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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	69

Interviewee Surname:	Jackson
Forename:	Ruth
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	13 June 1926
Interviewee POB:	Eberswalde, Germany

Date of Interview:	5 August 2004
Location of Interview:	Pershore
Name of Interviewer:	Helen Lloyd
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 30 minutes

REFUGEE VOICES: THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE

INTERVIEW: 69

NAME: RUTH JACKSON

DATE: 5 AUGUST 2004

LOCATION: PERSHORE

INTERVIEWER: HELEN LLOYD

TAPE 1

This is an interview with Ruth Jackson, on the 5th of August 2004 and my name is Helen Lloyd.

Tape 1: 0 minute 46 seconds

My name is Ruth Jackson, I was born in Eberswalde on the 13th of June 1936.

HL: Tell me what you know about your father's family.

RJ: Not very much at all. My father was born in Posen, Poznan now, and he went to live in Berlin. He had two brothers and a sister and they all lived in Berlin but I never met my grandparents because they had died before he moved to Berlin. That's really all.

HL: What about your mother's family and give names where you've got them.

RJ: My mother was non-Jewish but she became Jewish on marrying my father. And like most people who convert, she became more Jewish than he was. My mother had a mother living in Berlin, my grandmother, and we went to stay with her quite often. She had a brother, and her sister had died and her father had died. So that was the only contact I had of my mother's but she had several cousins. And of course they were all non-Jews.

HL: And what was their family name?

RJ: My mother's family was Hill, oddly enough. A very English name.

HL: Were there any English ancestors as far as you know?

RJ: Not as far as I know, no. There may have been some American ones, but I really don't know, no.

HL: And what did you father do for a living?

RJ: My father used to have a small bank in Berlin, and with the high inflation in the twenties he lost everything, and he then started to buy up a factory and try and do a jam and biscuit

factory, I believe, but this is all before my time. They had lived very well in Berlin, attending operas and musical evenings etc, but all that had to change. And my father took up a job in Eberswalde as a chartered accountant in the local Town Hall in their Finance Department and he also worked for two or three big insurance companies in Berlin.

HL: You don't know what the name of the bank was that your father once had in Berlin?

RJ: No. I don't. No. No.

HL: And how long were you in Eberswalde?

RJ: Until I was seven, until 1933.

HL: And then what happened?

RJ: Well, I became very much aware of the fact that we were Jewish; I was made aware of it. When we lived in Eberswalde, we lived outside the town, in a very nice ground floor flat, as most people on the continent live in flats, but there were three women living upstairs, spinsters, who were not so very nice. My father came home one day, he had a bucket of cold water thrown over him and the words 'get out, you dirty Jew'. And I was much more worried about the fact that he was called 'dirty' than a Jew, because it didn't mean anything to me at the age of four.

Tape 1: 4 minutes 0 second

But it resulted in the fact that we moved away from there into the town. My brother - I had a brother and a sister - my brother was more upset to leave because he loved the countryside. My sister was quite happy to move more into the town because she'd be with her friends, her school friends. However we moved into the town, into the main square right opposite the Town Hall, where we had a flat and all the windows faced the square so that anything major going on in the square, we were in the prime position, shall we say. At the age of six, I went to school and made friends with many children, mostly clients of my father', who also helped people with their bookkeeping. So that we were friendly with the mayor, which means much more in Germany than it does here, and doctors, dentists, what have you. And their children came and played, I played with them, they played with me. But the onset of 1933, from one day to the next I was *persona non grata*, they didn't play with me any more, they didn't come to my parties, and I wasn't invited to theirs. At the beginning of 1933, Hitler came to Eberswalde as he toured Germany and as all our windows faced the square we could see all these people gathering, thousands, seemed to me as a child, thousands of people, marching, singing, swastika flags flying, and a podium was set up for Hitler to give his speech. There was a knock at the door, my father was in Berlin at the time, and my mother opened the door, and I heard her arguing with a man, and in the end she let him in. And we were forced to put a swastika flag out of our windows, which of course my mother didn't want to do, and she hung a banner right below, as low as she could get below our window sill, and I thought she would fall out of the window, I remember hanging onto her skirts.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 0 second

And– because we were told that if we didn't it would be so noticeable because Hitler would just be facing our windows, we put the wooden blinds down which you have on the continent,

but you could still hear him shrieking and shouting, of course, but we couldn't see him - or I could through the slits of the blinds. And my mother phoned my father to stay in Berlin and he then stayed with my grandmother and when they all went we were able to breathe again, but my parents decided it was best to move back to Berlin, because you are not so noticeable in a crowd as you are in a small town.

HL: Before we move you to Berlin can you remember the name of the school you were at in Berlin?

RJ: I'm afraid I can't, no.

HL: Was it a private school?

RJ: No, it was an ordinary school, ordinary elementary school, I suppose, yes. We had children of all backgrounds there.

HL: Do you remember any particular friends whose attitude towards you changed?

Tape 1: 7 minutes 20 seconds

RJ: Well I think all of them; I think it was a general thing.

HL: What about their parents and their relationships with your parents?

RJ: Well, some of them said that they would still come and see us because nobody was going to stop them. And I think it was more my parents who said, well we don't want to get you into trouble, we quite understand, so don't come. But one thing stands out in my mind. I went along with my mother shopping, I suppose, and I saw a man in front of me with a swastika burnt into his skull and it made a terrible impression on me and I asked my mother why had he done that, you know, it seemed a bit stupid to me, and she said, well he had been in a sort of prison. And I wanted to know why, and she said, well, he didn't very much like the Nazis and he'd spoken against them and he was taken into a prison and they put it in there so that he would always remember that. And that made a big impression on me.

HL: Any other memories of Eberswalde?

RJ: It had been a very nice little spa town actually, and I know friends of ours had a house outside the town; we used to go there, they had a garden and life was quite nice, there were woods and hills around, we could go tobogganing (08:54)
When we lived in the first house we used to live in, there were big tennis courts opposite and these were flooded in the winter and I used to go skating in the winter at the age of three and I think I was more on the ice than off.

HL: Was there a synagogue?

RJ: Yes, there was a synagogue. There was a small Jewish community, yes.

HL: Did your parents go?

RJ: Oh yes, certainly.

HL: Have you any memories of this?

RJ: Not really, no.

HL: And how big– I know you were only seven, but do you remember how big that Jewish community was in Eberswalde?

RJ: Well, I think for a small town it was a fair size, but to me as a child, you know, I don't know, it was not terribly big, not a place like Birmingham you know. It was, after all, only a small town, and I don't know the inhabitants of Eberswalde.

HL: What are your memories of moving to Berlin?

RJ: I think I was looking forward to it because, I mean, having more or less been ousted by my friends in Eberswalde we moved to Berlin in rather a hurry because friends of ours had also moved and they said to my parents that there was a flat going in their block of flats, should they reserve it for us? It was too small for us, my parents had three children.
Tape 1: 10 minutes 19 seconds

Although my sister was ten years older, my brother seven years older, so we really needed a three bedroom flat, but we took it, it was best to get out as quickly as possible and it was on one of the wide avenues that Berlin has. I don't know whether you've ever been to Berlin. It's rather like a small version of Paris, I think, with all the roads and all straight avenues leading down to the star and– so I was quite pleased because so here was a friend already living there, and I remember sending messages from one balcony to the other on a long piece of string, so life was quite nice.

HL: Can you remember the address?

RJ: Yes, it was number 8, Kaiserdamm. Which was the main road that what was then called the Reichskanzlerplatz, which was of course duly changed to Adolf Hitler Platz. A very wide avenue with a park opposite, called Lietzenseepark, and we used to go and play there, and in the winter we used to skate on the lake. But all these things happened– well they disappeared very soon I should say.

