

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Forename:	Hella
Interviewee Sex:	Female
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Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

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Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
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REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV230
NAME: Hella Pick
DATE: 12th February 2019
LOCATION: London
INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

Today is the 12th February 2019 and we are conducting an interview with Mrs. Hella Pick. My name is Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London.

Thank you, Mrs. Pick for having agreed to be interviewed for the Refugee Voices Archive.

It's a pleasure.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family background?

Well, I come from a very conventional, secular, Jewish background, where the fact of being Jewish was hardly, really, a subject for conversation at least to the extent that I rem- I was much too small to remember what went on. But... my family was a middle-class family, comfortably off, living in Vienna. My mother went obviously to school- then went to a kind of finishing school. I still have a hand-written cookery book that she wrote while she was at the school. It's hardly decipherable by now, but anyway, I still have it. And, you know, she never really expected- she had no ambitions for herself to be prof- in any way engaged professionally. I think however, she was always extremely good with her hands and she was also highly intelligent and highly cultivated. And she had friends who had a big milli- millinery salon in Vienna and she learned how they- how to make hats, which stood her in

very good stead much later on when she was a refugee in Britain. But my parents divorced when I was very small- only three years old. And I really hardly ever knew my father, who emigrated to America, remarried an American and died before I actually made my first trip to America, which- well, the plan had been that I would at least meet him again after the war, when I was an adult. But that never came about. So, I believe- my mother never liked to talk too much about her, her- her husband, because he came from a very Orthodox Jewish family, and which is something that she absolutely could not live with. And that really, to the extent that she told me about this, that really broke- helped to break up the marriage. That- the interference from my father's family- my father himself was not a practising Jew, but the interference from the family just became unbearable.

[0:02:48]

And how did they meet? Did they- do you know how they met, your parents, or...?

I really don't know. I mean, obviously met through friends, I think and quite a conventional...

What was his background? What was his profession?

Well, he- he was in business. He- he had a commercial business and- you know, my mother in the end, hardly ever talked to me about my father. And I suppose I didn't ask enough questions, which, you know, in retrospect obviously I regret deeply. But I never had any connections to my father's family, with one rare exception: a-a cousin who had also emigrated to America and lived in Boston and to whom I became quite close. But again, there was just my sort of- my- my background on my father's side has remained to me a void which is- I regret, deeply.

What are your first memories of Vienna? What can you remember?

Oh, I can remember, you know- like being all- all the little children playing in the local park. And, and I mean, I still have a few photographs from that period. You know, I was obviously a very happy child. I started going to school, because by the time I left England [meaning Austria] you know, I was eight. But I did- I have so few memories; it's like a blank to me. My sort of- my Austrian life, as a small child, which, you know it's- it's- sometimes I- I

bitterly re-regret that I didn't go to- that I didn't have analysis later in life, which might have helped me to recover some of this. But I never- never really made the effort to do that. And... I feel very culpable.

Which park was it- you said- which park was it in Vienna where you played?

Oh, in what is called Döbling in the- in the 19th District. Which is also where the nursing home where I was born is, you know, so it's- it's, it's, you know, a- a lovely suburb. An extension of Vienna. It's- it's I mean, it's twenty minutes by public transport to get into the centre of Vienna. But it's- it's, it's more open; it has more gardens and has parks where the children played.

[0:05:23]

How come you were in Döbling or what was- why was your mother- do you know why- why there, or...?

Well, because my grandparents lived there and my mother had a home there while she was married. And then after her divorce, I- I lived most- a great deal of the time with my grandparents, because my mother travelled quite a bit and was abroad. She- she found someone she was very much in love with, someone who lived in Paris and whom I really regarded as my unofficial father. But he sadly disappeared in France at the outbreak of war and was never found again.

So, what do you remember? You said you spent time with your grandparents? Do you remember them?

[Phone rings. Sound break]

Yes, I was asking about your grandparents. You said you spent a lot of time with them.

Yes, but my grandfather died in I think '36 or something like that. So again, I just remember he was a lovely, handsome man. And my grandmother, was- was a grandmother.

What were their names?

Olga. Spitz.

And had they been born- did they come from Vienna?

No, they came from- from what is now Czechoslovakia. From the Sudetenland. From a place-

[phone rings – sound break]

Yes, you said they came from Czechoslovakia...

Yes, from a place called Jihlava. Jihla-

And when had- when had they come to Austria?

[0:07:08]

Oh, as young people. I- I don't know. I wish I had a family tree. There is a sort of- a partial family tree with a distant cousin in America, but I haven't- I haven't seen it for some time and I don't know how far it's got.

And you said you went to school?

Yes, I went to, you know-

Do you have any memories of that?

None at all. I'm sorry. [laughs]

No, no, no. It's- there isn't- it's not a test. It's not a test.

It's very deficient. [laughing]

It's not a test, so it's interesting. So, you have very...patchy-

I have very little and I'm always very envious of, of friends who have sort of perfect memory of, of the past.

It is what it is. But do you remember any landscapes, or any- you know, the house where you lived, for example. Is there anything?

Yes, you know, it's- I obviously remember the street where we lived. And I- I remember- You know, I- I confuse it between pre-and, and post- post-war Austria, because I went back to Austria quite soon, as did my mother. And- but for instance, I do know, because- and the part of Austria which is called the Salzkammergut. And there's a famous place there called the Wolfgangsee and it has a hotel called the Weißes- Das Weiße Rössl. And my mother always told me that that was where I was conceived. [Both laugh] So... And I do go to that part of Austria a great deal now. Yes.

But where did you live? What was the address?

What, in Vienna?

In Vienna, yes.

Well... my mother had a flat in a street called the Trautenauplatz. And this was after she- after her divorce; I can't tell you where she lived before the divorce.

That's fine.

And my grandparents had a flat in- in one of the big main streets called the Billrothstraße.

Billrothstraße?

Billrothstraße.

[0:09:18]

In Neunzehnten Bezirk? [19th District]

Yes, both. Yes, both.

And do you remember any friends or- from school?

Yes, I- you know, I still have a little book where my- my school friends all signed things. I've- I've got that, and it's charming, yes, with little drawings and that sort of thing. And how we all loved each other and so on, yes.

A Poesiealbum? [poetry album]

Yes, yes.

Or it was called something else, I think, in Austria.

Yes, a *Tagebuch* [diary] or something like that.

OK, OK. Before we go into emigration, so, anything else?

No, the only thing I can tell you is I do have a distinct memory, and... by that time we were living right in this- in the inner city of Vienna. And I don't know- this was after, after 1938.

Yes?

And I don't remember how it was that we came to live there but we did. And one evening the Gestapo came and took my mother away. But she came back the next day. And that was the end of it. And then she managed to get herself a visa to go to Engl- no- I mean, she decided to put me on the Kindertransport. And she then, you know, was fortunate enough to get a visa to come to Britain and arrived in...in June of '39. My grandmother went- got a- managed to get herself to Prague, but then she was arrested and she died in Theresienstadt. And in the meantime, both my mother and my grandmother had given all their valuables and shares and money, whatever it is, to one of those Swiss couriers who... appeared on the scene for the

Jews at that time. And he was a- we- he could never be traced again, and everything was lost. And, at the same time my mother also managed to- I mean this- this must have happened after I had already gone- to get all her furniture in- to be transported to Britain. And of course, that was then seized by the Nazis and it was, you know, we later got a record of how all the stuff was auctioned off at the Dorotheum in Vienna.

Really? You have a record of that?

[0:11:58]

Yes. And there are just two paintings which are in this flat, which still came from Vienna. Which somehow - don't ask me how they got here, but they - did.

So, do you- do you have any recollection of the Anschluss at all?

No, you know I don't. And that's the amazing thing that I don't remember. I don't remember that day. I don't remember Kristallnacht. Just a complete blank. It's awful.

It think it happens to some... Other interviewees-

You know, when I, when I listen to other survivors you know, I just can't relate to it, I mean obviously I can relate to it in the sense that I-

Yes.

... but- but it's not a personal experience.

Yeah. So where do your strong memories- where do they start?

Well, really, coming to this country. You know. That's what- you know I- I can still see myself arriving at Liverpool Street Station and being picked up. That I can remember. But everything is- I can't even remember much about the journey. You know; it's just a blank. It's shocking. It shocks me.

Well, maybe it's a protection or, you know, the mind- how it works...

You know, in a way... it also I think has kind of saved me from thinking about it too much. And you know, I remember a few years ago I was on a- one of those programmes that the BBC does where they reconstruct bits of history and they have witnesses come. And I was sitting there with a group of other Kindertransport children. And there were two or- I think there must have been five of us. And two or three- three of the participants, you know, were weeping away the whole time, absolutely unable to- to forget. And I was sitting there quite shocked because I felt, you know, I'm always looking to the future, not to the past. And I thought it was dreadful that people who had made very good lives for themselves in England with families and everything, and yet they were suffering still. And maybe because I have no memory of it, I don't have those kind of emotions about it. But... it's a lot of things that remain unexplained [laughing] after a long life. And it's rather sad.

[0:14:46]

At the end. That's really interesting. Everyone is different, I think. But- so what happened? You were- your mother put your name on the Kindertransport. And then, did you know that you were going somewhere?

Yes, of course I must have known. But – you know, again, it's just- I can't remember my emotions...

Yes.

... at the time. I mean, many years later, you know, oddly enough, I met the Israeli who had been responsible for organising the Kindertransport... children out of Austria. And we became very close friends as a result of this connection. And... even talking with him didn't really... increase my knowledge of, of how it- what actually- what I personally experienced at the time.

What was his name?

Ehud Avriel. He was a very well-known- a wonderful man who later became a diplomat. I mean, I met him when he was the Israeli Ambassador in Nigeria at the time of the Nigerian Independence celebrations when I was there for West Africa- together with my friend Harry [inaudible] [Laughs]

Yeah... yeah. But do you remember- do you remember what you took? For example, that- you said you have this little thing from your school friends. Did you take that in your luggage?

Did I do what with it?

Did you bring that- you said you have that little Poesiealbum?

Yeah, I have that.

Did you bring that on the journey - or not?

I don't know. Either that, or my mother brought it. Somehow, it's amongst the few things that have survived.

Yeah. And which station- where did you leave from in Vienna?

[Hella pauses to think]

Sorry to ask you. If you don't-

I really don't know. I mean, presumably the station where all the trains left from.

[0:16:48]

Westbahnhof.

Westbahnhof, yes.

Maybe... yeah.

The old one.

Yeah. OK. And so where- so where does your memory then- the train leaves. You go to Holland.

My memory starts in being picked up in- in you know, being picked up at Liverpool Street Station. And- and you know, I still remember that the only English I knew was ‘Goodbye’ and so I said “Goodbye” to the- to the- the family who picked me up.

And what were your first impressions coming... Coming to England?

I think I- look, I settled in very quickly. This- the, the family who, who took me in, they were called Infield. They had a- a very nice house in West Hampstead. They had three children - two sons and a daughter. They put me to schools in London straight away. Again, I don’t remember much- I don’t remember much about the school at all. But at the end of the first term, I found a school certificate and I was speaking English. I was obviously doing all right. But you know, I wasn’t there very long because then summer holidays and then off I went to the Lake District.

