I didn't have the necessary mathematical skills and so on. He said, "You're better off to learn a trade. We don't know what's going to happen around here, we might have to leave." You know, it got very close to that.

So, I started to go into my profession of being, well, let's go back a little bit. He found a job for me with a company that manufactured work clothes and rain coats. It was [unclear] Margaret Rosenbaum. And there I learned how to do patterns and then to cut the material and I found it very, I found it an interesting job, you know, at the time. And so as a consequence, I had to go to this *Fortbildungsschule* once a week. And right then and there I got in trouble with the Nazis.

Steve Hochstadt: What year is this?

Alfred Zunterstein: That was in '35 probably, maybe '36, '35. Right then I got in serious trouble with big, there were Nazis in class and they started to haze Jewish people, you know. I actually didn't, I didn't get in too much trouble, because I was a little bigger. But there was, especially a younger kid there, that had side locks, you know, and he was Orthodox and they, they would just push him and shove him, and any time there was an, you know, an intermission in the curriculum, they'd go down the stairs to another class room or something, they'd shove him and try and, what they call *stell ihm a Haxl*. [laughs] It means you kind of underrun his legs, you know.

I got in some fights then with Nazis, which before that I had kind of managed to stay out of, although I belonged to organizations that had problems with Nazis. Namely the Betar and then the Hakoah, and in both situations, in both clubs what was, the situations created were the Nazis would interfere with the activities.⁴ Like when we had, when I was in the Betar, you know, and we had a summer camp at Velden am Wörthersee, and the Nazis would come at night, they'd climb up and they'd hoist the swastika on the large trees, they thought the Jews couldn't climb up and get it down, you know. But some of the older guys really did manage to climb up and get it down, you know. And then they'd come at night and they'd make noises and we had to go out and kind of, shove them out of the way and, and on some of the trips we made into the Wienerwald, you know, marches we made, we ran into Nazis, and we had to have a little physical, what you call shuffle, and so on. Or on the way home on the tram, you know, sometimes, I remember one time we got in and found out that there were about eight or ten Hitler youths sitting in there. So we got into a shoving fight with them. So that, that was the sole, what you'd call matching up or meeting up with Nazis.

Then, when it came to '38, that's when the critical things happened. The Schuschnigg went to Berchtesgaden, I think it was. And he made this famous understanding with Hitler or Hitler's people, Seyss-Inquart or whoever was involved there, where they would loosen up on their control of the Nazis and give them more freedom. And then Schuschnigg came back and he kind of said, he said, "Well, it wasn't really exactly what I discussed over there," he says. "We going to ask the, the Austrian people

⁴ Betar was a Zionist youth movement, founded in Latvia in 1923, emphasizing the creation of strong Jews who could create a Jewish homeland. The Sport Club Hakoah Wien as a Jewish club which produced a number of Olympic medalists.

whether they really want to have German participation in this, a plebiscite.” And lo and behold, all of a sudden the situation changed, where, for example, Social Democrats, I forgot to say that, but in the, in '34 we went through a lot of turmoil, maybe I should kind of touch on that. The Heimwehr and the Christlichsoziale Partei under the leadership of Dollfuss created the civil war in Vienna, where they accused the Schutzbund, which is the paramilitary forces of the Social Democrat party, accused the Schutzbund of harboring arms and ammunition and in the *Gemeindehäuser*, you know, in those municipal buildings that housed the workers, to make fortresses out of them and attack then the police and take over by violent means. You know, it was such a far fetched exotic idea that most people laughed about it, but then on the other hand, you know, we all sometimes, anybody will, you know, will always find some fish that bites on that. But this bloody war affair that took place for about a week or two was very exc-, what you call, not, exciting isn't the right word, but I was very resentful of this, because Vienna looked like an armed camp, you know, they had, you come around the corner and here was a machine gun sitting and, and a big sign and the sign in black letters said, “Zurück, sonst wird geschossen,” you know, which means “back or we shoot”. And then I, I read about my heroes, their being, you know, arrested and, and some, I think one or two of them were hung, you know, and some of them managed to flee to Czechoslovakia and there was just total mayhem.

Well, right after that happened the, the Nazis started a coup. See they managed to kill Dollfuss, which cheered a lot of the workers immensely, because they, they thought there was kind of a, you know, payback for what he did to the Socialists, but essentially, that was done by their very enemies, you know, it was done by people that were going to do away with socialism in any form or shape.

So, the, the, outcome of all this was that there's a political dictatorship that developed over here. On one side you had Socialists turning, and there weren't really any Communists, it was mostly Socialists, and then on the other hand, though, you had the Nazis and in the middle were the, the Christlichsoziale Partei, which was supposed to be the pivot, but they had no support. They had no support from anybody, because they didn't have a believable program.

And when Schuschnigg came back with the idea of the plebiscite, he made this terrible mistake not to right away arm the Socialist camp again, in other words, call all these Schutzbund people and all these leaders and say, “Come and help, because a much worse enemy is going to attack us,” you know. And the, the workers instead of saying, “Well, you know, the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” and just go ahead and help out, you know. But that didn't happen, because the reactionary forces, then this, you know, Starhemberg and Fey, they were really fascists and they had more, actually more, sympathy for the Nazis than they had for the Socialists.⁵ So, this blew up, you know, it didn't, it didn't happen, they didn't get the help of the, official help of the outlawed Social Democratic party and that they called for the plebiscite.

Now, the time of the plebiscite was very traumatic for me, because right away the people that were busy underground, you know, which I had, you know, for many years been with the, what they call the SAJ, Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend and Roten Falken, but not as an active member of any, because I was too young.⁶ But we had what you call study sessions. We learned about, you know, socialist theories and world theories and so on. And right away they said, “Well, we have to go out, we have to demonstrate.” And, you know everybody ran out in the streets and the first district in Vienna was overrun with people, unions and Socialists and Zionist groups and, you know, like even the Hakoah sent people out. And it was just a mass of people that went out in the streets, it was black with people, and they demonstrated.

Now what happened is the Nazis had taken right away, possession of the situation. They, they put Hitler's portrait up at the, what was called the Verkehrsbüro, traffic office, or what you call like a travel bureau, big, glamorous travel bureau. Put these

⁵ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg and Emil Fey were leaders of Heimwehr groups.

⁶ The Rote Falken were founded in 1925 as a group for 12- to 15-year-olds in the Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei. They were disbanded in 1934, as were other leftist organizations.

gigantic posters, they were like from top to bottom of Hitler. The Nazis went over there and they saluted that and they sang the songs and they made all their malicious, you know, things, sayings, and anyhow they took over the streets they thought. But here come this mass, mass of people fighting with them.

And I was just one little part of that. [laughs] And I was not that big yet. [laughs] And I remember one that, for example, one Nazi got a hold of me and he says, "Bist Du bodenständig?" he said to me. That means, do you have any connections, do you belong to this country, you know, are you part of this country? And next to me was some burly big guy and he just grabbed a hold of him and he said "I'll show you bodenständig!" And he just knocked him down. See, so you weren't all by yourself, you know. But we yelled ourselves hoarse and we got beaten, we were beaten and we hit back and it was just, it was just a real hubbub.

People nowadays when they talk about the takeover, you know, they don't realize that, you know. A lot of people talk about the Nazi flags out in the streets and how everything was full of Nazis saluting and so on. But it wasn't. There were a lot of people fighting against it and they couldn't all have been bad, you know, and this is one of the things I like about Austria, there were fellow demonstrators there that vented their rage at what was happening. So, that's one thing, then, of course, that all disappeared within a week's time. See Schuschnigg just called in his chips and called, called it off, and on Friday we were still demonstrating and at ten o'clock we got the news that the war was lost.⁷

That night I got chased by some motorcycles with side cars, because I had thought, I thought they were Schutzbund people. You see there was this, this rumor that the Schutzbund was coming in from Floridsdorf. See, Floridsdorf was the hot bed of the socialist movement, you know. That's where all the workers lived and all the Schutzbund people, and that was supposed to be the working area or the most, the most friendly area to socialism and the Social Democrats. And everybody said, "Well, they're coming, they're coming," and sure enough I see this group of people come, you know, I am marching down the street, there's motorcycles left and right, and there was maybe five or six of us. It was near the, what is now the quai, you know, right near the, the Danube canal, and, but still in the first district. And we yelled, "Freiheit! Freiheit!" you know, and these guys ran after us on their motorcycles, you know, chased us. And then we saw they had swastika armlets. And they chased me down and I ran into the street, side street, and I thought they, they had me for sure. And there were a bunch of people working on the sewer system. They had white coats on, they were, what they called sewer workers. And they had these long, long poles, and they were in, in this hole and they were pulling, you know, garbage out of the sewer. And I ran by them and I said, "Help! The Nazis are after me!" And sure enough I run by and they drop these big poles down and the motorcycles couldn't get by them, and I ran on down the alley and ran out on the other side and saved myself. But, you know, that was a very pertinent thing, that really made me think that I was not very safe in here, you know, because I had this feeling of getting run down.

Steve Hochstadt: How old were you then?

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, I was still fifteen when that happened, you see. So I got home and then there were rumors that the Nazis were looking for people that had killed Hitler youths with knuckle dusters. Well, we, there was a knuckle duster in our house, but I hadn't taken it along, but, you know, I thought how easy it would be, they'd break in and find a knuckle duster and then they'd say, "You were the guy that," you know, so we took it and threw it in the Danube canal, you know, together with my father's pistol. And then I get to thinking, rightfully, that with some of the fights I had, you know that maybe somebody recognized me and might come looking for me. So I stayed away from the house for a little while and then everything was quiet. And then I started going camping and nothing really happened, basically, I think, because we had a very, very nice, how do you

⁷ Zunterstein is describing the Anschluss, when Hitler announced on Friday, March 11, 1938, that German troops would march into Austria the next day.

say . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Concierge.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . concierge, *Hausbesorger*. She was very, they had a long history of Socialist work, her father, her husband was a motor man and she was a pretty big resolute woman, and when the Nazis came into ask for Jews, she chased them off. She says, "There isn't any, there aren't any, and get, get the heck out of here." In those days, the beginning, you could still do that, you know, you'd still get away with that. Later on she probably would have gotten carried off, you know. But in any case I, there was nothing happening in our house, you know, so I got a lot more courageous, I went out in the streets and I looked around and could see everything that was going on, you know, and lots, a lot of it, a lot was going on. And family just kind of sat together and started talking and here were my uncles and they were all, there were two veterans there, you know, they that thought because they had been veterans, my father and his brother, that they were going to be relatively safe, you know. And I had another cousin that was, very what you'd call advanced. He was probably more of a Socialist than he was a Social Democrat, but he was all for leaving, you know. And him and I actually stood together against this whole team of uncles and aunts and everybody thought that, you know, that one shouldn't give up so quick, you know.

Steve Hochstadt: You thought already it was time to leave.

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, I, I was just absolutely convinced. See, the, the, the Nazis had a song, for example, that said "*Wenn das Judenblut von Messer spritzt*". You know, which means when the Jews' blood runs from your knife, then everything goes well. And they sang that with such gusto, you know, and they made, so often I heard this statement, you know. When they told me, "No, wait, we'll get you, we'll get you. You just watch out, you know. Watch out Jew, we'll get you." And I could see this hatred and this steadfastness that, that was there, you know.

Michèle Kahn: Can you tell it in German please?

Alfred Zunterstein: Pardon?

Michèle Kahn: Can you tell it in German, how they say it in German.

Eva Zunterstein: The song?

Alfred Zunterstein: "*Wenn das Judenblut . . .*"

Michèle Kahn: No, what you, what you said now? Watch . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, can I say it in German?

Michèle Kahn: Yes.

Alfred Zunterstein: *Welche, welche . . . ?*

Steve Hochstadt: "We'll get you, Jew . . ."

Alfred Zunterstein: *"Na, wir kommen, wir kriegen Dich schon. Wir kommen schon. Wart nur. Wir kriegen Dich schon. Du g'hörst zu uns."* They were, they made no, "*Saujud*", you know. They made no bones about it. And I had discussions with, you know, people who were Nazis, you know. I knew a guy, matter of fact, we'd go skiing and this guy, there was a girl there and she had a boyfriend and he was a Nazi, you know. And I was only about fourteen then and I had discussions with him about, he admitted to being, I mean, he openly admitted being a Nazi, although they were legal in this . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Illegal at the time.

Alfred Zunterstein: Illegal, yeah. They said, you know, they said that, we had taken over, you know, the commerce and they brought up all these things that you hear or, you know, or what the Jew had done. That we had caused them to lose the war, and we had, we had stabbed them in the back, you know. The Jew was behind this, you know, this revolution of the workers that caused the downfall of the monarchies in both Germany and Austria, you know, and so on, so. From an ideological point of view, I had no doubt that they really meant, it, it wasn't any propaganda. I always thought that the Italians were kind of big mouth and some of their actions, you know, like they'd pour castor oil down their opponents, throw it, you know, they'd beat them up so, but they weren't, weren't so serious as, as I thought the Nazis were. You know, they had this certain, there was a certain flair about them that you could tell that they meant business. It was, it wasn't something to, to laugh about, you know, it wasn't something to take lightly, you know. So, I, I, wasn't going to camp out all the time and, you know, and run away from the house. I said, "I want to be safe," you know.

So here about, I think it was June or July, here comes this letter from Shanghai about, well, it got to go back a little bit. There was a shirttail relative that had, a year or two earlier had left Vienna, because he was an aspiring actor, a very handsome man, young man. And he wanted to be an actor and while trying to be an actor he run up some debts and he couldn't handle the, the money problems, so he took off! Couldn't pay his, the money back, so what most people did, he left the country [laughs] and the only place he could go to was China, you know. And he wrote a letter, he was related, kind of, by marriage to one of my uncles, and he wrote a letter and he said, "If you have any need to go somewhere, come to Shanghai, because it's a free port, and the war is over and things are safe and they actually do need qualified people to work there." So, I had friends of, you know, that I knew, that I was friendly with, I mean, people that I was friendly with had formulated plans of going across the border. And I was supposed to go with them.

