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<b>Forename:</b>	Lili
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
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<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Vienna, Austria

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	10 April 2003
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<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Rosalyn Livshin
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	3 hours 2 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES  
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**INTERVIEW: 12**

**NAME: LILI POLLOCK**

**DATE: 10 APRIL 2003**

**LOCATION: HARROGATE**

**INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN**

**TAPE 1**

**Tape 1: 42 seconds**

RL: OK, so if you can tell me first your name.

LP: I'm Lili Pollock.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

LP: Schwarz, Lili Schwarz, which means black in English.

RL: Did you have any other names, any middle names or nicknames?

LP: No, no.

RL: What about a Hebrew name?

LP: Yes, Hendel.

RL: And when were you born?

LP: 8th of April 1917, in Vienna.

RL: How old does that make you now?

LP: 86. Just been 86.

RL: If you could tell me first about your parents and maybe first about your mother's family and her family background. What was your mother's name?

LP: Gisela, and her maiden name was Berger, before she got married.

RL: Where was she born?

LP: Czechoslovakia.

RL: And what can you tell me about her family, her parents...

LP: She was one of 16 children. And 12 were alive. And I know, she always told me she had to look after the older ones. She was a dressmaker, did very exquisite work, handwork. And my father was also one of eight, I think, children, he was a signpost decorator. He decorated all the signposts and we lived - shall I tell you where we lived?

**Tape 1: 2 minutes 35 seconds**

RL: Well, we'll just concentrate on their backgrounds first before we come on to your families. Did you know your mother's parents, your grandparents?

LP: I knew one grandfather from my father's side, not from my mother, but I knew most of her sisters and brothers who lived in Rumania, and in Hungary, and in Vienna, most of them in Vienna.

RL: When did your mother come to Vienna?

LP: She came when she was about 20, I think, and got married in Vienna and we only became Austrian citizens when we started going to school because for our sake they thought we should be Austrian nationals. They both were Czechs.

RL: Your father as well - whereabouts was he born?

LP: He was born in Czechoslovakia also, near Neutra.

RL: So why have they left? Why did they leave Czechoslovakia?

LP: I wouldn't know really. I think they probably thought life was better in Vienna. That's the only thing I could imagine. And they got married in Vienna.

RL: You said you knew your father's father.

LP: Yes, who was still in Czechoslovakia with one of my father's brothers and family, because I visited them quite often, in a little village where there were no Jews. They were the only Jews and they had a little shop where they sold everything. And as a youngster I spent many holidays there with them. So that's the only background from my father's side I knew - his sister, one brother, and his father.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing did he have?

LP: Well, fairly orthodox. I mean, there were so many different stages, but I do remember that they had to go 4 miles to go to a synagogue and they did, on Shabbat, go over to Neutra, to the synagogue, so they set off very early and walked for 4 miles. I have never been to a synagogue there. But they went, the men went.

**Tape 1: 5 minutes 05 seconds**

RL: What kind of religious background did your mother come from?

LP: Oh, it was similar. You know sort of, not ultra-orthodox, but kosher and you know, going to synagogue. More leisurely I would say, not as strict. Mother didn't travel, I suppose, or anything like that on Shabbat, fairly frum, you know.

RL: And you say that she was one of 16 children.

LP: 12 were alive.

RL: Was that from the same mother and father?

LP: Yes. Her mother died with the last child, in childbirth, there was a blood infection, in a little village in Czechoslovakia, and she died at the birth of the sixteenth child. And twelve were alive, and they made their way and they were quite happy and comfortable.

RL: Do you know what her father did for a living, your grandfather?

LP: He had a shop in that village. They had a shop together.

RL: On your mother's side?

LP: No, I know nothing there, because - I do know that she told me that the children in turn looked after the grandparents, but I never met them.

RL: And he didn't remarry after his mother died?

LP: No. I don't think they did that much, like now.

RL: What kind of education did your parents have?

LP: Well, nothing special I would say. My mother worked hard as a dressmaker, and my father worked. And they spoke several languages because when you come from Czechoslovakia you speak German, Hungarian, they could understand Polish and Rumanian, so all the neighbours around, they could make themselves understood in all those different languages. So they both spoke actually 4, 5 languages I would say.

RL: What was the language they spoke at home?

LP: When they didn't want us to know it was Czech, otherwise it was German.

RL: So they actually spoke German at home?

LP: Yes.

RL: How had they met each other, do you know?

LP: No idea. I think my mother was already 27 when she got married, which was quite... at that time. I remember that much.

RL: Had your father always been a sign writer?

LP: He has also had different jobs, an agent for different firms, buying and selling, that sort of thing, like they did, to make a living. Things were very hard in those days. He always used to say you

should have known Vienna in the good old days before the Kaiser came to Vienna, and after the Kaiser, Vienna became a poor country. You were lucky when you made a living, only just a living, nothing marvellous. But I thought I had a very happy childhood and I loved Vienna. To me it was just wonderful. I couldn't understand it when my father said, 'Oh you poor children, you didn't know Vienna when it was really Vienna, you know, before the Kaiser'.

**Tape 1: 9 minutes 3 seconds**

RL: What happened to your father during the First World War?

LP: He was in the forces for several years, right during the war and that's why he thought nothing would happen to him. Because when Hitler marched in, he said, 'Oh well, I have been in the forces all those years', four years, wasn't it, the First World War, right through. So, at first that was considered, you know, that you had a chance to survive if you have been in the army. He had a hard time.

RL: Did he tell you anything about that period?

LP: Very hard, very hard. He said when I was born I saved his life because he was right in the frontline and they told him to go home for me. And he thought I had saved his life.

RL: Did he tell you anything else about his wartime experience?

LP: Well, they were always talking. He was a great politician, when the family gathered together it was always about war and about politics; aunts, uncles, when they came, it was always big discussion and argument and disagreement about wars, and you know, and what they have gone through.

RL: When did they marry, your parents?

LP: I think my mother was 27, she was 53, 54 when I saw her last. She was born in '87, I think, '87.

RL: Where did you come in the family?

LP: I was in the middle. I had an older sister and a little brother who came after 11 years, so he was really quite young.

RL: And their names?

LP: My sister's name was Aranka, which is a Hungarian name that means gold. And my brother was Kurt.

RL: Where you names after anyone, were the children named after people?

LP: I don't know. I know my sister's name was Shaindel, the Jewish name. It was my father's choice. He wanted Aranka, a Hungarian name. And Lili was my mother's choice, an Austrian name. Kurt was also an Austrian name.

RL: When was Aranka born?

LP: Well, she was about 4 and a half years older than me. So she would have been born in '12, isn't it, 1912.

**Tape 1: 12 minutes 0 seconds**

RL: What is your earliest memory as a child?

LP: A very pleasant childhood and no anti-Semitism, whatever. I never felt anything like it. I belonged to a youth movement, I belonged to a Jewish movement when I grew up later on, and we all mixed very freely, Jews and Christians together. Never thought anything like that could happen.

RL: What about your home life? Can you tell me a little bit about that? What your house was like?

LP: Very happy, very pleasant, you know. My mother was a very good-natured woman, very placid; my father had a bit more of a temper, Hungarian temper, but full of personality, and very loving.

RL: Can you describe where you were living?

LP: We were living in a very nice district, next to the Danube. Well, there was the first district - the Danube divided the first and the second, and we lived in the second district of the Danube.

**Tape 1: 13 minutes 33 seconds**

LP: I would consider people who are here middle-class, would have been wealthy people already in Vienna, because things weren't easy. It was really a hard life. I didn't feel it so much but I know how things were. Pretty primitive, the flats, there were no bathrooms, or anything like that.

RL: Can you describe the apartment?

LP: Well, it was a two-bedroom flat. And a sitting room, kitchen, that's about it. We carried the water in from the landing and pour it out again because there was no toilet in the flat or anything like that, which you can't imagine nowadays can you, really.

RL: Would the toilet be a communal toilet?

LP: Yes, it belonged to two flats. There were about five flats on our floor. And for two flats one toilet. It had keys to open and lock.

RL: And when you wanted a bath?

LP: Well there was a communal bath where we went whenever we wanted to. But the hygiene was very high in Vienna in those days. There wasn't such a thing that a person would go out even without a bath. You should really have a proper wash, top to bottom. We were taught about that at school already, how to keep hygiene high. Hygiene was much higher than here in England when I came over, food-wise and everything.

RL: How big was the apartment, how many flats were in it altogether?

**Tape 1: 15 minutes 36 seconds**

LP: 52 flats. Over 50, and nearly all Jewish people, who were all arrested on Crystal night, all the men... And that's when all the trouble really started, on Crystal night.

RL: We'll just concentrate on before that for the moment and then we will come up to there. So it was mainly Jewish families.

LP: Yes, I think they were all Jewish except the caretakers. As far as I remember they were all Jewish.

RL: And how was the caretaker towards you all?

LP: Well, at first, very pleasant till Hitler marched in, and then he changed and told everybody where everybody was. And that's how they were all taken away. People changed overnight. I think that was one of the personalities of Austrian people, being very changeable.

RL: What school did you go to?

LP: Well, it was like a high school. Now there again, if you were ... it was a very good school, and if you were in a high stream, an A stream, you could go straight to university without any other qualifications, you didn't have to take any exams or anything. From there, you could go straight to university.

RL: What was it called?

LP: Well, I can't quite remember, but I think it was in the Patzmanitengasse. I think that's where the synagogue was as well, which we visited.

RL: Did that synagogue have a name?

LP: I think Patzmanitentempel, as far as I remember.

**Tape 1: 17 minutes 33 seconds**

RL: And do you remember who the Rabbi was at that synagogue?

LP: Well, I did know, but I have forgotten at the moment. I think it was Müller, yes, Müller. I don't know if he was the rabbi or the cantor. There was always a very beautiful choir, a men's choir, three, four men at the choir. And everybody concentrated on the Friday night, not so much on the Saturday service, but all the women and the children went Friday night to synagogue, not so much Saturday. We had to go to school on Saturday, by the way. We didn't have to write, we didn't have to carry anything, but we had to attend, because it's a 6-day school, 6 days a week school.

RL: Was that awkward?

LP: Not really, because we didn't have to travel, we didn't have to carry anything, we just listened to the lectures or whatever. Because school was only from 8 till 1, no afternoon school. So it was 6 days a week.

**Tape 1: 18 minutes 54 seconds**

RL: What was the proportion of Jewish to non-Jewish children there at school?

LP: Well, in my form I would say about 2 thirds Jewish children.

RL: And how were the teachers towards you?



RL: Well, everybody was - we never felt any anti-Semitism whatever. That's all I can say.

RL: How friendly were you with the non-Jewish pupils?

LP: Yes, yes, I worked with them, went to school with them. There was no difference. I mean, we mixed more with Jewish people, but at the same time I belonged to a youth movement where we mixed. I also belonged to the Maccabi later on, but that was a youth movement, which was partly - well, they were very much on the Communist side.

RL: Did it have a name, the movement?

LP: No. I don't remember.

RL: What would you do?

LP: We had outings. We used to go to the Vienna woods at the weekends, and just mix. And enjoy life. Vienna is such a lovely city.

RL: Did you have any Hebrew education?

LP: At school, yes, I think 2 hours a week. Not a lot.

**Tape 1: 20 minutes 32 seconds**

RL: Was that separate for the Jewish pupils?

LP: Well, it was the usual thing. It was just accepted as such. I don't even know - there were supposed to be some Jewish schools, but I wouldn't know where. Not in my district.

RL: Was there a member of staff who gave that Hebrew education?

LP: It was a minister, yes. Some of them were very good. The last one was fantastic, I remember, where we really learned something. But usually we just made fun, very naughty. Played some sort of tricks on him.

RL: You've spoken a bit about belonging to clubs, what else did you do in your leisure time?

