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**AJR**

**Winston House, 2 Dollis Park**

**London N3 1HF**

**[ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk](mailto:ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk)**

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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

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## REFUGEE VOICES

**Interview No.** RV248  
**NAME:** Ilse Ryder  
**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
**LOCATION:** London, UK  
**INTERVIEWER:** Dr. Jana Buresova

*[00:00:00] The interviewee is Ilse Ryder on the fifth of December, 2019 in London. And now we will start the questions and just speak for as long as you wish.*

Yes. Because you could always edit it out.

*No, we can't. We can't, so beware [laughs]. Thank you very much indeed for kindly agreeing to be interviewed for the refugee voices project. And first of all, could you please kindly give your name and your date of birth?*

Ilse Ryder, the second of November, 1928.

*Where were you born?*

Most or the German name is Brüx, in what was then Czechoslovakia.

*And, was your family orthodox or was it a religious family at all?*

No, totally secular. My father was a very convinced atheist and urged my mother to leave the Jewish religion when they became engaged which they did. And I was then as a child given an **[00:02:00]** agnostic background with a child's version of comparative religion. So, I was told Hindus believe this and Muslims believe that and in due course, you will be able to make up your own mind. So- nothing was ever given to me as a certainty.

*What were your parents' names and where were they from?*

They were both born in the same town, so all my generation and my parents' generation and both my grandfathers were- lawyers in the town. At that time, a trainee lawyer had to be apprenticed to a law practice. So, my father, when he was studying to become a lawyer, was apprentice to my maternal grandfather's practice and fell in love with my mother. And that was how they got together. So then, when my parents got married both the grandfathers retired and my father, upon his marriage, took over the combined practice of Stein which was my father's name and Grünfeld which is my mother's.

*Did you feel that you had a very secure comfortable childhood? [00:04:00]*

Well, up to a point, the marriage didn't succeed and my parents divorced when I was seven. So, at that point, my mother and I moved to Vienna which was where she had done her degree and had been happiest.

*What was her degree in?*

Sorry?

*What was her degree in?*

Mathematics.

*And did your grandparents disapprove of your father's liberalism? Were your grandparents more religious?*

My grandmother was very religious. I remember my grandmother, my father's mother, blessing me when I was a child, but my maternal grandparents were not. So, the only Jewish religious bit came from one grandparent.

*What was your reaction when your parents divorced? Was life very difficult for you?*

No, because there had been so much tension that it was a relief really. And I was very much kept informed and was a very spoiled only child and wasn't insecure. I mean, I felt totally cherished and knew that they both wanted me.

*Were you able to visit both grandparents despite the divorce?*

In a way, yes, but my father's parents were very, very, very [00:06:00] disapproving of my mother who had done the breaking up. And I remember going to their house and hearing my

grandmother talking to someone and saying that woman and realising they were talking about my mother, so that was difficult.

*That must have been very upsetting for you.*

Yes.

*Where did you then go to school?*

In Vienna. And there was a school called- in a road called Hegelgasse that I've been back to to look at. Hegel was a great educationalist. And that school was a sort of practicing school for the Institute of Education. So, it was very modern and up to date and had very good ideas. So, I had two very happy years at that school. And then I was excluded at the Anschluss in 1938 when Jewish children were thrown out of schools in Austria. So, I ceased to go- ceased to be able to go there.

*Were you, did you feel afraid at that time? Were you aware of what was happening?*

Very aware, yes, because there were things like we went to a market to shop and the SS were rounding up Jewish women and [00:08:00] getting them to scrub the floor. And I was with my mother who looked extremely Jewish and- but she had a Czech passport because we were Czech citizens. And so, when the SS man came to her, she showed him her passport but kept a very tight grip on the passport because she was afraid that it would be snatched. So that sort of scene was frightening and difficult.

*Especially for a child, it must have left a lasting impression.*

Yes, and then there was another episode. My mother had been in a hospital and had had an operation. And when she was discharged, we went out and went for a walk and the Stadtpark was near our house. And we wanted to go in so that my mother could sit down on rest but there were big notices at the door saying, "Jews and dogs are not permitted in this park." And so going into the park was accompanied by a degree of risk. And so, it was a sort of balancing act between her being exhausted and wanting a seat and her not wanting to trespass and be arrested. So that sort of thing, it was a frightening atmosphere, yes.