Steve Hochstadt: To Czechoslovakia?

Alfred Zunterstein: No, to . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Switzerland.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . to Switzerland to Vorarlberg, the province of Vorarlberg. They thought it was a little safer than going through Czechoslovakia, because there was a lot of military activity along the Czechoslovakian border. So, first we thought maybe to do it on skis, but then not everybody could handle the skis, and it was getting kind of late in the season and, matter of fact, it was too late by June. So I had to think fast and, or make a decision fast, and this idea of going to China, being whole continents away from the Nazis and, and, and all this jazz, you know, that appealed to me very much. And I said, "I'd like to go." So my uncle, he knew that I had a fairly successful career in cutting clothes, you know, and shirts and this and that. He says, "Why

don't you come with me? I'll go too. I'm going too." And this was one uncle that was very conservative and, matter of fact, he was only half-Jewish. And he was one that usually would probably vote for the Christlichsoziale Partei, so you know politically we were just at complete opposite, but he said, "Will you come along?" and I said, "I'll come, yeah." So we'll go together, you know. And my cousin, he's about my age, just a half a year younger. So that's how we formulated that idea.

Meanwhile, we were busy trying to get our passports, my friend, friends had gone to Vorarlberg and gotten across border, gotten into Switzerland, caught by the Swiss police, taken back to, to the border, turned over to the Germans. And fortunately it was a group of, they were younger kids and they were all kind of what you call appealing kids, you know, they were real nice kids, and they managed to impress that Gestapo character that they, that had gotten, collared them, that they didn't really mean any harm and, you know, to let them go. "Please let us go," and he let them go. You know, he says, "Don't come back to this place again," you know. So that kind of blew up for them, but essentially they did eventually make it about three, four months later, they did manage to make it to . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Belgium.

Alfred Zunterstein: They went to Belgium. They must have gone Switzerland, and then France, and then to Belgium. And actually they survived over, the two very good friends I had in that group, they survived the war, although the girl was sent to Auschwitz and she got out of there. And the, her brother had, the story's almost like, like a movie, because he escaped from a transport that was carrying him to the East. He escaped from there, he got caught again. He told them that, he told them that, he threw all his papers and everything away, told them he was a *Fremdarbeiter*, and because he was blond and blue-eyed they believed him, and they thought he was running away from being, from the work force. So they put him into a penalty group, you know, and with other *Fremd*-workers and so he, he managed to survive that. Then he ran away from that, and he got documents, and as a, as a worker and he was put into a auc-, slave auction they used to have. You know, where the people that needed workers in, for their, for their armament shops, you know, they would go down and they would have a whole line-up of people and they would pick this, this, this, this, and he got in one of those and they picked him. And they took him to Berlin and they worked underground there and, under, under, I mean, by underground I mean under the surface there. He survived.

Meanwhile, I went on to China. I probably left out some things, but that's the way it was.

Steve Hochstadt: Did you talk, did other members of your family think about going to China too, or did they . . . ?

Alfred Zunterstein: Not at that time. They wanted to go to the United States. What, what happened there, again it's, it's such an unlikely thing. We, my father had a friend that he worked with actually, co-worker, who was pretty sharp guy, he was much younger than my father. Matter of fact, he's only about five years older than I. He came one day and he said, "Look," he says, "I tore these pages out of the telephone book for New York City and I'm going to write to these five people for you and your family to get, give you an affidavit."

Eva Zunterstein: Who had Jewish names.

Alfred Zunterstein: Who had Jewish names, right. So lo and behold about a month later here comes this package, with, I was still there, matter of fact, when that happened. Comes this package and they said, "Yes, we understand your plight and we want to help you and your children are too old to work, they will go to school and you will get a job in our factory. We manufacture shoes and . . ."

Eva Zunterstein: It was affidavit.

Alfred Zunterstein: It was an affidavit. My father took it to the American Consulate and he got this usual story that your, you know, he was Austrian quota or Czech quota, I'm not sure now, because he lived in, in what was then called, how was it called?

Eva Zunterstein: Bohemia?

Alfred Zunterstein: No, not Bohemia, it was the disputed border section. Sudeten . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Sudetenland.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he was a Sudeten. So you have a practical usage, you know, living in, in Austrian territory then and then being, after the war going to Czechoslovakia. So, but my father was a very hopeful person, very positive thinking man, you know, he thought, he'll outwait the affidavit, he thought there would be enough people leaving and eventually, you know, his number's going to come up, you know, he was sure of that. So, by then I had left, see, and he was going to wait for the affidavit, and then came the Crystal Night and he got arrested, got hauled off, and he managed, just by the skin of his teeth, he managed to find some SA guy that were supervising them or watching them in this large holding area they had. He managed to go up to one of those guys and tell them that he was a *Front*, front soldier, that he had fought in the war and was wounded and all that, and he had a watch and he could have his watch if he just let him go. You know, and that was before they were searched and before they, you know, they usually take everything away from them. But this was still at the time when they were just pushed in there and more coming and more coming, and my father took the opportunity. And lo and behold the guy pulled him out of there and took him to the door and said, "Beat it, you know, don't let me catch you again or see you again" or whatever.

My father went home and my mother, meanwhile that took maybe a few hours and, and she was totally hysterical, you know, completely, my mother wasn't what you call exactly a resolute woman, you know. She was the typical what you call in those days family type housewife, you know, she, she couldn't take that, she couldn't take that strain. So she said to my father, "If you love me at all, we go." [laughs] And they did. They paid all the money they got for the, oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. They paid all they got for that little store he had, that he held on for, you know, that he thought he could get more money out of for holding it. I forgot to say that he had a shop on the Praterstrasse in the Second District in Vienna, and it was a nice little store. And somebody made him an offer and he didn't think it was enough and wouldn't cover all his expenses for leaving and so on. So he held on for, and that was one of the reasons he was so obstinate about leaving. Well, as it was he had to call that woman and say, "Look, I just absolutely have to sell and please take my place and I mean take it over." And she gave him a few thousand Marks and that was enough to get the tickets for Shanghai. So, I arrived in the beginning of November, and lo and behold about middle of February here they come, [laughs] you know. It was so funky, you know. My sister comes there, and I don't know what she thought Shanghai was like, but she brought my hockey stick, she had a hockey stick in one hand and a pair of hockey skates in the other hand. [laughs]. She said, "We got your bicycle, too!" she said to me. And said, and they had a *Lift* hammered together and my bicycle was in there and I think some household goods and all. And the uncle helped them to do that and he managed to drop a twenty dollar bill in there. He told my father, "There's a twenty dollar bill in there, be careful when you unload it, you know." And he's the uncle that was done away with by the Nazis.

Eva Zunterstein: He stayed behind.

Alfred Zunterstein: He was, he stayed behind. But then my father came, and because I had this ability to design shirts and work

clothes, they, my father quickly, I already had that figured out too, that they weren't wearing any coveralls in China. They wore all these battered clothes with straight arms, which kind of encumbered their ability to work, and the, the doctors, you know, didn't have this amount of white coats and so on. That was just the kind of thing that we were eager to do.

Eva Zunterstein: But you forgot to say when you arrived in Shanghai you immediately got a job.

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh yeah, I had a job right away in, in the second day. My cousin and I went out and we both got jobs and they were good enough jobs for us to have an, so all of us could take a little apartment with two bedrooms in the French district and so we worked there. And my uncle went out and he, he was a printer. Not really a printer, he was a, he made, he made some specialized paper, like the frames you use on pictures, like the mattings in pictures, he made that. And he also did a lot of work later on, incidently with the, with the artist that's on display now.

Steve Hochstadt: Schiff.⁸

Alfred Zunterstein: Schiff, yeah, he did, he did those little booklets, matter of fact, you folded them up, I got a whole bunch of them at home. It's a coincidence. And so for us everything went, came up real good, you know, my father came and lo and behold, he's a very engaging person, you know. He'd, he could sell you anything. He went out and came back the first day and he had orders. He got orders for doctors' coats, he had orders for coveralls and then, then somebody asked him whether we could make, see there was very popular white cotton, you know, regular jackets and pants, but made, made out of very thin cotton material, white, had to be white, and there was always demand for that. You know, some people would buy like six or eight of them and every day they come home all sweaty, they'll change. So my father hired a Chinese that was a fabulous worker, and the Chinese would do the sewing and I would do the cutting and all of sudden, you know, we were making money! [laughs] More money than he made when we were in Vienna, you know. [laughs] Things were pretty, pretty dim, you know, in Vienna for businessman. And then it turned out that he got a hold of big outfits like Coca-Cola Company and Bakeright Company and the Canidrome, where the dog races took place, and he brought in big orders. I mean, he, he really, we had to finally, I think, at the very best we had five sewing machines going, you know. And I did all the cutting, I quit my job, you know, after a while. For quite a while, I don't remember how long it was, I worked both things. I'd come home from my job with this Miller Transportation and I, my father had this all laid out for me and I'd start cutting the things and enough work for two or three guys. But then later when we had four or five, then I couldn't do it any more, so I quit my job there and just worked for my father.

Eva Zunterstein: Tell them what you did that you went, that this Mr. Miller donated the trucks.

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh yeah! Yeah, when I worked there for a little while and all these refugees, these transports would arrive, you know, Mr. Miller was very interested in that. Grisha, Misha, and then there was a, there were all together ten brothers and sisters.

Steve Hochstadt: These are Russians?

⁸ Friedrich Schiff (1908-1968) was born in Austria and came to China in 1930, where he worked as caricaturist and book illustrator. He is best known among former refugees for his Maskee: A Shanghai Sketchbook. Schiff's work was on display at the conference in Salzburg, where this interview took place.

Alfred Zunterstein: Russian Jews. Russian Jews. Very religious and the grandfather was a typical old type of, you know, Jewish grandfather. He says, "Fred," he says, "have Russian sausage," and he cut me a big piece of sausage, you know, he's a swell guy. Anyhow, I, I told him, I said, "You know, these people come, there will be about three hundred, four hundred people on this next transport, and there's no, you know, there's hardly a way for them to get to the camps. How will they transport all those clothing?" Because I, we had that problem when my father came, you know, how did we handle that, you know. So, I had to call them and he said, "Well, use one of my trucks." I said, "Well, what about when all these people come? Can we use the trucks?" I mean, that would be a good, you know, that would be a good deed. So he sent these trucks out. And now people, I am always amused when I read in, in the, everybody in, in these books, always comes back that they arrived and there was these cattle trucks that they had to get on, you know. And in reality it was a real break. I don't know whether people realized what the alternative would be. See we didn't have any, in those days there weren't any moving vans around like that, this was a war zone practically, you know. So they should thank Mr. Miller, you know, and like I always do. I thought, you know, how kind he was to me and . . .

Steve Hochstadt: That was your idea to, to do that?

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, I can't swear to you that it was exactly my idea, because I borrowed a truck from him and I said, "Well, thank you very much," and somehow in the discussion comes up this big shipload of refu-, the first really large . . .

END SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . well we, Miller was a very well known, he was a scout leader and Lonya was a, let's see, he was about, in those days he was about 20, so he was a bit older than I, well not, four, five years older. I think he's still alive and I read about him in, in that news-, how is it called Eva?

Eva Zunterstein: That, that newspaper from Israel that's published . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Igud Yotzei Sin.⁹

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah right, I read about him once in a while. And also, of course, that's how he got into the Shanghai Volunteer Corps because, Misha, you know, he took me aside one day, he says, "You know," he knew that I'd been in the Betar, he knew that I had training in boxing and jiu-jitsu, and he, he thought I'd be just the right guy, you know, to be in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. And so I had to lie about my age, you know, make myself a year older, which, white lie, you know, and I got on there and I really enjoyed that training. You know, they were very strict, they were very good, how would I say, our instructors who were usually Scotch Highlanders. They were a very elite battalion, tough, you know, they really used to drill us, you know.

⁹ Igud Yotzei Sin, the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel, was founded in 1951. It publishes a Bulletin several times a year.

Eva Zunterstein: You say you joined the Volunteer Corps but the Jewish . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, it was the, the Jewish, you know, it was the Jewish Regiment.

Steve Hochstadt: When did you join?

Alfred Zunterstein: I joined very early, it must have been in, in, in November or so, right after I came here, maybe three, maybe three, four weeks later. Yeah. And I was so proud, you know, I'd come home and I had a rifle, [laughs] you know, a rifle and a steel hammer and a bayonet, and I felt like a, you know, like I was somebody, [laughs] you know. Although I really didn't much agree to the, the formula of, you know, the Shanghai Volunteer Corps was meant to maintain law and order in the city. And they were used also when there were big labor riots for the cotton workers, you know, and I wasn't about to go out there and shoot at a cotton worker, you know. But I thought that the military training, you know, was so important for a person in my situation, because you never knew what could happen, you know. I wanted the military training, so that was okay.

Steve Hochstadt: You mentioned that you had done some boxing and some judo or jiu-jitsu . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah.

Steve Hochstadt: . . . was that, was that in Austria that you had done that?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, see I was a member of the Betar for a long time and the Betar had training camps. They were at Feldon and am Watersee. And they had very intense training, because the Betar had the Haganah.¹⁰ And that was an advance over what the Betar was, you know, the Haganah was more military, but the Betar was trying to get these young people to, to join the, you know, to be good enough to join the Haganah. So we had not only this training in boxing and judo and jiu-jitsu, not judo, jiu-jitsu, and also had long night marches. God, we had several long marches and I still tired when I still think about that, you know, after all those years. They'd hike us what must have been thirty miles during the night! You know, until we come to some desolate farm area, and there would be a barn and there'd be straw and it was, get some sleep we, you know, we'd go on back tomorrow. And, you know, then they had public transportation to go back, but it was good training, and trying to find something in that connection. Yeah, in, in this Jewish company there were several Betarins, you know, of the, from the, from the . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Russian Jews.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, both, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, and they got along fine, they got along really well, although people say they didn't get along, but I couldn't say that. We got along real fine among, amongst each other. And there's something else I wanted to say in that connection, escaped me now.