Right. And where was that? Which area of London?

Here, in Hampstead- West Hampstead.

Right. And they had other children, were they your age, or...?

They were older than I was, but not much older. And- and the daughter sadly committed suicide. And you know, we- we had become good friends and, and I remained very close to one of the sons who now died about six years ago. But... We never lost touch with each other. The other son, we stayed in touch, but much less so. We were never very close.

[0:19:00]

And do you know what made them take you? Take a refugee girl?

I suppose the- you know, the Jewish Board of Deputies that recruited them. They- again, they were secular Jews. I think they just wanted to do it.

And did you- it's a difficult question- maybe it doesn't apply. Did you think they understood where you came from or where- what the situation was?

Oh, I think they understood where I came from. And there then- eventually the- a tussle developed between them and the, the- the Chorley family where my mother had gone to, to be their cook and then who really- I mean they became really my, my sort of adoptive family. And you know, we're still all of us very, very close. But... the- the head of the family, Theo Chorley was a professor at London School of Economics, and he wanted me to go to LSE and in fact that's what- what I did. And the- my adopted family- I mean the- the family who had taken care of me, they thought oh, no, that I should take a secretarial course and start earning money and, you know- finish without any sort of academic ambitions. And they never really understood- I mean, my mother and they had a very- very tense relationship as you can imagine, as a result. And... They never really recognised that it had made sense that I should go to university. But they, the parents of that family... [phone rings]

[Audio break]

We were talking about- you said the conflict between your mother and the – the family, about your education. Where- so what happened? You said you had three months before your mother came?

Barely, yes. Mnn.

And when did you see your mother again, the first time?

Oh, when she arrived which in- was in June.

And how- how was that? I mean you- did you- you were an only child...

Yes.

... so, you must have felt...

Well, obviously huge relief. You know, I mean, how lucky I was. You know. I still find, you know I- I think it was a- I was just very, very fortunate and...

And was she able to take you when she came?

[0:21:28]

No, she didn't; she had to go and- you know, she had to go and be a cook. And in fact the, the- the first family where she actually was she only stayed very briefly and then found herself this job with the Chorleys who wanted someone who knew how to bake Austrian cakes. [laughs]

Aha. What was the first family? What was...?

I think that- I know- I can't remember anything. It was somewhere in Surrey and it obviously didn't work; they treated her really as a- as a servant and I think she was very unhappy as you can imagine.

But she managed to get a- another position?

Yes. And with this family they called Chorley. Now, eventually Theo Chorley- Professor Chorley became Lord Chorley. He was the last Peer I mean the last hereditary Peer created by the Attlee government.

Oh!

He was literally the last hereditary Peer to be created in this country. So, his son, I mean, I'm very, very friendly with their- all their children.

And they wanted somebody to cook? Viennese...

To cook- really to make- to make *Apfelstrudel*- and things like that... which she-

And did she?

Yes- no, she was an excellent cook. There was no- yes, she was. And she taught me.

And your family, how did they react when your mother came over? Did they... I mean, what-

[0:22:54]

Well, they were not very happy because they really thought they had me, you know. And I think that there was a sort of degree of- I mean they must have known that once she was here that I wouldn't be- remain with them. And, they- they were very keen to have me, so you know, it was not an easy relationship. And of course, particularly at first when she was also in London and I was in London and you know, clearly- you know, could go and visit her and so on. You know, she- she was treated very differently by the Chorleys. I mean the Chorleys regarded her as a- as a friend who was obviously- cooked for them, you know. So, she was very much part of the family. And... So, you know, I was [inaudible]- you know, there was no- until the war broke out, I mean there was no question that I- I mean I don't think they'd got to the point where they discussed just where I was going to- where- where I would be, you know. I think.

And do you know what the Board of Deputies? Who- were there other agencies involved in that decision what happened to you? Or...?

Not at all. I think the Board of Deputies for a time, tried to get my father to contribute to my- I mean, to make some financial contribution. And he adamantly refused to get involved. I mean he never, never did- wanted to do anything for me.

[0:24:30]

But by that time he was already in America?

By that time he was in America.

Or Bloomsbury House? Or, you know... Have you ever looked? Have you ever tried to find your files from World Jewish Relief?

No, I haven't. I mean, what- what do they have in Bloomsbury House?

I'll tell you a bit afterwards. World Jewish Relief has files of Kindertransportees and sometimes their case files. And you could see you know, the discussions and some- not for everyone, but... might be of interest. Yeah.

Yes. No this is- this is all mixed up with my not remembering and all the rest.

And how was your mother when she came? I mean, did she sort of embrace her situation or did...?

Yes, she did.

How did she deal with it?

She- she did. No, she- I think she adapted- she adapted well. She learnt English very rapidly and... adjusted much more easily I think than a great many other people. And also, never had any hang-ups about going back to Austria. And she- I think if she'd been able to- to go back after the war, she probably would have done.

So, Lake District: when did you actually go up? When did you...go to the Lake District?

In the whole of August '39.

So, what are your memories from that time?

Oh, I have memories partly because there- there are films, I mean there are lots of little videos and things and photographs. I was happily walking in the Lake District and swimming and... playing with the other children and we were just having a- a normal child's life. And then when war broke out, you know, the question was what would happen, because clearly

the Chorleys themselves had to go back to London. My mother had to find a- another job. And then got one with someone extraordinarily nice, but who- who died within weeks of my mother going to work there. And then she found this job with a family who- very comfortably off. Had a lovely house. But again, treated her throughout the war as, as- as their cook. And you know, I had to go into the house by the back door. And if I wanted to go and swim in the lake, I had to make sure than nobody else was using the garden or was swimming and this sort of thing. But you know- it made it hard for me to bring my school friends. Only the very closest friends could be told just the circumstances that I was living in. Which, you know, created- well, I don't- I don't know how much a problem it was. Because, you know, I had two or three very close friends who certainly did come and so on. But- it was a curious life for a small child. On the one hand to be going to a school where most of the children, you know, came from well-off established families and then going home through their back door.

Yes. So how did you get a place in the, in the- in that primary school?

[0:28:08]

Again, because this family, the Chorleys, arranged it. And they gave me a free place. And they, you know, I had a very happy time at school.

And were they in touch with your mum throughout that time, or...?

Yes, I think we- you know, we never lost touch, no.

But your mother accepted that in wartime she had to stay in that position of...?

Well, there was nothing else she could do.

Yes.

I mean... She had no money. And besides you know, as a- as a woman refugee you were, you were only allowed to do domestic service. And of course, you know, we were ranked as enemy aliens.

Yes, so were you- not you, but your mother was tribunaled?

Well, so was I to the extent that I had any papers, yes. And for instance, if I- I had school friends who lived on the other side of Lake Windermere which was in what was then Lancashire. And Lancashire was a- a protected area because it had a prisoner-of-war camp. I - theoretically - had to ask permission from the police if I wanted to go across the lake. But in fact, what we did was to row across the lake without permission. But, you know, things like that for a small child were odd experiences.

And your mother- do you know what you- what class- do you know what you were classed as enemy aliens? There were different categories.

That I don't know. No.

But you had to report to the police?

[0:29:41]

Well, my mother had to report...

Yes.

... to the police, yes. But- but you know, it was, you know, I mean- look, I led an extraordinarily sheltered life during the war. You know, the Lake District didn't know the war except for rations.

Right.

And the family where my mother was the cook, they had relatives in the Argentine and they received food parcels. So, we didn't even suffer from food shortages, really. So, you know, I think I couldn't have had a more sheltered... school life, really.

Yeah. And did you- was it a boarding school or did you stay with your mother?

No, it was a boarding school but I was a day pupil and I- I biked every day from where we were living to Ambleside to the school.

How far was the school from- from the house?

Oh, about three miles. Three, four miles.

So, you had a lot of freedom, in a way.

Yes.

And did the- the other children know you were a refugee? What did they- how did you present yourself?

Well, they must have known I was a refugee. And, but I became a Girl Guide. And I still remember once the Guides were doing- performing something in the, in the local church and I was an African chief who got converted to Christianity. [laughs] And I was painted all brown with dark with – well, I think - liquid stockings, which is what- in the war. And... No, and we- there were a couple of refugees- I mean, there were several refugees there including amongst the- the young Hans Keller was there. And-

Really?

And the-

In the school?

No. No. No, living in the Lake District during the war. And there were three or four musicians and they formed a little chamber orchestra. And I still remember going to- being taken by my mother to these concerts, and- which was lovely.

I had no idea. Who played? He played? Hans Keller?

Yes, I knew Hans Keller very well.

And who else? Who...?

Yes, of course it's- it's his centenary now. No, no. Hans and- and his wife - they've been here many times.

[0:32:01]

We- we interviewed Milein.

Yes.

She must- must have told an interesting story.

I can't remember about the Lake District because I don't think she knew Hans at the time.

No, I mean, she was not involved. No, Hans must have been very young.

Yes. What other musicians? Who- who was there? Do you remember any names?

I don't remember the other ones. But Hans I remember.

So, did your mother have any other refugees as her friends?

Yes, she had-

Was there a social...?

Yes, there were- there were two or three women refugees in the area that she got- came to know very well. And that- through that I went a lot to a lovely village called Grasmere in the Lake District and became friends with the- some of- Heat- one of the Lake artists called Heaton Cooper and his wife, who was a sculptress. And they really- they became my anchor. They- I spent a lot- I mean, whenever I could I went there and was with them and, and – again, their children you know, they had much smaller children. But one of them, Julian

Cooper who is the artist of this painting and several others that I have. You know, but they were the absolute firmament in my life, and I think they gave me stability which nothing else gave me.

And how did you get to know them? Through- through your mother, or...?

Goodness... I think it was through this other refugee, a woman whose name I absolutely cannot remember who- who was with a family- I mean, again in domestic service in Grasmere. And somehow, I got to know them and I just- they had- they had their home as well as their studio where they sold paintings and prints right in the centre of the village where it still is now to this day. And... And they were- they were members of- of 'Moral Re-Armament'. And I was- I used to sit with them while they listened to God and things like that. And I also- I loved going to Grasmere Church. I dragged my mother to the church on Sunday evenings. I love- you know, I can sing- I knew every single – and I still know, not by heart, but – every- every hymn. And absolutely loved going to Grasmere Church. [laughs] And you know, she'd- I dragged her along and she came. [laughs] So I was, you know- that was my- the most religious period of my life.

So, did- you wanted to fit in also I assume?

[0:34:46]

I was just fitting in, yes. I mean, it was never that I'd decided I wanted to be... Church of England any more than I wanted to be a practicing Jew. But I mean at the time, I loved it. And do you know, I still, for instance- when I go to Vienna, I always go to one – if I'm there on a Sunday – go to one of the... big churches to listen because they're really concerts rather than, you know- they play Mozart masses and Schubert masses and I love them. But so, you know, I'm, I'm- I think I've spent more time in churches than I have in synagogues, I have to confess. [laughing]

And what was...?