*What was the name of your school in Vienna?*

Hegelgasse. [00:10:00] I did say.

*Where did you live in Vienna?*

We lived opposite to the ice rink. And at that time schools- children went to school in the morning, you came out at 12:00 and you then had the afternoon off. And I used to go skating opposite the house, and then into the park in the afternoon.

*Following the Anschluss, were you still allowed to go skating?*

Well, yes, that was- yes. I don't remember that being a problem.

*What about the accommodation? How long were you allowed to stay there? Were you forced to move- in Vienna?*

Well, we were not affected because we were not Austrian citizens. So, I was not allowed to go to school, but I don't think anything else was affected. Then, there was in October '38, there was the music- Munich crisis when... part of Czechoslovakia was annexed. And that was when, when Chamberlain brought back peace with honour [?], and that was when we moved to Prague from Vienna. We then went and lived in the Korunni Ulice in a Pension [00:12:00]. So that was a very harassing time. That was from October '38 until the 12th of January '39 when I flew to England.

*Could we backtrack just a little before we move onto the flight? Could you describe some of the difficulties you experienced in Prague? You said it was a difficult time.*

We were confined in this pension where a great-aunt of mine and her husband were in the room next door. They were both suffering from depression and we used to hear them through the wall having a very temperamental time. But I mean, my mother was a really remarkable woman and she kept everything together for me. So, for me, personally, there were no problems because of my mother keeping everything on such an even keel.

*What about your education, how did she arrange that? Did she teach you at home?*

No, that's interesting because when I was a child, before the divorce, Most or Brůx was bilingual. And because my parents at home spoke German, they decided that I should have Czech schooling, so I went to the local Czech primary school. [00:14:00] And then when we moved, my mother and I, to Vienna, I obviously went to a German-speaking school and I completely forgot all my Czech. When, in October '38, we returned to Prague, I was sent to

the local school speaking no Czech. And it took me a fortnight and the Czech all came back, and I was perfectly competent both in spoken and written Czech.

*That's brilliant.*

And the interesting thing is I have since tried to resuscitate my Czech with no success at all. And I really was quite good at languages but I think I have lost the capacity now, the memory for languages, whereas my mathematical memory remains intact. I've read somewhere that if one learns languages at that age, it is shallow planted. And I think my shallow planted Czech is nowhere. So, when I nowadays hear Czech spoken, and I do have Czech relatives, I feel extremely uncomfortable as though a part of my mind had gone AWOL.

*What happened to your Czech relatives? Did they survive?*

A mixture, but I mean I have new Czech relatives. [00:16:00] I have a cousin in Vienna who has a Czech wife from Brno. And they speak Czech, their home language is Czech. When I said I have Czech relatives that's whom I meant.

*How did your mother go about finding you a means of reaching England or at least getting out of Czechoslovakia as it was then? [PAUSE?] When you went back to Czechoslovakia, and also in Vienna, did your mother work after the divorce?*

Oh- yes. You said when we went back to Czechoslovakia? We were in Vienna then.

*Yes, but did she work in Vienna and in Czechoslovakia?*

She worked in Vienna, she worked for a company doing market research, as a statistician. And that was run by a woman called Marie Jahoda who afterwards came to England and was quite an eminent employer, mathematician.

*And did she work in the former Czechoslovakia also?*

No. She was then just a wife and mother until the divorce. But then in Vienna, she worked.

*How did she come to hear about the Barbican Mission?*

[00:18:00] You have met Peter Needham. Peter Needham's mother, Annerle, and my mother were close friends. Annerle was very enterprising and resourceful. So, at that time, to get into England, one had to have a post as a domestic, which got one a visa. Annerle had two posts

and passed one to my mother. My mother got a job as a parlour maid with someone called Colonel Maeve, in Ingatestone in Essex. And at the same time, she had heard of the Barbican Mission which was bringing Jewish children to England. And so, both of those were presented to my mother by Annerle, and both of those she used, both for her job and for my immigration. And I then went once a week to see Peter and to make it sound as though this trip to London would be a huge adventure that was pleasurable. And so that happened because Peter was four and I was a big girl of 10.