Eva Zunterstein: Was it how they also stood guard on the Garden Bridge?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, yeah, okay. One of the, one of the things that was very positive about the, the Volunteer Corps is that it kind of helped maintain a standing against the Japanese when all the Allied troops were being pulled out of Seattle. You see . . .

¹⁰ The Jewish leadership in Palestine created the Haganah, a paramilitary organization, to guard Jewish communities.

Eva Zunterstein: Out of . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Excuse me, out of . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Shanghai.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . out of the Settlement, I wanted to say Settlement. And the reason for that is that the, the International District was policed by British troops, Scotch Highlanders and, and the, and the [unclear] , I think they were. And the western section of it was policed by American troops that were doing more mobile patrolling. So when it got towards the beginning of the war, the, all these Allied troops pulled their people, the Allied ones. And then the, excuse me, Allied ones, the British and, they pulled their troops out. The Americans stayed, because they still had, they were not on the war footing. But the, it wasn't enough, so the Volunteer Corps was used to reinforce the American patrols. Then when the Americans left, then the Volunteers took over all of the protection of the main entry points, and that was not as, you know, people sometimes laugh, they say, "What are you guys going to do with one machine gun if, if the Japanese tanks come rolling in?" but that wasn't the purpose. The purpose was that often drunken Japs, you know, Japanese come across the, the line and, you know, want to run into the District or they want to follow somebody or they want to, you know, arrest somebody and run, I mean, run after somebody and arrest them. And that was kind of a blocking force for them, you know. So there was a positive thing about the Volunteer Corps in my eyes, you know.

As far as the Betar is concerned, I wasn't a Betar member any more then, when I came to Shanghai I had quit the Betar, because I didn't like their attitude towards the other Zionist groups. The Betar was very aggressive and would often cause con-, what you call, confrontations with Zionist groups, like for example, typically like Poale Zion, Poale Zion, or Hashomer, that were left-orientated Zionist groups.¹¹ And I didn't like that, you know, and I didn't go, I noticed the Betar was getting more and more to the right, more and more. And people would, you know, my friends would kid me in school and, and on many occasions they say, "What do you want with this Betar?" you know, "What are you playing soldier here?" or, or they are just like the Nazis with their brown shirts, and I got to the point where I kind of had to agree with, with what people said and I quit.

So what are we going to cover now? You got any questions?

Steve Hochstadt: Yes, so now we're at the point where your family has arrived and your business is doing well. So, say something about what you would do when you weren't working . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, okay.

Steve Hochstadt: . . . what you would do at night. You were young.

Alfred Zunterstein: That's, that's easy. I had gone to, well, what I would do most of the time is go to the race course where, which was a fantastic recreational area. It was, like I just mentioned to Eva a little while ago, it, no matter how hot it was in, in Shanghai, the race course area was always cool. In those days it was a gigantic large oval, you know, [unclear] and in the summertime the various clubs, like the Jewish club and the American club or, you know, all these clubs, they had gigantic tents put up and they had tennis courts there and we could play tennis and so on. And so that was a nice place for me to go and I went to the Jewish club. And I, I more or less didn't do anything really productive in a recreational sense then, in the very beginning.

¹¹ Poale Zion ("Workers of Zion") organizations of Marxist Zionists were started across the Jewish diaspora during the early 20th century. Hashomer was founded by leftist Zionists in Palestine 1909.

But later on I found out that they had, there was a gym where they working out boxing, you know, so, I thought I'll try my luck at that, because I did very good in, in Vienna.

Steve Hochstadt: Where was the gym? Who had the gym?

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, it was somewhere in the, when I, when I got there it was in a state of flux. They just were changing over to another gym. So I only went there once or twice, I don't quite remember where it was, it was somewhere in Avenue Joffre, but the other gym that they, that they substituted then was in the Chinese YMCA, which was a very nice area, you know, they had showers and all that. So I found that more desirable and I started to work out there. And about that time, it was probably maybe a year later, I'd say about middle of '39, I started making contact with some of the boys from Hongkou, you know, Viennese boys especially, that kind of heard about me being here, you know, and came and visited, and I went down there once in a while and we, we were getting acquainted, you know.

And then they started to put up soccer teams and, you know, I'd play along, informally, I wasn't very good at soccer. But other than that I had a bicycle and I'd go out, and one of my favorite things was to go out past the Japanese lines and go into the countryside. I found out how thin they were really spread, there weren't all that many troops there, you know, and I, when they asked me what I was doing, I just told them I was German, you know, and they saluted you, I saluted them, went on. This favorite area was called Seven Hills. And it was, have you ever heard of Seven Hills? Yeah, it was, it's silly but, you know, when they have a flood, flood plain like, like Shanghai was for, for miles and miles and miles, then you, then you long for a little hill, you know, and there were these seven hills, it was just like a little paradise. And some French Catholic order had taken that over and, you know, they'd welcome you to come in and look around, and so that was one of my favorite trips in those days.

So that's how I kept busy, you know, time was getting by and then the war started, the Allies, I've got to tell you this is interesting. My cousin also joined the SVC, you know, I, I brought him in, and as soon as the war started, the British, you know, declared war on Germany. So we put on our uniforms, you know, and we marched down to the British consulate, because you couldn't get in there normally, but we got in, because we had the uniforms on, and we went right to the office there, and we wanted to speak to the person in charge and we volunteering for the British army, my cousin and I, you know. So, they looked at us and they said, "What nationality are you?" And we told them, "Well, we are Austrian refugees," you know. They said, we are enemy aliens, he says, "We can't use you, you know, enemy aliens." So, we turned around, left. And so, we had to get into the fight, so we decided we'd go to the French Consulate. So we went to the French Consulate and they said, "Come on in, yes, yes, write down your name and everything." We wrote it all down and [laughs] the guy says to us, "How old are you?" We made ourselves a year older, you know, so [laughs].

Okay, that was the end of it, didn't hear anymore about it until about a year later. A year later, it so happened, it coincided with the, with the advance of the Germans into France, it coincided. I had these terrible pains in my belly and they called the doctor and found out I had a very bad appendix that had to get out. So they put me in the hospital and there I was with my appendix being out and I had a little tube for drainage and all that, genuine what you'd call a clinically injured person. [laughs] Because at that time, the police came, the French police, and wanted to, to induct me into the army, you see. But they could see they couldn't possibly take me along, so they, they had also gone, I found out later on, to my uncle's place, by then my father already lived in a different place, but they went to my uncle's place and they wanted to take my cousin. [laughs] So my uncle, you know, he got real, he got real energetic about it, and he told them that he couldn't go, because he was only sixteen! [laughs] Or seventeen, whatever he was, he was too young, you know. So they got real upset at this, they said, "Well, you know, we'll arrest him, us, for making a fool of the French," but I, and I'm telling you this, because there's still a story to that. They got about, and this is something nobody talks about, but I, I have it straight, it's the straight scoop. They got about thirty guys to volunteer, along the same line, older people. They took them, they volunteered, they took them to Indochina and put them in the

labor battalions.

Eva Zunterstein: The French Foreign Legion!

Alfred Zunterstein: In the French Foreign Legion, yeah, labor, but labor battalions. And only one came back. The one came back, had beri-beri and his name was Ratz. They had him in the, in the hospital there for many, many months. I don't know whether he survived. So that was that.

And, and the war, you know, became more dynamic, or if you can call that word or more, more of a problem, because the Americans had to leave and they were important for the safety of the, you know, the whole area and the, the Volunteer Corps took over even more, spread pretty thin. So they called us out two, three times every week, and we had to stay all night and, you know, we kind ran out of sleep a little bit. And then one morning we hear the bombing and they, they sank the American patrol boat in the Yangtze River and the war had started all of a sudden [unclear]. And it didn't take long that they, they came out with the Proclamation. Meanwhile I had this big rifle at home, you know, I wore it about because they, they come looking, you know, in the houses and so on. But we were lucky, they never came to our house. And then somebody came by and they picked up all the rifles and I don't know where they ever went with them, they probably went to the underground or something, because I don't think they were ever returned to the rightful place, which was the armory in, in Seattle, but . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Shanghai.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . in Shanghai. So . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Is your family's business going along still?

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh yeah, all the time, all the time doing fairly well. But when, when the war started and, and the, the British, American and other related big factories closed down or were taken over by the Japanese, then business just kind of trickled off to nothing, to practically nothing, but still enough to keep two machines going, I remember that. And then my father had to move to Hongkou, you know, we all moved to Hongkou. And even then he managed to keep one machine going all during the war, all till the very end and made enough money to support himself, so we were very lucky in this respect.

Eva Zunterstein: I had the store front where the house . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, yeah, we had a store front and people would come in, you know. Even, I was surprised, even in the times of, of great calamity, you know, money wise and everything, people come in, want a pair of shorts or they want a shirt, so financially it worked out pretty good for, for him. He was one of the few lucky ones that could, you know, live, well, I shouldn't say not few, there were quite a few. I'm often surprised that people don't bring out the fact that quite a few refugees had formed successful businesses, you know, they've, especially on Bubbling Well Road they had, I've forgotten how now they were called, but they showed Viennese styles, you know, sweaters and leather coats, leather coats or fur coats and, and there was quite a few really fine looking shops, also on Avenue Joffre. I think there were quite a few. And then there were others that managed to manufacture sweaters and manufacture even materials, wool, tubes of wool and, and some went into the business of, you know, restaurants. Then there were a whole bunch of little bars, you know, which the seamier side of life, you know, there were people that had bars and there were some prostitutes, you know, and it, it was just a desire to survive, you know. My sister, for example, she had a job. She was baby sitting all the time, you know, she contributed to her own, you know, her own expenses.

Steve Hochstadt: How old was your sister in relation to you?

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, she was, my sister's three years older, younger, so I'm three years older [laughs]. So, in those days she must have been fourteen maybe, thirteen, fourteen. Went to school for a while and then she found a job taking care of children for a doctor in, matter of fact, she had a pass for quite a long time. I think even to the end she had a pass to go and take care of these children, which is a big advantage if you could get out of the District, you know. And as far as the District's concerned, there's this feeling that, you know, the word ghetto kind of gives it a misnomer, because you always think about the Warsaw ghetto or the Kiev or Lód_ ghetto. It wasn't a ghetto in the sense that we were isolated in there and couldn't get out. First of all, if a person really had to get out, there was ways he could get out and there was ways to get out. And other than that it . . .

Eva Zunterstein: It was a Designated Area.

Alfred Zunterstein: We were, it was a Designated Area, what it really was, because we lived side-by-side with the Chinese and Japanese and some Portuguese and what have you, so we were, you know, right, group of people together, not isolated. You know, ghetto I understand something where a Jew is isolated, you know, he's like, through centuries the ghettos, ghetto streets, Jews lived by themselves and, and they're, they're not mixed in with the population. But here was a, an area that had a manifold, manifold population, so it's something that I find a little bit of a misnomer.

Steve Hochstadt: You said there were ways to get out if you really needed to get out?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, there were ways.

Steve Hochstadt: What kind of ways?

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, there was the way of, of going through the office of, of, you've heard of Ghoya and so on. And there were ways where a guy just simply took a bicycle and snuck out. See there wasn't any, there were areas that were open and there weren't any barbed wires holding you back, you know, you could just go and if you . . .

Eva Zunterstein: If you had the guts.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . if you had the guts, yeah, but there was the Pao Chia, you see, and they would say, "Where is your pass?" you know, but if the Pao Chia was looking the other way, you could be gone, you know.¹² And . . .

Eva Zunterstein: I mean it was a big part of town, let's face it, Hongkou.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, you couldn't, you couldn't get out everywhere. You had to find your places where you were. You know, there was some, some of the main roads they did have a barbed wire and you had to go through there and go around, I

¹² The Foreign Pao Chia Vigilance Corps was an auxiliary police force organized by the Japanese in September 1942, and staffed by refugees. After the creation of the Hongkew ghetto, it guarded the entrances, insuring that refugees had the required passes to enter and exit.

think I remember that.

Eva Zunterstein: But they had those, I remember those like, that you could move, those barricades.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, on these main sections. But there were sections where there were no, you know, no main sections, for example like where we played volleyball, you know, we played volleyball in this soccer field in one corner and often the ball would get pushed over and over the wall into the other area. Well, see the other area, that was out of the, so we'd jump over and get the ball, run off, sometimes the Chinese would run off with the ball and we'd run after them. So that would take us out of the ghetto, you know, so-called ghetto, and if you wanted we could get out that way, you know, at night. And I know people did.

And I had a way of getting out because the, they formed a, what they called Youth Pao Chia. And the Youth Pao Chia was supposed to help out in air raids and so on. And because I, you know, I had been in the SVC and, the Volunteer Corps, and the names were kind of screened for people that had all this experience. I was made a youth leader. So, they gave me, youth leader got a, an arm band with three stripes, which made you like an officer in the Pao Chia. You see, so you could go to the, you could go to the thing and show it to the Pao Chia man, and say you're a, you're, you know, conducting business or something, you know. I, I, I got out several times without having a pass. But it wasn't the kind of thing you really wanted to do if you, you know, had a family or you didn't, you put yourself in danger in doing that.

Michèle Kahn: Did you sometimes go dancing or listen to music?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, I liked to go dancing and we had . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Tell them about the social life on the roof garden and so on.