It's dreadful. ...However, I'm about- I've just been invited, you know, the- the- there's a new synagogue here in-

Yes.

Just down the hill.

South Hampstead Synagogue.

Yes. South- and I've been invi- they're going to run a series of sort of discussion groups and- of remarkable women. And I've just been invited to be one of the first of these women.
[laughing] So...

Well, I am very pleased, that's to my synagogue, so I'm very pleased? [Bea laughs]

I see. So, it's Simon Hochhauser. I said to him, "Simon..." - you know, because I know the Hochhausers very well, and I said, "Simon, you know perfectly well that you know, this is not my synagogue." And he said, "Yes, but we want you all the same." [laughing] So...

That's- that's good news. Yeah. ...What about language? Did you continue speaking German to your mother? What? How...?

No, I- I absolutely refused to speak German. And if she spoke a word of German on a street - I mean, you know, in the Lake District it was not necessarily heavily populated all the time - I would just scream at her and said, "Speak English!" And then I had one of my teachers, a male- a man, [laughing] ...and I totally fell in love with him, I mean, at the age of thirteen or something, or twelve. And I- and he said to me, "Look. German is your mother tongue and you've just got to speak German." And he somehow forced me again to confront German.

And you did?

And I did.

Then?

Obviously- well, it must have been quite a slow process but yes, I mean-

So, you sort of re-learned it or...?

[0:37:04]

Yes, well, you know, my great regret is that I haven't read enough in German. And I still think my vocabulary isn't as good as it ought to be. But on the other hand, when I wrote a book about Austria which- I wrote it in English and it was translated to German. And also, the Wiesenthal book, the Wiesenthal biography, then when I saw the German text and I started going through it, you know, I suddenly discovered that – you know, because I was making corrections - that I had a much bigger vocabulary somewhere in the back of my mind.

Did you?

And I came up with words that, you know, I wouldn't necessarily use when I'm speaking-

Yeah. You had that...

...but were just somewhere there.

But apart from your mother, I mean, you probably didn't speak German there in the Lake District?

No, there was no one else to speak German to. I think that really came much later that I started speaking again properly.

And in school, were you- do you feel you were treated differently at all, or....?

No.

No. Did you experience any anti- ...

No.

...sentiments?

No, absolute- no.

No.

No, I think I was just one of us. No, I wasn't. No, I don't think that I had any sort of either special pro or anti treatment or anything. And not too much curiosity about my origins either.

But you said you felt slightly- you realised that the living- your circumstances were different from the others?

Yes. Well, inevitably.

And how did they treat you in the house as a child? I mean, as...

I think they just ignored me.

Right.

I mean, there was just no relationship at all.

[0:38:59]

Were there other children in the house?

No. No, they were a middle-aged couple without children that I can- if they had children, they were adults and not there.

So you had to be careful in the house?

Well, you know, I simply, you know- it was quite a large house and it had a sort of- part of the house was a separate section for the servants, so to speak. And you know, we had our

own flat there. I mean, it wasn't ... Perfectly comfortable circumstances, but it was separate. And, you know, I was OK as long as I was invisible, basically.

Yes. Was there other- other staff?

No.

And did your mother have to work very long hours, or how, how...?

I think she just cooked. I mean there must have been other staff. I mean there must have been cleaning people and- I don't remember. I mean, she certainly didn't do any cleaning, but she cooked.

So how...

But you know, she obviously had quite a lot of free time, because you know, we, as I say, we spent a lot of time going to Grasmere and other places and... walking. She- she loved walking and I like- loved walking, so...

So, Sundays, probably.

Yes, but there are... I, you know, when I think about it, yes, I mean weekends. Because after all during the week I was at school. But then there were the school holidays. And... I mean, I just can't remember whether she- I mean she must have cooked most meals but...

Yeah.

... obviously managed to get away quite a bit as well.

And you? What did you do in the school holidays?

[0:40:48]

Saw friends... and... went off to Grasmere on my bicycle and... spent- sat there for hours on end. I don't know how they could put up with it.

And so- for how long did you stay there? And your mother?

Till the end of the war when- then I went- I went to LSE in '46. And my mother got a job- again, still as a cook at that point, with the - and you know, that was fascinating - with the Cornford family. So, she got into this whole area of, you know, all the connections that went through the Cornfords. And I still remember for instance Gwen Raverat very well and you know, all the romantic connections that went with that family. The Darwins, you know, that- that whole network.

Tell us a little bit about it, because people might not know.

Well... You know, they were artists and they were philosophers. They were physicists. I mean, and they were all- they all knew each other. They were all intermarried. The Cornfords, the Darwins. The- Ah! Sometimes I just- I keep on saying I've got Alzheimer's in names [laughing] when I try to remember. You know, it's- it's, it's a whole wonderfully romantic interwoven series of intellectuals and artists and thinkers. And- and she was right in the middle of that.

And where did they live?

Pardon?

Where did they live, the family?

[0:42:44]

Well, the Cornfords were in Cambridge.

Right. So, she went to- your mother went to Cambridge.

To Cambridge, yes. And Gwen Raverat was in Cambridge. And...

So, she was exposed to a whole...

She was exposed to all of that. And to- [inaudible] but you know that didn't last very long because once the war was really over, then she- she was able to go to London. She found herself a small flat in Ealing and she started working as a milliner. Having private customers. And you know, in those days, making hats was still... you know, as I learnt, a sort of, you know, a- a big production. You know, you, you- you decided what you were going to have and you had to try it on and so on and so forth. And she- she was- she could easily have, you know, gone to work in one of the big London salons and... and made a lot of money and all the rest of it. But she never wanted to make more money than she needed. And she wanted her freedom.

So, she worked from home?

And I do remember that when she first arrived in Ealing, she went to the Ealing synagogue and said she, you know, she- she'd arrived and she needed introductions to people and so forth. And they did absolutely nothing for her whatsoever. And, you know, that made her even more of an agnostic than she'd already been all her life.

So, she felt they didn't help her?

No, she felt...

And why did she go to Ealing? Was- was there particularly a reason?

You know I can't answer that. I think- I mean she must have had some other- I think she had friends who were already in Ealing. And she got this flat in something called Florence Road and we were there for a while. And then she got a slightly- a bigger flat in another part of Ealing. And that's where she lived for the rest of her life.

So, she chose not to come to let's say NW3 or...?

No, she- no, she- she didn't.

And did you stay with her when you were at the LSE or were you in-

[0:45:08]

Yes... yes.

...in student accommodation?

No. No, I- I lived with her and- look, I was too young to be at LSE. You know, I was seventeen when I went to LSE. And... I and I'd lived in purely female surroundings almost my entire life before. And I- I would have had much better- I mean I think I had a good time but I would have had a much, much better time if I'd been more of an adult.

And what did you study?

Economics and Political Science. I've got a BSc in- they're all called BSc in Economics, but- but I studied Politics.

And you said the- that your first family, they thought it was not a good idea to study?

What?

The first family you stayed with. They thought you shouldn't study?

No, no, they thought I should just be a secretary and- and start earning money and get married and be done with it.

But you're lucky that they-

They didn't-

...they could think whatever they wanted...

Who knows? Who knows? I might have had a completely different life. But anyway- but- no, Howard Laski took me under his wing at LSE and in fact, again, secured a scholarship for me at- at LSE. And, you know...

So, who was at the LSE when you were there? Howard Laski and...?

I- I'm trying to think of any remarkable people who were at the LSE with me. And I can't- can't get that. I'd really have to think much harder about that. You're making me think about things that I haven't thought about for a very long time.

I went to the LSE - a bit later.

[laughing] Yes, I'm sure – considerably later. I mean you know; it makes me feel so ancient.

I studied with Ernest Gellner who was at the LSE at some point, but I think maybe a bit later. Not- not in the forties. I think he must have come later.

No, I just can't think of his name now. I mean one of my professors- I mean, when I graduated, I actually went to work with him doing research. I mean that was the sort of first job where I earned a little bit of money. And from there I got a job with something called the Colonial Development Corporation doing market research. And... Then one day I- and I knew that was a sort of dead-end where I was. And I started looking for other jobs and answered an advertisement in the *New Statesman* which led me to become the Commercial Editor of a magazine called *West Africa*.

So, did you know you wanted to be a journalist, or did you- when you started to study, did you- what did you think you were going to do, or what was your-?

[0:48:14]

I don't know what I thought I was going to do. I mean, I- I thought, you know, I wanted to do something interesting and I wanted to do something where I could earn enough money to support myself. And I think at the back of my mind, though I don't know whether I recognised at the time, was really that I recognised the absolute need to be able to get away

from my mother and not- you know, stop living with her and altogether not be so much in- in her orbit. I mean, you know, I was the only thing that... she had.

Yeah.

You know, I always regretted that she didn't remarry which she certainly could have done. And you know, concentrated far too much on me.

So, you wanted to be independent.

Yes. And of course, *West Africa* did give me that. To some extent gave me the independence because you know, I started spending a lot of time in West Africa.

But just before we talk about your career, to come back to going back to Austria. You said you went back to Austria quite early?

Yes, well quite soon after. I mean, almost as soon as- well- first of all, my mother and I, we both got our naturalisation papers in '46. So, then I had a passport again. And she wanted me to go back to see what could be rescued from what had been left behind. Find out what had happened to all the things at the Dorotheum. And I think that's how I came back with the few things that I found.

Yeah.

So, I went back very quickly. And then she- her parents had always gone to a place called Bad Gastein where people went for, you know- to spend- basically a spa situation where you went to improve whatever health problems you had. And she- my mother had very bad sciatica and so on. And she decided that's what she wanted to do, to go back and spend a month in the summer in Bad Gastein and take the baths there and get rid of all her, whatever illnesses she might have had. And she was able to do that, you know, very- very soon after. I mean, I don't know. I think the first time she went back must have been in sort of '48, '49. And then she went back every summer. She never went back to Vienna, sadly. But, and, you know, by that time, you know, I used to- by that time when she was there, I always managed

to visit her and spend a few days with her and then always end up going to the Salzburg Festival, standing somewhere listening to operas.

So, she went to Bad Gastein for a month.

[0:51:18]

Pardon?

Yeah, she- for a month, she went?

She always- yes.

And by when did she find out what had happened, or did you find out what had happened to her mother?

Oh, that was during the war from- she was notified by the Red Cross that she'd died.

So, she knew at that point?

Yes.

But she didn't want to go back to Vienna?

Look, I think if she- if she could have afforded to go back to Vienna, she probably- you know, she- she really felt comfortable in Austria. I mean, you know, I'm extremely grateful to her that she didn't instil in me this absolute sort of conviction that everything about Austria is, is- is anti-Semitic and you can't ever go back and think of what they've all done to you and all the rest of it. I escaped that. And I'm so grateful for that and you know, it certainly helped me to...to go back to Austria without sort of feeling, you know, this... you know, this is the worst. I mean, you know, I recognise all forms that there are in Vienna- in Austria. And you know-

Yeah.

But it's not, sort of, that I have any sort of deep animosity towards Austria.