*Were you convinced that it was going to be an adventure, or did you have doubts? [00:20:00]*

I don't think I had any doubts. I think my mother was so wholehearted in the way that she presented it. I remember we went on a bus to the airport on the day we flew out, which was the 12th of January and that journey to the airport, she made it sound like such fun. When I think what she must have been going through, uncertain of whether she would ever see me again, her courage is just daunting.

*Were you able to ask her years later, perhaps, how she felt at the time?*

No, I never did and that's one of these, one carries these guilts about one's deceased relatives. I wish now that I had told her how much I admired her, but I never did. It's an omission.

*You were a child and you would not have known then.*

Yes, but then later I wasn't.

*Could you describe your journey and when you left your mother, how did you feel?*

Well, we then flew to Croydon, where we were picked up by Mrs. Davidson in a bus and taken to the Barbican Missions [00:22:00] Children's Home. Beyond that point, there was then huge, huge, huge homesickness. I used to find two things I found extremely difficult. One thinks that the conventional attitude is that bedtime is going to be difficult. I didn't find that, so I found the mornings the hardest, breakfast. That's one thing. The other thing is that at school, they used to sing a hymn which goes, "Glorious things to thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God." And, and that was played to the tune of the Austrian National Anthem. It was the fact that to all the other children, it was just a hymn to, and to me, it meant this association of the national anthem and that was very lonely. So, I remember those two things as being very difficult.



*Not a good start to your day.*

No. [chuckles]

*Why did they play it to the tune of the-*

Sorry.

*Why did they play it to the tune of the Austrian National Anthem?*

Well, it is, if, if you go to church now, that is what it's sung to. It still is.

*Were there other children from Austria or Czechoslovakia in your group, in addition to Peter?*

Well, yes, that was the whole children's home. [00:24:00] And when we went to school, I was rising 11 and there was a local school called Addey and Stanhope School in New Cross Gate which still exists and the headmaster was a mathematician called Mr. Howard. And he offered to the Barbican Mission a free place because you have to remember in those days, it's before the Education Act, so education was charged, but he offered a free place to their best boy and their best girl. The Barbican Mission nominated a boy called Holger, Holger Heller, and me as the best boy and best girl. And we duly trotted off to Addey and Stanhope which is going to prevent us from being a year below our age by getting this free place. And so, I enjoyed two terms at Addey and Stanhope and then war broke out in September '39 and Addey and Stanhope were evacuated to Devon. So, we didn't go with them obviously and then a missionary came and taught for the Barbican Mission, just [00:26:00] all the children hugger-mugger. So that was really a sort of a non-educational bit. So, my whole schooling was very disrupted altogether. I went to 10 different schools in different countries, but the rescuing thing is that latterly, I took with me my math teacher, who was my mother. And so, although I had this disrupted education, I had total continuity in the maths, which I went on to read at Oxford.

*Could we stay with the school for a moment? How did you cope with English? Did you learn any before you came to Britain?*

I had been to English lessons, yes, but my English was very, very dodgy. There are several things to note there. First of all, I remember when I was a big girl at the Barbican Mission

somebody being sick in the night and my wanting to tell an adult but absolutely not having the vocabulary and doing a mime of throwing up in order to communicate what the problem was. [chuckles] That was one thing. And then the other thing was that when I did the- what was then the [00:28:00] 11-plus exam- and that had several levels of results, you either got a scholarship, in which case your fees were paid. Or you got a pass, in which case you could go to the grammar school, but you had to find your own funding. Or you didn't pass and you went into the secondary modern school. It was very much the parting of the sheep and the goats. I did that exam and there were three papers, English, maths, and verbal reasoning. And in the English, one of the questions was, in not more than 50 words, describe a wheelbarrow. Now, in my language lessons, a wheelbarrow had not crossed my path, so I had no clue what this was and there was no way that I could describe it in any number of words. So, this was one of the questions that I just could not attempt. So, I assumed that I had failed this, but I must have done well on the other, on the math and the verbal reasoning because I got a scholarship. And so, I then went for a free place.