I went to the local school. My brother went to an art college, and my sister went to a secretarial school. Being much younger, I went to the local school. I was seven then. And for the first nearly year I was in that school, I made friends, and the teacher seemed to like me, and I got on quite well, until one day my mother was asked to come to the school. I remember I was given a note to give to her. And I was afraid, I wondered what I had done wrong, nobody said anything, I was just asked to give her this letter. Well, the letter was for her to come to the school, which she did and she told me I wasn't going to go back to that school because the other parents objected to their children being in a class with a Jewish child. So that was the end of that school. That was the second time that I had to move.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 37 seconds

Luckily enough for me, a new school was just being built, a Jewish school, a Zionist school called Theodor-Herzl-Schule. Which was at the top of the avenue that we lived in, at the top of the Kaiserdamm, next to the Funkturm which is like the Eiffel Tower really. (12:57)

And so I was very lucky that I went there. I had to go up by tram but that was all part of the fun of it; I made lots of friends and here suddenly I felt that I didn't have to worry about being Jewish because we were all Jewish.

And – but meanwhile there were various restrictions, that we couldn't go to cinemas, swimming pools, but somehow as a child you to take it all in your stride, it didn't seem to worry me terribly because I'd got my friends. My brother didn't go to art college any more, he decided to go on Hachshara, if you know what that is, to prepare for Palestine, as it was in those days, and we then found a larger flat, which we needed, not far from where we were before. But now I had to go on the overhead train, the Stadtbahn. And I had to change at a station called Witzleben, but a lot of other children changed there as well, and we met up and we all walked from the train station up to the school and we were quite carefree and happy in those days.

Tape 1: 14 minutes 14 seconds

HL: Do you have any sense that people around the school were aware that it was a Jewish school?

RJ: No, not really, no, no. And nobody said anything to us, I mean, there was usually quite a crowd of us going to school and nobody seemed to say anything. My brother became ill. Because he was one of these people who was determined to work and get all his training done for Palestine in as short a time as possible, so whether it was raining, snowing or what, he still worked out in the fields. He got flu and pneumonia and St Vitus Dance, and he died. And I was ten by this time, so it was very hard to lose a brother who was seventeen, who had been a very good friend and companion, who took me out on bike rides on his bike, unbeknown to my mother, who would make– would cut a, a hole in the ice and go swimming under it and I had to stand by the hole so he'd find his way out again. And all that changed my life drastically.

Coming back to the school, being a Zionist school we had to learn Hebrew, but the Ivrit, or the spoken Hebrew, all in preparation for Palestine again. So that that was our main subject every day. I'm afraid I've forgotten most of it. So my parents couldn't bear to live in the same flat any more that my brother had lived in, so we were on the move again. And I always went with my mother to look at flats. My father now had very little work, he had clients who came to the house. Because, of course, I should have said that in 1933 he was the first one to be thrown out of the Finance Department in Eberswalde. But a lot of clients from Eberswalde used to come to Berlin to see him, and he still worked for the main insurance companies for the time being, but he worked from home. Except when he visited these insurance companies and sometimes I was allowed to go with him.

Tape 1: 16 minutes 38 seconds

We moved to another flat, in another part of Berlin called Schöneberg, where my parents lived when they first got married, so it brought back many happy memories for them. It was a flat in a private clinic actually, I think it must have been one of the doctor's flats, it was on the

ground floor, and I enjoyed that. And I still now had a longer way to go to school, actually, but we seemed to get used to that sort of thing. And when I think about it now, at the age of ten I travelled across Berlin to school on my own, changing trains and things. And being Jewish– but things were not as bad as they are now, you know, you didn't have to be afraid in any other way.

Tape 1: 17 minutes 30 seconds

I remember thinking that the flat was in a road called Apostel Paulus Strasse, one of the apostles, and it was number 12, which I thought was great, and I was very proud of my address. We took in a young boy called Joachim who was going– finishing his training in Berlin; I'm not sure what he did actually. I knew he was a wonderful violinist and he used to play to me. He lived at the– on the Baltic Sea, in a little fishing village, and he was like an ersatz brother to me, which I liked, he was nearly the same age as my brother would have been. And one day he said to my parents he was going home to the Baltic, could he take me along. Now I had never been away alone before. And my mother said, well, if I'd like to go, yes. And he said he'd take good care of me. He'd got two brothers and a sister, they were very Orthodox Jews, I will add. And so my mother said, if I was at all homesick, she'd come and get me. So I went to the seaside for the first time, alone with Joachim. And the family made me very welcome, and being very Orthodox we weren't allowed to do anything on Saturday. And on Saturday morning we had to go into the nearest town which was Stettin, to go to the synagogue. But because it was Saturday we had to walk. And we had to walk all along the edge of the sea, but I've never yet found out why we had to stop every now and again and dig some holes and put some bread and fish in. I can't– still nobody has been able to tell me why. I mean, the very fact of having to dig a hole would have been work: if you weren't allowed to carry a handkerchief, I don't see how– I don't know, it never added up for me. Anyway. We used to go there to the synagogue and they had plenty of friends there who invited us up to have a meal with them and stay there until it was dark enough for us to be able to take the train back into the fishing village.

Tape 1: 19 minutes 50 seconds

Called Hevensdorf– the next one– it was called Aalbeck. It was well-known for their flounders and it used to smell beautifully of– you don't say roast flounders– when they cure them, you get this wonderful smell. We used to go to help Joachim's Mum in the morning and in the afternoon we used to go down to the beach. And one day we found that our beach had been roped off with a little square: 'Jews' Beach'. We had a little square, I suppose the size of our back garden here, that was our beach and we couldn't go anywhere else. And we went home and told the parents and they were a bit worried and they didn't want us to go to the beach again. And we said we were quite alright, there weren't many people there anyway. And we were fine, you know, and they were a bit dubious about it; however, the next day, being children, we went again. But now we found there was a film company suddenly on our patch of beach. And they were filming a film call *Dreimal Drei im Himmelbett*. (21:01) I'll never forget that. Loosely translated, I suppose it would be 'Three times three in a four-poster bed'. They chose our bit of beach because it was the best bit. And that made us very proud that we as Jews had the best bit of beach along there. And so, you know, we didn't mind going there again. But soon the holiday ended and my mother came and collected me and we went back home and she said to me, I'm afraid we'll have to move again. And I said, why, because I did like that flat, specially the address, and she said that evidently in the clinic upstairs somebody had died, and my mother had come home and seen them carry out this

coffin and it brought back all the memories of my brother, and she said, I just can't stand it, I just can't live in a place where I might see that again. So off we went again trailing round and I'm saying it because it wasn't an easy thing to do. Because you'd found a flat and people would say 'Are you Jewish?' and then we'd say, yes, and they'd say, 'We don't want you'.

Tape 1: 22 minutes 9 seconds

HL: What year was this by now? How old were you?

RJ: It must have been 1937. My brother died in 1936, it must have been '37. And so we went all along the Kurfürstendamm looking for flats, and many a time either the flat was too small or else we were not wanted. And finally we did find a flat which was large enough, in a road off the Kurfürstendamm called Dreusenstrasse, number 15. And we moved in there and there was a synagogue not far away, and I think it was called Prinz Albrecht Strasse, if I'm not mistaken. So I was now a bit nearer the school again and there were other children nearby and I was able to befriend them. And we'd go to school together and home together and play after school. It became a routine. You didn't go out to play, you played in each other's homes. And somehow we just accepted that. We weren't accepted, welcomed in restaurants. My mother had previously taken me to ice-cream parlours but we weren't allowed to do that any more. And shops ---

Tape 1: 23 minutes 38 seconds

HL: Was it known that you were Jewish in the ice-cream parlours?