And she felt connected to Austria?

And she- she never lost the connection. And I think really, you know, felt more comfortable with like-minded people than she did- I mean she... she- I mean she- people liked her. She was an- you know, someone that people instinctively liked and she was very outgoing and intelligent and... Certainly, among other things, I owe her my love of opera and of music- of classical music in general.

Did she listen a lot or did she play an instrument, or...?

She didn't play an instrument and you know; I never learnt the piano which, I'm, you know, I think I would quite have enjoyed, but bad luck. I'm an- I'm a great listener.

Yeah? Is there something in particular or...?

Oh, what? In terms of music?

Yes.

[0:53:33]

Listen, I mean- I'm- I'm not happy with contemporary classical music- I mean, contemporary music, I mean. Anything from, you know, to Baroque to well- just this last week I went to a wonderful Janacek opera at Covent Garden which is simply wonderful. No, I- I mean, I love opera. I love orchestral music- you know, I really, I just love- music to me is, is extremely important.

And to your mother as well?

Yes. You know, my mother could sing whole operas; Mozart operas she knew by heart. I mean, as a young woman, she always told me, she went to the opera almost every night in Vienna, you know.

That's amazing. But you said she could- in the Lake District there was some music?

Yes – yes. Well, not much but I mean whatever there was...

And did she reconnect to some of the people she knew in Vienna do you think, when she was there in Bad Gastein, or...?

Yes, I mean, some of her- I mean, some friends. And we- particularly we had a sort of rather remote relationship with a family who originally were called 'Österreicher' but in England became 'Astley'. And, she saw a lot of them and I saw a lot of them.

But you said she never- she thought about going back, or you said, if she could-

No, I think- I think if she could have gone back. But- no, I mean, she, you know, she was settled in England and you know, she- as I say- it just- it wasn't sort of something that was offered to her on a plate and I mean she wouldn't- she would not have wanted to go back to Vienna unless she could live there comfortably. [laughing] No question about that.

And there was no family left?

There was no- no family, no. I mean the only- only bits of family. I mean, there again, there was one of her sort of second cousins was- who- they were in England. But again, he was doing a lot in Vienna. He used to run the- the Vienna music festivals in, in summer and this sort of thing. And again, they- this is a family that, that I've remained very close to. But... No, I think you know, her friends, her refugee friends were like-minded friends.

[0:56:18]

Yeah... And you said you were in touch with your father. And your father was in America at the time – after the war.

Yes, but you know, and- I was- I was- the plan had been for me to go to America – I think it was in '57, the first time – to meet him again. And- but he died. And so, I mean I did go to America but didn't meet him and- obviously.

Yeah. OK, so now, back to your career. So, you said you studied and then you worked for...

Then I went- the- I've now remembered his name; his name was Professor Sweeney.

Sweeney. Yeah?

And- and I worked for him for a while. Then I went to work for the Colonial Development Corporation and, then answered this advertisement in the *New Statesman* for a Commercial Editor for a paper called- for a paper called *West Africa* that I'd never heard of. And to my surprise, I was offered the job. And then of course, you know, this was a tiny operation. It was- *West Africa*, the magazine- the weekly magazine, was owned by the *Daily Mirror* organisation at the time- group at the time. And the Chairman of the *Daily Mirror* at the time, Cecil King, was passionate about Africa and already had a big collection of- a whole library of African books and so on. And it was sort of his personal hobby, this magazine, which had originally been launched to give- to provide colonial civil servants spread in Africa or West Africa, news about what was going on both back in Britain but also about trade matters and so on and so forth, which is where I came in. It had an absolutely wonderful editor called David Williams, who somehow knew how to train journalists. Because, you know, I- he was there. I mean I was taken on. Then another journalist who worked there was Bridget Bloom who then went on to work at the *Financial Times*. And Walter Schwarz who eventually also came to work for *The Guardian*. So you know, it was a kind of an incubator for journalists. And- this is- you know, that was my first schooling in what it- what journalism was all about. But, you know, it was very much learning on the hoof.

And did you have to travel as part of that?

Yes, because *West Africa* the magazine was published weekly in London. But *The Daily Mirror* had also acquired a whole network of daily papers in what was then - this was '57, no, '58 - still colonies in, in- in what was still then the Gold Coast in Nigeria and in Sierra Leone.

And I was very quickly sent out both to sort of find out about those newspapers but also you know, to start writing about what was going on. Because this was the- at the time when all these, both the French African and the British West African countries were all negotiating either for independence, or in the case of the French colonies, for some stand in a ‘*Communauté française*’ as General de Gaulle wanted and so on. I was pitched into all of this. And, you know, I was learning as I went along. And I had, you know, an absolutely wonderful time. Because you know, it was all sort of- it was a completely different media scene. All the new African- leaders of, of, of these African, West African countries were relaxed, they wanted to- you know. I was a curiosity. I could meet everybody. I knew them all; they became friends. You know, I could go from one leader to the next leader and so on. And you know, I obviously also learned how to write. And I- you know, wrote my weekly columns for the paper and so on. So, I went backwards and forwards between London and West Africa.

[1:00:36]

And did you ever feel that it was a disadvantage that English was your second language?

No, because I really regarded it as my first language. I mean, I think you know, I still, you know- it’s- German is my mother tongue and yet it is my second language. And, you know, in the meantime I’d learnt French as well. So, you know, so I had three languages. And which- because of my French I was sent off to the French African... West African colonies. And again, this was a completely different world because they were- with one exception they were not really looking for full independence. Unlike the British colonies who did. And then I went from one independence celebration to the next. I saw them all...into adulthood!

[laughs]

An interesting time, in terms of... history.

Yes – yes. No, it was a- it was an absolutely fascinating experience. No – no- and, you know, it was a good grounding for journalism. And of course, you know- and I was literally the only- I think the only European woman who was involved there. So you know, it’s- in terms of sort of just journalism and women, it was- was a bit of a pioneering experience.

Do you think it was an advantage to be a woman, or...?

Yes.

In terms of access, or...?

Yes, I think it- it opened doors for me, but you know, you sometimes [laughing] had to steer clear of bedroom doors.

Yes - I'm sure. [both laugh]

But- but on the whole yes, it was a- it was a- for me, I look back on that with great pleasure.

What did your mother think of your travelling and your...?

Oh, she was- she hated it. You know, she was forever protesting and saying, you know, "You're exposed to all these black people." And so on, I mean, you know, prejudice was plenty. You know, no, she thought I was- had definitely become an endangered species. And- and, you know, I hated that pressure. Cause she really just couldn't stop saying, "Why haven't you written to me?" and, "Why haven't I heard from you?" and, "What's happened to you?" No, it's- we- you know- we had a difficult relationship.

A difficult situation. No other family.

Yes – yes.

So for how long did you keep that- that job?

[1:03:09]

I had- in I think- one day early in 1960, Cecil King walked into the office and said he thought that I'd been there long enough and that was it and there was nothing I could do about it. I was sacked, basically. For no particular reason. Because, you know, I'd done extremely well for them. And then that's when I started- and I had, while I was working for *West Africa*, I

had done a number of, of sort of pieces for *The Guardian*, because *The Guardian* oddly enough had seconded its foreign- then foreign editor to spend a year editing *The Nigerian Daily Times* which was one of the papers in, in the *Mirror Group*. And I met him and he asked me to write some analysis pieces for *The Guardian*. So, I already had a slight connection to *The Guardian*. And then when I stopped working for *West Africa* I went to *The Guardian* and said the- the first- I don't know if you know what the Non-Aligned Movement was all about but that, the Non-Aligned Movement which sprung into existence at that time was a movement organised- well, I mean, started by... India, Indonesia, Ghana, Cuba – it was all- all the Third World countries, the major Third World countries, who wanted to stay neutral and, and steer clear of nuclear weapons and the East-West conflict. And they founded the Non-Aligned Movement, which, you know, at the time was really a major political development. And their first summit meeting was- was held in Belgrade because President Tito was one of the key figures in this as well. In 1960. And I went to the editor of *The Guardian* and I said that I knew quite- the African leaders who would be there and could I go and help report on this Non-Aligned meeting for *The Guardian*. And they said, yes, but *The Guardian's* diplomatic correspondent will of course be there and will be in charge and you'll work with him. And that was Richard Scott, who at the time was the one surviving member of the Scott family that had founded *The Guardian*. And Richard, being Richard, actually didn't manage to get there for the opening day of this summit. So, I covered that by myself. And that was my first big splash in *The Guardian*. And then Richard arrived and, you know, we worked together and anyway, and he and I got on very well. And he at that time *The Guardian* would send their diplomatic correspondent to spend the autumn session of the UN General Assembly in New York. And he didn't like New York. And being Richard Scott, he was able to go to the editor and say, "Look, I've met Hella Pick. She's perfectly adequate. Why don't you send her to New York in my place?" And that's what happened. And that was still on a purely freelance basis. And I did that and then I came back to London and said, you know, "Can I be on the staff?" And Alistair Hetherington who was the editor said, "I'm not ready for that, because once..." you know, things were different in those days. And he said, "Once we take you on, you'll be with us for the rest of your working life and I'm not sure that I'm ready for that." A [inaudible for that]- but he sent me off back to Africa to the Congo to- to the Belgian Congo, which was at that time you know, just becoming- adapting to being- to independence. And while I was there, he- I received a, a message saying, "I've changed my mind. I'll take you up on the staff." And then he sent me off to be the UN's correspondent of *The Guardian*. And that was the beginning of my *Guardian* career.

Wonderful. So, then you became an official Guardian...

Yes. No, then I was- then I was on the staff and I- and you know, I've remained a staff member for thirty-six, thirty-seven years. A lifetime...

[1:07:50]

In different roles?

Yes.

So, what were your...?

Well, I started off as the United Nations Correspondent. And, but in between, spent quite a lot of time in Washington as well. And- then *The Guardian* couldn't afford any more to keep the UN office open, and I was sent off to Geneva to sort of you know, cover some of the issues that I'd been covering at the UN. Because, you know, Geneva has the European headquarters of the United Nations, but also to cover broader European affairs. And that's when I covered the Prague Spring and then, and...you know, started travelling around Europe quite a bit. And then I came back to London and then I... went back to- I went to Washington as Washington Correspondent. Then I came back to London again and covered the European Market- British Mar- Common Market entry negotiations. [Bea exclaims at the irony] God, when I think about that and I see what's happening now, it breaks my heart. And then I went back to America again as Washington Bureau Chief. And then I became Diplomatic Editor. So, you know, I've just always been- oh, no. Sorry. I've left out quite a long period as East European Correspondent when I covered really the closing years of the Cold War. And then, so, you know it's always been foreign affairs but with a lot of travel. So, I've, you know, it's been- been an interesting working life. And that was- and then, you know- and that came to an end in 19...96. And then I started working with George Weidenfeld.

We'll talk about that in a little while. Now, because in one of the interviews I read, there was a funny story about the United Nations and where you...

Oh, forgot that story.

Tell us about that.