*Did you make any friends in the school [00:30:00] and in the children's home?*

In the children's home yes, in the school no because they disappeared from Addey and Stanhope. They went off, so it hadn't been long enough, no.

*Coming from a very liberal family, how did you feel being in the Barbican Mission and being brought up in a religious environment?*

I've described that my father had said- presented me with this course of a child's comparative religion and so nothing was assured. Everything was maybe, so I found the assurance of the Barbican Mission, "This is how it is. This is the eternal verity," I found that extremely seductive and I fell for it. Line, hook, and sinker. The result was, that I got acute religious fervour for Christianity. For example, my mother at that point was a cook in Blackheath and she would come on her day off. She would travel over to- first to Brockley where my home was and then to Chislehurst where we moved to a new home which the Davidsons opened. And I would say [00:32:00] that I could not see her because I had a prayer meeting. So, she was not best pleased to spend her free afternoon traveling to her daughter who was singing hymns and choruses. So - that went on. Yes, I was charmed by it and seduced and became very confused and have really remained in the state of religious confusion ever since. [chuckles]

*As an adult, did you still go to church?*

I then married my husband who was a believing Christian. And so, yes, as a household we went to church. Our sons both went to a church school. I boggled and have boggled ever since taking communion which is a step too far for me, but I can participate in the- what I feel to be less committed- parts of the Anglican service. And I like the tradition, the hymns, and the responses. I feel very comfortable with that, but communion is a step too far.

*Did you ever think of going to a synagogue instead of-?*

Think of?

*Of going to a synagogue instead or were you drawn [00:34:00] to-?*

Absolutely, not. Absolutely not. No, I have no allegiance to the Jewish religion at all.

*Where did you meet your husband? How did you meet?*

We taught in the same school.

*What did he teach?*

He taught geography but then later stopped teaching. And in the days of the Inner London Educational Authority became an education officer and ran resources centre in [inaudible] He was the director of the ILEA's Learning Resources Center.

*What did you teach?*

Maths.

*Did you enjoy teaching?*

Yes, I loved it. And went on doing it till I was 62.

*I'd like to backtrack just for a moment. You said that you went to university.*

Yes.

*Where did you go? Where did you study?*

Well, in those days- this is not the case now because in my- further working life, I became instrumental on advising people on their university choices. I know that nowadays one has to make a choice between Oxford and Cambridge and cannot put both on a form. In my day, one did put both down [00:36:00] and so I got an exhibition which is a kind of mini scholarship to an Oxford college. Then the Cambridge entrance exam was in the following March and I could only have accepted that if I had done better, done the previous Oxford exam. I got a place at Cambridge, so I had an exhibition in Oxford and a place at Cambridge. I then had a choice of which I would take. My mother at that stage said, "You have done better at Oxford. You will always do better, so this is the choice to make." That's what I did. So, I took up the exhibition, that Oxford.

*Was she very pleased and proud?*

I don't remember, no. [chuckles] I think it was taken for granted really that, you know- that's what able people would do.

*I asked specifically also because she perhaps felt very frustrated in her work.*

No, she wasn't. She made great progress. She got into university education. I mean, having been [00:38:00] a parlour maid, she progressed to being a cook, which was marginally less disastrous because she knew absolutely nothing about housework but she could cook a bit. And from that, she became a governess to a very spoilt brat, called Erica, which again was produced by Annerle Needham as a job. From that, she got- as mathematicians were called up into the forces, she got a proper teaching job.

*And what did she teach, maths?*

Math. And so, from that teaching job, she went on to Chelsea Polytechnic and then entered the university. And she was both at Chelsea and at Brunel until ripe into her retirement. She went on and on and on working and couldn't bear to retire. So-she was a very fulfilled woman. She didn't have to live through her daughter at all. She had a life of her own. Living through her daughter was not my mother's style.

*She sounds as though she was a counterpart to Peter's mother who was also very-*

Yes absolutely, yes. They were very, very, very similar people. As I said, I was very-  
[00:40:00] you asked is she proud of me, it was the other way round, I am very proud of her.  
I just regret that I never told her so.

*I can understand that, yes.*

But the relationship with one's parents is fraught. It's not the simple thing that it is when they have died.