RJ: Well, I don't think I looked particularly Jewish and certainly my mother wasn't Jewish. But we weren't going to take the risk. And shops would say 'Jews not welcome'. And a lot of the shops, actually big stores, had previously belonged to Jews. And they were bought out for a pittance. But the worst thing that happened actually– of course my mother not being Jewish all her family weren't Jewish– And so we used to visit them quite happily, they had children, my mother's cousins had children who were nearer my age than my own brother and sister had been. So I used to enjoy going there and playing. And one day, we went to this one aunt called Ella, and my mother particularly liked going there because Ella used to make my mother's favourite dish, of herrings, which my father hated so we never had them at home. And she always made us very welcome but on this occasion she furtively looked round the door to see that nobody had seen us come. Almost pulled us into the flat, I was shooed into the other room to play with my– I suppose she would have been my cousin once removed, and my mother and my aunt went into the kitchen and chatted, and I thought they were out very quickly, normally they'd stay in there for ages and talk and we'd play. And the first thing I noticed when I went into the sitting room was that there was a big picture of Hitler on the wall where the mirror used to be. And Friedl, Friedchen, the girl, said to me 'why are you looking at that haven't you got a picture of Hitler?' I said, no, no. And I said, what happened to the mirror? Oh, we took that down, this is much more important. And I was nearly going to say something when my mother said 'we've got to go'. I forgot, we've got to be somewhere. And I thought, oh it's a bit strange, but anyway I went. And my mother said, I'm afraid we can't go there any more because they're going to be in trouble if they have Jews coming into the flat, or meet us anywhere, my uncle would be out of a job, the children at school had been told to spy on their parents, and it just wasn't safe for them. So that was that. So we didn't see any of my mother's relations any more.

Tape 1: 26 minutes 14 seconds

HL: What relation was Ella to your mother?

RJ: A cousin. So my mother had about three other cousins also living in Berlin, and we didn't see any of them any more. And she had a brother and very rarely did we go there. And I can't remember going there very often after that episode. My grandmother, who lived outside Berlin in the Grunewald, which once had been a very big house but she'd sold the rest and only lived in the smaller part, she wasn't going to let any Hitler dictate her who was going to visit or not, and we were always afraid that she would say things and it would cost her her life, but luckily enough it didn't, and she died of old age, after I'd left Germany.

HL: You mentioned Joachim's family were very Orthodox. Were you struck by how much more Orthodox they were than your own family?

Tape 1: 27 minutes 11 seconds

RJ: Yes, yes, very much more. I mean, all we were allowed to read was the equivalent of the Bible, the Old Testament and we had to just sit around after we got back on a Friday night, Saturday. I wasn't– I'd been in Orthodox homes before, so it wasn't all that strange to me but, yes, they were very much more Orthodox than we were.

HL: And what was the extent of your own family's practice?

RJ: We ate kosher food; we went to the synagogue, my father less so than my mother. And my mother tried very hard to make it as Jewish a household as she could.

HL: Were they Zionists like your school, or –

RJ: I was a Zionist, certainly, and I belonged to various clubs, youth clubs, and we also had a club that we– a theatre club, which was good because at least we could do something, and we'd have a play or an opera or anything once a month, because we weren't allowed to go to the cinema, I'd never been in a cinema in Germany. No. And I also remember this friend I used to go to school with, who lived around the corner, called Naomi. Now they were very, very Orthodox. To the extreme.

Tape 1: 28 minutes 50 seconds

Well, we used to think it quite ridiculous, because I'd come home from school with her on a Friday and she'd say, you can come and play, but you've got to help me because I've got to tear up all the toilet paper, because they weren't allowed to tear anything on a Saturday. And I thought, you know, I really thought this was ridiculous. And all sorts of little things. All the lights had to be switched on, or the neighbour came and did all the cooking for them and my father was always quoting 'Thou shalt not work, nor thy maid, nor thy manservant'. And what were they doing, and they were doing just that so he didn't hold with any of that. But Naomi looked very, very Jewish, Semitic, shall we say, rather than Jewish and coming home from school from the station we'd have bricks thrown at us by youth– Hitler Youth boys. And that frightened me and I remember coming home and really being very upset, and my mother tried to calm me down, and I said, I don't think I'll go home with Naomi any more. And I felt a traitor, really. Because here was my friend, and I didn't like to go home with her any more, I

was looking after my own safety. And I used to make excuses and go home a different way, or go to school a bit earlier, on an earlier train, but I still went to her house to play with her. But I really didn't feel comfortable with myself.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 28 seconds

I had a small puppy dog, a wire-haired terrier. And my mother, later on, when I knew I was coming to England, had given it to one of her cousins to look after, but I didn't realise it was because Jews weren't allowed to have pets. I didn't realise that until many, many years later. But my mother just said, well, we may emigrate some time and I think we ought to give Mickey to somebody now whilst he's still little and doesn't realise it, and I went along with that although I still missed him very much.

Tape 1: 31 minutes 1 second

And now we're approaching 1938. My father was busy, very busy, not working, but working for other people trying to find ways for them to leave Germany. Everybody was trying to get out, people were going to all sorts of places as you know, and he'd spend hours trying to find relatives, friends, for other people. And I used to say to him, why don't you find somebody for us? And he used to say, well I'm trying hard and he remembered that his mother used to correspond with somebody in England and I think after her husband died, this person in England maybe sent her money, or something. How related he was we never did know. They might have been cousins. And my father finally found an address, and he wrote to this person in England, and his name was Bertram Levenson, he was a solicitor in Piccadilly in London, and he had two brothers in Australia, one in Adelaide and one in Brisbane. And when my father wrote to him, he said, yes, well he would see what he could do. But somehow people in England didn't believe it was as bad as it really was, so he sent his company's secretary to Germany to Berlin, to have a talk with my father. Now this man spoke fairly good German, so that was one reason he sent him. And he came - it must have been the sixth or seventh of November, 1938. And he spent quite a while talking to my father, and when he went he said, Well, I'll come again tomorrow and we can have further talks and I'll see what I can do, but I don't know what they talked about, obviously, because I wasn't in the room. But he lived in a hotel next to the biggest synagogue in Berlin. Now on the 8th of November was the Kristallnacht and that synagogue was set– was one of the first to be set alight. He never came back, he just packed his bags and went to airport and flew back to London. For us it was a good thing because he could see what it was really like. But of course for him it was a frightening experience, and then Mr Levenson decided, yes, he would help us. Things must be bad after all.

Tape 1: 33 minutes 32 seconds

And I think it was in December the first Kindertransport came into being and I was put on the list for the Kindertransport by Mr Levenson. And– but it took a while and I didn't go, leave Berlin, until the end of July '39. So I still spent time in Germany but not only did I see what was happening in the streets. [Phone rings]

Tape 1: 34 minutes 20 seconds

On the day before the actual Kristallnacht, the Nazi Youth went round and painted a big white 'J' or actually wrote the word 'Jude' meaning 'Jew', on all the shop windows in Berlin, so that was an easier target for them, and on the actual night I was woken– my parents told me to

get dressed, and we all sat and waited, because we could hear all the noise down the roads, of lorries, people being– shouted, being pulled out of their homes. There was a furrier opposite us and he had two small children and I remember seeing them being pulled out in their nightclothes and being shoved onto the lorry. And it was a very frightening experience and I was waiting for them to come into our house any moment now, but somehow or other we got missed out. It was a corner house and they went round the corner and they took a young family with a baby and I really couldn't understand what they could have done wrong, but anyway for the Nazis you didn't have to do anything wrong, you just had to be Jewish. So we sat there waiting and finally with a lot of shouting and banging, a lot of noise everywhere, glass flying everywhere, the Nazis left, and my mother made the usual cup of coffee and she said, 'Now we can go to bed', but we really couldn't go to sleep any more. The next morning she told me not to go to school, but I was fond of school and so I went, only to find that my school had been ransacked. We had vines growing up the school and we enjoyed harvesting the grapes, but they had all been pulled down. The books were all smouldering from the fire in the foreground. The building was a new building so it was very much of a concrete block, they couldn't do much there, but the glass windows of course were broken, the furniture was broken or burnt, and the Headmistress told us to go home again, very quietly, but in small groups, which we did. My parents thought it was best that I went to another school again, which I did, and I went to the school not far away from the KDW, if you know where that is,

Tape 1: 36 minutes 37 seconds

it's a big store, on Joachimsthaler Strasse, it was called the Josef-Lehmann-Schule. So I went there, just for a short time, until I emigrated. I believe my school opened again but only for a short time until March, but I didn't go back to it.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 58 seconds

HL: And the Josef-Lehmann-Schule had not been attacked then?