Michèle Kahn: Yes, yes.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, there was a roof garden and if you could, had the money, you know, then you could go up there and have a tea or a coffee, something, and it wasn't expensive, you know it. Fortunately, like I said, I had, my father didn't pay me a very good salary, but I always extracted enough money from him that I could go to a show on the roof garden.

Steve Hochstadt: What was the name of the roof garden?

Alfred Zunterstein: How was it called, Roof Garden, wasn't it?

Eva Zunterstein: I don't know, I never went, I was too young. But it was on top of the Broadway Cinema.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: Was called the, yeah, and they had some very exquisite bakeries.

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh yeah, they did that. Excuse me a second . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Wiener Konditorei.

Alfred Zunterstein: You talk, I have to go to the . . .

Eva Zunterstein: They had some marvelous, there on that famous Chusan Road, you know, that we Austrians had. There were two very, the other door, two, there was some very fine, excellent bakeries. Not for bread, but for, how do you call, pastry shops.

Michèle Kahn: Yeah, Konditoreis.

Eva Zunterstein: Really, Konditoreis. *Ja, natürlich Konditorei.* Just, they had exquisite cakes, if you could afford them. And they had quite a few restaurants and coffee houses. I never went to any, I was too young. But, and they had one park that we could go to in the District. And, you know, the kids went to school. We had actually a normal life. I mean, we mightn't have, some of us mightn't have had enough to eat, but I mean we weren't starving, you know. So you, you had meat maybe once a week, once a month, and then a little piece, you know. But you survive. You had bread, they had good bread. And the kids, we had fun, I mean, all my friends that, whom I had, you know, and we went to school, we got, we received a good education.

Steve Hochstadt: Which school were you in?

Eva Zunterstein: I went to the Kadoorie school. And, as a matter of fact, when I first, first it was in one of the camps in Kinchow Road when I first got there. We immediately started schools. I mean, it's just absolutely amazing how all this was accomplished. I mean, here people were living in this, when we first came there, we lived in this Kinchow Road Camp. You know, they took us on the, on the truck there and we, we were just there a very short time, we found a room later. So, but they established a school right there in one of those camps. I forget for how long, but that was the first classroom I went to.

And I remember, it must have been, I didn't speak any English, of course. I came to Shanghai, I didn't speak any German, I didn't speak any English. Only Italian. So, it so happened that an uncle of my mother's, they also, we happened to meet on the ship by accident, and we did not come on one of the main liners, because we came from Italy and it was a Greek ship out of Marseille. And it so happens, it must have stopped somewhere and who boarded this ship, but this uncle with his three children and his wife. And one of the daughters was my age, little older, half a year. And she had taken English in school in Germany. So this uncle said, "When you go and enroll Eva, just tell them she speaks Eng-, she says English, and then they can both go in the same class." So, my father said, "Yes, she's had a little bit of English," and they put me in this class, and I didn't know any English. And I sat next to this boy who was a genius. Have you ever heard, he's in Geneva with a, used to work for the International Labor Organization.

Steve Hochstadt: Hans Eberstadt.

Eva Zunterstein: Hans Eberstadt. You've heard of him. Had this big article in, in the Atlantic.

Steve Hochstadt: Right.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, he was a typical nerd. He, the man, the boy couldn't tie his shoelaces. Wore these big glasses, he was very unattractive. And, of course, he knew English, and I sat next to him and I copied. And he didn't like that and he told the

teacher, "She's copying from me!" And I had to go stand in the corner. So when I came back I was really furious at him. And I said, "Oh, *Petze, Petze!*" you know, [laughs] which means, you know . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Stoolie.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, so after that he was very accommodating and he let me copy, I could copy everything. You know, I sort of shamed him into it. But afterwards we got along fine and it didn't take me long, you know, I followed in English and I learned German from my friends, because that was the conversational mode. And then we moved to the, then Mr. Kadoorie, I don't know whether he paid for the whole school, maybe he built this whole complex, I don't know how that came about, and we all moved over there and we had nice class rooms, you know, it was modern. It was nice. And we had good teachers, some of them, others were strictly amateurish. But, and I finished, I went through all the grades. I, it didn't take me very long, because I already started at a higher grade. And, so then by, by the time I reached the last grade I was still fairly young. And I remember, there were only seven of us in class or twelve, and they used to cram algebra, geometry, trigonometry, how old was I, fifteen, physics, chemistry. The only thing I was good at were languages. And you know, they proceeded at such a rapid pace and since most of them were really sharp at math and so on, they had no problem, I had to get coaching. And, but then I got through with that and graduated, and there was no way to go to any further school unless out of the District, and the war was on and my parents wouldn't let me. So I took a few languages here and there, and I even went to Chinese school for just a short time. And then my father said, "You can't just loaf around like that." So he enrolled me in the Gregg School of Business, to my great horror. I didn't want to go there.

Steve Hochstadt: That was Mr. Deman's school?

Eva Zunterstein: Mr. Deman's school, yeah.¹³ And I flunked out of bookkeeping right away. [laughs] After the first day I said, "I'm not going to mess with that. That's too terrible." And we had to learn to type, you know, blind type writers with the thing on the board. It was deadly. I, I said to my father, "What do you think I'm going to be, a little secretary?" And you know, I ate my words for the next twenty-five years. I always had good jobs, even though I reluctantly became a secretary, I, I did it very efficiently and I always had good jobs. And then I worked for the Joint Distribution Committee. And I worked for Mr. Grodsky, who was, you know, the representative. He and his wife came and they had, I forget what he, he was in charge of that one office in Hongkou.¹⁴

Steve Hochstadt: Of the Joint?

Eva Zunterstein: Of the Joint. Well, he was under Charlie Jordan.

Alfred Zunterstein: But he was under Laura Mayer?

Eva Zunterstein: No, no, he wasn't . . .

¹³ William Deman, a refugee from Vienna, started the Gregg School of Business in Shanghai.

¹⁴ Aaron and Geraldine Grodsky came to Shanghai to represent the Jewish Welfare Board and the Joint Distribution Committee after Charles Jordan left. They created the Jewish Community Center for teenagers and young adults at the Kadoorie School.

Alfred Zunterstein: She took over . . .

Eva Zunterstein: . . . she took over then. And then Laura Mayer came and she was very efficient. And when her secretary, who was a young girl, very smart, beautiful young woman, left for Israel, she said she wanted me to work for her and I couldn't stand her. So [laughs] I said, "I'm not going to go and work for her." "Yes, she wants you," and you know, she had the pull, so I had to go and work for her. But I learned a lot, she was, she was one of those super-efficient types. And she'd dictate those wires, you know, I had to type into the typewriter what she dictated, all those names and when they were leaving. It was interesting, really. And so then we, afterwards we were married and I left.

Michèle Kahn: Well, how did you get to know each other? [laughs]

Steve Hochstadt: I bet there's more to that story! [laughs]

Alfred Zunterstein: I worked there, too!

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, he worked there, too, as a, I think I got you the job.

Alfred Zunterstein: I worked for the American Air Force and then I . . .

Eva Zunterstein: No, yeah, yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . yeah, and then I . . .

Eva Zunterstein: He worked there too as a statistician of all things, and we met at the Jewish Community Center, founded by the Grodskys. They had debating groups and all kinds of things. Since, you know, we lived in one room, you never wanted to be home. I was gone all day long as, you know, never was home except for meals. But that was after the war that we met.

Steve Hochstadt: Would you say something about the Grodskys founding the Jewish Community Center?

Eva Zunterstein: Yes, they were social workers and they came from America. I think specifically, I forget, no, Mr. Grodsky had other duties. He was in charge of that office and I was his secretary. And Mr. Grodsky was a very nice man. And Mrs. Grodsky was a very, and he, he was a nice gentleman. Mrs. Grodsky was a nice lady, but she was, you knew who was the boss in the family. And she was tall and slender and she was very proud of her legs, which were very nice.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, she had beautiful legs.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . she had beautiful legs and she'd say, "They used to call me Legs Grodsky." [general laughter] And she was the one who was really, did all the work in setting up this community center. And all the kids joined and we had dances and live bands, of course, and it was fun, wasn't it?

Alfred Zunterstein: Of course.

Eva Zunterstein: Volleyball team and all kinds of activities they set up.

Alfred Zunterstein: [unclear]

Eva Zunterstein: They did a lot of good, yeah. So then they left, didn't they? They went back home.

Steve Hochstadt: And you met at the Jewish Community Center.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, and then we went, well, my parents, I was, I was German quota, my parents were German quota. So it finally came to the point where we were going to the States. A friend had sent them an affidavit, friend from Italy who had moved to the Seattle area, and I was supposed to go with them, of course. I was only seventeen. So I, my, the day before we were supposed to go to the Consulate for the first interview I said, "I'm not going with you." He says, "What do you mean you're aren't going?" I said, "I'm getting married!" He says, "You're what?" I said, "Yeah, I'm getting married." He said, "To whom?" So, I said, "Fredl Zunterstein." And my father, he started humming, and he said, "Are you sure that you want to do this?" I said, "Yes, I'm sure." He said, "You know, you're making your bed. You have to lie in it. Once you make up your mind, that's it. If you're, if you're convinced." Well, first he said, "Well, why don't you come to the States with us and when he follows, when he comes," [laughs] he says, "you can get married," you know. I figured with the Austrian quota and he'd been after me to get married and I always said, "Oh, wait till we leave then." He never believed for one moment that I was going to stand up to my parents.

Alfred Zunterstein: Right.

Eva Zunterstein: Did you?

Alfred Zunterstein: I didn't.

Eva Zunterstein: That was the first time I ever stood up to my parents, because I was a very obedient child.

Alfred Zunterstein: Your father was quite stern.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, I was raised quite, you know, children should be seen and not heard, and all of that. So . . .

Steve Hochstadt: So you said you were going to stay behind.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, and once I, he said, once he saw I was determined he couldn't talk me out of it. He says, "Well, if you sure that's what you want to do." He had no choice, so I was eighteen years and two months and we got married. We were married and Mrs. Grodsky made a big deal out of it. She wanted us to have a big wedding, because we were the first couple who'd met at the Community Center and we're getting married. Then my parents left and we stayed behind.

Steve Hochstadt: So did, did she organize a big wedding for you?

Eva Zunterstein: Well, we all, yeah . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Except for there being a soccer game.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, they came in and ate up everything. So, but it was fun, we had a big dance. Then we left, then we left, we couldn't go on a honeymoon, of course, because we couldn't afford it probably. And we took off in the rickshaw to our, we found this little room for which we had to pay in a very good . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Nine hundred.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . three hundred and fifty U.S. dollars, key money, which was a lot of money. Had this room which we furnished real cute, very cute and had the little, little divider and we had the kitchen there, which I never used of course.

Alfred Zunterstein: It was a very fancy, actually that was considered premier housing.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, it was very fancy housing.

Alfred Zunterstein: Anybody who lived in that was kind of a cut above. Of course, not any more, when we moved in there, because things already had, you know, dissipated. But during the period of the Designated Area, ghetto, you know, that was prime property.

Steve Hochstadt: Where was that?

Eva Zunterstein: In Hongkou on Kumping Road, 30522 Kumping Road. I don't know why I remember those addresses.

Alfred Zunterstein: Brick building and they had nice toilet . . .

Eva Zunterstein: It had toilet and it had a nice bathtub, I mean for the whole house, not just for us, I mean . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Have you got any research capabilities in your work? Because I got something for you that you could maybe research for me.

Steve Hochstadt: Tell me about it, maybe I can.

Alfred Zunterstein: It's also one of my big adventures, adventures, but I've never been able to make heads or tails of it. When I was in, that was during the war, you know, like I said I had, had experience with the Volunteer Corps and all that. And I had a lot of friends in the community. One day a guy shows up and he says, "You know, you seem like the kind of guy we could use for the, we have an underground here that's supposed to help the Allies when the war draws near, and also watch out for people that get shot down, pilots and so on and help out, and we also need observers, observers that can tell when they bomb, you know, what they hit and what happened." So, I was of course, that was right down my alley, you know, I, although I was probably playing with fire, I, the person that talked to me seemed really trustworthy.

Steve Hochstadt: Who was this person?

Alfred Zunterstein: It was a fellow called Goetzl, Harry Goetzl, and he had, he had an antique shop on, I think, Muirhead Road.¹⁵

Eva Zunterstein: Muirhead Road.

Alfred Zunterstein: But you see where you . . .

END SIDE B, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

Alfred Zunterstein: He said that when the time came, you know, there would be people that would band together and, but that for the time being that we'd be very limited. The cells wouldn't be very large, so, you know, I could bring in one or two, three people to help me, but that would be all, you know. So I, I agreed. And then a little bit later they came around, they said that there's this building in Hongkou, which is the tallest building in, in the area besides the jail. The jail, I think was taller. But there were nine flights of stairs, that I had to run up there every time I, I lived very close to that building, run up there every time there was an air raid. It was absurd.

Eva Zunterstein: Was it in the Alcock Heim?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, it was near the Alcock Heim. That tall building, all the Japanese and Koreans lived in there and there weren't any, I don't think there were any refugees.

Eva Zunterstein: It was right on the corner, wasn't it?

Alfred Zunterstein: Some, some Russians. Anyhow, so I did like . . .

Steve Hochstadt: What were you supposed to do up there? Look at the aircraft?

Alfred Zunterstein: I was supposed to observe, because you had a clear view around, and see, matter of fact, I did see two or three B24s get shot down right over the Huangpu River, and then I was supposed to run back to him and let him know, you know, that's it, you know. And when the time came, you know, then we band together and we'd get behind the lines and we'd cause mischief. It sounded all right to me. But there never was any more follow-up, other than they gave me a red armlet and it said on there that I belonged to the, they called it FTP. Now the word FTP is kind of interesting, because as I looked into it later on, it means Francs Tireurs and Partisans. It comes right out of the, out of the . . .