I've told that story too often. [laughs] Well, I mean, the way the UN worked in those days is that- you know, that the- then, the United Nations in Lon- New York has what is called a 'Delegates' Lounge' which is a very large room which also has a bar in it and where, you know, people congregate before lunch, after lunch, in the afternoon, whatever it is. But usually before lunch there were- a lot of the diplomats would sort of meet up in the Delegates' Lounge before- before they would go off to lunch at the UN restaurant, or go out of the house. And the journalists always had access to that- I mean in my time had access to that- to the Delegates' Lounge. And we, you know, we used to go there before lunch as well so that we could talk to people and try and extract information from them what was going on and so on. And one day I was writing some story that involved the- the UK. And I desperately needed to talk to at least one of the British diplomats, one of the members of the UN delegation- British delegation of the UN. And I couldn't see anybody at all, which was odd, because, you know, someone- one of them was always there. And then I ended up asking one of the other diplomats, "Have you seen any of the British? Is there some new crisis that involves Britain?" And they said, "Well, you know, the only crisis is you! They're all in- they're all in the men's cloakroom hiding from you." So...

[1:11:48]

They were scared.

They were scared of me but of course they had to come out so...

That's hilarious. Yeah.

Anyway. And of course, my great mentor at the UN was Alistair Cooke who was you know a very, very famous journalist who was at that time *The Guardian's* Bureau Chief in the United States. And I think, you know, obviously I'd learnt quite a lot about journalism before I ended up at the UN. But I think when I really became more professional was working with Alistair and having his guidance and being able to ask his advice. And- and I just learnt so

much from him and, you know, we became very, very close friends and, you know, I owe him a huge debt. And you know, he is now- I mean, Alistair Cooke's *Letter[s] from America*: I think even today they're relevant if you listen to them. He had a weekly broadcast '*Letter from America*', and it told more about American politics than anything else. And I wish I- I could- I wish he could be writing about Trump today.

Yeah. And in that time – I know you travelled a lot - were you ever tempted to emigrate elsewhere? To...?

Well, the- I mentioned to you that I met the Israeli diplomat who was responsible originally for getting the *Kindertransports* out of Vienna organised. And he, at that time, was the Israeli Ambassador in- at the United Nations. And when I- no, he was not Ambassador; he was one of the senior members of the- no, I think he must have been Ambassador. And he wanted me very much to go to Israel. And he said, "Look you know, you..." And I said, "I don't know Hebrew." "You don't have to speak Hebrew. You can work for the *Jerusalem Post* and, and you can write in English." And, but I said, "I can't. It's just not- I'm happy to visit Israel but I can't- I can't come to live there."

And America? Were you ever tempted to stay in America, to...?

Yes, I think I could- I could have stayed in America. And in fact, the *New York Times* actually asked me to be their UN Bureau Chief at one point and I did toy with the idea. But then in the end I think – no – I think in the end I wanted to be back in Europe. But you know, I always say I'm schizophrenic, which is a silly term to use, but you know, I really feel deprived if I haven't been to America at least once a year. I mean I- I do go back to New York a lot and used to go back much more to Washington as well because I had a lot of friends there. But- but I, I - I do need my- my American fix. [laughs]

[1:14:56]

But why? Why? What is it about- what do you think?

Well, it's you know, partly because it's familiar to me. I'm fascinated- I mean, you know, I'm a very- I'm a very political animal you know and I am, I am fascinated obviously by

American politics as much as I am by European politics. And I have a lot of friends there. And you know it's- in fact, one of my very, very close friends died now- it's, well, it will be almost two years now, but while she lived, I went back at least twice a year to be- staying with her. So... It's, you know, it's part of my life, America.

Yeah. So, I have to ask you because, you know I'm - personal interest. So, when did you start with this- the German Frühshoppen? When did you- when did that happen?

That was when I was *The Guardian*'s sort of East European Correspondent and was spending a lot of time in- well- I mean I was spending a lot of time in Germany as well as in- as well as in, in the East. And you know, I think by that time my name was sort of known to some extent. And I was phoned one day; I remember I was actually in Bonn at the time covering something or other, and got this phone call from Höfer, the, the anchor of the...

Yeah, Werner Höfer.

Werner Höfer, the anchor of *Frühshoppen* and you know, asking me on the following Sunday to be on the program. And I think it was early in the week because they always invited you early in the week. And I said, "No, I'm sorry. I've got to go back to London and I- I wouldn't be able to come." Even though, you know, they said, "We'll fly you out." And then I mentioned that to one of the other journalists who said, "Do you know you're- you're absolutely crazy! You never say 'No' to Höfer. I mean, you know, those of us who get invited, we usually let him know where we are." And in fact, you know that's what I started doing you know, when I used to say, you know, "I'm going to cover..." this, that and the other you know, "in case you're interested" and so on. But- I mean somehow obviously the viewers must have taken to me because I was invited very regularly. And- and, you know, I became extremely well-known throughout the world as a result of this program which, you know, was ex- very flattering. [laughing]

And that was an iconic - really iconic - German programme.

Yes...

It was on Sunday morning.

[1:17:37]

It was a Sunday morning program. It went out live. And it was forty-five minutes of television followed by, I think, fifteen minutes of just on-line discussion. And, you know, I mean the- the hallmark of this program was that he managed to get journalists from Eastern Europe, from the Soviet Union and from all the Communist Bloc countries to come. And, you know, which was actually quite remarkable, because I don't think there was any other television programme that was able to do this. And, and Höfer- Werner Höfer had started this quite early after the war. And really, the programme has done a lot to create better understanding of, of the sort of whole East-West situation. And, and also the problems that journalists faced in- in- behind the, the wall. And, you know, just the mere fact that people were able to come across from a world that was virtually unknown at first hand in the West was a remarkable achievement. And sadly, you know, after he'd done this for many, many years, somebody discovered that he had been involved in really what was minimal collaboration during the war with the Nazis. And he was forced into resignation. And quite a lot of us who had worked on this programme supported him. But you know, it was- he was finished. And we all felt very, very sad. I mean, he was quite an old man by then, but it was a sad end to someone who had really been very positive and constructive in the sort of post-Hitler world of Germany.

Yes, it was kind of a scandal. What did they find on him? They? He...?

[1:19:34]

I can't remember you know, and I'd really have to check on this. I mean there had been some- some collaboration with Nazis but you know on the- on a really minor- I mean, I don't think anyone could have accused that man of having ever really been a Nazi. And he certainly wasn't a party member. But- but it finished him. But I should perhaps mention one thing because- and I talked about how I was perfectly relaxed about going back to Austria. I didn't have quite the same feeling about Germany, for a long time. And then *The Guardian* was celebrating its 150th Anniversary in London and there was a big dinner at the Dorchester in London. And Willy Brandt, who was at that time Foreign Minister, was invited... to be the guest speaker, the principal speaker. And there was something happening that affected

German- German- Anglo-German relations at the time. And the Editor of *The Guardian* said, “After the dinner, try and talk to Willy Brandt and get him to comment on this.” And so I went up to Willy Brandt and I said, you know, “Can I ask you a few questions?” And he said, “Come back to my hotel and we’ll talk.” And- which I did. And we sat down in his suite. And I still remember, we were sitting on the- there was some bench against the window and we were sitting there. And we talked two, three hours. And you know he asked me about me and we talked about Germany and all the rest of it. And... at the end of that conversation, I’d become reconciled to Germany. [laughs] And you know, Willy Brandt and I, we remained friends for the rest of his life. And I, you know, went to Bonn quite often and so on. Of course, at the time, you know, *The Guardian* didn’t- didn’t hear from me and I’d vanished with Willy Brandt. They all thought, you know, all he’d done was to get me to bed with him. But in fact, he didn’t. We just sat on that... window ledge and talked.

And what was it- what was it in that conversation or what made you...?

[1:22:00]

Oh, we talked about... Hitler, about... anti-Semitism, about general society. You know - everything. But I suddenly realised here was a liberal German who had all the right ideas.

Tell us maybe who he was, Willy Brandt. Because some listeners might not know who Willy Brandt was.

Well, Willy Brandt became German Chancellor and was a... remarkable person who did everything he could to foster- improved East-West relations with- with Russia. But above all, to make Germans aware of their past and what had happened. And who, you know, promoted and lived a life that demonstrated that liberalism and democracy were the- crucial to the international so- situation. And, and above all, forced Germans to confront their past. And live by example.

So, this was before you went to Frühschoppen? Or was it...?

I think that must have been before *Frühschoppen*, yes.

Because that's what I wanted to ask is- so what was it like for you to go and...? It was in German, the programme. Frühschoppen.

I loved it! You know- I enjoyed- [laughing]

Yes?

I enjoy talking to cameras, as you can see.

Yes?

No. Look, I mean, it was very flattering, for goodness' sake. There you were, I mean, you know, OK, you've- *Guardian* readers would know you. Maybe a few other people know- And suddenly, there were millions of Germans...

Yeah.

... who recog- had a face that they recognised and, you know, seemed to like to an extent. But you know, it was- it was ...it was very, very good for one's ego, I mean, to be frank. But also, you know, it meant that I got to know a lot of journalists particularly from Eastern Europe which was very useful to me when I was going to Eastern Europe so much myself at the time. Because you know, I could then get in touch with these people and talk to them. Because in the end, you know, the journalists always knew more about what was going on than you would learn from any other sources that you had access to at that time. So- no, it was- it was both useful and flattering and helpful. So, what more could you want?

[1:24:37]

But in that time did you talk at all about your own story, or did anyone ever ask you?

No, I didn't talk much- no I didn't. You know, I never spent my time telling other people, "I'm a Kindertransport child." No. I think- on the whole I wanted to merge, rather than emerge.

So, when did that change, or when- for you?

It didn't. I mean it didn't- I didn't suddenly change my mind. It was that people started coming to me and asking me questions. [laughs] No, it was- it was my- I mean, as you can see, I'm very late in being interviewed by you, because I never- I never- I've never sought out to do this. And- and you know, very remiss of me. And I've always followed the AJR but I haven't actually been a member of the AJR, which I'm now correcting rather late in life which is really quite disgraceful. I suppose to some extent when I started... doing some work with the German Jewish Studies Centre, you know, that I was more drawn-

Yeah.

...into this world much more. And was asked then, you know, to take part in, in various conferences and address the Kindertransport issue, and so on.

When did you get involved in- with German-Jewish Studies?

Must be about fifteen, sixteen years ago, by now.

Right.

Through- through a friend of mine who was already on the advisory board of the German-Jewish Studies Centre. And then of course, you know, I shouldn't neglect the fact that, you know, working with George Weidenfeld... drew me- a little bit more into- into the sort of the Jewish world of London. But again, in- into the secular world. Not the religious world. And of course, when George Weidenfeld asked me to write the biography of Simon Wiesenthal, again, that brought me, you know, into closer contact with the Jewish community in Vienna and so- you know, it sort of gradually came about but it's not because I've- I've sought it out.

In the last sort of- because now you've been speaking quite a lot in this year, the Kindertransport...