LP: Oh, what did I do - I used to go dancing a lot. Yes. We had the Stadtpark - that is the park, the garden in Vienna. Open air dancing, and coffee and all that, Sunday, that was the usual thing. Or we went to the country, to the woods, and the mountains, and climbing, we did a lot of that, everybody did, even the parents and so on. They all go out of Vienna. There was still the Strassenbahn, electric. It took about half an hour to get out. And that's where the family spent the weekends, the Sundays.

RL: What about theatres, concerts.

LP: Well, there was a Jewish theatre. I visited it quite often later on. I remember a neighbour used to take me actually. And there were Jewish plays. But I went a lot to the opera because I was engaged to somebody who was in the world of music. He was a musician, and we had always tickets to go. And the Vienna Staatsoper is just something out of this world! I went nearly every week to the opera.

**Tape 1: 23 minutes 11 seconds**

RL: Did your parents do that sort of thing as well?

LP: No, no my mother didn't at all. They went to the Kaffeehaus. My father - every day after lunch - we had a Kaffeehaus at the corner, he went for his mocha. And that's where we found him. And my mother - the greatest outing was going to the cinema. It was quite something really, to go, just to see a film. But usually they were at home, and it was a different way of life, of course, a lot of gossiping going on. With all the neighbours, they always were in our flat, and you know, talk, talk, talk. That was their entertainment, I think and every day going to the market in the morning, every day, meeting all their friends or relations. Friday night, the family gathered together. My mother's sisters and brothers, they came. Not for a meal, just coffee and cakes and things like that. It was very pleasant. My father had a very good voice, when he had a Schnapps, he started singing, it was very enjoyable. It was a close family life, a loving family. We adored our parents, you know, different from nowadays, we would do anything for them. There wasn't such a thing as saying "no" when our parents asked us to do something or go anywhere.

**Tape 1: 24 minutes 50 seconds**

RL: Did your father belong to any clubs or organisations?

LP: I don't think so. He liked to go to horse running, to watch the horses, you know, in Vienna, that's what he like to watch. Gamble on horses, things like that. Oh, he liked to play cards. He was playing a lot of cards, gambling a bit.

RL: Did he belong to any Jewish groups?

LP: No, not as far as I know.

RL: And your mother, did she belong to anything?

LP: No. I can't remember. But they mixed in Jewish circles, and family, it was family life, really.

RL: What about your memories of the festivals, the Jewish holidays?

LP: Oh, we kept them all. I don't know if it was kept a 100% as my daughter does now, but we did keep them as much as possible. And different ideas, sort of, we decorated for *Sukkoth*, with leaves and so on, the flats, when it came to the holidays. Not flowers, it was leaves always.

RL: Did you have a Succah?

LP: There was a communal Succah, funny as it is. One of the tenants built it - and we all went in whenever because they were all Jewish people.

RL: So did you never experience any hostility, you or your father, your parents?

LP: Hardly, hardly, I really don't remember. I remember on one occasion, I think my father said somebody called him the Jew. And he was going after him because he wasn't going to put up with it, and that's the only thing I remember.

Everything changed overnight, you know. How people change is unbelievable.

**Tape 1: 27 minutes 42 seconds**

RL: Were you at that stage interested in Zionism?

LP: Yes, I have always wanted to go to Israel, from the earliest age on, as I was perhaps 14. I tried to talk my parents into it, too, I had my father nearly on my side to go, I wish he would have done, but of course it didn't come to it. Yes, I always wanted to go to Israel.

RL: Were there any Zionist groups?

LP: Yes, the Maccabi.

RL: And were there other people that did go in the early days...?

LP: Yes, I had an aunt and husband who went, but things were so difficult there that they returned after a few months. They couldn't make a living and they came back. That was auntie ...

RL: What did you do when you left school?

LP: Well, I did all sorts of different bookkeeping courses and things like that. And then I started to work, I worked – I learned it – as a designer, and then also I modelled, at the most exquisite lingerie in Vienna, which I think is still there, under the name of Zinner, and it's right near the opera in the Kärtnerstrasse. And I modelled lingerie. And then I really worked in a wholesale place designing clothes, I learned this, designing, and that's about all I did. They were both Jewish firms, Zinner and Gertland. Am Bauernmarkt in der City.

**Tape 1: 29 minutes 45 seconds**

RL: How long did it take to learn to do this?

LP: Well, I did evening classes usually. I did window decorating as well, I learnt and before I left – actually, a lot of men did that, I think I was the only girl there – we did a course to learn how to make cosmetics. That lasted about 3 months, because we thought it to be a profession when we leave Vienna. And we really learned quite a lot, there was a whole book. It was like a recipe book, how to make creams and different powders and all that sort of thing – very interesting. I really enjoyed that. I did all sorts of things.

RL: You said you did modelling as well.

LP: Yes, I modelled at Zinner, lingerie, and that's when King Edward the 8<sup>th</sup> - am I right? - King Edward the 8<sup>th</sup> came to visit Zinner and of course we were all stunned when we saw him. He was very charming. And he bought beautiful nightdresses - they were very, very expensive, and we thought, well, he must have somebody there to buy that for! And we were all staring at him, because they were with handwork and pure silk – they were really absolutely exquisite. And he bought quite a bit there. When I modelled lingerie, I didn't have to undress, you always had a dressing gown around and you just opened the dressing gown. But it was quite something.

**Tape 1: 31 minutes 39 seconds**

RL: If you can tell me now about what happened and how things changed with the *Anschluss*?

LP: Yes, I came from the city, and everybody was screaming and shouting "Down with Hitler!", demonstration all over. By the time I came to our flat and we turned the radio on, Hitler had already

marched into Vienna, that was a matter of half an hour or so. And we weren't allowed to have the windows open or look out. So there were blinds at the window, but we could look through the blinds. And I saw Hitler in the car, passing our window, our street, and he was sitting on top of the car. And everybody was jubilant. "Hitler.Heil Hitler" – everybody, already changed overnight. They changed in a few hours, I would say. That was March, wasn't it, '38.

RL: And up to that point, had you had no inkling?

LP: No. I believe there was anti-Semitism in the provinces, but not in the city. In the provinces, there was. Because people used to say, well, there were hardly any Jews, but I know business people who had connections in the provinces like Salzburg, or Vorarlberg or any of those cities and they experienced quite a lot of anti-Semitism but not in the city, not as far as I am concerned anyhow.

RL: So who did you notice change towards you first, how did things begin to happen?

### **Tape 1: 33 minutes 41 seconds**

LP: Well, you couldn't work, you were really forbidden to work. You weren't allowed to work anymore, or attend any schools probably, but school didn't come for me anymore. No, my brother didn't go to school anymore. And everything was rationed for us. I don't think we could get any meat. Because I remember my mother making all sorts of things from vegetables and potatoes and cabbage, sort of cutlets, she was very good, because Jews couldn't get any meat or anything like that. But otherwise I was still very optimistic, because I didn't realise what would happen. But my parents were sad and they were already very worried and I used to say, "Oh, this could give us a chance perhaps to see another country" or whatever, you know, that sort of thing. Things weren't so bad till Crystal night, really, when they really took every possible man away. And my father was at the time probably about 52 or so, I mean a young man really, and a fine tall chap. And he was only in there 10 days and he came back an old man, really an old man. What he's gone through in those 10 days was unbelievable. What he saw and what he didn't want to tell us, but eventually it came out as the years went by. They killed the people with their hands in front of him. And they were trained, sadistically trained how to do it. Every day was different. One day they would say, he told us, whoever married out should come forward. So they would kill them for it. The next day, just the opposite: if you married out, you could go free. Things like that, you never knew what they were going to do with you or what was going to happen. That was the time when I tried to get him out of course and we went to the Gestapo with non-Jewish friends, who helped. And they said, "You don't owe any tax or anything like that, and have permission to leave the country". We had a chance to let him out, but we had to bribe the Gestapo. Not such a terrific amount, something like a few hundred pounds would be now, probably. And we managed at that time to get permission of visas for Shanghai for the family, which was the only place, Shanghai, or Uruguay, which took Jews in. And little did I know it was this chap, this Japanese man, who helped to bring the people out, to bring thousands of Jews out. So my father came out.

### **End of tape 37 minutes 25 seconds**

## **TAPE 2**

### **??? 37 minutes 40 seconds**

RL: From the time of the Anschluss until Kristallnacht, did anything happen to you or to any members of your family?

LP: Yes. Once I was picked up in the street and we were supposed to ... They just called me over. They were in a car, two Nazis. I knew already what that means, and I said, "Alright, I am Jewish", because there was no point to deny it. And they said, "Get into the car", and they took me to their Nazi headquarters, the Gestapo headquarters, where they were cleaning the building, they were decorating it or whatever, and they were just throwing water and mud all over the floor. They were all men, Jewish men, and I was the only girl, to clean it up. You couldn't clean it up because every time we mopped it up they were pouring more mud on the floor, just to annoy us. And that went on and on. And there was one very nice Gestapo chap, a young fellow. When I saw the men, having the trousers all – I mean they were dressed, they were all probably picked up in the street like I was - I started laughing hysterically the whole time, like some people cried, like men were crying and god knows what and I was laughing, I couldn't help laughing. So this Gestapo man came over to me, a young, very handsome chap, I remember, and he said, "Well, I will help you, if you come to my office I will talk with you". And I thought, "Oh god, what will he do"? Well, he wasn't bad. He only kissed me and cuddled me. That's all. And he said, "I will promise you that when I get off duty, which will be about ten or eleven o'clock at night, I will give you a pass that you will be free". And he did. And after spending this day there, I never saw any of the men again. Not one. They were perhaps 20 men at least there, and I was the only girl, and I got free. But you can imagine what my parents were like. No idea, nobody knew what's what and where I was. And my sister was taken from the flat, she was already married but she lived on the same floor where we lived. They dragged her out to the street and made her scrape, which you have probably heard all those things, swastika crosses. And they were pulling her hair because she had long hair. And that went on for hours and we had to watch from the window. And when she came back she was never the same again. And that was right in the beginning, that must have been, because she left already Vienna eight months before me, so that must have been about July, before Crystal Night. She didn't go through all that, except that experience. Well, she had to of course, give up her flat, which was a lovely flat. She had a beautiful flat because she was newly married and it was all newly furnished and some of the Nazis took it, as it stood. And her husband, who tried to get out of Vienna, he had a lot of bad luck. He was trying to go to Switzerland, Belgium, all over, but he was always turned back. Eventually, he was also arrested and I got him out, with my non-Jewish friends. We could bribe people. We got him out, and he also went to Shanghai and survived the war. Like many of the people whom I had helped, survived the war, with passports and visas for Shanghai, if you could show your ticket. The first year, I don't know if you know, Hitler let people out if they didn't owe any tax and if they had somewhere to go. But the borders were closed, nobody wanted the Jews, only Uruguay and Shanghai. And people were so afraid to go to Shanghai. They thought that's the end of the world. You know, they never travelled there. And my parents, who had also the visas and everything to go to Shanghai, didn't go because my sister was already in England, and she was told they wouldn't survive Shanghai. So my sister wrote that she wouldn't go to Shanghai. That's how my parents never went because they thought they would never see her again, if they go alone. They wouldn't go. So they tried to – they went to Cologne. There were different guides who apparently, who helped people to cross the border. They wanted to go to Belgium. So the first guy took the money off them, a few hundred pounds or something like that. And well, he didn't, he took the money. It wasn't just him, there were several people, who took the money and never took them over, because on the border, of course, there were the Nazis who had to be bribed again to let them in. But they sent me a telegram if I could send some more money because this chap took the money off them. Which I did, and the other guide let them in to Belgium. They had no luggage with them, just hand luggage.