RJ: No, the Josef Lehman Schule missed all that because it was in a courtyard behind a synagogue, and they didn't seem to notice that because it wasn't prominent enough, I suppose. So then after going to the new school I used to quite often walk to the school, take a bus in the morning, walk home again. I quite liked walking down the Kurfürstendamm, especially in the winter time, and Christmas time, they used to have Christmas trees for sale all along the road, and they had booths along there, selling things, Christmassy things, and like any other child I enjoyed looking at those, but I couldn't understand why they were all in such a happy mood, and they didn't seem to care about us at all. And Hanukkah, that's our feast of lights, was spent at home, very quietly. And then, I suppose, there was the preparation of getting ready to go to England. I was in two minds about going to England. My parents told me that I was being sent ahead to scout out the place and they would follow along, and my sister would be coming too, she was waiting for a domestic permit. That was the only way you could come to England, by working as a domestic. Now my sister had never lifted a finger at home; how she was going to work as a maid for somebody else, I never did know, but she tried very hard to get a visa which unfortunately she didn't get until the day after the war was declared. So she never did come. As we weren't allowed to go into the shops to buy new clothes, or buy material, or anything like that, a lot of the Jewish shop owners took some of their wares, clothes or shoes, or whatever, and they sold them from home. It wasn't the same like going into the shop for me, I hated it. It felt a bit as if I was buying somebody else's cast-off clothes, although they were new clothes. But nevertheless, I bought– my mother

bought me a navy blue coat, and I had another skirt, a few skirts, and the shoes I'd always wanted were blue suede with a red rim, which I thought were wonderful, but then I thought I'd rather not have those shoes and stay in Berlin with my parents. I was very, very divided about it. My mother made lots of clothes for me. I was still a little child, young for my age I suppose, I still played with dolls and she had to make the same clothes for my doll I was going to take with me or, rather, was going to come in the trunk which I actually never got.
Tape 1: 39 minutes 52 seconds

We were only allowed to take one small suitcase, you had to write, make a list, an itinerary of everything that was in the case, and it had to be stuck on the inside of the suitcase, and my father very carefully printed all this out and then my mother would find other things to put in, and I used to get very upset about it because I said, it isn't on the list and I'm not going to take it, you have to take it out, because I was very afraid of what might happen, and I think this fear of the Nazis was well-rooted in me. And my father also was very careful in showing me the English money and the measuring; now it's much easier, but then it wasn't. We had twelve pennies and twenty shillings to the pound and you had farthings and he made pictures of all these and drew them all out for me, so when I got to England I would know the money and I would know there were twelve inches to a foot, and I learned all that from him. He and I used to do a lot of stamp collecting, and we played Mah-Jong, and Rummy, because there was nothing else that he could do any more.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 6 seconds

HL: Where was his income from by this stage?

RJ: I've often wondered. I really don't know. He– I know that we had– sometimes had people staying in the house until they could emigrate, and– or else, the last person was a very elderly man who stayed, who had the spare bedroom, and he was sort of like a paying guest, and I suppose he must have paid my parents, or his children must have done, they emigrated, but he was too old to go, so he stayed with us. But where the rest of the money came from, I never did know, and I've often since wondered how my parents managed. During that time, there was a sort of rationing of food, for Jews, for everybody I think. Hitler was preparing for war. And I remember that only during certain times could we go into the grocer's to get our butter and cheese and whatever. I'm sure there were smaller rations and I know I was sent to go, I think it was between four and five or something like that, but I'm not sure. But I don't think people here realised that he was already rationing. And food rationing was introduced.

HL: Do you have any memories of how you were treated in the shops during that period?

RJ: No. I know I was treated alright. I suppose– obviously they knew because we had ration cards, and they must have had a big 'J' on them. What I do remember is that, of course, after the Kristallnacht there was a new ruling that we all had to have an identity card that we had to carry around with us. We had to go to the main police station in Berlin, which was a bit of a frightening experience, it was a big building with thousands of steps going up, and my heart was pounding, I'm sure everybody could hear it, and my mother took me along and I had to have my fingerprints taken like a criminal, and my ear photographed, my left ear. I never did find out why my left ear, but the Nazis were very odd in their reasoning. They also measured people's heads, and they said that they were bigger or smaller or something if you were Jewish, I've no idea. Then I was given this book, with my photograph, my fingerprints, and I had an additional name of Sarah, because Ellen Ruth was not Jewish enough, and we had to

have these books with us at all times. And woe betide me if we didn't. And that was a bit frightening for a child. Then I, at the end of July, came to England.

Tape 1: 44 minutes 9 seconds

HL: Just a few more memories before we come to your journey to England. Your parents were obviously trying to protect you and create as normal a life as they could, and continued to send you to school. But did you get a sense that they were afraid?

RJ: Yes, yes, I think so. Yes. Although we had to hand in certain things like typewriters and radios, and my father used to worry me because he used to try to listen to the English radio and I got very upset about it, because I said someone would hear him, someone would notice, although we lived in a block of flats that no other Jews lived in, as it happened, and although I know that somebody on the top floor was called Von Braun, and he used to have the ex-Crown Prince visiting him. And I thought in my childish mind that we were quite safe, having him living there. But I don't suppose we were any safer than anybody else.

HL: It sounds that if you could afford such a flat you were really quite well off.

RJ: We must have been, yes. There was a porter there as well. We lived on the– it wasn't exactly the ground, it wasn't exactly the ground floor, slightly up from the ground floor, but we didn't need a lift. But there were lifts there, carpeted stairs, I remember that, red. You couldn't go into the flats, you had to press a bell, the porter would answer, and ask who you were and then he would open the door from his lodge.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 43 seconds

HL: Did you have domestic servants living in?

RJ: No. Then, no, we used to but not then any more.

HL: But you remember having servants?

RJ: Well, my parents did when they lived in Berlin before I was born but then we lived in Eberswalde, they lived in Eberswalde, I had a nanny but then she– my mother wasn't very pleased with her so then she decided she would look after me herself.

HL: Did your parents ever consider going to Palestine?

RJ: My father always wanted to go to Sweden. I remember that all my childhood. But my mother always said that she didn't want to leave her mother. Which was a shame because I think if we had all gone to Sweden I think we might have got out of– But there we are, with hindsight.

Tape 1: 46 minutes 34 seconds

HL: Did your parents know any English to prepare you for your trip?

RJ: My father knew a few words. And I learned some English at school, but not very much, no. Not really.

HL: And did you know others of your friends who were going go on the Kindertransport?

RJ: No, no. I didn't know anybody. There were lots of children who had gone away, gone to America, people went to Shanghai, my cousin, on my father's side, so they were Jewish, my aunt, uncle and the daughter, went to Colombia, to Bogota. So every day, it was sort of a normal thing, you'd turn up at school and somebody was missing, and somebody'd gone away, and I also remember, I went– because I liked music, but I couldn't take music lessons, and we hadn't got a piano any more, my mother used to play the piano, and my father played the violin. And he did play the violin very well, and he tried to teach me, but the violin was rather too large for me. So I went to a music and movement class and I enjoyed that and the teacher used to allow me to play on her piano, and so I used to play little tunes by ear. One day I turned up for my lesson and she wasn't there, she'd gone to Sweden. Nobody was supposed to know, she just sort of went overnight. And people did, you know. My sister, I remember, begged my parents to let her go with a group of people who were trying to get across the border into Holland, but my parents were too afraid to let her go, because very often these people didn't reach the border. They were shot. My sister had a fiancé who lived in Holland, or rather he did agriculture in Holland in preparation for Palestine, and he did go to Palestine in the end. But that engagement broke off.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 40 seconds

HL: When you look back on Berlin, do you have any memories of the city that are not touched by the awful events that were happening?

RJ: I did go back to Berlin, actually, on a visit. We were all invited. And I hung back for a very, very long time. I didn't want to go back. And we've got my husband's relations in another part of Germany, and we were going to visit them, and they said, well, you come here, and then go from here, and if you don't like it, one of us will come and collect you again, so you needn't worry, you know, so– So I did go, and somehow it seemed very odd to me, I was sort of in limbo, I knew the roads, I knew the numbers of the buses to take, I knew where to go, I knew exactly what tube to take, as if I was going to go out to my grandmother's, But somehow it wasn't me, I was sort of– it was a very peculiar feeling.