[1:27:09]

Well, yes, in- in this year yes, it's been, you know, almost sort of continuous. [laughing]
 Well, you know, getting involved with, with the German-Jewish Studies Centre and doing more when George Weidenfeld tried very hard to establish professorships in- in Israel Studies in the leading universities. And I worked with him to get the Sussex University to establish a professorship which they now have. This in turn has led to Sussex University decision to establish the- a- a Jewish- Institute of Jewish Studies, and to call it 'The Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies'. So, you know, that brought be closer to- also of course George Weidenfeld himself for a long time organised an annual conference or sometimes bi-annual conference- I mean, twice yearly conference on Israel-Europe relations. And I got involved in helping to organise these things. So, I started going to Israel more than I had in the past. So, you know, all sorts of not necessarily connected events all led me to get much more- much more involved in this. But, you know, my basic sort of philosophy hasn't changed.

So, it's not that you find the past is sort of coming back to you?

No. I- I think I'm much more intellectually involved than emotionally involved.

Yeah. Because the-

You know, I don't- I mean the thing is, I have never- I've always felt it's a bit hypocritical to consider myself a victim in the sense, you know that- particularly I've never agreed very much with the whole sort of philosophy of the second-generation victimhood. I mean, I think we're the fortunate ones, not the victims. But, you know, maybe I'm just running away from myself.

That leads me to the next question. Do you think your experience had a lasting impact on you? On your life?

Yes. Absolutely. I mean, you know, I'm totally, totally convinced that the fact of having been uprooted has left a lasting impact. And it creates a certain degree of insecurity which I think never, ever leaves you. That I- you know, to extent - yes, you can use the word 'victimhood'. But whatever it is... even though it's hard to define, the impact is unquestionably there.

Yes, without labelling... how would it manifest itself? You say 'insecurity' – in terms of what?

[1:30:19]

I think I've always, always needed constant... testimonials, that- that I'm cared for, that I'm successful, that what I'm doing is worthwhile. You know, and- and I'm always grasping for more and more roots to my life... and which has led to many mistakes in my life. So, you know to that extent I think you know, you can say I'm damaged goods but you know, on the other hand I think I've been very fortunate. So, it's, you know, it's- I don't know which is the most dominant factor.

And do you think- do you sometimes think about how your life would have been if you hadn't been forced to... emigrate?

No, I think- no, what I think much more is how different my life would have been if I hadn't had this sense of insecurity. So- but...

And how- how do you imagine it? How, different?

Well, I think basically I've really always wanted to have a- a- a lasting partnership and, and children. And a family life, you know. But I've- in fact- it's been a very sort of lonely- I mean, you know, obviously there have been important men in my life but, you know, the kind of relationship that I always wanted, I- I never succeeded in getting. You know, I can always say professionally I've been very successful - no question about that. Personally, I think life could have been very different.

And do you think, you yourself, you think it's part- you feel it's linked to...?

I feel I've- I think- feel, I've lost what I would- most wanted to have. ...So that's ending on a rather sad note! [Laughs]

We're not ending yet! We're not ending yet... We're not ending yet.

Well, concluding on it... [laughing]

And how would you define yourself in terms of your identity, today?

A Cosmopolitan. And certainly, a European. And... I think... Brexit has, has made me re-think a lot about Britain and life in Britain.

Have you got- you have Austrian nationality as well?

[1:33:00]

I have. Yes, I have. Yes. In fact, you know, I'm- I don't know whether it's fortunate or not, but when Bruno Kreisky was Chancellor of Austria, he offered me the return- the restoration of my Austrian nationality before that had been enacted as a law that the emigrés could get it back. And at that time, it still needed a Cabinet decision [laughing] to restore nationality to individuals. And I said, "No, I don't." You know, "I'm perfectly happy as a British citizen; I don't need it." But after Kreisky was gone I changed my mind and I said, "Yes, I- actually I would rather like it." And that was still before the law that gave- restored it to everybody. And the then Chancellor called Sinowatz, was his name, he took it to the Cabinet. They gave it to me and I remember there was a little ceremony here at the Embassy and I got my Austrian nationality back.

Why did you decide- why did you want it or why?

I don't know. I just suddenly changed my mind. I thought that this is- this is mine and if it's offered to me why should I turn it down? You know. They took it from me but it's my nationality. And- so then I had it. And then- but I still didn't get a passport and then - not the current Ambassador – the previous Ambassador asked me if I had a passport. And I said, "No, I don't need it. I've got my British..." And this was before the referendum.

Now? [Bea laughs]

And he said, "Don't be ridiculous; you've got to have a passport." So, I got myself the passport. So, I've had- I had the passport before everybody else clambered for it. So, anyway. So yes. And actually, I think, last year I- I took a- I always in summer I go to Austria and I fly to Salzburg. And I knew I'd already noticed that in Salzburg when you get out of the

plane, there's one entrance for Schengen and one for all passports. So, I think, well, I'll take the 'All Passports' line- it's always...so long..." [phone rings]

[sound break]

The- Salzburg and the Schengen line...

[1:35:13]

The Salz- yes. So, I, I decided I'd take my passport with me, so that I don't have to queue for such a long time. I get out, walked to the Schengen entrance and the policeman there says, "Oh, no. That's not open." So, I had to go to the back of the- back of the queue, of the 'All Passports'. So, my one attempt to use my Austrian passport got me nowhere. [laughing] So, anyway. But now if I- when I go off to, cause I- I go off to Thailand in January most- most of the years. And I take it with me now just in case I lose my British passport, but it's silly.

Well, it might change now, depending on what will happen after... So where would you think is your home today?

Oh, London.

And have you...?

You know, I'm- I'm always- I- I really enjoy going back to Vienna. And you know, I- I have quite a lot of friends there. Non-Jewish friends. And you know I enjoy- I love going to the exhibitions, to the opera. Just like to be there for a few days. But in the summer, I've been going to a place called Grundlsee for years now. And I don't know if you remember the Fischer Fine Arts Gallery in London?

Mn-hnn.

Well, Wolfgang Fischer, the owner and his wife, I first met them once at an Austrian Embassy function here in London. And they invite- have a house in Grundlsee. And they invited me to come and stay with them. And I've been going back every summer ever since then. And I've been- I rent a tiny little sort of a converted barn and quite close to where the

Fischers have their house. And it's just become a sort of regular standing visit once a year for two weeks. Second half of August. And then we go to the Salzburg Festival and combine the two, which is very, very nice.

So, like your mother used to go to Bad Gastein, this is your Bad Gastein.

Yes, I- I get- It's my Bad Gastein, Grundlsee. And- and now one of the- my Austrian friends, Hannes Androsch - who was Kreisky's Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor, we- we became very close friends and he has a house in Altaussee which is not very far from Grundlsee. And is- and he now has become the owner of, of a sort of Spa Clinic called Vivamayr which does the Mayr diets and detox and anyway- and they- he now has a Vivamayr in Altaussee right on the lake. And last year he invited- he's been inviting me to come and stay there ever since he had it. So last year I went there and spent two weeks detoxing there and so on. So, it's all- it's all- it's all very much part of my- my sort of Austrian world. And do you know I'm- I'm really comfortable and happy there. And actually, I recently had an email from- through friends from someone who's been researching some of the villas in Altaussee, because they were owned by Jewish families. And you know, now, of course, they've- I mean, they were all taken by the Nazis and so on. And very few families have made any attempt to get these houses back. And this person is doing some research there. But of course, when I was doing the Simon Wiesenthal book, again, that took me to that part of Austria because that's where Eichmann's wife lived for a long time. And of course, Wiesenthal mistakenly thought that he could trap Eichmann himself when he visited his wife while she- but Eichmann had a brother who looked very much like Eichmann and it was the brother who went- who was visiting. And Eichmann himself was already in South America. But so, you know, I did quite a lot of research about that village. And there's, you know, all sort of stories there, because that's where the Nazis printed some of the fake Pounds – Sterling - at the end of the war. And there's a villa there whose owners discovered some of the machinery that was used. And that was in fact the house that the Goebbels family had lived in at the end of the war- I mean, towards- before the- I mean, during the war. But during the last- and there were photographs there that they found of the Goebbels children playing in the- in- in the gardens on the lake, looking like every- just like I looked, you know, as a small child. Extraordinary.

[1:40:24]

And the British Pounds- why did they print...?

Well, they printed fake money.

Yeah...

And, you know. And also of course those are the mountains where the Nazis tried to hide some of the- the artwork that Hitler had taken. And then when the- when the Americans were approaching the area, the- the order was to blow up the, the- the mountain, the salt mines where the paint- the paintings had been stored. And the workers barricaded the entrance to prevent the dynamite from being put in. No, those are all extraordinary stories. I mean, that area-

Which mine was that? Which mine is that? Where is that?

Salt mines.

Yeah. Which salt mine? Where is it?

In- in Aussee.

In Altaussee?

Yes, above Aussee, which is now owned by my friend Hannes Androsch. The salt mines.

How do you spell Altsee?

[inaudible] A U S S E E - Bad Aussee. There Bad Aussee, Altaussee and Grundlsee, and they're all- they're two lakes divided by a series of mountains. And in between, is a small town called Bad Aussee.

And when you are in Austria, do you feel- I mean- do people know that you were born in Vienna? Have you ever had- experienced- bad experience, or any...?

No, you know- I talk- you know, we all talk a lot about anti-Semitism. And I have to say, personally, I'm not aware of having been a target, ever. But, you know, maybe I'm just blind and don't want to see it.

'Ever' meaning neither in Britain nor in Austria?

No. No.

Nor in your work?

No. No.

Nor in...?

No. No, I really, I just do not have the feeling that anti-Semitism is something that I have direct experience of.

Are you worried about anti-Semitism?

[1:42:20]

Well, of course, how can you not be? But I do think- you know, I, I- I very much share the view that Anita Lasker-Wallfisch keeps on saying, that the only way to fight anti-Semitism is to teach people about Jewish culture, Jewish history, Jewish in- integration into wider cultural and intellectual and scientific experience. Not just by always focusing on the Holocaust.

And hence the Jewish Studies Institute is important?

Of course. No, I- I feel very strongly about that. I think it's- it's just a mistake always, always just to tell people: genocide, Holocaust, anti-Semitism - and Israel. You know. One of my quarrels with George Weidenfeld always was that he argued the- the diaspora had to agree with whatever the Israeli government does because it's their duty to be loyal to Israel. You know. And I kept on saying "No, you've got to be- you've got to distinguish between anti-

Semitism and criticism of Israeli government policies.” And you know, I think it’s- it’s an unresolved argument? But I feel very strongly that it’s essential.

And what do you think in terms of the British government today? You know, towards the policies towards refugees. And you know, some of the Kindertransportees are quite involved in...?

Look- I’m not an admirer of Mrs. May’s, in any shape or form, but I do think in terms of- I mean, I think she’s trying to be helpful in terms of- I don’t- I don’t think she has anti-Semitic instincts at all. And I think she is trying to fight it. I do credit her with being genuine about that. Whether she’s doing enough, I mean, how can you judge that? It’s- it’s almost impossible. But... you know to the extent that the government is supporting the memorial in Westminster, I think that’s a rather dubious...