**Tape 2:****??? 44 minutes 25 seconds**

And even that they threw away on the way because they had to walk and walk and walk till they got into Belgium. So they were literally without any clothes, without any money, without anything. Now we were allowed to send from Vienna one case a month. And I stayed back. That was one of the

reasons I stayed back to send one case, at the time, over to them. But the other reason was, I was still trying to get people out from the camps, and wherever they were, in Dachau and so on. If they didn't owe any tax, and if they could go somewhere, they had a chance to come out from the camps. And I managed to get about at least ten people out like that. But there was one family who had heard that I can do that.

RL: How did you manage to do it?

LP: Also with non-Jewish friends.

RL: Was it the same non-Jewish friends that helped you?

LP: Yes. They were two men. They were really more friendly. After that they were in the underground movement, which we found out because we were in contact with them for a long time.

RL: Do you remember their names?

LP: Stöckner was one name, I remember, Hans Stöckner.

**Tape 2:**

**??? 45 minutes 58 seconds**

RL: And how did you know them?

LP: I think it was through my sister, who also belonged to a youth movement, and I think this Hans – was through one of my cousins who went to America, they were supposed to go seriously. And he was one of them who helped me, he and another chap. And another friend of mine who was years older and very, very sharp and very, very clever, and the two of us, we helped to get people out.

RL: So who was the friend?

LP: She lived in the same house where I lived, and she was about ten years older than me. She was a wonderful person and she survived as well. She went with her parents to Belgium.

RL: Do you remember her name?

LP: No, I can't remember.

RL: So what did you have to do to get the Shanghai visas, how did you get them?

LP: Through the Kultusgemeinde, the Jewish Association. It must have been through the Kultusgemeinde that I got it. But we never used them, unfortunately.

RL: You say your sister; she was the first to leave.

LP: She left eight months before me, about August or so.

RL: And how did she arrange...?

LP: On a domestic permit, she came to England.

RL: How did she find out about it? You know how she actually came to hear about it or arrange it?

**Tape 2:****??? 48 minutes 0 second**

LP: To come over? There were adverts I think. Because, I remember like today, she was sitting with about three other friends or relations and they were all writing and responding to the adverts. And she was the only one who got straight away a reply, and she got this job.

RL: So did she put in an advert into the paper here?

LP: It was advertised, it must have been advertised. They replied to an advert I know. And she was the only one who got a reply of those few girls. And that's how she was the first one. She was hoping to be able to get the rest of the family over there, over here, but it didn't happen.

RL: So she went on her own, and she left her husband in Vienna.

LP: Yes. It was a big decision to make, but we thought at the time it was the best thing because hopefully, she would bring the family over.

RL: What was her married name?

LP: Lester, Aranka Lester.

RL: Where was her husband from?

LP: Vienna, born in Vienna.

RL: What did he do?

LP: Jeweller, a jeweller.

RL: And you said that you yourself were engaged.

LP: Yes, I was engaged to a musician. A Viennese chap as well, who went to Tangier. And I came only to England actually, on a visitor permit to see my sister who had made herself ill here – she was in hospital for several months actually, I think about three months. My parents were very worried and they asked me and I managed ... I was in Belgium already. I had permission also to go to Belgium.

RL: We are jumping a little here. In fact, I had asked you about your fiancé, what was his name?

LP: Arner, Felix Arner. ??

RL: And when did you get engaged?

LP: Well in Vienna, before he left. It was an understanding.

RL: In what year?

LP: The year before Hitler came to Vienna, '37 it must be.

**Tape 2:**

**??? 50 minutes 47 seconds**

RL: So we had the period between the Anschluss and Kristallnacht. Can you just describe to me Kristallnacht itself and what happened on that night?

LP: That was just terrible. They burned every synagogue, whatever they could and carried all the men away.

RL: Can you describe what you were doing, where you were?

LP: It was like Yom Kippur. We were just sitting at home, crying and crying. And my little brother, for three days he wouldn't eat or drink because he was in such a state about it. And he was trying to hang on to my father as they carried him away, you know, and they said, "If you don't stop, you'll go as well", and he was only ten years old. So we were so worried about him, because he was a bit delicate in any case and he wouldn't eat or drink for three days at all, just cry, cry.

RL: How did you first hear that the synagogues were burning?

LP: Well, it was just around the corner from us, you could see it. And the houses and the Rabbi were burnt. And that's when we started to try to get quickly visas and passports, whatever, to get the people out. And as my parents wouldn't go to Shanghai, they went to Belgium. I must say the community were wonderful there to them, they were quite happy because I spent a month, before I came to England, with them. And they were very content there. I mean, when I say content, things were short, food was short, but the people looked after them in Antwerp. That was in Antwerp. Eventually, they went to Brussels.

RL: When did they go to Belgium? When was that?

**Tape 2:**

**??? 53 minutes 10 seconds**

LP: Well, it was soon after Crystal night, because they had to, when my father came home, they literally threw them out of the flat. My father was ill. And I begged them, I remember, those Christian people, to let them stay till he's better, for a few days, and they wouldn't. So they just had to go as they were, they wouldn't wait even one day. And they had to leave the flat. I went to stay with an old aunt of mine. Already, I wasn't anymore registered. We were afraid. Things were getting already very, very serious. So nobody knew. Jews had to be registered in those days, so I wasn't registered. I was sort of just staying under a false name.

RL: Who were the Christians that came for the flat?

LP: No idea, they were sent from the Gestapo, just to take over the flat. My sister's flat, I knew the people, we were very, very friendly with them. They tried for a few weeks to be very helpful - that was before Crystal night of course. But when Crystal night came they also just took it over and just threw them out. Well, she wasn't there anymore, but her husband was still there. They had a deli. They changed completely. At first, as I say, they wanted to help, but then when they had the chance to take over this lovely flat, they changed completely. They changed to such an extent that my sister eventually, years after, she went back to Vienna, and she knew the people, she knew who they were. So she was told that if she can find furniture or whatever, her own furniture, they would have to return it. She didn't go on her own; she went again with a non-Jewish friend there. And this woman denied it completely, "She has never seen her, she is mad", she said, "She is hysterical, this isn't hers". So this friend of ours said, "For that, she will pay". And they went straight to a solicitor, and



she had to pay for every article which she saw in their flat, she got some money for it. But she denied it completely.

RL: Were you able to take anything out of the flats before the people moved in?

LP: Well, my parents... clothes, whatever, that's all, jewellery, a bit of jewellery, money of course, although on the quiet, because the Gestapo came one day to our flat, before Crystal night. We had a big bookcase, they searched the flat. They couldn't find anything. Because my mother, in the kitchen, she put the vegetable bag at the window of the kitchen, on the nail, she put a bag with vegetables, and the money and the jewellery was in that bag. So that's how we have managed to have some money and jewellery at that time. But they threw all the books out of the window, every book. They said they're communist books. They threw every book out of the window, to the backyard. Every one! And whatever they could find, I can't remember. We couldn't care less anymore; we were already by that time very low. And as long as they didn't take us at that time, and just took their articles we were already satisfied, we didn't say anything.

RL: Did they take any articles for themselves?

LP: I don't know. Probably, whatever they could find they took. And we just were pleased they didn't harm us, we didn't mind anymore.

**Tape 2:**

**??? 58 minutes 6 seconds**

RL: So when you were thrown out of the flat, where did your parents go?

LP: They went straight away to Belgium, and I stayed back. They got them a flat, the Belgian people there, and they were really quite content.

RL: So you stayed back...

LP: I stayed back for this reason, to send something over once a month. They were literally without anything, and also trying to help people. But there was one particular... people got to hear about that I can help and complete strangers came up asking me if I could help them and I told them the position, one or two families, but there was one particular family in a very good position. She had three children. And we explained, if her husband doesn't owe any money, any tax, and you've got tickets to leave the country, you have a chance to get him out, from Dachau, he was in Dachau at the time. And she said she can't afford it, she's got children and she can't do it. And we said, "And you wouldn't give us any money to bribe them either". Then she found out, because she kept on coming to the flat where I was with my aunt, she saw the cases that I had packed by that time. I got already frightened, because too many people were involved, that they would be after me. My parents were worried, I started worrying. So again, I had a friend at the Kultusgemeinde, and I told them the position that I am really frightened, I must get a visa straight away, just a visitor visa for Belgium. And this friend of mine got it for me. And the day when I left Vienna, this Jewish woman came with the Gestapo to have me arrested. This I will never get over. My aunt, she was very wise, she knew already what to say, they asked, where I went to, because they could have stopped the train or whatever. She said I went to Italy, she didn't say Belgium. So this Jewish woman turned around and said, "Can't you take her instead"? to the Gestapo. And they said, "No, she is not on our list". I was on their list, but she wasn't on the list. So she wanted my old aunt! So I wrote her a letter, you can just imagine. I said, "Your poor husband is suffering for you because you wouldn't pay, and you wouldn't do this and this". This was a very, very disturbing experience, as you can imagine, but I got

out, and once we crossed the border, everybody was very jubilant, you can imagine, that we got out of Germany.

**Tape 2:****??? 1hour 1 minute 32 seconds**

RL: What was that journey like? Do you remember that journey?

LP: There were lots of Jewish youngsters who also had permission to go to England and so on. There was a guide to take us, and we didn't know if that guide was for or against us. We were very worried about that. But we realised, once we had crossed the border that he was really on our side. And he was helpful.

RL: How were you travelling?

LP: By train, straight to Antwerp. Well, to Cologne first, and then to Antwerp. And in Cologne, we were searched. And we were allowed to take things over, like clothes and so on. No jewellery. Actually, I was body-searched. I had a ring and a pendant my father bought me, and I had to declare it, I said it isn't so valuable, but it is a memory of my father, and they let me take it through. I still got it. And I went to Belgium on a visitor permit and I managed to stay a whole month with the family. And from there I came to England, hopefully, - well, everything was arranged that I can go to Tangier, but things went wrong, it's a long story, and I couldn't get there. We waited for each other for nearly ten years. Then we gave it up and I married Henry.

RL: So the plan had been that you would go to Tangier.

LP: Yes.

RL: How were you going to do that?

LP: Well, he had all the papers, and he had a working contract there, and that would have been alright. But I went to the French consulate in London; that was before the war started. It must have been in August. They asked me a few questions, and one of the things I didn't say the truth. They asked me how long the working permit of my fiancé was. And I had no idea. And whatever came in my mind I said it, "I said six months". And that wasn't the truth. And after, when I didn't get the permit to go out, I wouldn't give in because he had all the papers, everything ready. I went forward and backward, I must know why, why I didn't get the permission. And they told me, because I said a lie, because they can't trust me. But if nothing happened by September, so they must have known already I was in England. If nothing is going to happen, they will give me the permission after that. But war broke out, and they couldn't trust me, I was already an alien, you know, not a friendly alien.

**Tape 2:****??? 1hour 4 minutes 51 seconds**

RL: So how did you manage to get to England, how was that organised?

LP: On a visitor permit. I didn't come on a working permit. As I didn't get straight away the visa, and I knew my parents, and myself, I have to make a living. I started work with children, I worked domestic.

RL: First of all, can you tell me about the journey over to England?

LP: By boat, and there were a lot of refugees on that boat. We arrived, and my sister waited for me at Victoria Station. And I thought it's wonderful, it was only eight months and she could speak English and I couldn't speak a word of English. We learned French at school. And I stayed with her overnight. And then I was left, she couldn't go with me, because she was working and the people weren't very nice, they wouldn't let her go with me. And I couldn't speak a word of English.

RL: Where was she living?

LP: Golders Green. She was working for a very wealthy couple in Golders Green, who kept on saying they were treating her like a daughter, but anything but! They promised and promised they would sign papers to get our parents over, because they had affidavits to go to America where we had wealthy relations out there. They sent us the papers but the quota wasn't due for eight months. So just for 8 or 9 months we wanted a family to sign for them, and we just couldn't - and those people where my sister worked they promised and promised, and it never came to it. That's why she left there and we ended up in Harrogate eventually.