¹⁵ In the Japanese census of foreigners taken in 1944, Heinrich Goetzl is listed as an arts dealer on 18 Haimen Lu, which is the Chinese name for Muirhead Road.

Michèle Kahn: *France-tireurs et partisans.*

Alfred Zunterstein: Pardon?

Michèle Kahn: *France-tireurs et partisans.*

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, right. Comes out of the Maquis movement.¹⁶ And it was, certain parts of the Maquis used this as their designation, and that's, that's rather important, we come back to that a little later. Because I've only really used this to advantage one time. And I'll tell you what happened. After the war, well, the war was over . . .

Eva Zunterstein: '45.

Alfred Zunterstein: '45 in, in, sometimes in . . .

Eva Zunterstein: July.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . July or August or something like that.¹⁷ Just a week afterwards appeared these American airplanes and they drop all these canisters with food for the prisoner camps and they go over the city and they show the American flag, and everybody said "Hurrah, hurrah!" you know, and we, of course, you know, being [unclear] , we said we'll go out to the air field and we'll see what's going on. So about five or six of us on bicycles went out to the air field.

Eva Zunterstein: Lunghwa, wasn't it?

Alfred Zunterstein: Lunghwa, yeah, no, Chiangwan , Chiangwan, went out to Chiangwan air field and got out there and there were some shot down planes. So, one of the guys, you know, he was, you know, a little brash, he gets in to one of these planes and he rattles around on it [laughs] , and before you could even say Jack Daniels, here comes a Chinese military patrol and arrests all of us. And they question us and they, they had this guy that did the rattling, you know, and they took him and they tied his, they put a rope around his neck and they tied him to a tree. They told us to take off, he had to stay. So what we going to do? I mean, these were military police, you know, they weren't going to fool around, they were Chiang Kai-shek's finest. That was that, I think, Twelfth Division or whatever they called into Shanghai. So, I thought what the heck, I've got this armband, you know, that says I'm, I'm a Allied, you know, fighter for the, for the good of the cause, let's see what happens. I commandeered this car that we go down to the Bund, not the Bund . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Bubbling Well Road.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . to the race course, where the American mission had just been installed, they just came two days earlier. And the place was completely filled with people, I mean, it was just practically impossible to get through that wall of people. Put

¹⁶ The FTP was the armed wing of the Communist Party in France.

¹⁷ The war in the Pacific ended with Japanese surrender in August 1945.

on my armlet and I showed this to a policeman and he makes room for me and I march right into this hotel, and I wanted to talk to the American mission, see. So this sergeant there says, "What is your business?" I said, "Well," I says, "I've been working on the underground and we have a problem and I'd like to have somebody help me." So he rings a phone, a guy comes down and he says, "Come with me." So, I go up there, there's a Captain there and he says, "What's your problem?" And I said, "Well, I'm a refugee, you know, and one of our boys got in trouble in the air field by rattling an old Japanese plane and the police has got him, the military police has him and they got his neck tied to a tree." So then the guy started, he got on the phone, you know, and they called some, some Colonel and he says, "Well, they're at it again," or something, "they took this young kid." And they go back and forth, you know, about it and the guy said, "Well, we'll see what we can do about it." He said, "We'll go out there and take a look." So I go out with him and he gets this jeep and he says, "Come in here," I get in the jeep, I felt like I was King of Prussia, you know.

And we drive out to the air field and we come out there and the guy's gone, you know, he wasn't tied to a tree any more. So he called in on one of the officers and they said, "We have him here in this little holding area," and they talked to him and they just let him go.

But then, you know, he started asking me how many refugees and what we were, he was a very highly intelligent man, and what was going on, he was very interested, any collaborators and, you know, with the Germans. And I said, "Well, as far as I know there probably are some, but I don't know their names or who they are," and he wanted to know about the food and about the Japanese especially, you know, and were they very cruel and, you know, I said, "Well, there have been occasions." Then I, he asked me, you know, with this band, you know, and I said, "Well, they came to me whether I'd be willing to participate in case of fighting, whether I would help, you know, behind the line to create enough diversion," and I explained to him the whole situation.

Then I said, "You think you might have a job for me?" [laughs] He says, "You know," he says, "You got something, we usually do hire people when we get into a new area," and he says, "I myself don't do the hiring," he said, "but there's a man," and I still remember his name, because he was German, his name is German [laughs], you see. So not to forget he says, "He is out there on Chiangwan air field in the headquarters area, and you go out there and see what you can do." So I got my bicycle and go out there and I saw that guy, and told him all this story, and he said, "Yeah, we got a job for you, you know, starting, you know, right now." So I was one of the very first people, you know, to get a job there. And so that was it. I worked for the Air Force for quite a long time as an air craft mechanic, and then I helped out with the little bit of translations with the coolies, you know. And it was a very interesting job, because that unit was actually called Executive Headquarters Branch and they, they were supplying all the peace teams that were sent out between the Kuomintang and the Reds, see there were teams. And if you remember the Birch, you know, the Birch Society?¹⁸

Eva Zunterstein: John Birch.

Alfred Zunterstein: John Birch, he was one member of one of those teams. He was shot down in a confrontation with, with a Communist. I think it was a lieutenant or something who wouldn't back down, and he wouldn't back down, the guy lost, you know, with his face, you know, what they call . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear – Chinese phrase]

Alfred Zunterstein: [unclear – Chinese phrase] It's one of the most important things, don't make any Chinese lose his face,

¹⁸ The John Birch Society is a political organization founded by Robert W. Welch Jr. in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1958, whose main concern was the supposed power of Communism in America. Welch raised the accusation that President Dwight Eisenhower might be a "conscious, dedicated agent of the Communist Conspiracy." The Birch Society opposed the civil rights movement, immigration, the UN, the European Union, and the "one world order".

because he'll do desperate things to recover his face. Anyhow Birch got shot down, that's just, got shot. That was the outfit I was working for, the Executive Headquarters Branch, so it was highly interesting. They took me along on the flights when they were supplying the teams, you know, they would get gasoline, sometimes a jeep would break down and we had to haul it back and they were all between here and Peking. Wherever there was a, a face off between the two units they would, you know, inter-, interfere. So it got me the job and it got this guy off the tree or at least got him back home and I've been ever since trying to find out whether there are any FTP members, ask any of these people and nobody, they say, "Yeah, yeah, I've heard of it," but nobody really knows and nobody's a member and you know, I just, I've even asked Professor . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Eber.¹⁹

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . yeah, Eber and she doesn't know.

Steve Hochstadt: Do you know any other names besides Harry Goetzl that, that . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, I don't . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [laughs] Wasn't his name Henry?

Alfred Zunterstein: No, it was Harry.

Eva Zunterstein: Harry.

Alfred Zunterstein: Or maybe it was Henry, I don't know. Put Henry in parenthesis with a question mark. I enrolled one guy, you know, named Maxie Beiner to help me, but he wasn't reliable, so I didn't tell him about the, about the actual FTP underground. I just thought, well, when the time comes he'll do everything I say, because he helped on, on the watch, you know, when there were airplanes. He lived also very close.²⁰ And then there was a guy called Kossackevich. I don't know, is Kossackevich still alive? He also helped on, on the observation part, but I didn't want to involve too many people in, in the actual armlet.

Steve Hochstadt: And you don't know who Goetzl talked to? This was all pretty secret?

Alfred Zunterstein: It's pretty hush, hush. I heard, one time, somebody said . . .

Eva Zunterstein: He asked his best friend and he didn't know anything.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . I said, no, I said, his best friend. He said . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear]

¹⁹ Professor Irene Eber is Louis Frieberg Professor of East Asian Studies (emeritus) at the Hebrew University at Jerusalem.

²⁰ In the Japanese census of foreigners taken in 1944, Max Beiner is listed as a 24-year old employee living at 818/19 Tongshan Lu.

Alfred Zunterstein: [unclear] no, he didn't, I don't think so. I don't believe it. I don't think so.

Michèle Kahn: But had it to do with French?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, okay, now it comes to the interesting part of it. You'd think the whole thing was just kind of a joke, you know, that somebody pulled on me or whatever, you know, because anybody can obtain an armlet and, but there's something interesting now. There did exist in the, in the Shanghai area an underground network, that was led by a former member of, was he, was either the Maquis or in the French underground or something. His name was . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Hilaire du Berrier maybe?²¹

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . yeah, Du Berrier, but what was his, Hilaire, yeah! Hilaire du Berrier. Now he is mentioned in a book, matter of fact, where is my thing, I just remembered, I got this here.

Steve Hochstadt: So you think there may be some connection between that and . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, because it, it's, it kind of points that way. [unclear] I got something, a letter I, I wrote to somebody that inquired of me, because we had a conversation along that, here's the, meanwhile you can see my father and, and his brother together in the First War, in the military exercises in the First War when, you know, like I said, my father got by and his brother, he's the, see that's his brother right there. Yeah, this, this guy here. Both with mustaches my father and. This, here's me in my uniform. [unclear] But here's this letter. This woman wrote to me, I attended a [unclear] reunion in Chicago for former refugees, and Mr. Compart, I talked with Mr. Compart about, I asked him about underground activities, and he went back to this lady and asked her. So she wanted to find out from me. " [unclear] records at the National Archive are now open for research, and I intend to investigate this matter soon using that collection. It would be very helpful, however, if you could give me some information on this." Okay, so I gave her the information. "In the year 1942-45 some European refugees were enrolled in an anti-Nazi, anti-Japanese network called FTP, for the peace, they were told." For the peace, but it really wasn't for, meant to be . . .

Eva Zunterstein: What did you say it was?

Michèle Kahn: Francs Tireurs Parisiens.

Alfred Zunterstein: "It was presented as a free French, pro-Allied group, but there is some evidence that it was run by the OSS. This network extended over the Shanghai area and also included Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, and other nationalities." I know that there were Russians in, in, White Russians.

Eva Zunterstein: Francs Tireurs Parisiens.

²¹ Hilaire (formerly Hal) du Berrier was a barnstorming American pilot who lived in France and possibly worked for French intelligence, then lived in Shanghai until the Japanese jailed him until 1945. He has been described in various books as a spy, traitor, pimp, and patriot.

Alfred Zunterstein: “The main project at the time was the locating and rescue of downed American air crews and their transport into Chinese Army controlled pockets near Shanghai, where they could be moved to the Free China territory. Since there were many spies and agents of the Kempeitai, as well as Gestapo, that were active in the greater Shanghai area, cells of the FTP were very small, three to five members. The cells of the FTP in the Hongkou area had connections into the top levels of the refugee Pao Chia auxiliary street watch and air raid warden headquarters. That allowed for mobility and access to the non-Designated Areas.”

Steve Hochstadt: Was that something that you, is that something that you . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: I wrote this, I wrote this part of it, which is all factual. “That allowed for mobility,” Kranzler, I think, also writes something in there about the Strichs and, Engineer Strichs, I think, and [unclear] or wherever they were supposed to be, working for the Allied underground. They, matter of fact, you know, they, they escaped, the escapees from that, from that building. Have you ever heard of that?

Eva Zunterstein: From the jail?

Alfred Zunterstein: From the jail house there were ten escaped and they were supposed to be with the help of, of refugees that were enrolled. The only references that could possibly allude to FTP activities was in a book by Carroll F. Glines, The Doolittle Raid, where he mentions Hilaire du Berrier, an American civilian . . .²²

..

Michèle Kahn: Du Peron, du Peron, Hilaire du Peron.

Alfred Zunterstein: Pardon?

Michèle Kahn: Du Peron, I think.

Alfred Zunterstein: Du Peron.

Michèle Kahn: Du Berrier, Hilaire du Berrier.

Eva Zunterstein: Have you heard of him?

Michèle Kahn: No, but it’s an American, he is an American.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, well, I think he’s essentially, must, must, when he mentions Hilaire du Berrier, however, “an American civilian who had been a pilot for the Spanish loyalists and later for Chiang. And had joined the French resistance spy network in Shanghai.” Now this is not my talk, this is Carroll F. Glines in the book The Doolittle Raid, page 194. “That would explain the FTP designation Francs Tireurs Partisans, which describes the left wing of the Maquis. I strongly believe that du Berrier was with the O.S.S. He was later captured by the Japanese and held at Fengtai. Good luck for your research.” Now that . . .

Michèle Kahn: Can I see it again, please?

²² Carroll V. Glines, The Doolittle Raid: America’s daring first strike against Japan (Crown, 1989).

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Now there's more to this du Berrier thing, which might appear a terrible coincidence, but there is a book out written, that, about that Korean airplane that got shot down on Flight, remember that?

Steve Hochstadt: Yes.

Alfred Zunterstein: Okay. In that, there's a book written and in that book somebody makes mentioning of the Birch Society, what was his name, MacDonald, MacDonald was the guy's name. And he was on the, on the airplane and they were saying it was an attack on the Birch Society, but . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Right, do you know if this was the Korean passenger liner was shot down by the Soviet . . .

Eva Zunterstein: It was only recently.²³

Steve Hochstadt: It was recently, yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, but this has, this has nothing to do with, essentially with, with this case, but interestingly, it says in here, is, is this a very common name, du Berrier?

Michèle Kahn: No.

Alfred Zunterstein: No, okay. "Perhaps the fullest version of the theory was set forward by Hilaire Du Berrier, Larry MacDonald's advisor on foreign affairs." So, you see, unless this is a real coincidence, this guy has been working for, you know, in foreign affairs, he must have some, you know, because he used to work for the O.S.S. There's a lot of these guys after they got out of the O.S.S., they're, trying to make a living and they threw in with the paramilitary or, or [unclear] extremists or whatever, it's always kind of a, it's like a possibility wave, you know, but anyhow. So there you are.