HL: What year was that?

Tape 1: 49 minutes 53 seconds

RJ: Let me think. It was fifty years after. So it must have been '88, yes it was about fifty years after I had left Germany.

HL: Can you remember what you felt towards other non-Jews?

RJ: Then? I distrusted them. Anybody who was of a certain age, I immediately saw them in a Nazi uniform and, of course, when we went the wall was still up, and I tried to go to the Jewish cemetery, because my father was– my brother was buried there and later my father, and we had to go through all this rigmarole, and be interrogated, and it was just like the Nazis again, and I hated it. And I wanted to get out.

HL: I meant how you felt towards non-Jews who were not Nazis, before you left in '39.

RJ: Oh, I see. I don't think I trusted any of them. I think I probably thought anybody who wasn't Jewish was not to be trusted. And although I do know that my mother's cousins were quite nice people and– but as we couldn't go there any more, I just didn't– that didn't come into it.

HL: What contact did you have with your grandmother before you left?

RJ: I often visited her. She was, to me, an elderly lady and I just enjoyed going there; where she lived, in Grunewald was a very nice area, near the Wannsee, if you know where that is, which was also cordoned off, and we could only go to the small– there are lots of lakes outside Berlin, and we were only allowed to go to the smallest lake. But we always went to my grandmother's and went down to the lake for a little while, and she made a fuss of me, and I think she tried to spoil me because she realised that my childhood had been messed up.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 5 seconds

HL: Tell me now about your journey with the Kindertransport.

RJ: The dreadful day came, and I didn't want to get up. My mother kept on and on calling me and I kept saying 'I'm not going; I've decided I'm not going'. And she said 'Oh come along now, you're our big girl, you're going to go there, and we'll soon follow you'. Finally I did get up, she persuaded me to have breakfast but I couldn't. And she'd made a little parcel of sandwiches, and my little case was there, and I was supposed to say goodbye to my father, he wasn't going to come to the station, my mother was going to take me. And I was very rude. I wasn't going to say goodbye to such horrid parents who were sending their daughter away, and they probably didn't love me any more. And I didn't really care, and I probably wasn't your child anyway, maybe you only adopted me and now you've decided you want to get rid of me, so out of the door I banged. And I was very sorry about it. I'm sure my father realised. And I think– actually I've been like that ever since. I hate saying goodbye to people. And I think I would have broken down and I wouldn't have gone and so I left in a terrible temper. The taxi was– it must have been a taxi, I can't think how we got to the station. That's in a blur. But I think it was a taxi, and we took it to the mainline station. It was very early in the morning, it was very eerie, we were all told to be quiet. Not to wake the Germans. The good Germans mustn't know that we were all being sent away. So my mother and I stood there and I was given a number which was pinned on me, I must have lost that over the years. And I was told I was a big girl and I was to look after these little ones. Now, being the youngest in the family I was always the baby and now suddenly overnight, I had grown into the big girl, and I was looking after these little ones in the compartment with me. And I remember sitting there, in the corner, I couldn't look out at my mother but she still stood there and I sort of gave her a little bit of a wave and a nod. And she said, we won't be long, we'll be coming soon, Mr Levenson is going to get us all into England and then we're all going to go to Australia. That was the plan. And the train left and I couldn't really look round and say goodbye because the tears were very near. So I amused myself with these other children. And they were enjoying it. They were only little and they were hopping up and down and they thought it was great fun.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 4 seconds

And then half way along the journey we were told we ought to have our sandwiches because you know, time was getting on. It seemed an eternity, the journey. And I couldn't really eat my sandwiches, but I had to eat them, because I had to say to these children 'Look, I'm eating my sandwiches, now you eat yours'. It was the first part of my training looking after little children, I think. And so the train rolled on and we stopped and it was this side of Holland and the Nazis came in with the station police, and they went through all our things, and we each were allowed to take ten marks with us, but they soon collected that from us. So they must have been on quite a good deal, with the Kindertransport every day, collecting the ten marks again. And we were asked if we'd got any valuables, and, luckily enough, because there were all these little children my compartment was left more or less intact. And after a lot of humming and ha-ing and waiting and shouting and banging of carriage doors, we went. And I was quite relieved. But I remember thinking, I wonder if I could get out and go back home.

Tape 1: 56 minutes 21 seconds
And then the train went on, and then it stopped again. And now I really got frightened, and I thought, now something is wrong, it's probably me. And I wondered whether I can open this door and go. But then I looked out and there were very friendly faces there. And they were Dutch people. And they said, open the window, here's some fruit, and chocolate and cake and biscuits, and we'd only just left the Germans, the nasty ones behind, and here were these very friendly Dutch people. And that gave one really hope. And we went on to the Hook of Holland.

TAPE 2

HL: Ruth Jackson Tape 2.

Tape 2: 0 minute 10 seconds

Now we got to the Hook of Holland on the Kindertransport in July 1939, what happened then?

RJL: We all got off the train, and the little ones had to get onto the ship first, they went up onto the gang plank before the older ones and then we were allocated cabins, and I was very lucky because another girl and I were able to share, and it was just the two of us, and we thought ourselves very grand. It was late in the evening by this time and we could see the lights reflected in the water, and we were just getting ourselves ready and deciding who was going to sleep in the top bunk and who wasn't, and there was a knock at the door, and I opened the door, and a very black steward stood there, I'd never seen a black man before, and he was so kind-looking, smiling at us, and he said, would we come up and have some supper. And so we did, and he led us all the way up to the dining room, where, you know, I really don't remember what we had, it was probably a cup of cocoa and some rolls, but it wasn't anything very much and then when we'd finished he took us back to our cabin. The younger children, of course, were like little animals let loose, they were running all over the ship up and down the gangways and steps, until finally they were tired and went to sleep. And we went to sleep quite quickly actually, I suppose the movement of the ship, and it had been an exhausting day, and in no time at all it seemed to be morning. We heard the seagulls crying overhead, and here we were in Harwich.

We got off the boat and took our suitcases and we had to have those searched. Which I now in retrospect think is rather silly. And I was once again afraid that my mother had put

something in it that she shouldn't have done, but luckily enough, no, nothing happened. And we went to a big field, and I imagine that was Parkeston Quay, and we had sandwiches there, and drinks, and sang songs as if we hadn't a care in the world.

Tape 2: 2 minutes 26 seconds

And the trains were already in at the station, great big old-fashioned steam trains, of course, and soon we were led onto the trains; our suitcases and little cases were already on the train. And I remember we sat in– in Germany it would have been first class, in Germany you still had third class wooden seats, but we were very surprised that all the seats on this train were upholstered and the boys were jumping up and down and a lot of dust came out of the seats, of course, and finally the train left and went to Liverpool Street Station. Liverpool Street Station, I think it's the worst entrance you could have into a country, at least I think it was in those days, I don't think it's tidied up much more since, and we were led into a very large hall, there seemed to be hundreds of us, there must have been. And there were ladies there standing at the table calling out names. It's always very difficult to hear names, any announcement on a station anyway, and there was the background noise of the station, and I was hoping that I'd hear them call my name. And suddenly they did. Yes, they did call me. And I had to go forward and here was the same man who'd been in Germany, the Company Secretary of my– I suppose he's a great-uncle of mine, Mr Levenson, had called for me at the station. And he took me by car to Essex. I was to go to a boarding school in Theydon Bois, which is on the edge of Epping Forest. 04:03

On the way there we passed a bicycle, a man peddling a bicycle with a funny box in the front; and Mr Saunders said to me 'Would you like one?' and I said, 'Like what?' and he said 'Shall we see?' and I didn't understand what he wanted. Anyway he stopped the car, and he stopped the man with the bicycle, and out came my first ever choc-ice, Walls choc-ice. And he said 'Look what it says on the side: stop me and buy one'. So that was my first impression. I thought the taxis and things looked very odd. They looked so different and old fashioned. And I was surprised to see policemen at the station in the same old uniform that I thought was old-fashioned in my English primers in Germany. And we then drove on through the pretty countryside, because that was some years ago and Essex wasn't built up then, to Theydon Bois. We drove in and there were lots and lots of cars there and lots of giggling schoolgirls going home, because it was the end of July and they were breaking up for the summer holidays. And Mr Saunders took me to the Headmistress, and then said goodbye to me. And that was the end of that.