RL: What date did you arrive in England?

LP: I arrived in April '39. That was a whole year under Hitler in Vienna. It was hard. Because, every time there was a knock on the door, looking back, I think when you are young, you take chances, because I was really in great danger, to be picked up any minute. And I still didn't want to leave until I got something done. I think I achieved something, to get quite a few people out.

**Tape 2:**

**??? 1hour 7 minutes 41 seconds**

RL: How many of the people, your friends, parents, your neighbours...?

LP: Mostly relations. I think ten people.

RL: But were others able to leave, that you knew? How many actually left? Was it the majority?

LP: I think they left, they had to leave. Otherwise they wouldn't have let them out. They had to leave almost overnight. They had to have passports, or tickets where they are going to, because you wouldn't let them stay. For one year, the first year, if you had somewhere to go, they would let you go. So really, the borders were closed for Jews, weren't they, otherwise 6 millions Jews wouldn't have died, so they had it on their conscience just as much. Because if they would have let them in, Hitler for one year let them out, he just wanted to get rid of them. So that was the only way.

RL: You say that you arrived in England...

LP: That was a terrible experience, because, well I left the luggage in Victoria station and just had my hand luggage and stayed overnight with my sister where she worked. They were very, very nasty to the people. I mean, the next day - I couldn't speak a word of English - Friday morning, and I took it for granted that my sister would go with me to Bloomsbury House to take me. I didn't know the Underground. We had no Underground or anything like that in Vienna. And my sister said, "I'm sorry I can't, they wouldn't let me go, I'm too busy". So she just took me to the station and there I was. And I was all day long finding Bloomsbury House because I couldn't speak, and I had this hand luggage with me and I eventually, not a car, a horse and cart stopped, one of those in London, and he said, he must have had pity on me, "Where are you going?" It was Euston Square I wanted and I kept on saying "Euston (pronounced 'Oysten') Square", and that's how I couldn't find it, "Because we spelt the way it was written, you know, Euston - Oysten". So I kept on saying "Oysten Square",

so nobody knew, and that's how I couldn't get there. Now this chap got off his vehicle, as we call it, with the horse, and he said, "I'll take you". And I was very worried, but I couldn't cope, and he was a real gentleman. And he took me right there. And they fixed me up overnight, or for two nights I think, in the boarding house. And after that, I didn't know what to do, so I had to take a job. There were a lot of youngsters, and people who wanted domestics, au pair girls and so on. The women were eyeing us up, and I got a job in Stamford Hill. I worked there a while and eventually, after different jobs, we were told Harrogate was the most beautiful city in England.

**Tape 2:****??? 1 hour 11 minutes 40 seconds**

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about the jobs that you had?

LP: They weren't so bad, really.

RL: Tell me about the first one in Stamford Hill.

LP: Well, I worked hard, because she was a businesswoman, and she had to be in business. There were two small children. She was out all day long. I don't know how she trusted me because I couldn't speak the language or anything. But she left me with them. When the war broke out I stayed there, I was with them when war broke out. She evacuated me and the children to Devon, a little village called Shaldon. To get the children out of London, it was a tough time. And after she stopped paying me for several months, she said, "Nobody is getting paid anything, because there's a war now. And you were only lucky to have a bed and food", till my sister came to visit me, who was in London, still with this Golders Green family. She said, "Well, you either pay Lili or she is going back with me to London". So they started paying me, a pound a week I think it was at the time. Eventually, we stayed near Bedford, in a vicarage. We worked in a vicarage for quite a while, because we wanted to be together, my sister and I, and from there, we came straight to Harrogate.

RL: How long were you with the first family?

**Tape 2:****??? 1 hour 13 minutes 47 seconds**

LP: Probably a year, a year and a half, something like that.

RL: And how were you treated?

LP: Reasonable. They were sort of working class people and they were nice enough. It wasn't bad. But it was very hard, because there again, her sister was sent to Devon as well, the family, and I was looking after five children. And left alone, and not speaking the language, and not knowing anything. They came for the weekend to see us, but all during the week I was working and looking after all those children. I wasn't capable enough really to do that, but somehow I managed.

RL: So their parents stayed in London, and you were alone with the children.

LP: Yes, the parents stayed in London. They were working, they had a fruit wholesalers' and they came for the weekend, every weekend. I was there a few months.

RL: How did you manage?

LP: I really don't know, because I didn't know the ... Well, I got books out and newspapers, and dictionaries, and I learned to speak with the children. The little one was only a baby, as the baby started to talk, I started to learn from the children really. And I read a lot, and with the dictionary... I didn't go to any classes, but picked it up like that.

RL: How old were the children?

LP: One was about 5 and the other one would have been a year or something like that, when I came.

RL: What did you do with them?

LP: What did I do? There were playpens. When I had to do some work I put them in the playpen and threw biscuits to them and bits of fruit, because there was plenty of food. They brought over lots of food. So that I could get done with cooking or cleaning, or whatever it was, washing, whatever I had to do, so everything, really. How I don't know, because I wasn't used to that. But somehow when you have to you have to. And I managed.

RL: Were you in contact with any other refugees at this stage?

LP: Not in Devon, in London. Yes, with quite a lot.

**??? 1hour 16 minutes 39 seconds**

RL: Well, we'll go on and talk about that in a minute. This film is just ending [new tape].

### **TAPE 3**

**Tape 3: 0 minutes 19 seconds**

What was your first impression of London and of England when you arrived?

LP: I didn't like it at all. I said I could never live here. Vienna was such a small place compared with London. I didn't like the people and I didn't like London. And I had one disappointment after the other. The first disappointment was with my sister's people, where she was working. They were so nasty they wouldn't let her take me to the West End, when they knew the way I was, just arriving and with nothing. And the other experiences were, when I went of course to Bloomsbury House and they fixed me up to stay two nights in the boarding house. And I begged them to get papers for my parents and my brother – I said "I got affidavits to go to America, it's only for about 8, 9 months and the quota comes through". They said they couldn't do anything, but they gave me a whole list of names of wealthy people, "I am sure they would sign for you to let them over". And we literally went, my sister and I, from door to door, and all they offered us were cups of tea. And we told them we were working, and my parents were only over 50, they weren't old people, and a little brother of ten, eleven, twelve or whatever he was at that time. And everyone refused us. And the people my sister worked for, their excuse was their father who lived in Sunderland. A Mr Burke, big furniture people. "When he comes over, he'll do it for you." When he came over to London, and my sister asked him he said, oh no, we have enough Jews and refugees already in Sunderland, we don't want any more. So that was the end, that's when she left really. And we just couldn't get them over, and that was so sad. I mean, we couldn't understand - we were in our twenties, weren't we - people could refuse you completely. They were very wealthy people, homes which I have never seen before. They gave us only names of people who were in a position to do it. We just weren't lucky. Other people did, perhaps we weren't strong enough, I don't know. But we certainly weren't lucky or strong enough for it.

RL: You say you didn't like the people when you arrived. What was it about the people you didn't like?

LP: I found them not friendly enough and not helpful enough. For instance, there were perhaps 50 girls in one room in Bloomsbury House. And the women came to pick up girls to help them as domestic or au pairs. And they were all dressed up and we were all in a state and we were very sad to have to do that type of work and so on. And they treated us very, very bad. To tell you the truth, we felt like prostitutes, because they were standing there, and they kept on saying, whomever they liked they went like that [gestures – come over here], to come over. And I remember the person who wanted me, a friend of mine stood next to me and said, "Don't go to her, she is terrible, don't go to her". So, she offered me I think 15 Shilling, or 17 Shilling, and I didn't want to go to her, my friend said, "She's terrible". She knew something about her. She said, "That's all we pay here, 15 or 17 Shilling". I said, "No, I have to have a pound because I have to send the money to my parents", which I did, in Belgium, who had nothing. She said, "Alright, I'll give you a pound". So I couldn't get out of it. So those were the people. They were really on the whole very nice. They were working class people. I didn't get enough to eat, but otherwise it was alright. The bit of money I had I used to buy peanuts and filled myself up because they were cheap and filling. And on our day off, we met in the West End. Now this was lovely, that was the highlight. Where all the refugees, at the Lyon's Corner in the West End, met and there was silly music, and this was the highlight, where we all met, we could have a salad for a few pennies or something and sat the whole afternoon gossiping. It was too vast for me, I couldn't speak the language, I didn't know people, I just didn't like it.

**Tape 3:**

**6 minutes 11 seconds**

RL: How did the family communicate with you?

LP: Yiddish, quite a bit of Yiddish. And I picked it up pretty quickly. I always feel I knew after 3 months as much as I know now. It's amazing when you have to learn a language.

RL: You say you all met at Lyon's corner house. Did you know any of those people?

LP: Yes, quite a few girls from Vienna. And the ones we didn't know – they were all refugees, we all sat around and told our stories and our sorrows.

RL: And how were others getting on, what kind of experiences were they having?

LP: Most of them didn't work, they went to hostels, and then went to America most of them I think. I stayed in touch with one or two, and I stayed in touch with a school friend who lives in Dewsbury, who's never mixed with any Jewish people except me, at all, because there's nobody in Dewsbury, and she was brought over from Italy, as an au pair, and became eventually director of a fish merchant who she worked for. She came as a domestic, but they took her into the business. Very clever girl, and she became a director and she still lives there, in Dewsbury. There's no contact at all with Jews, except me.

RL: Did you have any contact with Bloomsbury House after you got your job?

LP: For instance, this friend from Dewsbury, I think she wrote to Bloomsbury House – she knew that I was in England – if they could find me. And they wrote to me and said, would I like to meet Hella Ruebner, that's her name, and I said, yes of course. I think that's the only contact more or less probably I had with Bloomsbury House, Woburn House and Bloomsbury House.

**Tape 3:**  
**8 minutes 49 seconds**

RL: And then when you went down to Devon, were there no other refugees there, no one else had been evacuated?

LP: No, no. I remember I used to take the kids to the beach and... beautiful winters, it was September when we went there when the war broke out and we were there over the whole winter, and it was beautiful weather, and people used to stop and they used to say, "Isn't it a lovely day", and the little English I knew, I didn't realise it's part of the conversation. And I used to say, "No, I don't think so". No, there was nobody to talk to the whole week, because I didn't know anybody. It was a little village, Shaldon. It's outside Teignmouth.

RL: How long were you there?

LP: A few months.

RL: And when did you come back to London?

LP: I came back with the family to London, and from there I went to Harrogate.

RL: Did you have to appear before a tribunal?

LP: Yes, I did, because we were considered unfriendly aliens. And we were under curfew. We had to be at home by ten, which we didn't always do. And I appeared at a tribunal, yes. And it was a vicar who vouched for us, that we are alright, that we didn't know anything. There's a long story attached to that.

RL: Do you want to tell it?

LP: Well, we went to a dance, my sister and I. It was the forces, the continental dance in Bedford. And this was a funny story actually, and we overstayed our curfew, and we missed the bus. So we stood there trying to get a taxi or something when a car stopped and said, "Where do you want to go?" And we told them, it was about 4 miles from Bedford. Oh that's just where we are going. So we thought, "Gosh, aren't we lucky". And they took us right to the vicarage. I said to my sister, "Gosh, real English gentlemen". They didn't even try to kiss us or something, took us right to the door. Little did we know they were detectives, and of course, straight away, we had to go to the tribunal, because we were at this Czech camp and we stayed over the time. And the vicar vouched for us and said that we were alright, that we missed the bus and this and this and this. Otherwise they would have interned us. Because we had no right even to go to the dance either, because it was for the soldiers, you know. The forces.