*No, no. And did you ever find out what happened to your father?*

Yes, I did. My father went to a large concentration camp in Poland where he died and he was not killed in the gas chambers like lots of people including my grandmother- was killed at our Auschwitz in the gas chambers. My father died of starvation. And we know that because my parents had a friend called Gretl Kerneck and she was in Lodz and survived and came to stay with us after the war. And- so she told us that the last time she saw my father, he had to give him her, his condolences because her husband Hans Kerneck had died. And then shortly after that she heard on the street that Ernst Stein had died of starvation. And she said the thing about death by starvation is that it is in some ways merciful before shortly before you die the terrible pangs of hunger. that you have been experiencing, stop. And you feel this ginormous relief of not having these pangs anymore. Although at the same time accompanying that relief you realise that this presages the end.

*What were your feelings when you heard about this?*

Well, obvious- I don't want to go to be obvious.

*One of your relatives prepared a family tree, would you like to say something about that, about the family tree of the people in the camps?*

Yes. My cousin Paul, who is one of my second cousins wanted to draw up a tree, which makes clear the balance between those who were killed in the Holocaust and those who survived. So, he has done that very effectively, I think that is a real masterwork of his.

*Yes.*

Did you admire it?

*I did, yes, and the photographs that accompanied- yes.*

Yes, the photographs and the date of birth of all the people, and, of course, the generations kind of slip. That is because the men [00:44:00] tended to be older before they could have families so there was a discrepancy in age between husbands and wives and that makes the generations go awry. And he's kept that, so he's kept his level of cousins a long one echelon.

*Which year did you marry?*

1958.

*What was your mother's response, would she have liked you to have married someone from continental Europe?*

No. No, absolutely not. She adored my husband, they got on terribly well.

*And did he take an interest in your background and your sons?*

Yes, very much so. Yes, she was very fond of both of the boys, yes.

*Have you ever been back to places associated with your childhood in Vienna and in the Czech Republic?*

No, this is another of my guilt things, this time towards my husband. Because he very much wanted to go to Prague and I didn't want to go as a foreign tourist- to somewhere where I had spoken the language fluently. So, I wouldn't go- and [00:46:00] didn't do that because subsequently, I'd been for this meeting of second cousins to Karlovy Vary. I feel a bit guilty towards my husband for having denied him that return, but I didn't do it.

*Because he wanted to share with you that experience, yes.*

Yes. But the boys have both been. And they have been outside the Villa Grünfeld and have looked at Most and have looked at the hole in the road that was the centre of town.

*And the house in the picture that you said the front entrance is now the back entrance, would you describe that please?*

When we drove from Karlovy Vary, and I was quite emotional because it was the first time I had been back-

*Of course.*

-and they drove to the back and I said, "What are you doing here, you know, why are you not-" and I then walked round to the front and they persisted and thinking that it was the other way round. And then I wrote them an email to all the cousins to explain because I realised, when I saw the driveway at the back, I realised why they had turned that whole thing round.

*To park the cars.*

Yes.

*Who did the house belong to?*

I don't know. At one point, my one [00:48:00] cousin Annelies went to see the house and she had lived in the house as a young girl. She said the inhabitants were very uneasy with the thoughts of the previous owners. So, I don't know because there has been compensation paid by the Czech government for the Villa Grünfeld so I don't know whether we ever got recompensed for that or whether or who now owns it, I have no idea.

*Who owned it originally in your family?*

My mother. I did tell you in an email, my mother was given it as part of her dowry as a wedding present from her father, who was the man in the photograph there. And so, when they got married, the Villa Grünfeld was given to my mother for ownership. And my grandparents lived on the ground floor, we lived on the first floor and the Kutscherers who were the gardener and his cleaner wife, and their daughter Hannele, who was a bit younger than me lived in the basement. And there were guest rooms in the attic. So, each of those levels is now a flat in its own right. So, it is a full flat occupied house. It doesn't look like it did because in [00:50:00] my day it was painted a bright yellow and now it's rather dark and somber.