Tape 2: 5 minutes 28 seconds

I was then led upstairs to a dormitory and that was empty. I thought dormitories only happened in schoolgirl books of years ago. I didn't think they still existed. And I was told that the very end bed was mine, and I should now have a bath and come down to tea. I felt miserable. It was empty and cold and horrid-looking. I think there must have been ten rows of beds on either side. I went to the bathroom and sat there and floods of tears and I thought what would my mother be doing now, I wonder, and how did she get back home, and is everyone alright and tears were just running down my face. And there's nobody to scrub my back, and I don't know, and then there was a knock on the door, 'would I please hurry up and come down'. So I hastily got out of the water and my daydreaming, put clean clothes on, and a schoolgirl showed me the way down, there were a few girls still there, and we sat down to what was called High Tea, I was given my first cup of tea with milk in, which I thought was

horrible. And I couldn't eat anything. And they looked at me. And some of them tried to talk to me, and I couldn't understand what they were saying, and I felt a bit like a sort of animal in the zoo. And I wished they'd rather not talk to me at all. But, anyway, finally the meal was over and they all went home. And I seemed to be left there and nobody else in this empty school. Teachers had gone, there were a few domestic staff there, and one of the maids showed me round the garden and showed me the library. And the Headmistress then called for me and she said I ought to write a letter home to say I'd got there alright, would I show her the letter before I sent it? So I did and I thought she probably doesn't understand any German, but anyway I showed her the letter. And I suppose she posted it.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 30 seconds

I had a look at the library, at the books about Australia, and I thought, well, maybe one day I'll go there and I'll have a look at it. And then I had to go to bed in this forlorn dormitory, and I couldn't go to sleep, and I just lay there under the bedclothes sobbing away and thinking why on earth did I have to come here, why did all this have to happen? And I suppose eventually I did fall asleep, only to be woken by one of the maids to say it was breakfast time. And that there were some children coming from the East End of London. And I don't know actually where they were particularly from, but they were coming from London, for the holidays. And we got friendly, and somehow we were able to understand one another, and it was good for me to have some children there.

HL: What was the name of the school?

RJ: Red Oaks I think, yes. I think so. And now let me think what was the Headmistress's name? It will come to me. These children didn't like writing letters home. Because they didn't like all the rules and regulations. So they wrote the letters and the headmistress would give them back to them and say 'write again and say it's a nice place'. So they thought, well, this is stupid. And another German girl came and don't ask me why, we were then billeted in a bungalow nearby, but to get to the bungalow, we could go either round the outside of the school, where there was a letterbox, or across the fields at the back. And if I went round past the letterbox, I could post all the letters that we really wanted to write. Then we would write two letters, one for the headmistress, and one for ourselves. And it became quite a game. And one day I heard these children decide (now I must have known enough English), I heard them say that they were going to go home. They didn't like it there, they wanted to go back to London. And they decided they would climb down– tie the sheets together, and climb down the ivy and all the rest, and I thought, somebody is going to get– you know, have a broken leg or worse, and somehow I made one of the maids understand that this was going to happen but not to say that I had said so. So she intervened, I'm glad to say, and they probably thought I– well they didn't realise that I'd done it. And– but we were then taken, the next day, to the pictures in Epping. I shall always remember going to the pictures because I'd never been to the pictures before. It was *Old Mother Riley*, which I thought was terribly stupid, and *Bandwagon*. And I didn't think any of it was funny, but I suppose I didn't understand it. And it wasn't my sense of humour anyway. But what impressed me was that in the interval little trays of tea went round, and people had little pots of tea, cups of tea in the interval which I thought was amazing.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 27 seconds

What worried me was that the teacher had taken me to the cinema. Because I as a Jewess wasn't allowed to go to the cinema. She kept saying yes, it's alright, you know. And I

thought, I hope she doesn't get into trouble, you know, and I was still this– it hadn't left me. I also got invited by one or two parents, one in particular, who lived on the edge of Epping Forest, she invited me for tea. And I had my first cucumber sandwiches there, which I thought were very nice. And one day the Headmistress called for me to come to her. The girls– the children were still there, but they were going to go home at the end of the month. It must have been the beginning of September by now. We'd already been given gas masks. I didn't like those because I couldn't breathe in them. So I loosened them, and I hoped there wouldn't be a gas attack and everybody was talking about war. And anyway the Headmistress called for me and she said 'I've got a letter here from your sister and she's going to come to England soon'. So here you are. All the letters had been opened beforehand. And my sister had written to say that I'd only be alone for another few days because she'd got a visa and would be leaving Germany on the 4th of September. So I thought, Oh good, it's only next Monday and I can just about cope until then.

And then of course she called me in again on the Sunday morning and said in a very matter of fact way, 'Well your sister won't be coming now because we are at war with Germany' and I felt; well, like somebody closing the door in my face. And I just didn't know what to think. I just – I felt devastated. And then a few– I suppose a week later, she called for me again, and she said 'You're to go to London, to another school. So pack your things, and I hadn't got much to pack anyway, which I did, and the maid will take you to the station. So she took me to the train and told me that I had to stay on that train to the very end, not to get off before. So I went once again to Liverpool Street Station, and there I was met by a Miss Marples.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 42 seconds

Now Miss Marples was quite a formidable looking lady, all in tweeds and brogues and she belonged to the Ladies' Alpine Club, and she marched me across London, which was a little bit like being trained for the Matterhorn, you know, and marched across and we ended up going on tubes here and there, and of course had to go to King's Cross Station because I was to go to school in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Now nobody had thought, which seemed silly to me now, of writing down the word 'Letchworth' to me, they just said it. Now it doesn't sound very difficult now, but when you don't know the language, it's a difficult word, and I was told there would be a Mr Middleton there to meet me. And so I got on the train, and Miss Marples said goodbye to me and she was going to go again, and I had as yet not met Mr Levenson, who was supposed to have sent me to England, or collected me.

Tape 2: 13 minutes 39 seconds

and I was very worried and I was sitting there, and I thought 'Middleton, Letchworth, Middleton, I hope I know where to get off' and I was saying this over and over to myself. And there was an elderly couple sitting there and they said 'It's alright; we'll tell you when we get to Letchworth'. They must have seen the worry on my face. And they did and I picked up my little case, and I went to the end of the platform and at the ticket office was Mr Middleton with his seventeen year-old son. And they were very friendly people, and I was supposed to live with them now. Mrs Middleton was very kind, she showed me into my bedroom, which I had all to myself. They'd had another son before Roy, one of twins, but his brother had been killed in a car accident, and Mrs Middleton was quite pleased to have another child in the house. Mr Middleton showed me his garden and I thought this was where I was going to stay now. And on Sunday they went to the Quaker meeting, because they were Quakers, and Mr Middleton got up, you know what Quaker meetings are like, obviously very

quiet, nobody says anything, which I rather enjoyed because I could now say my own prayers and think for myself and that was– that suited me fine. And then Mr Middleton got up, because in a Quaker meeting if you've got something there to tell everybody you do, and he told everybody that I'd come to stay with them, and where I'd come from and all the rest. So that after the meeting, everybody had cups of coffee, and I had no end of invitations to have tea or coffee with other people. So that was alright, I was made to feel quite important.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 27 seconds

Roy took me for a drive round Letchworth, he had a car, and showed me where the school was that I would be going to, he used to go to that school. And where the shops were and everything else, and the countryside roundabout, and that was nice and one day we went to Whipsnade Zoo, and then Mrs Middleton had to take me to the tailor's to have my school blazer made, and the winter coat made, and everything made by the tailor, and– nowadays at the school they wear anything they like, they don't have a uniform any more.

HL: Who was paying for all of this?