**Tape 3:**  
**12 minutes 28 seconds**

RL: How did you get on in this household, the vicar, how were you treated there?

LP: It was a very old vicarage. They were nice enough to us, but hard working. It was very hard, because it was an old place. You know those old vicarages. But there were nice parts as well. There was a nice orchard, with their own vegetables, which we would cut and bring in every day fresh

fruit, fresh vegetable. They treated us alright, so much so that when we left, they begged us to come back. They offered us anything if we would come back. They were decent.

RL: What made you to decide to leave?

LP: Too hard work, and I mean, we didn't want to stay in a vicarage. It was always sort of in between, when we had nowhere else to go.

RL: How did you manage with food at that point?

LP: Well, we didn't eat meat, and we managed the rest of the things.

RL: Did he try to convert you at all?

LP: No, not at all. In that respect, no bad experience at all, except hard work. No, they were very nice, both of them.

RL: Were you in touch with any refugees while you were with him?

**Tape 3:**

**14 minutes 12 seconds**

LP: Oh yes, there was a club, there was a continental club in Bedford, where on our half days we spent the time there which was lovely. But that time I was still waiting, I didn't want any close relationship or anything like that but we had lots of fun there, dancing, all the refugees together, telling our stories.

RL: How long were you there?

LP: Probably a year. And then we got in touch here as we heard ... Those were the Golders Green people who told my sister Harrogate was the most beautiful place, that she used to come here for treatment, and she knew Harrogate well, so, one good point there. So we wrote to the minister here, Mr Kahn at the time, Reverend Kahn. And they got us a job in a Jewish boarding house in Harrogate, the two of us, so that we could stay together. And we were there quite a while.

RL: Which boarding house was that?

LP: Mendel, Lancaster Road, just round here actually. Londoners who came over through the bombing, from London, and opened this boarding house, and I never looked back. It was really, from that time onwards.

RL: Did you experience any of the bombings?

LP: No, the day we arrived in Harrogate, there was only one bomb that fell over Harrogate, over the Majestic, and that was the day we arrived in Harrogate. That was the only time.

RL: When was that?

LP: Which year? It was probably '41. There are different stories why they bombed the Majestic. One story was because the Chief Rabbi stayed there. Another story was they wouldn't dress up for dinner or something, the people. I don't know, all sorts of stories went round, why they bombed the Majestic – I think it was the only one which fell in Harrogate. I was actually surprised that nothing



happened in Leeds which was so near, there was nothing. My husband experienced more in Sunderland, but he was in the war all the six years nearly, wasn't he, about six years.

RL: But in London you didn't experience the bombing?

LP: No, not the bombing. We must have left before – there again, my father was already in a camp in France. They sent him from one concentration camp to another in France. First, they were detention camps, then they were concentration camps, and he begged us to leave London because he heard about the bombing. That was another reason why we left London actually. He begged us to give him at least peace of mind that we are not in London at the time. They sent the Jewish men from Belgium to France, for their own safety, little did they know that France was overrun as well, wasn't it, in no time at all. So he suffered plenty there until he was sent to an unknown destination. And my mother and my brother stayed in Brussels, actually, by that time. They tried to get over to England. A lot of refugees managed to cross the channel, but they weren't lucky, they tried several times and they were always turned away. So a non-Jewish family, for nearly four years, looked after them. How they managed, I don't know till today, because they couldn't have got ration books or anything for them, and they were all rationed already, weren't they. And somehow, I got Red Cross messages, right until about 3 months before the war ended, they were denounced by somebody. And they were taken away to a detention camp and then eventually to Auschwitz, which I found out through people who were in the same transport. I never actually read details about it except that they were in the transport, and they said, "Can you imagine after that transport how they felt?" And that was the last I heard.

RL: I was just going to ask – you had the Red Cross messages, this was from your mother who was in hiding.

LP: Yes.

RL: Did you ever find out who the family was that...?

**Tape 3:  
19 minutes 54 seconds**

LP: Unfortunately not, no, except through other people. I knew the people but I didn't know the names, I mean I didn't know them, but I knew that they were hiding with them.

RL: And your father, as you say, had gone to France.

LP: They sent them to France for their safety, the men.

RL: Was he in touch with you at all?

LP: Oh yes, yes.

RL: Because you said that he didn't want you in London.

LP: Yes, I had Red Cross messages.

RL: And when was the last contact you had with him?

LP: Well, I don't know the date, but there are the Red Cross messages. And once, a soldier brought me a message, greetings from my father, from the camp, from one of the camps, an English soldier

who met him. That's the only contact I know, but I heard from my father, and I heard from my mother.

RL: So you arrived in Harrogate, what did you think of Harrogate when you got here?

LP: There again, we worked hard at first, but we liked it, yes. And we got to know people.

RL: What kind of work were you doing?

**Tape 3:**

**21 minutes 47 seconds**

LP: Well, in that boarding house, cooking, cleaning, whatever. Serving - cooking and serving, not cleaning actually. There again, that was hard.

RL: Had you had experience cooking?

LP: Not really. I don't know until today how we managed, but somehow we did. My sister was very good. As soon as we could, we bought our own place. We bought a big house. My sister got married, also very near here, with six bedrooms, and we started out on our own.

RL: Now when was that?

LP: That was already after the war, just after the war, 46.

RL: So did you stay in the first boarding house, Mendel's, until then?

LP: No, I worked at Betty's as well. We had already our own flat. Well, we shared a flat with somebody, in Cheltenham Parade. And we worked for Betty's for probably two years. And from there, my sister got married, and then I got married. So we thought, well, we need a house. By that time we had already a bit of money saved. And we bought this six-bedroom house and started to take boarders in, for a year. And did so well, in that year, that we bought a hotel after that, the Manor hotel, where we were quite successful.

**Tape 3:**

**23 minutes 47 seconds**

RL: Just staying in the war years for the moment. Can you tell me about the community in Harrogate at that point in time, during the war, and how they received you?

LP: They weren't very welcoming. I had very nice experiences from non-Jewish people. They couldn't do enough. I was working in a hotel, Langham Hotel on Valley Drive, very nice couple, a big hotel, about 60 bedrooms, and she was very nice, she spoke also several languages, perfect German and so on. And she felt very sorry for me and very sad about the circumstances. She always told me, in England you have to put a smile on your face. You can't go on crying all the time, because you know, how we felt, we were very low. So that was very funny, because we were always told to show our feelings, you know. I learned to smile, even when I didn't feel like smiling. And of course, I was so worried about the family the whole time, because we knew about my father already and my mother, and what was happening and so on. So she took me to the office and she said, "When the war is over, I know what your father will be like, and he will be penniless. So I'm going to give you on the quiet every week some money. And I want you to put that away, that when your father comes out, he has got something to start with." And things like that. And she also promised

me, as soon as the war is over, she said,” You won’t be able to go over, but I will go over and find him for you”. I mean that was so wonderful, just to hear it, such a nice gesture. Not Jewish people, you know. So I had really very nice experience from non-Jews, not one Jewish person really welcomed us at all here, all the years we were here. Even in the synagogue, we had to share a seat, my sister and I, things like that. Nobody ever invited us for a Yom Tov or anything, not once, I remember, all the years we were here.

**Tape 3:****26 minutes 45 seconds**

RL: Were there other refugees here?

LP: Well, there were a few, yes. The Reverend Kahn, I mean they were very nice, they helped us in other ways, but I was never invited for a meal, I didn’t expect to. They were very nice people, very helpful. She was on the tribunal eventually, Mrs Kahn, the Minister’s wife. And she, for instance, I didn’t want to go on ammunition, because I was a very bad traveller. So that’s how we managed to get into hotel work, because there were forces staying in the hotel. So she arranged that and also, not to split us up, my sister and me. So she was very, very nice, and so was Reverend Kahn, but nobody did anything for us, no.

RL: Did you meet any other refugees here?

LP: Yes, but there are hardly any here now.

RL: But then, during the war?

LP: Yes, I was friendly with quite a few.

RL: Who were they?

LP: They were young girls like we were and they went back to London, America, Israel, all over.

RL: Were they also working in hotels or elsewhere?

LP: Well, that was the only thing we were allowed to, domestic or au pair. We had no permission to do anything else.

RL: Were there any refugees that opened boarding houses?

LP: Yes, the Winters had one boarding house, they were – yes, and in Valley Drive, the girls I was friendly with, Hofstätters. There were nine Jewish hotels in Harrogate when we opened. And we were the last ones here, the others had all closed by then, but there were nine when we opened. We did well, we were quite successful. Hofstätter, you might have heard of the family, they had a lot of children. They were very nice people, on Valley Drive. They came from Czechoslovakia I think, originally, and the Winters from Germany I think. The Winters, I think, ended up in Israel, the Hofstätters in London, it was a large family, a lot of children, I was friendly with one or two girls. No, I can’t remember that I ever had a meal in all those years, anywhere. I can’t, I am trying to remember, but I don’t think I had.

**Tape 3:****30 minutes 13 seconds**

RL: What happened *Pesach* time, Seder night?

LP: Well, I tell you what we did for the *Seder*. There was a hostel on Roxborough Road, for youngsters. And we asked them if we pay, could we join in for the *Sedarim*, which we did. That's when we lived already in our flat, in Cheltenham Parade when we worked for Betty's that must have been.

RL: And can you tell me more about the hostel?

LP: They were youngsters, well looked after by a Mrs Hipps, did a lot for them. They also eventually all left for different countries.

RL: Did you know any of them?

LP: Not really, no. No, we just joined in the *Sedarim*. That's all I remember.

RL: Was it mixed, boys and girls?

LP: I don't think so, I think they were girls. I can only remember girls, I think. It became a convalescent home after.

RL: Was that being run by the Harrogate Jewish community?

LP: I presume it must have been. I know Mrs Hipps and Mrs Kahn were very involved, but I don't think they could have financed it, I don't think so, must have been financed by the Jewish Association or whatever. I am sure they didn't finance it. Mrs Kahn couldn't have done, definitely because she was very badly paid. At that time, it was ridiculous what they paid. Mrs Hipps, she was in a good position, but I don't think she would have helped much financially, but she worked for it.

RL: What did you do for leisure?

LP: We went to Leeds a lot. It was the only time we had the chance to go to the Jubilee Hall to meet Jewish people and we felt at home and we met a lot of refugees there. And we went to the dances and they had plays and musical evenings and so whenever we could, we went to Leeds. That was really lovely.

RL: Did you find them more welcoming?

LP: Yes, I would say so. Yes, my sister met her husband there, her second husband, in Leeds, in the Jubilee Hall. I met one or two people.

RL: And you met other refugees as well.

LP: There were a lot of refugees there, and a lot of marriages started at Jubilee Hall I think, because they were all youngsters, and so many young boys and girls, refugees.

RL: Did your sister marry another refugee?

LP: No, a Leeds chap. Norman Fox.

RL: And how did you meet your husband?

**Tape 3:**  
**34 minutes 0 seconds**

LP: I met him in Sunderland. I had an aunt living in Sunderland. I think, actually, he came in to pay - my aunt's husband was a reader in the synagogue there, and I think he came in to pay his membership or whatever. And she introduced me to him and that was it. In three months we were married I think.

RL: When was this?

LP: 55 years ago.

RL: What year was that?

LP: '47 probably '48!

RL: Who was your aunt, how was that relationship?

LP: Well, she was actually my mother's eldest brother's wife, my mother's sister in law. Eventually, she came to Harrogate actually.

RL: Did your mother's brother also live in Sunderland?

LP: No. She was married four times, this aunt of mine. And the last husband was a Harrogate chap, that's how she came.

RL: So during the war, you got your own flat at first, or was it renting - you were renting a place, where was that?

LP: Cheltenham Parade.

RL: Was it just you and your sister?

LP: Yes.

RL: And how long were you there?