Michèle Kahn: I can ask some French people if they know about it.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, so this is, this is the question I had [laughs] was I just fooled or, you know, was there such a thing or, or and you know something? I, I, I actually cannot find that armlet. I, you know, years later tried to find it, couldn't find that armlet. Disappeared.

Steve Hochstadt: When did you join?

Alfred Zunterstein: This, this thing? I would say that was, I don't have an exact date, but I would say that was in probably in '44, late '43, in '44.

²³ As a Democratic Senator from Georgia, Larry MacDonald became President of the John Birch Society. He was on Korean Air Flight 007 when it was shot down by Soviet planes in 1983.

Steve Hochstadt: So you were in it for quite a while.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, at least a year, you know, while the air raids were taking place, you know. So I faithfully ran down and, and knocked on his door and told him, you know, this and this happened, you know. It's a puzzle.

Steve Hochstadt: Eva, if I can go back to something far back you said, how did you, how did you end up in Shanghai as a refugee who only spoke Italian? So I guess I need to start from the beginning of your story.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, it's very easy. My, my parents were married in 1928 and went on their honeymoon to Italy. My, both my father and my mother were not the usual type of parents. In other words, my mother used to, met my father on a ski trip and they were both very interested in sports. And my father belonged to this Berliner Sport Klub. And so that's how they got to know each other, on the train going on a ski trip. After they were married, they went on their honeymoon to Italy and they liked it there very much.

When they came back, well of course they, my father was, I don't know what he was working at. Yeah, he went into business with, he lent a friend of his some money which he had. He had a small inheritance apparently, and he lent this friend of his, a German, not Jewish, some money, because his family, although they had money, wouldn't give him any, because he had married a woman who had been divorced and had a child. Okay, so he lent him this money. Well, they had a, my parents, as being outdoor people, they had one of those *Klappe Faltboots*, and they used to go and on the Wannsee or wherever in Berlin, in their little boat. And my father looked Jewish, my mother didn't. So one day they were rowing along there [laughs] and from a bridge a bunch of Nazis or, you know . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Hooligans?

Eva Zunterstein: . . . hooligans and said "Jew, why don't you row to Jerusalem!" or Palestine, I don't know. So, my mother said to my father, "I don't like this," she says. "I don't want to be a second-class citizen. Let's move away from here." They were always, so they moved to Italy. They moved to Milan and my father eked out a living being a representative selling knives or whatever, and he traveled all over Italy and eked out a living, you know, not, it was very hard. And I went to public school and, you know, it was, well, when, after we got there, we, he had rented the house and the neighbors had a girl who was my age, and they said, "Why don't you send her on vacation with us." They had a little house out in the country, so I went with them.

Steve Hochstadt: How old were you then?

Eva Zunterstein: Five. And when I came back, after a month, I no longer spoke German. I probably didn't forget it, but I refused to speak it any more, so it was Italian from then on. And when I, when I came, and then in '39 or late '38, I could no longer go to public, to the regular school. I had to go to Jewish school, which I hated anyhow. And the declarations must have come out, I just recently read a book and my parents are both dead. My father, I, we often asked him to write down about his life and all that, and he was a good writer, but he always refused. Maybe it was, he didn't want to face his mortality, I don't know. But anyhow, I never asked him, but after reading this book The Italians in the Holocaust, [unclear] you know, where they said, Jews, non-Italian Jews, we weren't citizens, had, you know, they promulgated those laws.²⁴ So my father, we didn't have an affidavit or anything, there

²⁴ Susan Zuccotti, The Italians in the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival (University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

was no place to go, didn't have any money except good furniture, good china, lots of crystal. So everything was put up for sale, they sold it and we had enough money for the tickets. And we sailed from Marseille on this tub of a Greek boat, "Athos II", to Shanghai. And my parents thought this was a great adventure.

We, we got there and this room was, actually it was a pretty nice room that we moved into in a nice old Chinese house, which was owned by refugees, Austrian refugees, who had put, had inserted in a heel of their shoe a big ruby. Which they'd smuggled out, because these people couldn't take anything. So with that ruby they bought this fabulous, big Chinese house with front court and back court and had lots of rooms and they rented those out. So we moved in there, had this nice big room, two beds with the straw ticking, a plywood table with four drawers. I still remember, you know, I was only nine years old, but I remember my mother embracing my father and she'd said, "*Ach*," she says, "Werner, I am so happy to be rid of all that stuff!" You know, she, because I remember, you know, they had, they had fabulous crystal and, you know, these big cut crystal and so on. And some of the things were still wedding gifts with the cards on it, you know, you didn't have one set of china, you had four sets of china. All for twenty-eight people or, you know, all that useless stuff they used to have. And tablecloths and so on. Well, I still, my mother died and I got a part of the silver she had left and so on. And you know something, I still have brand new dish towels from, which she got for her dowry, which she had in her dowry. Brand new! Can you imagine, must be, I'm sixty-five, they were married sixty-six years, sixty-seven, still they are brand new. So it's really funny.

Anyhow, she was happy, my father was happy. They were completely unencumbered, free, they were free souls, you know, they were different. My father spoke six, seven languages. He even studied Chinese. He wrote like a fourteen year old, he was very good with a brush. He was artistic, he painted, and of course they were, he was such a, I mean, he was a Renaissance man, you know. His friends, everybody always envied them, even in Seattle, they had lots of friends. And they never could figure out, my parents never had much money, but they always had a better time and more fun than most people, you know. And they loved to travel, like they'd come to Europe, they'd buy a, they'd have a VW camper and they'd camp all over Europe, for one year, one and a half years! They'd be gone. So, and they had friends everywhere, of course my father is, he was, well, he grew up bilingual because his mother was born in Lausanne. And she spoke French, of course, and so he grew up bilingual. And so my parents enjoyed China very much. When my father first, when we first came to China he got a job in the export/import business of an American company. He did very well and then, of course, the war came and they closed down, and then he, he eked out a living, my father always eked out a living, giving language . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Lessons.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . lessons. German, French, English, he had Chinese pupils and, you know, he sort of enjoyed that.

Steve Hochstadt: What were your parents' names?

Eva Zunterstein: Mannheim, Werner and Hilde and, they were quite, they were characters. My mother participated in the Senior Olympics at eighty. She went to the Senior Olympics, she came second in the back stroke and third in speed walking.

Alfred Zunterstein: Although she had a cancer.

Eva Zunterstein: Although she was suffering from multiple myeloma. Strong . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: She was quite a lady.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . mentally strong, she was strong. So she just died a few years ago. My father died in 1980.

Alfred Zunterstein: You know, I just had a recall. I think it's Heinz Goetzl, but all three names are possibilities.

Steve Hochstadt: Okay.

Michèle Kahn: Do you remember what the musicians play at, played at your marriage?

Eva Zunterstein: The music?

Michèle Kahn: The music they played.

Eva Zunterstein: All I remember, we had this Rabbi Kantorovsky , and he was known for his long-winded speeches.²⁵ And Fred told him, he says, "Make it short, make it short." And he kept on talking and talking and talking, and we pushed each other and looked, and I had to, we both had to laugh.

Alfred Zunterstein: Did we, did we have music?

Eva Zunterstein: We had a band playing!

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, we had a band playing, didn't we?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, we had a big dance afterwards.

Steve Hochstadt: Whose band, do you know anything, can you remember whose band? Immigrant, an immigrant band?

Alfred Zunterstein: Probably.

Eva Zunterstein: I don't remember.

Alfred Zunterstein: They made the arrangement for that . . .

Eva Zunterstein: The Grodskys.

Alfred Zunterstein: The Grodskys probably did.

Eva Zunterstein: We used to have dances over there all the time, we had, at the community center. We had dances, we had plays, we had all kinds of cultural.

²⁵ Dr. Georg Kantorovsky was one of several Reform rabbis in Shanghai. His daughter Eva is one of the main sources for James R. Ross, Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China (New York: the Free Press, 1994).

Steve Hochstadt: Plays put on by the members?

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Discussion groups and . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, they really did so much for us, they really did.

Alfred Zunterstein: We also had another person that did a lot for us was Alvin Fine, have you ever heard of him?

Steve Hochstadt: He was the Chaplain for the U.S. Army?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah.

Michèle Kahn: Irwin Fine?

Alfred Zunterstein: Pardon? Alvin.

Steve Hochstadt: Alvin.

Michèle Kahn: Alvin.

Alfred Zunterstein: Alvin, Alvin and he had, he had an assistant, I think his name was Feldman. He was from the Jewish Welfare Board and he was, Fein was with the Army, with the Air Force.

Steve Hochstadt: I don't think I've ever heard the name Grodsky mentioned before. That's why I was asking you about that.

Eva Zunterstein: You've never heard . . .

Steve Hochstadt: I don't think, they mentioned . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Aaron Grodsky . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Aaron?

Eva Zunterstein: Aaron with two A's. Nobody has ever mentioned the Grodskys, of the young people?

Steve Hochstadt: And his wife? What was her name?

Eva Zunterstein: Gerry, Geraldine.

Alfred Zunterstein: Geraldine, it was.

Eva Zunterstein: They live in, I don't know whether he's still alive, but she must be pretty old by now. How old were they? They must have been in their forties then.

Alfred Zunterstein: I couldn't tell you.

Eva Zunterstein: They're probably dead by now.

Alfred Zunterstein: There was a picture of them in the paper not too long ago, in the [unclear] . I've seen a picture, or maybe, yeah, must've been . . .

Eva Zunterstein: They were just really wonderful. They did so much for us.

Steve Hochstadt: Did the money for the Jewish Community Center come from the Joint?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

Steve Hochstadt: And they did the work. They did the work.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, they were employed by the Joint.

Steve Hochstadt: And when you said that there were plays?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Steve Hochstadt: Who was organizing them, who would be the director, must've been someone . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Well . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Her father!

Eva Zunterstein: My father worked in the Community Center, for the Community Center too, for a while. My father used to put up the, the, the quiz shows.

Alfred Zunterstein: Quiz shows, yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: We had very sophisticated quiz shows, didn't we?

Steve Hochstadt: Does the name Gary Bigus mean anything to you? He's a man I met in California, who said he'd had

something to do with the quizzes.²⁶ The All-Shanghai quizzes or ...?

Eva Zunterstein: Well, they did compete against other clubs, didn't they?

Alfred Zunterstein: Bigus does sound familiar to me.

Eva Zunterstein: Hmm?

Alfred Zunterstein: Bigus sounds familiar to me, but not that I could tell for sure.

Eva Zunterstein: Because didn't they, didn't the different debating quiz teams compete?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, yeah, I used to do one.

Eva Zunterstein: You used to be one.

Steve Hochstadt: One, were you on one of these teams? Tell me about it, because Bigus mentioned it and . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, who was on it? Walter Furedy?

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear] Dzialowsky.

Alfred Zunterstein: Dzialowsky, yes. [unclear] in Israel and, you know, the . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Hank Topfer.

Alfred Zunterstein: Hank Topfer. He's now in Australia.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, Georgi Fischer.

Eva Zunterstein: George Fischer.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he lives in Vienna, went to Vienna.

Eva Zunterstein: Peter Schatner wasn't on it, was he?

Alfred Zunterstein: Super kid, Georgi Fischer, really.

²⁶ See interview with Gary Bigus, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, June 9, 1990.

Eva Zunterstein: Who else was on it?

Alfred Zunterstein: [unclear]

Eva Zunterstein: No.

Alfred Zunterstein: No? You sure?

Eva Zunterstein: I don't know. I don't know, I don't remember.

Steve Hochstadt: What kinds of questions? What were the quizzes about?

Alfred Zunterstein: They were about, matter of fact, my friend from the U.P., from the, he was, what's his name, he was the best in the . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Oh, Mike.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . the best, oh, Joe Jacobs.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: Joe Jacobs. Did you know Joe Jacobs?

Steve Hochstadt: I know Rose Jacobs, Rose Horowitz.²⁷

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, that's maybe his sister. I know both of them.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, what about him?

Alfred Zunterstein: He was . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Ambassador.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . he was a referee during the war . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Oh, was he?

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . on that one, yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: What were the questions? I don't remember.

²⁷ See interview with Rose Horowitz, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Los Angeles, June 28, 1991.

Alfred Zunterstein: I don't know who put them up. I think some independent . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Well, didn't Werner make up some of the questions?

Alfred Zunterstein: No, he was on the opposing team that . . .

Eva Zunterstein: I mean for our, we had different teams . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: The seniors against the juniors, but the seniors lost. Her father was on that. Remember that?

Eva Zunterstein: My father was in that?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he was on the quiz team.

Steve Hochstadt: So it was the adults against the younger people, the younger people won, or that was . . .

Eva Zunterstein: No, didn't they have various debating teams . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Joe Jacobs was at the reunion in Catskill, wasn't he?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, in '85.

Alfred Zunterstein: Because I got a picture of him and I used to know him quite well in Shanghai. We were so pleased to see him.

Eva Zunterstein: Wasn't he an ambassador for the state of Israel? Didn't he . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he was, how do you, he wasn't ambassador, what's the other word? What else could he be?

Steve Hochstadt: Consul?

Alfred Zunterstein: Consul, no. Representative, attaché, something like that he was. Yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, well, they . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: You've heard of Alvin Fein then?

Eva Zunterstein: Everybody's heard about Alvin Fein.

Steve Hochstadt: I've just heard his name. Tell me some more things that he did.

Alfred Zunterstein: Have you heard of an organization called Tikvah? He created the Tikvah.

Steve Hochstadt: Say more about that, about what they did and who joined.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, I was a member of Tikvah, for one, and [laughs] I remember . . .

Eva Zunterstein: That's the one he remembers!

Alfred Zunterstein: No, no, I know quite a few. Your, your friend, you know, piano, the piano . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Oh, Walter Saphir?