RJ: Mr Levenson. And so I stayed there in the September term, and then I started school at the end of September and in the school we had classes as well as groups. Now you have a class of children of your own age, but you then have a group of children of various ages and then you have your group leader and you have a teacher who is in charge of that group and I was put in a group with Reg Snell and he was a German teacher and he spoke fluent German, to make it easier for me. And we had a school parliament and each school group had two members of parliament that they sent in to the parliament, so anything that was relating to the school business we would have to sort out or we could make complaints or whatever: it was run on those very progressive lines. In fact one of the teachers at the school was not like the other teachers. All the other teachers we called by Christian names, or they had a nickname, and they were our friends. But this one teacher was very much apart. He was an old-style teacher who liked discipline and he used to throw bits of chalk at us if we didn't listen, and he would go round with his ruler and bang it on his table and even the fingers, and so the parliament decided that he ought to go. And he did. He was– we were all instrumental in seeing the end of Mr Lindsey. And–

HL: This was a Quaker school?

Tape 2: 17 minutes 48 seconds

RJ: It was mainly Quaker, and it was a progressive school, co-educational and vegetarian. Now, whilst I was with Mrs Middleton, I ate everything, but she knew I was kosher and she didn't give me any pork, or so I thought. But unfortunately she did, and she told me it wasn't pork, it was beef, but I didn't know this, so it didn't make any difference. As far as I was concerned, I was unaware.

Christmas time came and at school we could do all sorts of things like linocuts. I didn't have much money, I got a shilling a week pocket money and I wanted to make them something, and I remember we had a weaving shed and I remember I made some table-runners for Mrs Middleton, and various things. And she went up to London with a friend and she bought me the most hideous dress that my mother would not have put on me. With sequins round the yoke, but to please her I put it on on Christmas Day. And we had to listen to Gracie Fields on

Christmas Day as well as the King's Speech. And we had a lot of coloured streamers decorating the room. It looked rather like the sort of thing that we would, in Germany have done for New Year's Eve. And then at the end– during the Christmas holidays, she said that I would have to go and live with another family. Now that upset me. Because I didn't know what I'd done wrong. I thought, oh dear what have I done wrong? I haven't been naughty, I haven't done this, I haven't done– I went through all of this and I couldn't, couldn't understand it. And she tried to explain to me that no, it wasn't that, but they couldn't find anywhere for me and because nobody offered to have me, they had me for the time being until a permanent place could be found.

Tape 2: 19 minutes 43 seconds

So I went to stay with the Yardley's, who lived in William Way, which was very near the school, near the fields of the school, they had three daughters who also went to the same school, and I had a room there and I was one of the family. Mr Levenson evidently thought it wasn't any use my being a boarder at the school because what would he do with me in the long summer holidays. I mean, we had eight weeks of holiday in the summer and he wasn't going to bother with me. As it happens, all he wanted to do was give the money, he was sort of like a patriarch, he was giving the money, and everybody else doing his bidding. So he obviously paid the Yardley's to have me, and he paid the school fees. I would have liked to have music lessons but I was very much aware of the fact that he was paying for everything. And it was a very expensive school, so I didn't know where else– I mean, it was a public school as well, so I mean, you know, the fees were pretty high, so I didn't like to say I wanted music lessons so Mrs Yardley had a piano, and she said, well, you can always teach yourself. Which wasn't really very good, but I did mess about on it, shall we say. She was good to me, she was very fair, and she was what I would call a good Christian. And the first thing she said to me: 'You needn't worry, I shan't give you any pork, I know you've been eating pork sausages and you thought they were beef, but I wouldn't do that because I know that you mustn't eat pork, so I will keep to that and I will tell you. I had my meals, the main meal, at school anyway, and it was a vegetarian school so there wasn't any worry about whether I was eating pork or not as there wasn't any meat there anyway so that suited me fine.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 30 seconds

I did quite well at school I think. And –

HL: How good was your English?

RJ: My English was– well, I'd been in England for about– or at the school for the first term, and people thought I was English. I think I have developed an accent in later life, I don't know, I have been told so. I certainly hadn't got one when I met Allan because he didn't know where I came from, I didn't know where he came from and he's very much aware of accents. So, yes, I was one of the crowd, and I learned to play Lacrosse (and I played Lacrosse against King Alfred's, where my daughter now teaches, which seems very funny). The Yardley's always went to the Gower coast in the summer holidays, they rented a cottage there, and I went along with them. But as the war had started, we all had to do something for the war effort, and we used to go with the school fruit-picking part of the summer holidays, or harvesting. I quite enjoyed that, and driving a tractor, and learning how to put up stocks in the fields, and Jean was nearly my age, she was a year older, the middle daughter. I felt that she

was a bit bossy because her mother had told her she should look after me and she should be there for me and help me, but she took it rather to the nth degree maybe sometimes, but–

Tape 2: 23 minutes 10 seconds

The youngest child was obviously– felt that I was sort of an intruder in the family; she wanted me to do the things that she wanted, so– she was nine years younger, and she was in the Montessori. And I used to help out in the Montessori, and I often wonder whether I'd helped out when Michael Winner was in the Montessori there. But I, I liked little children, and I often played with Veronica, and I couldn't always play with her when I had homework to do. So she said to me one day: 'I'll cut a hole in your skirt if you don't play with me.' So I didn't think she'd do it. I said, 'When I've done my homework, I really have to do this homework', we had quite a different system in school when you had to give things in after a fortnight. We really had to do it. And she said 'Alright, then I'll cut a hole in your skirt', and she did. And Mrs Yardley couldn't believe me, she believed her daughter who said she hadn't done it. And I realised then, although she seemed very fair to me, her children came first. I think she would have been quite horrified if she'd known that Veronica had done that, because she – she wasn't that sort of a person. One day there was a football match going on in the fields beyond where we lived, and there was a policeman standing outside our gate, and I saw him. To me, he'd come for me. I knew he'd been posted there so I couldn't leave the house. I didn't think that he'd been posted there because of the crowds of people coming after the football match. Anyway, it was teatime, and Jean called me for tea. And I stood behind the curtains watching that gate. And she called me and called me and I said I couldn't come. I didn't want any tea. So Mrs Yardley said go and drag her down to tea, see what's the matter. And she went, she came up to my room, and she said 'Mother says you are to come down to tea'. I said 'I can't'. Why can't you? I looked out and I said he's standing there, and he's going to come in for me. So she went down and told her mother. And then to my horror, Mrs Yardley went out of the front door, down the long drive, to the gate. And she talked to the policeman, and he came in with her. And I thought, I thought she was a nice person, I thought she was on my side, and now she's actually getting this policeman in, and making it easier for him to get me. So I certainly wouldn't go downstairs. And after a lot and a lot of persuasion, I finally did go downstairs, and they sat having a cup of tea. And Mrs Yardley said, - I can't remember the man's name - 'This is Inspector whatever', or sergeant or whatever he was, and gave his name, and I thought, well, that's a funny thing. So he said 'Well thank you very much, Mrs Yardley, for the tea, nice to have met you, Ruth, bye, bye, I've got to go out to make sure that we haven't got too many people up in the fields misbehaving. And I thought, how funny. And how clever Mrs Yardley had been, that she'd called him in to have a cup of tea. To show me that I needn't be afraid of the police.

HL: Had you had any news of your family since you'd arrived in England?