LP: Well, I was there 'til she got married, two years probably.

LP: And what did you do when she married?

**Tape 3:**  
**36 minutes 14 seconds**

LP: I still lived together with them, because I married 6 months after. So we lived together.

RL: Until you married.

LP: Yes. And then we bought this house, where we started with the boarding house.

RL: Which house was that?

LP: Westcliffe Terrace.

RL: And you actually bought the property?

LP: Yes. Just when I got married we moved in there, more or less. We had already saved a bit of money by that time, we worked several years. And we bought it, and the first year was quite successful. No telephone even and still we did well.

**TAPE 4**

**17 seconds**

RL: You were just saying you remembered an incident when you thought you actually had been invited out for a Friday night meal. Do you want to tell us about that?

LP: Yes, it was a very charming and well-known person, Mrs Hipps in Harrogate, very comfortable. And she invited us for Friday night and we thought, oh well, that's very nice. We both arrived and she put us in this very large old-fashioned kitchen, they still had the open fires, a real cooking kitchen. Not like nowadays a nice kitchen. She asked us to sit down, and eventually she offered a cup of tea and asked us if we would come and work for her. And we just were absolutely stunned. And we said, "No thank you very much", and we left. Now, years after, when we opened the hotel, she came for *Pesach*. And she said, can I come for meals, for the *Sedarim*. And first of all, we were really very busy and we didn't take anybody else anymore. And I said, "No I'm sorry, we can't". And she said, "Me of all the people, you are refusing Mrs Hipps". And I said, "Well if you want to know, I tell you the story". And I repeated it to her that I really have no room, but eventually she worked her way through, she did come for the *Sedarim*. But I did tell her. That's the end of this story. But that's the only family I remember, nobody ever invited us. I think I had tea at Hofstätter's, the boarding house, because I was friendly with the girls. That was on Valley Drive.

**Tape 4:**

**2 minutes 28 seconds**

RL: You were saying that you got married and you bought between you your first boarding house.

LP: Westcliffe Terrace.

RL: And how did you make a go of that?

LP: I think we advertised probably in the Chronicle. And it's amazing, we had probably only four or five rooms to let, because we needed our own accommodation, didn't we? And we filled it up over the whole year. We could not believe it because it wasn't modern and we weren't that experienced. As I said I had to walk about two minutes even to get to a telephone. We made sufficient money to be able, by auction, to buy the Manor Hotel after a year and a bit. There again, we came about a very nice man who had a lot of property in Harrogate and he was at the auction. I had never been to an auction before. So I went to Morfords, the estate agent, before and asked how much mortgage we would be allowed. And he gave us an amount at the time, but as the property went cheaper we couldn't get the mortgage. So we were really stuck, it was very, very hard. However, during the auction, which only lasted as you know a few minutes, we get a note from Mr Meyer who had a lot of property, and he saw us there. He was the president of the *Shul* in Harrogate at one time as well. And he sent us a note during the auction, 'If you are interested, I will not bid against you', because he was bidding. And through that, we managed to get the property very reasonable. The only thing was we didn't get the mortgage we expected because the mortgage was applying to a higher value of the property. So then we really were in trouble, but somehow we managed.

RL: And how big a place was it?

LP: Around 20 bedrooms.

RL: Was it a hotel?

LP: It was a hotel. And the hotel was left to minders so it had to go by auction. So whatever price, it would have gone. It was two old ladies it belonged to, they were nurses and they became alcoholics, very strange. But it was really a lovely place, I don't know if you have ever been. Beautiful situation, before you leave I will show you a picture, it's really super, like a castle, and they made flats out of it now.

RL: And what kind of staff did you have?

LP: We had 3 girls living in, and the rest were part timers. There again, they were from the north, the girls, and they were very good. And one in particular I am still in touch with, she worked for us 16 years, and she more or less managed the place, and I always said when she is leaving, we are going to leave, which we did. When she got married and she had her second child – the first one she used to bring to work – when she had the second one she couldn't, and that was it. We are still in touch. She helps us sometimes in the synagogue when we need her.

RL: You say there were a number of other boarding houses.

**Tape 4:  
6 minutes 24 seconds**

LP: There were nine altogether when we opened. Mrs Levi, Winter, Hofstätter, there was another one on Valley Drive, I can't remember the name. There were nine, anyhow.

RL: And why were people coming?

LP: Well, it was a spa place and people came for treatment mostly. And we got people from abroad a lot as well, because especially refugees, they got compensated for treatment, and for doctor treatment, so we got a lot of people from Germany and Austria and all over, and we were very busy. But then over night it changed from a spa place to become a conference town. And the business just folded up, we had no business at all over night, we thought that's it. But it's amazing, in a matter of weeks, we got all the people for conferences. And we did just as well.

**Tape 4:  
7 minute 35 seconds**

RL: When did this change happen, in the 1960s?

LP: Probably...

RL: Who did the cooking?

LP: Between my sister and me. We tried, we found it hard, as time went on, we tried to take cooks in, but it was too difficult, it didn't work. We wouldn't have made a profit. And with kosher and one thing and the other, it was very difficult. So we decided against it and we carried on, but then

unfortunately, my sister, the last four years, she was very ill. And it became very hard for us. So that's when we closed down.

RL: When did you close?

LP: Well, I closed down about 30 years ago.

RL: So how did you manage, running it and doing the cooking – did your sister have any children?

LP: No. I only had Michelle, I had some trouble before - I just had Michelle, and we had a nanny living in. And we managed, but it was hard going, I must say, but we enjoyed it, because we had a very good understanding my sister and I, we worked in turns, in different shifts, and met a lot of very nice people whom we are still in touch with, some of them. We liked the life in Harrogate and I liked the hotel life as well. It was hard, but looking back, enjoyable.

RL: Did you have any permanent guests?

LP: Yes, when we closed down, we left the hotel with 9 permanent guests. But in no time at all, they wouldn't stay. The people who bought the place they said they would buy kosher meat, they promised everything for those people, they weren't Jewish. But it didn't work. And they sold it in no time at all, she was a domestic science teacher, and thought probably it's so easy to know this part of the business, but she found it so difficult. We sold it for next to nothing, and it went, not long ago, for a million. We sold it for 13,000 pounds at the time.

**Tape 4:**

**10 minutes 45 seconds**

RL: When you were cooking for it, did you do any continental recipes?

LP: We mixed it, yes, quite a lot. Especially the baking was all continental. It was a mixture of English and continental cooking I would say. It was good, people used to say it was better than Bournemouth hotels, you know, food-wise. It was lacking other things, but food-wise it was good.

RL: Can you give an example of a menu?

LP: Well, it started with morning tea in bed. The girls had to go around with morning tea, cleaning shoes outside. That's also a thing of the past, isn't it? They all put their shoes outside. And then breakfast at 9 o'clock. 11 o'clock, whoever was in got coffee, or tea, whatever they wanted. Then there was a big dinner, a five-course meal at lunchtime, every day, afternoon tea, every day, supper in the evening, a fish meal usually in the evening, something like that, then late evening tea, 10 o'clock. So it really went on and on. We had to entertain people as well, there were a lot of single people and they expected us to be with them. They always wanted us to join in, so every evening we had to be there and listen to all their stories. So when television came on the scene that was a godsend. It was wonderful, because really, we didn't have to do that part, they were watching the television. And some of those permanent guests could be very difficult at times, you know, they would dwell on this and that.

RL: How long would the permanent guests stay for?

LP: A few years usually, some of them. We had one man who was over a hundred, and when we closed, he went to the ... (inaudible) and he reached the old age of 104 I think. They were mentally



already, a little bit, you know. But as I say, the staff were absolutely marvellous with them, so patient with those ladies and men, you know, more patient than I probably. They were great.

RL: Can you tell me how you managed to prepare for the different festivals and what you did for those?

LP: Well, we kept it all as it should be really, you know. We did our best. *Pesach* of course was a very difficult period, I don't know until now how we did it. We served ... (inaudible) 'til ten o'clock in the morning or whatever. Well, we changed the night before already as much as we could, cutlery, because we didn't have extra for *Pesach* and so on. So it was just really the china to change, and pots and so on. Most of the preparation and cooking was done by breakfast time, before breakfast came on. We got up, when it was a busy period, about 5, half past 5 in the morning, that we should finish with the bulk of the cooking by nine o'clock. Otherwise, once breakfast had started, people used to come between 9, 10, half past 10; you couldn't get a meal really out in time. And I baked for *Pesach*, I remember, every day, about 3 to 5 cakes before breakfast, but it was all prepared, the sponges, they were by 8 o'clock ready. Because so many people from Leeds came over, you know, for meals and for tea. And we had a lot of Harrogate people as well. So we had *Pesach* up to 70, 80 people for Seders. There were two rooms going, the dining room and the lounge for *Sedarim*. And really we were not experienced, especially when we started. I remember the first *Seder*, it was just murder, we had about 50 people in, my sister got poorly and I thought, this is it, I can't, I can't!

**Tape 4:**

**15 minutes 43 seconds**

But somehow we managed. That was just, we opened just before *Pesach*. That was hard. *Pesach* was very hard, Christmas, toy fair, a very busy period, the toy fair. And Yom Kippur and the whole summer, but then the winter was quiet. So you had to make your business really in summer, and *Pesach* because the winter could have been really that we worked at a loss, you know.

RL: Did you have extra help in the kitchen, at your very busy times?

LP: Yes, we had help, and my husband was a great help of course. He did all the correspondence and the books and petty cash and all that sort of thing. Telephone, he took as much as he could away from me. He was very good. If there was any complaint or so he wouldn't even tell me that I shouldn't get myself upset. He took it all on his own shoulders. He could take it, it didn't worry him, it wouldn't upset him, me, I was more temperamental, it would have upset me. So he didn't want to upset me and never told me anything like that.

RL: Was there a Succah?

LP: No. I remember that he didn't want Michelle ever to miss anything, so she was invited to a party on Shabbos, it was a big estate agent. It was about 3 miles I guess and he walked forward and backward, twice, to take her, come back, and then pick her up again. That she shouldn't miss anything. Because we were always afraid being in a hotel that she is missing out, you know. But I guess we were good on the whole, sometimes including her in our things and so on. So I think she had a good childhood, ja.

**Tape 4:**

**18 minutes 09 seconds**

RL: Whereabouts were the guests coming from, what part of the country?

LP: Well, mostly from the north. We also got Londoners, but the North Country people were so much easier to deal with. The Londoners weren't as easy as people from the north, Middlesborough, Manchester, Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle, you know. They were very pleasant.

RL: Did they use to come back regularly?

LP: Pretty regularly, not everybody, but yes, the majority. From one year to the next. So they must have been quite satisfied. I could have made so many friends, but I only kept about two or three really, because it was too difficult to keep up with it. But Michelle, being an only child, she had a lot of company because, being a young family, a lot of people came with their children which was rather nice. So she didn't miss out much.

RL: How did you get on with the Harrogate Jewish community?

LP: Once we started, and we had our daughter and got on our feet, they were nice. And I became active, of course, even though I was so busy, with WIZO and the guild, the synagogue guild. And that was a different 'capital' then. Things changed overnight there. I wasn't anymore the poor refugee, you know.

RL: What activities did you do?

**Tape 4:**  
**20 minutes 13 seconds**

LP: Well, I was co-chairman of the guild, and at one time I was treasurer and secretary, you mention it, WIZO co-chairman right through, all this kind of thing. I am still very active, with WIZO and the guild. Now I am an advisor, a catering advisor.

RL: Was your sister active in any organisations?

LP: Well, a little bit, not as much. She wasn't a very strong person I think. She didn't find enough time I think to do all this.

RL: And what did your husband do for a living?

LP: Well, he worked I think for Cohen in Sunderland till he came to Harrogate and we got married. I think it was Cohen.