*That must have been very emotional like that.*

Yes. One of my insensitive cousins was camera a-hoist, wanting to photograph me, and so I snapped at her [laughs] in the way that I do. [laughs]

*Have you been back to Vienna at all, to places-*

Oh, yes, I've been back to Vienna a lot because my husband and I went there for holidays. And then latterly, we went to stay with my cousin who lives there. But before that, we went back and stayed in a pension and I tried walking round and finding my school in the Hegelgasse and orienting myself. So yes, I have been back there.

*Was it painful going back the first time?*

No, I don't think so, no.

*Do your sons still take an interest in both countries?*

Yes, although my sons are very different in that the younger one is very conscious of his Jewish background, the elder one is not.

*What are their names, please?*

Nick [00:52:00] and Jon, J-O-N. Jon short for Jonathan.

*Is it Nick who is conscious of his Jewish background?*

No, Jon.

*Oh. Thank you.*

As an example of being conscious of his background, someone was talking about- what's it called, something buster. Ah!

*No, I don't know I'm afraid.*

What is the musical instrument or something buster?

*I really can't think what it is.*

Can I just go and- can I have a minute?

*Okay. You were about to explain what your son's concern was about the term ghetto blaster on religious grounds.*

Not on-

*You were going to explain your son's objection to the term ghetto blaster.*



Well, he felt that ethically, it was- make a good distinction of the Jewish ghetto to which he objected. [00:54:00] And so I was using that as an example of his awareness of Jewishness.

*Is he drawn to the religion at all?*

No, he's a scientist and a very convinced agnostic. No, he has no religious fervour at all.

*Have you been to the synagogues in Prague and the Pinkas Synagogue with the names of people who perished in the camps?*

No, I haven't been to Prague.

*At all?*

No.

*I know you said you didn't go with your husband but I wondered if you've been*

No, I've been to Karlovy Vary and from there to Most/ Brůx but nowhere else in the Czech Republic, in Czechia.

*Are there aspects of your life that you deeply regret that perhaps were caused by your coming to Britain or your disrupted childhood?*

No, I think my regrets are mainly in not having voiced my admiration of my mother. Nothing else. My husband was very much a 'we are where we are' person and I've taken that on very much. Regret is futile.

*Is there anything that [00:56:00] you would like to add that perhaps we haven't covered at all?*

What sort of thing? I can't think of anything.

*Anything about your childhood or how it was at Oxford University for you or what you would like to have done perhaps?*

I don't think so, we are where we are. No, I really don't spend time in umbilical gazing.

*Is there anything that you would like to say as a special message to someone watching a copy of this interview?*

Well, I have been influenced by Alf Dubs who was another Kindertransport child refugee. And he has been very instrumental in supporting children- child- unaccompanied child refugees and saying, "Look how they made good in the last century." I think that is very true and I would be very supportive of anything with Syrians for example, of allowing unaccompanied children and giving them a chance. I think that is important. That is an important lesson to have got [00:58:00] out of my generation.

*And you are an example of someone who succeeded.*

Yes, and there are many, many.

*Indeed, indeed.*

So that's a very positive note to end on. [chuckles]

*It is indeed. Thank you very much again for so kindly agreeing to be interviewed.*

That's fine.

*Greatly appreciated.*

I enjoyed it.

*And- just one last question, if I may, did you ever meet Milena Grenfell- Baines who was instrumental in fundraising for the memorial to the parents left behind in Prague?*

No, I never did, no.

*Thank you. [silence] 50].*

So those are my great -grandparents Julius and Eleonore Langer. And he was one of two brothers. Julius and Siegfried who ran a bank. And the brothers fell out because Julius took fisticuffs to his nephew who was Siegfried's son. And so, he was paid off and never worked again. So, from the age of 40, Julius was at home not working and the bank was run by the other family and the two families were at daggers drawn forevermore afterwards.

*Where and when was it taken?*

My great -grandmother died shortly after, after I was born. So, it would be prior to 1928.

*And where, do you know?*

Well, in Brüx.

*In Brüx please.*

Those are my paternal grandparents, Moses and Camilla Stein, and that would have been taken in the early 20th century again in Brüx or Most. Those are my maternal grandparents, Emil and Ida Grünfeld. He died of a heart [01:02:00] attack in 1931 so pre-Hitler. She was gassed in Auschwitz concentration camp. She was the gentlest and kindest person that I have ever known. My mother at the right hand, with next but one to her, my grandmother. Between them is a cousin and then at the left end, a friend. And they would have been in the garden of our house having had tea together.