Alfred Zunterstein: Walter Saphir and his brother . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Kurt Saphir.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . Kurt Saphir. And let's see. Bobby Lange. He was a member of Tikvah. [unclear]

Steve Hochstadt: Was it refugees, refugee young people who were . . . ?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, young, young most of them were pretty, let's see. They were all boys, you know, and those days, you know, no equality! [laughs]

Steve Hochstadt: And what kind of things did you do?

Alfred Zunterstein: Tikvah? Well, we just had meetings and discuss things and, you know, talk philosophical things and religious things and do that. If you really want to, I can probably find, if you want to, I can, I can look around at home, I might have a back issue of it somewhere.

Steve Hochstadt: That would be great.

Eva Zunterstein: Oh, the Jewish Community Center, they also had their own newspaper. What was it called? They published it monthly.

Alfred Zunterstein: "The Future."

Eva Zunterstein: "The Future", a monthly newspaper called "The Future". I have a friend who still has copies, I don't.

Alfred Zunterstein: I should remember more of the kids.

Eva Zunterstein: Freddy, it's been fifty years ago.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, that's a long time, you know. You think you can do something with my, with my adventures?

Steve Hochstadt: I can ask other people. That's what I can do, ask other people. And if I look at any records, but I don't think I'll

find anything in archives about that. I think it's other people that . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: But at least you could find out whether, would it be possible to find out whether the Hilaire that worked for MacDonald, is the, is the same Hilaire that mentioned in that, in that book.

Steve Hochstadt: That, that would be possible to find out.

Alfred Zunterstein: Because that book, you've got that book. You wrote down that book.

Steve Hochstadt: Yes.

Alfred Zunterstein: Because the . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Yes, that would be possible.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . the book clearly states that he was part of that crew that was called [unclear] you know, so apparently, I mean he's, it's no phantom, it's there. And if you can link him to the other book, the shoot-down of the Korean airliner, then at least you got that step.

Steve Hochstadt: Right.

Alfred Zunterstein: Then it'd be a question of asking him whether he ever did an underground job in, onto the refugee community or the Hongkou community.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, he wouldn't have been, no, it would have been Shanghai, no, he's too big a shot, if he was in . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: [unclear] It wouldn't come that way, [unclear] because I have a suspicion there were quite a few others involved.

Steve Hochstadt: Now, I talked to a man in Florida named Ernie Sloan, who was a German, but not a refugee. His family went to Hong, went to Shanghai before 1933 for his father's work and they stayed there. And he told me that he worked for an American underground organization that had some connections with the O.S.S. during the war and he had a contact named Peter Wong, who was a Chinese American. And again, I have, it's so hard to check these stories, because I don't, he didn't know very many other names, and they are different names than the ones you mentioned.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, they wouldn't work that way, you see. They worked three or four at a time, you see.

Steve Hochstadt: So separately.

Alfred Zunterstein: Because if the Kempetai get a hold of you, you know, they'd chop, their heads would get chopped off in no time.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, they torture them first.

Alfred Zunterstein: People would, people would just squeal real fast, so they were very, very careful.

Michèle Kahn: I know somebody wrote a book with the chief of the French police. Maybe he could know. So I will ask her.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, if you say this man was, worked underground with somebody from the O.S.S . . .

Steve Hochstadt: So maybe there's some connection.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, according to this book that was Hilaire territory, see.

Steve Hochstadt: I think there were underground organizations and you may, you were young at the time, so they might not have given you . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear]

Steve Hochstadt: . . . an important job, but they gave you a job that was useful and didn't tell you very much more about what was going on.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, from some slight, you know, it's more kind of a recall and I can't really put my finger on it, but I think that it went into the leadership of the Pao Chia . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Well, that's what you wrote in the letter.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . and the thing, you know, I mean that's my suspicion. I can't put my hands on it. But the Kranzler book does mention some role of, of refugees in, in helping the escape of the . . .²⁸

Steve Hochstadt: Right.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . and that would be right in that area. Who arranged that escape, you know. And . . .

Eva Zunterstein: How, how did anybody escape from that jail, I mean.

Alfred Zunterstein: It's, it's not, important to me but . . .

END SIDE A, TAPE 2

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 2

²⁸ David Kranzler, Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945 (Yeshiva University Press, 1976).

Eva Zunterstein: ... young people, everybody wanted Americans to win.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, of course. How many were willing to do something to help out, than there, I'm sure there were quite a few because ...

Eva Zunterstein: And there must have been a lot of Chinese too.

Alfred Zunterstein: I, I talked to people, you know, and they said, you know. "And comes to it," they said, "We'll probably have to fill a few Molotov bottles." Do, do something to help, throw up some, you know. Everybody was, I mean, it was just understandable, yeah. They were all by then, most guys in their eighteen, twenty, twenty-two, twenty-five, and they liked to do things.

Steve Hochstadt: There's one more thing I'd like to ask you about and that's about boxing.

Alfred Zunterstein: Okay, ask away.

Steve Hochstadt: About who was training you all, who was, if there was a trainer and who you were fighting against and what it, someone told me you were a champion, a Chinese champion. Who you were fighting against?

Alfred Zunterstein: Okay. Well, I was Chinese champion by default, because I fought against a guy and it was more or less like a draw, you know, but he was awarded the fight. And then they said, because it was so close we have to re-fight it, you know, and then he wouldn't, didn't want to re-fight it, so they said, "Well, it's yours." But I never considered that, because I would have liked to fight him. He was a very nice fellow and a very highly technical boxer and I would have liked to. I thought that next time I would know how to fight him.

Steve Hochstadt: Who was he?

Alfred Zunterstein: He was called Bobby Groucher. Bobby Groucher and he was a Portuguese kid.

Eva Zunterstein: Tell about when you came to, to the States and you saw the movie. Who was that?

Alfred Zunterstein: Oh, yeah, well, that's a good story, but it really has ...

Eva Zunterstein: He was such a good boxer.

Alfred Zunterstein: ... it has some bearing on this. Maybe, let's clear up what he wants to know first and then we'll ...

Steve Hochstadt: Just about the organization. I'm interested in the way these things were organized.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, it was well organized actually, because the fellows that did most of the training were old hands at

that. One was Dagobert Reich, Reich, Reich, Reich like the Reich. And the other was a fellow called Buchbaum, Buchbaum.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, didn't he have cauliflower ears?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he did, he was a very good fighter in his own right and, of course, you know, he trained some of the younger kids. But, you see, we were just amateurs. There's a whole group of really good fighters that were professionals. And that were way above our league, you know, because they got more attention and they had more facilities. And the best known one of our fighters was . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear]

Alfred Zunterstein: No, he just told us the story of . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Kohn, was it Kohn?

Alfred Zunterstein: No, remember the story that we'd gotten about [unclear] wanting to beat up [unclear] and then this guy came to help and pulled him off. Remember? Lefko! Sam Lefko. He was the top refugee fighter. He was a professional. Sam Lefko.

Steve Hochstadt: So he was able to make some money by fighting?

Alfred Zunterstein: He made, he made, I think, made good money, but I think he paid for it.

Eva Zunterstein: Who was the Golden Glove champion from New York State whom you saw in the . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Ok, well let me, let me say this. We had a championship, okay, at the, at the Alcock home. They had a big . . .

Steve Hochstadt: When is this?

Alfred Zunterstein: Now I'm talking to you about forty-, must have been after the war . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear]

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . probably '45, '46, '46 they were going to have a championship. So they had about fifteen to twenty fighters, all amateurs and they wanted to establish the, the champion. So they paired them off, you know, as they usually do. Win, lose, win, lose until they finally came to the finals, okay. Well, I did the stupid thing, I had so much confidence, I fought welterweight and, welterweight and lightweight both. In other words I, I had double entry, which was very idiotic. Anyhow, I managed to fight my way all the way to the finals in the lightweight and all the way to the finals in the welterweight. But now comes the problem, you see, in one evening you've got to fight twice, although those are just three-minute rounds, you know, three three-minute rounds. So it wasn't all of that for a guy in good condition and I was in good condition, it wasn't difficult, it shouldn't have been too difficult. Anyhow, I get the first kid, he was a lightweight like me and he was considered the best of the,

of all the kids there.

Steve Hochstadt: What was his name?

Alfred Zunterstein: His name was Kurti Wolf. He was a baker, a professional.

Eva Zunterstein: Now he lives in San Francisco.

Alfred Zunterstein: He's now in San Francisco, yeah. And I had a knock-down, drag-out fight with him, I mean, I had my hands full. I mean, he was good. And I won, but I won ugly. You know, they say that I won, only won because I pushed him in the corner and I kept kicking, hitting away on him and I didn't really do the fine boxing that I usually do, and I had to, because the kid had a strong punch, you know, he was, he was good. Okay, so now it's the next thing. Now I've got to fight Al Lako and Al Lako was a husky, tall kid, I mean he was, for his weight, you know, he looked . . .²⁹

Eva Zunterstein: He was tall for a refugee.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . he looked more like a, like a half-heavy than he looked like a welterweight. The first thing he did, we got in the ring and I, I started to go into a stance and he whacks me a straight punch to the . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Ribs.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . heart, you know, right here. I went like this, and I just couldn't breathe any more. You know, I thought I was going to die, you know. So I just put my hand down and I just gave up, you know. What could I do, I couldn't breathe, I couldn't fight. So they got booed, you know, of course. The newspaper next day said, *ich hab aufgesteckt*. [laughs] You know the expression in German, *aufstecken*? *Aufstecken* in German, no? It means that you're giving up something that you don't really have to give up, you know, in other words, you just kind of, I don't know . . .

Eva Zunterstein: You throw in the towel.

Alfred Zunterstein: So that was that. Now comes the finish of the story, that Al Lako went on to become a very well known fighter in New York, amateur fighter, and he won the Golden Glove championships in, in New York. And . . .

Eva Zunterstein: That was in '49.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, '49.

Eva Zunterstein: '49.

Alfred Zunterstein: And when I arrived in the United States, I arrived at San Pedro and I went to San Francisco and waited for Eva, and out of boredom I decided to go to the, in San Francisco they had something which kind of unique, it was nothing but . . .

²⁹ Zunterstein refers to Alfred Kohn, known as "Lako", derived from *der lange Kohn*.

Eva Zunterstein: Newsreels.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . newsreels. And [unclear] I've always loved newsreels. So I go buy my ticket and I open up the, they had, it was dark, you know, they open up the thing and I see this black guy and this white guy fighting and then the white guy falls down, and the guy says, "Al Lako lost this fight by a knock out." [laughs] Now how's the chance of that happening, I mean, in reality. If a guy told you something, would you believe it? I mean that's unbelievable, you know! Anyhow, he got to be Golden Glove champion of New York and they fought for the United States National Championship, and it was in Chicago and there, some black guy, I think that black guy later on turned out to be also a top fighter, but he lost. Lako was good.

Steve Hochstadt: Did you ever hear of a fighter named Max Ackerman?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, an older man.

Steve Hochstadt: Yeah, I met him in . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: He was my second one time. Matter of fact, he could have been my second when I lost that fight against Al Lako, Al Lako, it could well be.

Steve Hochstadt: I met him in Los Angeles and talked to him.³⁰

Alfred Zunterstein: Did you talk to him about fighting?

Steve Hochstadt: Yeah, he told me he was, there was an article in the newspaper, he showed me an article . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: He was a small man.

Steve Hochstadt: Thin man.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, thin and small.

Steve Hochstadt: But he was still in good shape, he was about ninety years old, but he still was in good shape.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he was my second, I'm pretty sure, because somehow he was in, maybe he was the referee or he was the second, I don't know. I really can't say for sure, but I've heard of him. See how things come around.

Steve Hochstadt: Yeah, that's the idea.

Alfred Zunterstein: What goes around comes around. So that's the boxing part of it. And then when it came to the point of people just started to introduce me, they say, "That's the boxer Zunterstein," then I figured it was time to leave this [general laughter] and go to other pursuits. That's why . . .

³⁰ See interview with Max Ackerman, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Los Angeles, June 7, 1990.

Eva Zunterstein: They, they said, "What, you're going with the boxer Zunterstein?" [laughs]. I didn't know he was a boxer.

Alfred Zunterstein: There's no percentage in being a boxer, it's, your reputation precedes you, and people pick on you and . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Well, they think because you box, you're dumb or something.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, that's right.

Eva Zunterstein: And look at Kurti Fischer, Whirlwind Fischer, he became a professor.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, Kurti Fischer you know that, Kurt Fischer?

Steve Hochstadt: That he was also a boxer?

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, we were in the same, we were in the same stable, we had the same coach.

Steve Hochstadt: Who was your coach?

Alfred Zunterstein: We sparred [unclear] Kurt Fischer didn't look anything like he looks now. He had curly hair, he was slim.

Eva Zunterstein: You don't, you don't look anything like [laughs] . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: No, I don't. Yeah, and he was always running around with some papers under his arm, you know, always studying, training, boxing. He would, I think this American boxer was his idol, the one that was a, can't think of his name, but there was a boxer that, was a absolute intellectual and very brainy. But I can't remember now what his name was. Gene Tunney, no, could it be Tunney?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, he was, he was very brainy, yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: It might have been Tunney, Tunney.

Steve Hochstadt: Do you have questions, more questions?

Michèle Kahn: No, no.

Steve Hochstadt: You've given us a lot of your time.

Alfred Zunterstein: We've used up a lot of your tape!

Steve Hochstadt: Yeah!

Alfred Zunterstein: Fun, fun doing it. I'm sure I'm going to go home and when I'll go to sleep, and then I'll remember what I

forgot to tell you, that's very important.

Michèle Kahn: [unclear]

Steve Hochstadt: That'll be all right, you've told me a lot. Thanks very much.

Michèle Kahn: Thank you very much.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, it's all cobbled it. Can you arrange the tape so you can cut, snip, snip, snip here and there? [laughs]

Steve Hochstadt: I like the way you told your stories.