RL: What was he working as?

LP: Dispatch clerk, something like that.

RL: And then in Harrogate?

LP: Well, more or less the hotel, he came into the hotel business with us.

RL: And Aranka's husband, what did he do?

LP: He was in furniture; he was managing Walkers at one time, or Cohen, whatever, a big store in Harrogate. He was a Leeds chap.

RL: And when was Michelle born?

LP: 50 years ago, when was that – she's just been 50, 1947?

RL: 1952. And what education did she have?

LP: She finished off at university. She went to a private school till she got the 11 plus. And then she went to state school, to the grammar school, Harrogate grammar school, and then to university where she got a Hebrew and English degree, and German.

RL: What about Hebrew Education?

LP: At the university. Before that, we had a Cheder. We had about 50 children here in Harrogate at one time. Now we haven't got one, at all. So they had two or three teachers here, more or less just Sunday morning. Sometimes a day in the week, one afternoon I think. She was always very interested from the early stage onwards in the Bible. I remember I got this big picture Bible for her, the very thick one. Like other children would read novels or children's books, she would read the Bible. She was so interested.

RL: Did she belong to any youth groups?

**Tape 4:**

**24 minutes 12 seconds**

LP: I don't think we had anything here, did we. Occasionally we went to Leeds, but they didn't get on so well in Leeds, our children, the Harrogate children. So they kept themselves more or less here. Somehow when we went to Leeds, although it's so near, it was far away, you know, the different standards. She had friends here in Harrogate. She loved grammar school so much more than the private school.

RL: Who did Michelle marry?

LP: She was married to a Reverend for 22 years, something like that, Ian...(inaudible). And then they got divorced and she is married now to Marcus Levi.

RL: And what children?

LP: She has only got Joel and Suzie. Suzie who is a pharmacist in London, in the Royal Free Hospital, 2 years already, doing very well, and she is very conscientious. She could earn much more money in a shop, but she prefers to work in hospital because she learns so much more and finds it more interesting. And Joel is in computers in Sydney. And he's got two children.

RL: Who did he marry?

LP: He married a South African girl, they met at Carmel College. Joel did his education at Carmel College. Then he went to Israel, ...(inaudible) and Hebrew University. And from there they went to Australia, where his father in law lives, and family.

RL: And what children do they have?

**Tape 4:**

**26 minutes 16 seconds**

LP: Joel has got two children, a girl of 5 and a boy of 4. They are quite happy, well, Sydney is lovely. We all emigrated. We were going to live in Australia, on the Western side in Perth. We all left Harrogate, about 14 years ago. Well, I was one of the people, but we couldn't settle well enough and we came back to Harrogate after three months.

RL: So who went?

LP: Well, we all went, the whole family - Michelle and family, and Henry and I. There were 6 of us. We all went out, and we all came back after 3 months. The understanding was, if we didn't like it, if one of us didn't like it, we'd return. And we did. And when we left, I got this picture here given by the Harrogate community. It's an old painting, The White Roses of Yorkshire. It's rather nice. They made a lot of fuss. Nobody believed it when we returned. We didn't even unpack our furniture. It was still all there.

RL: What didn't you like about it?

LP: I think I missed England, and I missed Harrogate, more than anything. And the new life, I felt a refugee all over again. It was too late in life to start in a new country. But the rest of the family liked it. Joel loves it, they love it in Australia, it's different when one is so young, Joel was 21 when he got married, and went straight to Australia. So he is used to that life. They climb and everything. The outdoor life, they like it. Which is right for young people, isn't it?

RL: Coming back to Hebrew education, I believe that Michelle had a Bat Mitzvah.

**Tape 4:**  
**28 minutes 36 seconds**

LP: Yes, it was the first one in Harrogate. There were quite a few girls at the time, about 6 I think, which was quite something, they never knew about it at that time.

RL: How did that come about, how did that take off?

LP: I think the Hebrew teacher started it in Harrogate, because the *Cheder* was quite strong in Harrogate at that time.

RL: And what did they have to do?

LP: Well, they learned quite a lot I think and then they had to have an exam. In Leeds I think it was, they tested them, and written work, they really worked quite a lot for it. Yes, it was quite an occasion and then we all joined in and made a party for them in Shul, which was nice.

RL: Did you have a Bat Mitzvah?

LP: I had one in Vienna in the big synagogue which is right in the city, which is still there, because several years ago I went back to Vienna. I wanted to know if it is still as beautiful as I remembered it. Unfortunately, I must say it is more beautiful. Because they built it out and modernised it more. It's absolutely super, and I went to this big synagogue in town, Seitenstettengasse, where about 50 girls got probably – it was only one day of the year when they did it, we were about 50, 60 girls together, confirmed there, in that big synagogue. This was quite something.

RL: So what would happen?

LP: In the synagogue... well everyone would sing bits, in Hebrew and in German, and the sermon and parties, yea.

Who organised that?

Probably from school. Yes, whoever wanted that, but not everybody wanted that. It was only one year.... For the whole of Vienna. And when I went to that Synagogue, which was absolutely beautiful, with a mens choir and it was very busy there, packed, and a lot security generally, outside you had to show your papers and your passport and as a man's choir... as good.... Everyone in the choir was as good as a cantor, absolutely fantastic, and there was a Jewish restaurant there, still next door more or less in the ? in the city and the synagogue was also large and beautiful. And mostly tourists were there, when we were there.

RL: And how did you feel being back?

LP: Sad, in many ways. Because we went back for instance and longed to see our flat and we walked all the way to the flat which was on the third floor and we just couldn't knock on the door, we just couldn't. We left. Because the way we were thrown out, we didn't want to meet those people, the same people were there we thought. We just left the house, we didn't knock on the door. The whole district changed, it became a working class district now which was entirely different before, with big (?)... and beautiful shops and all that, and it wasn't that anymore, it was just a working class district, so that was sad. But the town is beautiful and everything even improved, they even enlarged it. We had 21 (betsierke) now there are more from the provinces they included from Vienna, they enlarged it, so... and in the city there is also the underground already where you can just walk and shop, and... it's nice.

RL How did you feel with the people?

LP Well it was an organised tour, the great Austrian Tour they called it. So we were mostly in the tour except again we met just two or three people my sister knew who took us round when we went away from the tour. And well the people we were with were alright and the people we met they were pro-Jewish, ya. We didn't feel any antisemitism there. Except for instance in Salzburg, we went into a shop to buy something, and it was just the (Siletkreisler?) I think it was the Burgemeister there, and I said 'well how do you find life here now in the shop and here, I think, and she said 'oh we have to vote although he's a Jew, you know he was a Jew the burgermeister, because 'look, how prosperous we are compared with how things were before. Because, under him, you know, because they were so more prosperous than they were before, because the fact being they were peasants, and now they were shopkeepers or whatever. So then a better financial position in Austria and Vienna than they were before the war.

#### **Tape 4:**

**35 minutes 35 seconds**

RL: Did you meet anyone that you had known?

LP: Just two or three people, that's all, whom we met in coffee houses, sort of arranged, and one person took us around in the car, but not particularly. We stuck more or less with the group. We saw so much, we went right through to every province you know. In Austria, we only stayed in Vienna probably three, four days. My sister wanted to see her first husband, that was rather funny, who came from Shanghai back to Vienna. And they all survived in Shanghai you know, which is

amazing. And she phoned him, and she saw him, and they got on very well. He came with his wife and it was great fun.

## TAPE 5

RL: You were just saying that Aranka met her first husband whilst you were in Vienna. Had they actually been divorced – what had happened with that marriage?

### **Tape 5: 28 seconds**

LP: That's why she went back for the *Get* actually. They were legally divorced, but she wanted a *Get*. That's why she went back to Vienna, not with me, with her second husband for the *Get*, to get the Jewish marriage...

RL: When was that, when did she go back? Was that straight after the war had finished?

LP: Well it could be after, three, four years after.

RL: OK, a few years later. Coming back to the boarding house and stories that you can tell me from the boarding house, you were just about to tell me something as the tape began.

LP: There was one lady who was very awkward. She had a stick in her hand and if something didn't go right, she used to go with the stick after the staff. You know, they were already a bit disturbed and they accepted it, they were very good with them. There were all sorts of things. There was one lady who – we used to call her the mother of the Israeli Navy – Mrs Diamond. She stayed with us several years. She had a heart failure, all sort of things. And one night she was very, very bad, and my husband stayed with her all night. And she said if she is going to live the night out, she is going to buy everybody a watch, because she was a very wealthy woman, which she did. I still got the watch, and my husband I think has got the watch.

RL: And you used to call her what?

LP: Mrs Diamond, the mother of the Israeli Navy.

RL: And how was that?

LP: Apparently, she lived in Israel, and she did so much for the navy. So much charity work, although she was an ailing woman, all by correspondence, from the hotel. She would sit day and night and write letters, and collected money just by correspondence. She was great, and she was buried in Israel. And 500 people I think came out from the navy to see her, and the Minister Horkmann ... (Inaudible). That was in ... (Inaudible), he took her over to be buried in Israel. She was a character, very bad temper, but very kind.

RL: Did anything ever go wrong in your planning?

### **Tape 5: 3 minutes 47 seconds**

LP: Well in the cooking one day as I said, the Irish girl, it was borscht, and we took out the beetroot, it was *Pesach*. And she probably thought it was just water, and it was just before the *Seder*, and she emptied the whole lot of the borscht in the sink. But I could always cope, I managed to make the soup for 40, 50 people in a matter of an hour or less. So I made a vegetable soup or something like that. But it was quite something. Can you imagine after cooking all that borscht, and she pours it all out. That I remember. But otherwise nothing went particularly wrong.

RL: Would you cook at night?

LP: No we never cooked at night. By 2 o'clock we finished for the afternoon – well we had to cook supper, but we never started until about half past 5, 6 to get supper ready, it was prepared and we finished it off, pretty well organised in that respect. And we did it in turns, so one evening my sister would be on duty and another evening we would be on duty. For the evening, tea and so on, we had to stay up sometimes until 12 o'clock. Everybody went to bed, so it was sometimes a long day when you come to think of it. With all the meals, nobody does that nowadays, morning tea, afternoon tea, evening tea and all that sort of thing.

RL: Did you have any speciality that you were known for, in what you served?

**Tape 5:  
5 minutes 44 seconds**

LP: I think the baking. They were very keen and I was a good baker always. And... From Leeds they came on one Sunday. We used to make our joints and our scotch balls we made, you know, put one chicken in and the rest was vegetables and barley, you know, and that sort of thing. That, we making it every Sunday and they came for that, yeah. And there was always a joint. And there was always a choice of two, two main courses and a choice of sweets. And always a starter soup, main course and sweet, and then lemon tea again in the lunch, lunch time and evening, after the meal. That's beside all the other meals.

RL: Which was the main meal of the day?

LP: Lunch time. That was a dinner. That was a meat meal. And the evening was usually fish. Fish salmon something like that. Soufflés, we made a lot of soufflés and things like that.

RL: Did you do any Viennese patisserie?

LP: I don't know actually Viennese except probably the flavouring was Viennese, like spinach for instance. I would put in eggs in spinach, boiled spinach, you know. And then put egg yolks in, salt and pepper and garlic, which made it. You made the vegetables up quite a lot. Not just three vegetables, or pickled cabbage and red cabbage and all that sort of, continental dishes, but... I don't think otherwise much, because Vienna isn't a fish country really. And we eat a lot of meat in Vienna, goose, goose, geese? So there wasn't so much in the meat line. I mean different to here. Here its chicken usually isn't it or so. We eat, every week I had a duck or a goose for *Shabbats* in Vienna. That's what we did at that time. And the Viennese cooking it's rather stodgy, sort of, lots of dumplings and things like that. Plum dumplings, apricot dumplings, or noodle dumplings, sweet noodle dumplings as a sweet, with nuts or with Mohn you know things like that and that wouldn't go down well here I don't think (laugh).