What do you think about that Holocaust monument? Yeah.

Look, I’m an ad- I’m- I’m torn because on the one hand I think Adjaye is a wonderful architect and you know, what he’s done elsewhere is- is great. But I think the location is, is - is wrong. And it, it - it doesn’t- I think it would create more antagonism than, than support. I also don’t support the idea of this- sort of going subterranean. It shouldn’t be hidden. It should- whatever you do should be on the surface, not... And you know, there are so many other places where this could have been put. And- so in other words, I’m very ambivalent about it.

Do you think Holocaust education should be part of a wider education in terms of Jewish identity?

[1:45:40]

Yes. Yes. I mean, first of all, I think it should go way beyond the Holoc- I mean, you know, I think this is essential. And I think it should have done- been done much more in coordination with some of the academic institutions. I mean, not just Sussex, but obviously Oxford and Southampton and so on- wherever, you know, the subject is tackled. And to really decide

what is best in terms of fighting anti-Semitism. It's not just a memorial. It's- it's got to be something that's pitched to the future, not the past. And something that engages the young.

And how do you feel Austria is dealing with their own past? Do you think they've caught up in terms of... commemoration? In terms of...?

Well, up to a point. But- you know- you know Austria- one has to be- one has recognise its- the country's shortcomings. I mean, there's, there's so much hypocrisy in all of this. And I mean, I think, you know the extent to which the current Chancellor has sort of embraced the anti-Semitic flag and is trying to fly it all over the place. I don't know, I mean, you know- he obviously thinks it's in- it's in his political interest to do it. But I don't really feel this is in any way genuine, what they're trying to do. I mean, I think what Germany has done in terms of education and so on is, is - is much more valid. But, at the same time, you know, when I'm in Austria and I listen to the Austrian radio and there's always, always discussion of what went on in the 30s. What- discussion of anti-Semitism, discussion of Israel, the history and policy. It's not that that it's being neglected. But... I think, you know, given the politics of Austria at the moment and you know, moving to the right, I just can't judge how much of it is genuine how much is not. I mean, you know, I was a little bit surprised but also quite cynical about it. We mentioned the Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies. We persuaded the Austrian government to support it. And they've given, at the moment, the princely sum of 60,000 Euros towards an institute which is looking for an endowment of ten million Pounds. Just to give it some perspective. And they've also said that this money should be spent primarily on bringing students from Sussex University to Austria to see what Austria is doing to fight anti-Semitism, and teach people their history, and the Jews in Austria and so on. And to my surprise, the Austrian Chancellor decided to use one of his visits to London when he had- Austria had the Presidency of the European Union, to have a reception at the Embassy in- in London and to invite Kindertransport survivors and several- a number of other people to a reception. He brought with him one of the- one of his party members, Members of Parliament who is Jewish and apparently sort of trying to be very prominent in anti-Semitism. And he, you know, he made- Kurz made a speech saying you know, how devoted he was to the cause of the fight against anti-Semitism and so on. Most of the people who'd been invited they had no idea why- what the- what this Weidenfeld Institute was all about and so on. But anyway- but they were there. And of course he brought Austrian journalists with him and you know this was then reported in the press in Vienna. So it served his political purposes.

And- OK. But you know it's better they've given something than nothing. And- and I think they probably will give more 'cause the Germans have now given quite substantially to this project. So, Austria- Austria will probably feel obliged to give more. But- but so, you know, I'm very ambivalent about Austrians. I mean, I'm much more convinced that the Germans have really made a mega effort to educate the new generations in the- in the meaning of anti-Semitism and the history of the Jews and so on. I think the Austrians are playing around with it for political purposes as much as a genuine conviction that this needs to be done.

I wanted to ask you, you said also because you never felt drawn to this Kinder thing- so did you ever go to any of the reunions or anything ever?

[1:50:54]

No. Well... not- not altogether true. I mean for instance- I was invited, I think, two or three years ago to light a candle at Liverpool Street Station on...

Right.

... the anniversary. I've been invited to St. James's Palace for reunions, by Prince Charles. But I, I- no, I mean I feel quite ashamed of myself. I don't- you know, I think my problem is that, you know, I've moved beyond the sort of sense that I have to commemorate victimhood. And one of the things that I think has always been in my system and it's certainly got reinforced by George Weidenfeld who, right up to his ninety-sixth year when he died, was still planning always for the future. He was never spend- never spent- I mean, he had an elephant's memory for the past and for past experiences, but his thinking was always pitched to new initiatives. Doing different things. Moving forward. Not sort of dwelling on- on the miseries and the unhappinesses of the past. And that's sort of very deeply im- imbued in my nature.

So, for the future how do you see- should this legacy – let's say- of the Continental past- how do you see it... develop?

Well, first of all, you know, as I said to you before, I'm not just a Cosmopolitan but a European. I find the present divisions between Britain and Europe deeply, generally

depressing. And I think utterly wrong. I'm also obviously very disturbed by the emerging nationalism in- throughout Europe. And- and obviously America too. We haven't talked at all about the 'Institute for Strategic Dialogue' where I've worked under the sort of Weidenfeld aegis now for you know, for quite a number- long years, which was an institute originally set up by George Weidenfeld and- to- as part of his sort of fundamental philosophy in building bridges between cultures and countries, intellectuals, people. And we held- we organised conferences in America, in Moscow, in Berlin, in London, bringing together people both- we had arts- annual arts conferences for quite a number of years. We had conferences on economics and strategic issues. History, and so on. But gradually this Institute has transformed itself into something that deals entirely with projects that address... counterterrorism and counter-radicalisation and it's now made a very solid name for itself in that field. And, so I've become, you know, I've seen a lot more through this- through this development of the, of the Muslim world- of the Arab world. And you know, all these issues you know, intrude on the- on the sort of world picture that one's built up for a long time of a- of, of a more cosmopolitan world of bridge-building and so on. And, you know, it's obviously given me a lot of food for thought and you know I'm still doing a certain amount of work as a consultant for the Institute. And at the moment actually, that's one of the things I have to finish. The- the Institute is about to establish a website in the German language and I've got to- got to look through the translations that I- I mean there is a translation has been done of the British- the English-language website. And, you know, I've been asked both to sort of help to make sense and then also- so I'm very much drawn into all the work which is now being done in Germany by the Institute. So- but, you know, all of this, you know, I see the- the conflict between the kind of philosophy that I've believed in and thought would persist and all the new divisions which we're now witnessing. And of course, anti-Semitism is part of all of that.

And so, to take it further. For example, I mean, our project obviously is about the past-

Yes.

...but there is a hope to...

Well, yes, but I mean, I think to- you know, obviously, you know, anyone who then listens to all the different interviews you've done will get- obviously will get very different

interpretations and views. I don't know how many people you've done who would share the kind of arguments that I'm putting forward. But I hope there are some who also... look to see how the lessons of the past really can be applied to quite distinct ideas that one has about the future. You know, I simply do not believe that dwelling in the past and, and- and making oneself miserable and unhappy about it, is the way in which one ought to be living. Or is the way in which the world ought to be doing either. You know, it's a- I mean after- Brexit to some extent, again, is about a lot of individuals who think that the past is better than the future.

[1:57:00]

Yes. So what message would you have for anyone- for the future- anyone watching this... video?

Well, I think for the future, listen to what the likes of us have had to say. Draw your own conclusions. But remember that this is not just a project about... about telling the stories about unhappiness and loss, but it- they should also be stories about gains and about the lessons that have been learnt that can be applied for a future which will create more stable, better lives and bring people together, rather than separate them. [laughs] I'm sorry, very trite.

Thank you. That's fantastic. Mrs. Pick, I know there are lots of things I haven't asked you about your career and we could talk much more. But the purpose of this interview, you know- it's slightly different. Is there anything else you think I haven't asked you which you'd like to add?

Oh, dear. This is what I always say when I interview people. What have I left out that I should have asked you? [both laugh]

I know exactly, we have left out many things. But I don't want to keep you here the- for hours and hours.

No. What- what else can I say? Well, I think one- one, one of the things that you know I'd just like to stress is partly because my work has always involved a lot of travel, I certainly

have been bitten by the travel bug. You know, I do enjoy travel. But I think I enjoy it partly because one meets new people. One, one learns about different countries and different cultures. And I think that in itself is, is – is, is an exciting thing to do. So, I think even as- look, as- you know, I'm by no means young anymore. But I- I don't feel that- my statistical age doesn't relate to the way that I feel or the way that I think I live. And, you know, I'm still learning about new things. I can still get excited by new things. And I think that is very, very important.

Thank you – yes?

And also, well, the one thing that we haven't talked about at all and I just want to say something, is about, well, if you like, the #Me Too movement and the role of women and professional women.

Yeah.

And, you know, we- as I said earlier on, my mother really never had ambitions for- be professional in any way. I could not have lived a housewife's life. I mean, yes, I'm deeply sad that I haven't had a family, my own – children. But at the same time, I know that I could never just have stayed at home and done nothing; I would always have wanted to do things. And even now, I couldn't live without working. You know, I mean, obviously I do a certain amount of pro bono work, but I still- you know, I still feel that if I'm not doing something useful and something that excites me, I'm not living. And I couldn't just sit here and grow old and feel sorry for myself.

And you had the opportunities.

[2:00:20]

I had the opportunities but I think I've also created the opportunities.

Yes.

You know, it- it doesn't just come to you. I mean, you, you really, in the end, have to fight for everything. You have to have some concept of what it is that you want to do. And you know I've obviously always- learnt to enjoy writing very much. And I enjoy meeting people, talking to people, so, you know, journalism was always a natural. But... But I have also enjoyed the discipline of writing books and you know, taking great pleasure in seeing them published and in a shop as well. [laughing] You know... quite... But- and you know, I've been urged by many people to write a memoir of my own life, but...

Yes? You are doing it?

Well- you know- everybody says, "Oh, everybody wants to know about you and this, that and the other." But in fact, you know, I've found it quite difficult finding a publisher. I'm still hoping that Weidenfeld's will decide to publish it and then I really will go ahead and, and - and do it. But- but I, you know, I've- I enjoy writing and I enjoy broadcasting and television, you know. I really- you know, I suppose I'm an exhibitionist of some sort but anyway, I've- no, I- I do enjoy work and I do enjoy friends. And you know, I'm lucky to have a lot of good friends.

On the-on this question of gender, I mean, something I've-

Yes, sorry, I've got lost again.

It- you know- do you think in terms of gender, being a refugee- it doesn't apply to you because you were younger, but for the older generation I think that played a role, you know, whether you were a man or a woman. I'm not sure...

Yes. Well, of course, you know, it always matters whether- I mean.

Yes.