*Do you know roughly when?*

Again, it would be in the 1920s, '30s in Brüx, in our garden. Person between my mother and my grandmother is my cousin Mimi who was the grandmother of my cousin Paul who designed the family tree. That is my mother Lisa Stein and would have been taken at her flat in Hammersmith, in, I should think, 1990. Now that is my wartime identity card as an alien child.

*Yes please.*

This is the reverse of the previous document with the immigration information enabling me to report to the police at regular intervals. [01:04:00] An older version of me in the late '40s or early '50s, a photograph that my mother kept on her walls. So that is the four of us, my husband Leslie, me and our sons Nick on the left and Jon on the right. And that picture was painted by a friend of ours who is an artist for a surprise silver wedding present for me. And the other three all sat for their portraits whereas I had to be caught by surprise because it was meant to be a surprise. This is a photograph which appeared in an Observer on the 10th of November. A friend dragged me and said, "Have you seen the photograph of you in today's paper?" So, I went and bought it. There are in the photograph two things that I find very poignant. One is Peter Needham now over 80, in the arms of the pilot and wearing a muff which his mother had bought him. And the other moving thing is the length of my coat which is far, far, far too long, which again my mother had bought because she was uncertain

whether if ever, she was going to buy me- be able to buy me another garment to wear. Both those stoical reactions [01:06:00] I think are extremely moving. To think- you could tell by the length of the coat-

*Yes but-*

Yes. Other children in the picture are Inge and Helga Plitzka, Erich Meyer, the Fried sisters and... the Hellers, and others I could name but I can't see now.

*Okay.*

The plane was chartered by the Barbican mission to the Jews which flew us out. I have since discovered that their funding came in part from support from Nicholas Winton.

*Yes, please.*

And that is the Langer family tree which my cousin, Peter Beck, constructed. So, my generation is the third row down. The original- my great -grandparents are the couple at the top, Julius [01:07:40] and Eleonore Langer whom you have seen elsewhere. My cousin Paul was very intent on showing the contrast between Holocaust victims and Holocaust survivors [01:08:00] which he has highlighted. [silence] We were quite right to put that sticker in the car.

*Yes, good thinking, good thinking, Ilse, definitely yes.*

That is the Villa Grünfeld [01:08:50] in Brüx or Most which was built in 1928, the year I was born. It was bought by my grand- by my father and given to my mother as a wedding present, cum dowry. The side [01:09:15] you can see there is what was then the front of the house. It was a house in single family occupation. So, my grandparents, Emil and Ida Grünfeld lived on the ground floor. You can see them on the balcony, standing, looking out. On the floor above them in the first floor is where my mother and father and I lived. The basement house, the Kutscherer family. Herr Kutscherer was our [01:10:00] gardener and his wife did the rough cleaning of the communal areas and their daughter, Hannele, just younger than me, was someone I played with. In the attic were the guest bedrooms. So, the whole house, unlike now, was in single occupation.

*Yes, please.*

Can I just ask something first, please?

In this picture you see what, in my day, was the back of the house. Lower down, there was a huge swing, a six-seater swing and a sandpit for us children. When I went back subsequently, what was the back there had become the front of the house, which was mysterious until I realised that in my day, nobody needed vehicular access, because nobody had any cars, nobody drove. Subsequently, when the house became subject to multiple occupancy and every floor would have had a least one car, an entrance had to be created. And it was obviously found more expedient to create that at what had been the back of the house, thereby making it now the new front. This was a pity, because, in my day, what was then the front, faced the mountain, with its castle atop, [01:12:00] whereas now, the facing of the new front of the house is just the back of town. In 2017, it was decided that we would have a reunion in Czechia, of the second cousins, in Karlovy Vary. From there, we drove to Most [01:12:30] and found the Villa Grünfeld. Here we are assembled, standing in front of the house, in front of what was the front, but is now the back. You can see that the house is now painted in dark and somber colours and, unlike our day, it is occupied by four different families, one on each floor.

*Thank you very much.*

*Brilliant.* [01:13:20] [END OF AUDIO]