**Tape 5:  
8 minutes 36 seconds**

RL: Did you ever try, try it out?

LP: Not that kind of thing no.

RL: No.

LP: No.

RL: What did you serve for Shabbats? What was the Shabbat menu?

LP: Well it was. Lunch time was always chicken with rice or cholent in the Shabbats. I think it was all chicken there was no choice. Chopped liver, the usual, which I don't think we did in Vienna. We do goose liver, which is absolutely delicious (laughing). I could have lived on it. Yes, but we done it with chopped liver. And it's not a fish eating country because we didn't have much fish in Austria. So the only fish I remember was carp, carp in jelly. That was more or less as a starter on Friday night. Carp.

RL: Where did you pick up your recipes from? And how did you learn what to do?

LP: Well I learnt a bit in the year I was in Vienna, under Hitler (laugh). I kept on saying to my mother you must show me how or where to go or I know nothing. I was always interested in baking even as a youngster. And I started cooking a bit but there again we had no meat and so there wasn't so much I could learn except. I over-seasoned everything and my father used to say, as if we haven't got enough with Hitler we have to eat Lili's food as well (laugh). I always remember that (laughing).

**Tape 5:**

**10 minutes 26 seconds**

But the rest we picked up as we went along and used a bit of common sense, that's all, and try, tried out things. Probably took us longer but. I think the secret is to taste food before you serve it in a hotel. And I think that very often lacking here. People serve things, soups or gravies, or so, without tasting it. I think our soups and our gravies were always very good. And I think that makes a meal.

RL: How many people would you usually be serving?

LP: Well as an average I would say around twenty-five to thirty, but when it was holiday time, so people came from outside or from Harrogate. But there were quiet periods in winter of course, very quiet, when we just had permanents and the odd one.

RL: You say especially for Sedarim, you would have a lot of people?

LP: A lot of elderly people joined yes.

RL: Who would lead the Chedar?

LP: Well Henry would do it for years and then the, I remember clerks came, I remember, and, he had the lovely voice, so he, did several Chedars in the Manor Hotel for us. I don't know which clerk it was. I don't remember the first name. But Henry would know.

RL: Where was he from?



LP: Sunderland.

RL: From Sunderland?

LP: Yes. He did it lovely. But my husband, up to very recently, managed it very well without it getting him down a bit to do the Chedar, gets him tired. But he told this, he told me he went everyday to Chedar including Shabbat and Sunday. So of course they learnt a lot which we didn't.

**Tape 5:**

**12 minutes 48 seconds**

RL: Did you, do you belong to any refugee organisations? Did you join any?

LP: Not really because during the war I probably didn't have time and I didn't know. And then there was nothing 'til just now when the Association started I've been a couple of times to one of the meetings. And I've been in Leeds once or twice at the Association of Refugees.

RL: When did this start?

LP: In Leeds? I don't know. I've been about two or three years ago the first time. I don't know when it started. Here they only just started in Harrogate.

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about it, what they do and who it involves?

LP: Well Suzanne Green organises it here in Harrogate and everybody, they sit around. We do it almost in the same place because. It's a German lady. She's married to a Christian but she's nearly blind so she can't go out much. Very nice and very smart person although she's nearly blind. And, so she wants it in her house. So we meet there. And everybody says a bit, whatever they want. Suzanne Green organises it very nicely. And she asks everybody what, where they come from and what they've done and what, all this life here and so forth and so forth. And it makes a nice afternoon. And you meet a few people and. I've only been two or three times. Every few weeks you meet. They're organising now different trips. There is one going to Nottingham, to the museum, which we probably will go on. We did one from Harrogate but I didn't go, so Michelle might go with me actually. And then they're organising a little holiday in St Anne's. I'm not going but they're organising that. And things like that. They're quite active actually.

RL: And how many people attended?

LP: Well there were. Last week. Last time I should think there were fifteen, sixteen people there. They're not from Harrogate. One person was from Harrogate beside me. They were from the surroundings.

RL: Did you know any of them before?

LP: No, no.

RL: And they're all refugees?

LP: Yes, yes.

**Tape 5:**

**15 minutes 22 seconds**

RL: So whereabouts are they living?

LP: In Ockley, Ilkley, York, Bradford, all in the surroundings.

RL: And have they married Jewish people?

LP: Mostly not, no, mostly married out. That's why I think they're living there, sort of isolated, away from towns.

RL: How would you describe yourself in terms of nationality?

LP: Well, I've lived much longer in England than I lived on the continent but I still don't feel, I still feel foreign, foreign to a certain extent. Language most probably, I don't know.

RL: Do you think you have any kind of continental identity?

LP: I think. I suppose so, yes. I feel a little bit odd in out here among our friends, although there are fifty friends and we are the only Jews here so I .... They're all very nice, I can't say anything else, but I feel the odd one out, you know.

RL: Do you feel different to the English at all?

LP: Yes I think so.

RL: Can you sort of describe how, what it is that's different?

LP: What's different? Language most probably because I can't express myself as well as I should do, I could do, whatever. Yes. See, unless you've been to school in England I think there's something lacking, different education, different ...

RL: How do you feel towards the English?

LP: Well on the whole quite comfortable, and, yes, and we mix quite well in Harrogate here. Unfortunately it's an older community now and a lot of my friends moved away or died, or going into homes, or whatever. So the community's shrinking and shrinking. And we're missing the youth. I've got no minister here, no permanent minister, which is also lacking. There's something missing here. While we had the permanent minister, you know, it was different. There's no, nobody really you could go to if you really needed advice or anything special, or to discuss anything. I was, for instance, very friendly with Rabbi Rockman. I don't know if you know him, we were all friendly, and Michelle was very friendly with the girls. Or Gale, we were very friendly with, Dr Gale, down in London. Norman Gale, yes, you might know him. Then Rabbi Louis, who went to Israel, back, now they lived here, that block, in my, our block. That was lovely. And we were very friendly with Mrs Louis. Oh sure, so we missed this. It did keep the community more together

#### **Tape 5:**

**19 minutes 27 seconds**

**(this part of the transcript – until the next time code - is not on the video)**

I would say, when there was a minister. That is lacking, in my opinion. But they say they prefer it and they can't afford it financially and so forth.

So that every week somebody else, some better, some not, some are youngsters some are just... To be able to *layn* you know. We've quite a few learned men who could do the service but they can't *layn* so we have to have somebody for this. We get a lot from Manchester or what, the ... And Dr Fried, do you know him? Yes. I think he sends quite a lot of people over to us.

RL: Have you ever come across any hostility here in Harrogate?

LP: Not really I don't think so. No. I don't think so, nor even when I worked weeks. Girls were - I was the only Jewish girl - they would always appreciate my standards. And I kept up to it, you know. They appreciated that yes.

RL: And how do you feel towards Israel?

LP: Well I love it. I was, very early stage onward, I was hoping to settle there, but now... I think it will be alright one day but it will take a certain time, beautiful country and so much hope. Yes. I've been there about nine times, I think, I worked it out.

RL: When did you first go?

LP: The first time? When we closed down the hotel, and I didn't want to fly. I was always scared of flying and then I thought well I have to if I want to see it so I must fly. And we got to the airport. I remember there was a chief Rabbi. It must have been, I think it was ... (inaudible). We did his wedding actually, in the Manor.

**(this part of the transcript is back on the video)**

**Tape 5**

**19 minutes 31 seconds**

We did another Rabbi's wedding here. And he got on the same plane. I said, oh, I'm alright now (laughing), and I wasn't scared anymore and I've been flying ever since (laughing).

**Tape 5:**

**19 minutes 41 seconds**

RL: How did you feel on your first trip?

LP: Beautiful. It's absolutely fascinating. That was with 'Israel Tours' at the time. It was very well organised. It was super. We saw such a lot and we stayed in different places. We started off in Ramat Aviv, I think, and then we went to Haifa and we went to, I think, Netanya as well, probably, while out there. I have relations out there, cousins, from my mother's side. Quite a few and Michelle is now friendly with the girls, with the younger generation. They live in Peta Tiqwa, and their business is in Tel Aviv. And something, I knew a group of friends from Harrogate, and they made it there, about two years ago and they're very happy there. They don't, are not unduly worried about the situation at all. So... but I think it'll settle itself I'm sure, very optimistic about it.

RL: Do you think you'll ever move from Harrogate?

LP: Not any more. I'm too old (laughing). The will is there but the strengths aren't (laugh). In my mind yes (laughing) bodily no (laughing).

**Tape 5:****21 minutes 31 seconds**

RL: Do you think, you know, your refugee experience has affected you in any way, either sort of ...?

LP: Nerves, nerves I think, yes, yes. I was always a very bright and lively person, extremely lively, really, and happy-go-lucky. It depresses you, yes. But time to overcome it.

RL: What about in the way you brought up your daughter? Do you think it affected the way you brought her up in any way?

LP: Affected me, well no, that was the happiest time, bringing up Michelle, of my life. To have a daughter, and a good daughter, wonderful daughter, lovely grandchildren, and they're absolutely super. And I think they love me as well, which is great (laughing). So they say in the letters (laughing). And, that's the life as you get older. You live for your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, bless them. Yes. They get a bit mixed up with grandparents and great grandparents the little ones, you know.

RL: Is there anything else you would like to add?

LP: I don't think so.

RL: Well thank you very much.

LP: Thank you. I hope it's going down reasonably well because, I don't know.

**Tape 5:****23 minutes 22 seconds**

LP: Are you taking photo?

RL: Yes. You tell, you say now what this photograph is of. You say now who it is, where and when.

LP: Yes.

(Another woman's voice, perhaps Michelle's) Right, and you have to say, that's my father, Joseph Schwarz, taken in Tavaros, September 1916.

LP: Yes. This is my father, Joseph Schwarz, taken in September 1916, in Tavaros.

LP: That's Joseph Schwartz, taken in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War in 1916 in Kronenberg.

RL: Which one is he?

LP: In the middle of the back row, in the centre of the back row, or middle.

LP: Lili Schwartz, in Wien, geboren in 1922, 1922.

LP: My darling brother Kurt, born in Vienna, 1932

**Tape 5:****25 minutes 18 seconds**

LP: This was taken in 1938, my sister Aranka, my darling brother Kurt and myself, Lili Pollock, Lili Schwartz.

LP: This is the last photograph in our flat in Vienna taken in 1938. It's my mother, my father, my sister, brother and myself. That one? My sister's husband Dolfi.

LP: This was taken in Brussels in 1940. It's the Bar Mitzvah of my brother Kurt and my mother.

LP: What am I supposed to say?

A Man's Voice: Don't know mum.

LP: Those are two Red Cross messages, from my mother and brother Kurt, from Brussels where they were in hiding by non-Jewish people in 1942 and '43.

LP: This was taken in nineteen hundred and one (2001). It's the graduation of my grand-daughter Suzie in Birmingham. From left to right isn't it?

Woman and Man's Voice: Yes. Okay

LP: This was taken at the graduation of my grand-daughter Suzie in Birmingham, in 2001. Lili, Suzie, my grand-daughter, my husband Henry and my daughter Michelle, is that it? Am I right?

A Woman's Voice: Yes

**Tape 5:****30 minute 36 seconds**

LP: This was taken in Sydney, Australia, of my grandson Joel and his wife Michelle and my two darling great grandchildren, Nathan and Yael.

RL: And the year?

LP: The year is two thousand, I think, two thousand and one

**Tape 5:****28 minute 18 seconds**

Black screen then video again

**28 minute 37 seconds**

LP: This is my daughter Michelle and the marriage to Marcus Levi, here in 1997, in the Harrogate synagogue. Is that right?

**Tape 5:****28 minute 53 seconds**