I've- I do still think there's some difference between the sexes. Look, I think what's happening in, in, in terms of women and profession- professionalism is terribly important. And you know, equality is essential- equality of opportunity is absolutely essential. And I think that women should have the ambition which is so important. I think the whole #MeToo

movement is encouraging women to come out, so to speak, into the- into the professional world and to have the ambition to make something of themselves. You know, far too long women - most women - just were prepared to accept whatever had come their way. And it was always the exceptions who were the remarkable women. And now, I think everybody has an opportunity to- to be remarkable. But, you know, I have to say at the same time that I think you know, some things in the #Me Too movement - and that's a very unpopular thing to say - is- is totally exaggerated. You know, the, the concept that somebody touches your bottom and that's the end of the world is, is, is I think to some extent exaggerated. But I know that's a very unpopular thing to say.

So how did you then deal with the sexism...-? You must have encountered... let's say...

[2:03:42]

Look, I think- I think all of us in my generation, we all dealt with it... in perfectly sensible ways. You either pushed people away or you encouraged them, or- but, you know, you didn't feel that you were fundamentally- under fundamental attack by anybody. You know, I- I think it was just taken much more in the sort of spirit of give and take and you know you deal with it. I remember at one point at *The Guardian* there were a group of men going around telling particular women that they had sort of attractive bottoms or something. And we then organised ourselves and, and put, put a round robin on which of these men in our office would any of us want to be with. You know.

Yeah.

All came to an end. You know. I mean, you could deal with it with humour rather than with offence. And I think- I think if, if- if you lose the humorous side of it all, you've- I mean I think you damage yourself a lot. And also, when all is said and done all of us know that every office has office affairs and nobody talks about that at all.

Yeah. It sort of links up to the idea of victimhood. Are you a victim or are you...?

Yes - yes. And you know- and, and you know again, you know, I'm not- I'm not into victimhood really. And I think this concept that, you know, that you can't differentiate

between attempted rape and, you know, stroking somebody's leg under a table... to my mind I think is rather sad. But... And, and you know that sense of victimhood I think is not- and not- you know, it won't go on like this forever, because gradually this will settle down and professionalism for women and, and, and equality is where it matters. And, and the human relationships always have their ups and downs. But- but I'm preaching the wrong thing. I wouldn't dare say this in public.

Here- here it's OK. Whatever you want to say.

[2:06:00]

Anyway. Anyway. But all I'm saying is, up for the women professionals and help them and encourage them. And, you know, make it possible- you know, in my job where I was travelling such a lot, to have had children and to do the work would have been even more complicated than if you're- if you're in the same place all the time. And to have to deal with both families and, and professional work- mine was, was a professional life, but it can be done. And you know, people, women have to be helped and encouraged to, to combine both. And you know, men are different now. I mean men cook and clean and wash. They didn't always do that.

Some [both laugh]

Some, not all.

OK.

OK. Well- thank you.

I think we have covered many things, and-

Yes. Well, I'm sorry I haven't offered you any coffee or anything-

That's absolutely fine. I want to say thank you again... for allowing us to interview you. Even if it- we've waited such a long time - you were ready now. And I think it is interesting that it is this year where there has been so much publicity on the Kindertransport.

Well, you've- you can- you have the benefit of having heard all the others. You know how different this is.

I think you know; everyone has a different story. But you would be surprised how many Kinder there are who are not affiliated, and, you know, who don't see themselves as Kinder and who now... come to it in- in different ways. So, thank you very much and we're going to look a little bit at your- at photographs or- if you have some- something.

Oh, God, I'll have to dig them out. Where can I find them? Well, I'll- I'll go and have a look and see. While you try and restore my room. Oh, sorry.

[End of interview]

[2:08:10]

[2:08:27]

[Start of documents]

Yes, please. What do we see on the photograph please?

Photo 1

Well, you will see my grandparents and they're walking in Vienna. And it was some time in the 1930s.

Photo 2

Well, this is me, playing with toy- oh, toys. In Vienna in '37-6', '37, '38.

Photo 3

Yes, those are my parents and they must have been somewhere on holiday, in Austria, in the 1930s.

Photo 4

Right, I was with my grandparents in one of the Vienna parks. And that would have been in the early 1930s, because my grandfather died in '36.

Photo 5

Well, here I am with my mother obviously on a walk, and I suspect it would have been the Salzkammergut in the country, because otherwise she wouldn't be wearing a *Dirndl* the Austrian national dress, so to speak. And with us is an Alsatian. And my mother always told me that the dog looked after me in my pram when I was a baby. So, my nurse was the dog.

What was his name?

I don't remember. [laughs] Another- another thing I've forgotten. But I do remember the dog. And I've loved dogs ever since.

Photo 6

Well, that's me, posing, in front of a church in Vienna.

Photo 7

Well, this is a school photograph. One in the class where presumably I was actually doing some learning. And the other one where we clearly had a party and all dressed up as wild west Indians. As wild Indians.

How old were you here? Maybe...seven?

Seven, seven, six- seven, something like that.

So, 1936.

Yes. Well, as I said I was at school in my class. We were probably learning.

[2:11:08]

Photo 8

Well, this must have been taken as an official photograph when I- for the- for the Kindertransport. And it somehow seems to have reached England, together with me.

Photo 9

Well, this is- I'm now in the Lake District and it must have been I think probably the first summer that I was there. And I'm standing somewhere above Lake Grasmere. And... beginning to enjoy life in Britain. And it was the summer before the war broke out, so it was still a very carefree time.

Thank you.

[I mean I thought I was on the list given that I-]

Photo 10

Now I'm at school in the Lake District in Ambleside and the school was called 'Fairfield', and it was part of a system called the Parent's National Educational Union. So, the school was known as the 'Fairfield PNEU School'. And I had a very happy few years at the school and did reasonably well as far as I can tell. And I had one teacher who took a special interest in me and also encouraged me very much to go on to university.

Photo 11

Well, living in the Lake District, inevitably one walks a lot on the fells. And my mother was a very- great walker- loved walking. I loved walking and we went for many walks. And this was on one of them and we're sitting leaning against one of the wonderful walls that are all over the Lake District. And in those days, I was extremely good climbing over the walls. Nowadays I think I'd find it rather hard.

[2:13:16]

Photo 12

This is a group of refugees who were all living in the Lake District during the war. I can't identify them individually anymore. But you know, they all obviously knew each other. And one or two amongst this group were musicians.

Photo 13

Right. This is a house called 'Boundswood', which is nice, right on Lake Windermere. The lake would have been at the bottom of the lawn that you can see there. My mother cooked for the owners of that house and we lived there in a- in a wing which is not visible here, which is right at the back of the house. And... I lived in that house- it was my home from 1939 till 1945.

Photo 14

OK. Well, this is me at the London School of Economics with some of my fellow students, and this was in 1946 which would have been my first year at LSE. And that was still in Cambridge, because LSE moved back to London in '47.

Photo 15

[This was in the year 2000 - turn of the century - when I got- when I got my CBE, sorry, I'll start again.] This photograph was taken in the year 2000 when I received a CBE. This photograph was taken outside Buckingham Palace just after I had had it given- pinned on to me by Prince Charles. The Queen was not doing it that day, which was unfortunate, but anyway, I enjoyed it. And then, outside the palace- you can take- you can take three people with you to these ceremonies. So, my three people were there: my closest, two of my closest friends and the son of one of them.

And Hella was it given for a specific achievement or was it...?

Well, I think it was given, I think, mainly for my journalism.

Yes. And I wanted to ask you because I didn't ask you in the interview. What is actually- what do you think is your highlight in your journalistic career? What do you consider your highlight?

[2:15:48]

I think you've- that's an impossible question. I- I really, you know, there are so many highlights. I mean to some extent I would say the most important encounter was with Willy Brandt, which was not really an interview but was a, a - a meeting with a great man which I

owe to the fact that I was a journalist and had set out to ask him some questions. I think interviewing General Jaruzelski, the Polish - at the time - President of Poland during what the Poles consider their particular war against the Soviet Union was an important event, because he chose to do it on the day that Brezhnev had died. And I had assumed that he would drop the interview that had been arranged and obviously fly off to Moscow. Instead, he stayed behind to do the interview and then went to Moscow. And I discovered then the following day, the Party, the official Party paper in Poland, led with the interview of the General, rather than with the death of Brezhnev, which was an interesting political comment on what Poland was all about.

OK. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Photo 16

This- this photograph was taken in July 2018, when I was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Sussex University partly for the work which I had been doing both to help the German Jewish Studies Centre at Sussex University and above all, in the work that I continue to do to help the- the establishment and also to help with the fundraising of the Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies which is a new initiative taken by Sussex University to establish itself as hopefully Britain's leading centre - leading academic centre - in Jewish studies.

And who else is on the picture?

And on the picture, I'm surrounded by the friends who were invited, rather whom I selected and who were invited to be there to- for this awards ceremony for the graduation ceremony. I think I was allowed to bring- initially I was told six. We ended up being rather more, but Sussex were extremely nice and welcoming. And I think everybody had a very good time. And this photograph was actually taken just before the graduation ceremony. Afterwards, we all met and had lots of drinks and enjoyed ourselves.

And this was 2018?

This was 2018. This was in July 2018.

Thank you.

[2:18:54]

Document 1

Right, well this is the- a book that I think every child has kept where his or her friends write on various occasions, often with drawings. Usually during birthday- usually to mark a birthday or if not- to mark some other celebration. And the book contains messages and drawings by some of my school friends and is very touching to read, looking back all those many years at what my little school friends thought of little Hella.

Document 2

Well, this was one of my schoolmates who wrote me a rather poetic message of friendship which, looking back at it now, is extraordinarily touching. And I'm really very happy and to some extent surprised that I have managed to keep this. It's a reminder of a rather happy childhood.

Thank you.

[Hella reads the passage, in German]

Hab' Sonne im Herzen, ob's stürmt, schneit, ob der Himmel voll Wolken, ob die Erde voll Streit. Hab' Sonne im Herzen, kann kommen, was mag: Das leuchtet voll Licht Dir den dunkelsten Tag!"

Erinner' Dich gerne an Deine gute Freundin Liselotte.

Wien, am 2. November 1938

Translation:

Keep the sun in your heart, if it is storming or snowing, if the sky is cloudy or if there is strife on earth. Keep the sun in your heart, then come what may: It lightens the darkest day for you! May you have fond memories of your good friend Liselotte, Vienna 2nd November 1938

Mrs. Pick, thank you. This is a very poignant message I think to finish our interview. Thank you for your time.

[Hella reads from another passage]

Frisch durch das Leben wandern, sprich wahr ' und wäg ' nicht lang, verlass ' Dich nicht auf andere und rechne nicht auf Dank.

Walk briskly through life, speak the truth and don't ponder too much, don't rely on others and don't expect gratitude.

I think that's- yeah, in some ways, more interesting.

That's even more interesting. Who knows what else we find in there? Thank you again. And thank you for giving us your time and for sharing your story with us. Another one you want to read?

[Hella starts a third passage]

No, that's too difficult to read:

Weiss... no.

[inaudible]

*Reinheit im Gemüte, im Verstande Licht...in dem Herzen Güte, in der Seele Pflicht
Zur Erinnerung an Deine Mitschülerin Elfriede Kraft*

A pure nature, a bright mind, a kind heart, and a dutiful soul.

In memory of your classmate Elfriede Kraft

[End of photographs and documents]

[2:21:33]