Michèle Kahn: Yeah, it was good.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, you know, it gives a different outlook from many of the stories you heard, where everybody said how really horrible things were and, you know, they showed, well, many of the young people said they had a good time.

Alfred Zunterstein: Well, I often try and analyze this in my mind, that people are so negative about the Hongkou experience, you know.

Eva Zunterstein: And the Chinese, you know. I think many of them didn't give them a chance. They thought they were like the British or something, they looked down on the Chinese. The Chinese are highly intelligent, educated, I mean, they have all this culture, cultural background. I mean, they were cultured when the Europeans were still barbarians.

Alfred Zunterstein: I've worked with Chinese all, you know, like I said, my father had about, you know, up to five or six machines working there, and there were Chinese tailors and they weren't exactly gentlemen, but we never had any problems with any of them, you know, they were just super people.

Eva Zunterstein: My father had a number of Chinese friends. As a matter fact, I still have correspondence, "Dear Uncle Werner," they write them in . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, it is touching.

Eva Zunterstein: Touching!

Alfred Zunterstein: It was really touching that he helped somebody with something and he . . .

Eva Zunterstein: "Would you send me a calculator," or something and . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: And they will not steal. Chinese are honest, honest people as a rule, will not steal.

Eva Zunterstein: They were so poor like, like that, you know, these Chinese who were here, they took exception to the refugees complaining about how hard they had it and that the Chinese had it much worse, of course they did. I mean, it was terrible.

When I grew up and went to school and there were these little bundles of straw wrapped in straw, the babies, you know. Sometimes they had to kill their own children, because there was no food! I mean, they lived in such abject poverty. In the wintertime and it got cold, you know, there were so many corpses in the doorways. They'd come in the morning with the carts and haul them off.

Alfred Zunterstein: It made real believers out of the older generation as to who was right and wrong in the battle, you know [unclear] Chiang Kai-shek.

Eva Zunterstein: You know, it was absolutely no surprise. America sent all that aid to China to Chiang Kai-shek and it never trickled down to the people. Never! Corrupt!

Alfred Zunterstein: No, matter of fact, they came, they came by the, I know this for a fact, they came by the boat load, the rice and it, instead of it being delivered to people, it went into Chiang Kai-shek's go-downs and they sold the stuff themselves, you know, at exorbitant prices on the black market, they sold the rice, and the people were going completely, you know, starving from hunger.

Eva Zunterstein: Terrible.

Alfred Zunterstein: It was just the most corrupt.

Eva Zunterstein: What happened in China . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: This guy writes about that, there's this, there's a book out that's very good, The Man Who Stayed Behind, it's about a fellow called Ritten-, Rittenberg, right?³¹

Eva Zunterstein: Rittenberg. He lives in [unclear] now, he married a Chinese lady.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he does.

Eva Zunterstein: He joined, he was a representative of UNRRA.³²

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, first he was a G.I.

Eva Zunterstein: First he was a G.I.

Alfred Zunterstein: And he liked, liked the Chinese. And he became, then he got discharged.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, and he went back as UNRRA.

³¹ Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, The Man Who Stayed Behind (Simon and Schuster, 1993).

³² UNRRA stands for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Alfred Zunterstein: And he wanted to come back, so he joined UNRRA. He came back to UNRRA and he noticed all this corruptness and corruptions, you know, so he finally, I guess he got in touch with Zhou Enlai and he joined the Red Army, and . . .

Eva Zunterstein: He never, he was in prison for many years during the Cultural Revolution, twice, and he still was a believer. Then finally after he was released a second time, I think, he then left. Now he has a Chinese wife and two daughters and he lives up there in a suburb of Seattle. I think he still lives there. He wrote this book and what, he has all these high connections, because he was with Zhou, friend of Zhou Enlai, he was way up there and so now he has all these connections and the business people, you know, he helps establish connections, you know.

Alfred Zunterstein: Yeah, he does help . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Actually, his wife is the one who's the efficient one and does, she's, he, so like this Mr. [unclear] , he's an interesting type.

Alfred Zunterstein: You know, there was a typical case where, if they would have left things alone, and not interfered on the side of Kuomintang, they could have saved their country, you know, the Chinese were ready for a democracy based upon the universities and, you know, there were professors of the universities that were willing to take over and guide the country and they, you know, Chiang Kai-shek, they wouldn't, wouldn't have it, you know, he, he just insisted on, on Kuomintang or nothing.

Eva Zunterstein: You know, in America they were so simplistic. Now everything is like they used to say, how can you, you know, they lost their freedom, how can you live under communism and all that stuff. I mean, there was no way for these people! They never, that was their only hope! I mean what, what they did in China, what they have accomplished is absolutely, actually forty years is not that long a period of time, as far as history is concerned. And what they accomplished. I mean the place used to be full of beggars . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: And prostitutes.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . and sickness and prostitutes. It was terrible! Well, sure so you have to let go, so you, certain freedoms for the upper class, well they, the ones who had money fled to Taiwan and Hong Kong anyhow. When you have nothing to eat and no place to live, nothing. I mean, so somebody takes care of you, so big brother watches a bit, watches out a bit for you, I mean, they're compromises.

Alfred Zunterstein: The Chinese, they get terribly paranoid, though, with the pressure. I mean that doesn't make them have a better regime. It makes it very difficult. Because they, you know, like Stalin, I think that Mao Zedong, you know, they got paranoid and they mistreated people . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Well, it was the . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . because the pressure makes counter-pressure and they never really had a chance to develop free.

Eva Zunterstein: But they have accomplished an awful lot.

Alfred Zunterstein: They have.

Eva Zunterstein: I mean, that country is blooming. It's so dynamic! You've been there. Really dynamic.

Christine Lixl: In these recent years . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Hmm?

Christine Lixl: In these recent years it's . . .

Eva Zunterstein: It's unbelievable.

Christine Lixl: And also how young people's lives, changes, these last ten years even.

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah.

Alfred Zunterstein: What is your opinion, what is your opinion of Tienanmin Square? What happened there? Do you have any thoughts on it?

Christine Lixl: Yeah, of course, but we, I do think the Chinese government at that time, the situation was getting out of control and they were ready to risk anything, because the People's Army killing the people was something in China that was unheard of and not done, I mean, Cultural Revolution is tremendous cruelty . . .

Eva Zunterstein: It was tremendous trauma.

Christine Lixl: . . . and trauma also, yeah. But it was not, the People's Army until the Eighties was still quite respected and was, standard was rather high. I mean, somebody mentioned it, that people were afraid Communists would come and kill and murder and rape, but nobody did it. And status was hold, held high for a long time, that's my impression. And that the government was ready to use the Army or parts to really kill those who were trying to get some changes taking place. It is . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Well, they weren't perfect, but . . .

Christine Lixl: Hmm?

Eva Zunterstein: Yeah, well they weren't perfect, let's face it.

Christine Lixl: Who?

Eva Zunterstein: Well, the, the government.

Christine Lixl: The government, yeah.

Eva Zunterstein: I mean, when you have to, when you have that huge, that great a population, I mean, there will be, I mean . . .

Alfred Zunterstein: I often wonder, you know, how much of this . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Have you been to China?

Christine Lixl: Yes.

Alfred Zunterstein: . . . can be created by provoking and, you know, they can create situations where people, they're going run wild, because they've been provoked into . . .

Christine Lixl: And you thought that the students might have been provoked or the other side, the Army.

Alfred Zunterstein: I think that the students might have had agent provo-, of provocateurs, you know, that make them jump up on these tanks and set them on fire and . . .

Christine Lixl: Well, at first it was very peaceful and it remained actually very peaceful, peaceful from the side of the students, I think, until the end. Of course, like, the more violent government side became, the more violent student reactions were, too. But I lived in China from '86 to '88, just a few years before, and in '88 you could feel the situation is changing. Very many people were on the one hand dissatisfied with their economic situation and they in a way, '88, '89 until, I'd say, May is a very interesting time, because again like in late Fifties it was possible to speak out and new periodicals were published and there was somehow a vibration of, you can talk again and you can, you can name what you're not, what you don't like.

Alfred Zunterstein: But what makes people go out in the streets and create all this havoc, you know, this . . .

Christine Lixl: But it was, it was very peaceful. I, I wouldn't consider it havoc and what made them go out into the street like, you know, that first Hu Yaobang died, and that was the initial, because people felt, two years earlier Hu Yaobang had been removed from his post, post because there was difficulties between the liberals, the reformists and those who tried to keep the situation, slow down the speed of changes. And Hu lost his post and he was somehow really admired by many students. He was a man they had hopes with and his death became a . . .

Eva Zunterstein: [unclear]

Christine Lixl: . . . yeah, and it was, then going and mourning for him became a symbol. It was not only mourning for this man, it was a political statement. And how exactly things, and also it was the . . .

Eva Zunterstein: And Gorbachev was visiting, I think that, you see, that was, that's . . .

Christine Lixl: Yeah, Gorbachev was visiting, yeah, and it was the May 4 movement, movement's anniversary, I think, wait nineteen to, *achtzehn, neunzehn*, seventy, seventy years May 4 movement. So, it was this atmosphere, May 4 movement, then was the students speaking out, wanting changes. And it was this idea, will they let us do it? Who is going to celebrate May 4? Is it the Chinese government, who claimed to be the, the *Erben?*

Eva Zunterstein: The heirs.

Christine Lixl: The inheritors, the rightful inheritors of the May 4 spirit, or is it us, can we also have a part, be part of commemorating May Fourth? And all this together created . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Tension.

Christine Lixl: . . . and many more things, which I don't know of. But, well, I sympathize with them very much.

Steve Hochstadt: We happened to be in Shanghai in 1989, because this was this first reunion, this first attempt of Shanghaier to go back and it was in April and May of 1989. And we went to, we were in Shanghai for this Shanghai reunion, and on the street were these demonstrations, which looked to me just like demonstrations from the 1960's and 70's. Crowds of young people with banners, of course, I couldn't read the banners, I didn't know what they were doing at all, but there they were walking by, peacefully, not quietly but peacefully, crowds of them. I didn't know what that was at all, and then we went, part of our itinerary was to go to Beijing. So we went to Beijing and we didn't have much to do in Beijing and I don't like tours, so I just wandered around and wandered down to Tiananmin Square, where there was this big picture of . . .

Eva Zunterstein: Mao Zedong.

Steve Hochstadt: Yeah, Mao Zedong, but who was this man Bang?

Christine Lixl: Hu Yaobang.

Steve Hochstadt: Hu Yaobang. There was this picture up there that they had, huge poster, in the middle of Tiananmin Square is a statue and they hung his picture on the statue. And there were all kinds of students just milling about in the Square, which is a big open place, and they were just milling about and talking to each other or they had, they also had some banners with, with slogans in English. "Freedom of the Press", but it wasn't quite like that, it was like, "Press Freedom".

Christine Lixl: That was one very important, yeah . . .

Steve Hochstadt: "Press Freedom", it took me a while to figure out what they were saying. Why would they say "Press Freedom", and then I realized that they meant "Freedom of the Press". And we went to, we went to the Winter Palace, is that is that something in Beijing, the Winter Palace?

Christine Lixl: Summer Palace.

Steve Hochstadt: The Summer Palace, we went to the Summer Palace.

Christine Lixl: Up in the North . . .

Steve Hochstadt: So, we're wandering around as a tour group and there are these students sitting there with a big poster that

they've written out in English saying, "We would like more democracy." They had some pictures of something, I can't remember what it was, and they were just sitting there trying to get the attention of the tourists who were going by. So, I, I took a picture of this poster and talked with them a little bit and there were other students with, outside the gates of the Summer Palace with posters that they had made or placards of which they had written things in English trying to get the tourists' attention. And a couple of days later I went back to Tienanmin Square, and the, the Army had come. But they had no, they had no arms, and what I noticed about them, an army, maybe it was police, I have a hard time telling, it was khaki uniforms and it was hundreds of them, but they had no, they had no weapons, and it looked to me like they were Boy Scouts, except there were girls, boys, they looked to me like they were fifteen years old. Little, little young kids with these uniforms and they were, they made a circle around Tienanmin Square, and they had the army and they had sort of locked arms, because they were trying to prevent the students from going in. But the students just kind of pushed in and nothing happened. There was no, the confrontation was very, very mild and the students were there.

Alfred Zunterstein: I've always worried . . .

Steve Hochstadt: And then we left and it was so peaceful, and it seemed to me so, I mean, I wasn't thinking about China, I was thinking about what I'd seen in the United States. It was, it was so small and peaceful and also we saw some people walking down the street. Our tour bus, we were going to a factory and all of a sudden our tour bus stops in the middle of the street. And it's not going anywhere, and then it tries to go on some detour all around. And we're taking all this time and we couldn't figure out why we were sitting in this hot bus, because there was a march of students down the sidewalk and they didn't want us to see it. But these students were walking down the sidewalk, about fifty of them, also with a banner, we did finally get to see. This was all that we saw, so when I came back to the United States, right in the beginning of May, I thought, you know, this is, this is very interesting. This is very interesting and very peaceful. We were in a factory, we were in this factory and all of a sudden all the factory workers leave their machines and go to the windows. So we go over to the windows, too, and they're looking outside, because down on the street there are some students walking by and all these factory workers, who were also, they were mostly young women, twenties. They were, wanted to know what was going on. But then they went back from the windows very quickly.

Eva Zunterstein: Because you were there, yes.

Steve Hochstadt: Well, because I think they didn't want to, they didn't want to be seen being interested. But it was, it was so peaceful and quiet and the violence was so surprising to me when I saw it and when I read about it afterwards.

Eva Zunterstein: Well, they probably panicked, they felt that it was going out of control and they . . .

Christine Lixl: I think that's it.

Eva Zunterstein: . . . they . . .

Steve Hochstadt: Here we go.

END OF INTERVIEW