Tape 2: 26 minutes 39 seconds

RJ: At first my parents were able to write, before the war. And then the war started, I had an aunt in Hungary, my father's half-sister, in Budapest. And I wrote to her. She sent my letters on to my parents. And I had to write to her in such a way, as if– so that she could send them on to my parents, and I couldn't sort of say the obvious things about England, so that they would know that the letter came from England, they would be in trouble, so it had to be done that way. And my parents again wrote back to me. And then we had the Red Cross letters, and they were 25 words. It sounds a lot, but you can't say much in 25 words. And then they

ceased as well and I didn't know any more what was happening. I saw planes going over from Royston aerodrome, and very mixed feelings. Obviously I knew that they were going to bomb Germany, which I wanted, but on the other hand I didn't want them to bomb my parents. I used to go up to London to see Miss Marples, who was evidently– coordinated with Mr Levenson. He didn't want anything much to do with me. He did– (I left that out) he did actually come to Theydon Bois once, and took me to the Salmons, who were obviously also distantly related, the Salmon and Glucksteins, went to their house, which was very nice, I wished I could have stayed there, but I didn't. That was the only experience I had of him whilst I was in Epping, at Theydon Bois. He came once to Letchworth, on his way to Cambridge, because his son was at Cambridge. And I went to Cambridge with him. I remember we met his son, and then we went back again, and he had either his mother or her mother in the car, who spoke perfect German to me, and she asked me how I liked it, and how the family was, and the things she said to me only a German would have said, but not somebody who'd learnt German. And his wife was in the car. But there wasn't much conversation nor much contact. And I, to this day, I can't understand how you can treat a child quite like that. From the point of view of money, education, and everything else, I couldn't grumble, I did much better than a lot of them. But I hadn't got the one thing that I needed was love. And the Yardley's were not a very demonstrative sort of, type of people. They didn't kiss you goodnight, or anything. They were very good, don't get me wrong. And they certainly looked after me, and I was one of the family and they always remembered my birthday and we went up to London and bought things, but there wasn't that little bit of love that I needed. And I'm really amazed that Mr Levenson, who was supposed to be a relation of mine, couldn't have done a little bit more, he would have me come up to London and see him at his office, and take me to lunch at the Piccadilly Hotel, and then he'd go back and I'd go back and that was the end of that. Miss Marples would take me to the zoo and the museums, and she lived in Belsize Square, and we would stand on the balcony and watch all the searchlights overhead, and then I'd go back to Letchworth again.

Tape 2: 30 minutes 21 seconds

But when I was sixteen, I suddenly became an Enemy Alien. And I had to go to the tribunal in Hatfield. And Miss Marples came with me, and there was a long table, board, and questions were fired at me, and then I was sent out, and then they called me back and they said, yes, I could carry on going to school as I had only got another year to do. But I would have to follow the restrictions: curfew and I would have to have police permission before I left Letchworth. I don't think I was allowed to ride a bike any more. It seemed rather stupid, because the day before, I could do all these things, but that's what it was. And so the friends I used to have, who lived maybe in Luton or Bedford, that was too far for me to go on foot, and I would have to go to the police to ask for permission whether I could go there, then I would have to go to the police when I got there to say that I've got here, then when I left the friend's house I'd have to do the same thing in reverse and, quite honestly, it wasn't worth it any more. So I didn't very often visit anybody anywhere. And when I went to London to stay with Miss Marples for the weekend, I'd have to go to Hampstead Town Hall and tell them that I'd got there.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 49 seconds

HL: Do you remember how you were treated by the police when you made all these visits?

RJ: Very well. Yes. And when we went on holiday to the Gower coast, there was a little policeman– I think I went to the local police, I don’t think I even went to the Swansea Police, and he hadn’t come across it, he didn’t quite know what to do. And he put a stamp in my book and that was it. I think we all thought it was a bit farcical, really. Anyway, I had a good time at school, I enjoyed my school days, and Miss Marples had a niece who had cast-off long dresses, and so I was able to have two nice long dresses, like everybody else was in evening dress for the balls we had at the end of term, and all too quickly it was going towards the end of my schooling. But just before, I think about two terms before, the Yardley’s decided to move back to Surrey, where they had a house. So I had to find somewhere else to live. There was a family nearby that I’d got quite friendly with, and had two small children, and she was expecting another child so she didn’t want me until the September, so I went somewhere else for a short time, only for a term, and they were very nice to me, and then again at the end of September I went to the Knotts (33:27) who had a big restaurant in the town, and I stayed there and I helped with the children and I lived there and he was in the Home Guard, a Captain in the Home Guard or something, and I was quite frightened because they were out one night, and a man came and he said he’d come to deliver the bomb, and I thought– I really thought this was going beyond a joke, and I don’t know what it was to this day but I told him to put it on the hall seat and forget about it, and I never I went upstairs because I dare not pass this hall seat until they all came home again. I became very popular the last term at school, because we had to do a lot of sport, and if it was raining we still had to do cross-country running, and if it really chucking it down we had to go for a walk, and you always had to go for a walk with a senior person, and now I was a senior person, now I was a senior, and they all lined up to go for a walk with me, because I lived with these people who had a big restaurant, and I walked them down there, and we had a lovely tea in the restaurant, and of course they couldn’t believe it, they all wanted to go for a walk with me because we didn’t have to get too wet, we’d just walk down the town and get tea. And all too soon I finished school and went up to Westhill Training College in Birmingham.

Tape 2: 34 minutes 50 seconds

HL: Had you taken Higher School Certificate?

RJ: Yes.

HL: What subjects did you take?

RJ: I think I took about ten subjects. I don’t know.

HL: German?

RJ: Yes, I took German although I hadn’t spoken German all that time, but it all came back to me. And– but I could still remember the German writing, so I thought I’d use that. I got a distinction in German. And I had to do my oral German. I remember we were all sitting there, we were using the Headmaster’s office, and a girl came out and said ‘It’s an Alsatian in there’. And I thought of a dog. I was really quite scared of big dogs. And I went in, and obviously it was a man from Alsace, but he spoke a bit of a funny German, but I got used to it and that was alright. Yes, I took German, I didn’t take– although I took French at school, I didn’t take French then. Maths, the usual things. I’d stopped with sciences and took advanced anatomy and physiology because I was interested in that. We could choose, it was the sort of school where you could choose what you did and didn’t want to do and you had optionals and

you had free periods and it was very much like that. And school life was enjoyable, that's all I can say about it. And I took School Certificate, and if you got more than three credits you got your Matric. And I got the credits in my Biology and those sort of subjects, and a distinction in German so that was alright. The Yardley's had moved to near Leatherhead and they said I could come and stay with them again now. So I stayed there, and from there I went up to Westhill College: I imagine Mr Levenson must have arranged that. I would have like to have done Interior Decorating or Architecture but I knew that meant many more years' training, and as he was paying I didn't like to ask.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 53 seconds

So I did a pre-school teacher's Froebel teaching at the college, they had their own school in those days at the college, and being too far away from Surrey, obviously, I stayed there, except for the long holidays. I didn't go home at half term or anything like that. I was quite happy at College, I became the social secretary, which meant I could arrange dances, and outings, and concerts, that was nice. And– but it wasn't a very long course, anyway. We had to do– because of wartime we had to do something towards the war effort so part of our training had to be taking the NNEB, which was a nurse's– nursery nurse's training to look after children whilst their parents were working in factories. So I did that, I did that at Goring in a residential nursery that was from Dolphin Square in London, evacuated down there. So I did my six months there, then I went back to the Yardley's to get a job, and worked under the Surrey County Council as a supply teacher. Although I hadn't done any formal teaching beyond the age of seven, I got many jobs because they were short of staff, of course.

Tape 2: 38 minutes 17 seconds

I ended up teaching as – It meant I was then allowed to cycle, because otherwise I'd have had to drive all over, or take the bus all over Surrey because I could be sent from one end of Surrey to the other. I had to go into Kingston, which was the County town, for my directions, and I was then– one of the schools I was at was in Sutton. The Yardley's by this time had moved to Carshalton Beeches, and that was only down the road, and I taught at this school, I was teaching boys of twelve, which was ridiculous, but I had to take them swimming, and I had to take them on outings onto Banstead Downs, which I thought was also a bit much. I wasn't much older than they were, really, and it was still not a permanent post from my point of view, but the Headmaster was hoping it would be. But I applied to other jobs, and I got a job at the Rudolf Steiner School in Eton Avenue in London. So I travelled up to London every day. The Headmaster of the school in Sutton actually came to Mrs Yardley and said, couldn't she persuade me to stay on there? But she couldn't, and I was happier teaching the age that I was trained for. So I taught there for some time– I must have gone there in 1944, I suppose, '45, '45, I suppose, yes.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 56 seconds

HL: Were you much affected by bombing?

RJ: Not really, no. No. No, I don't– No. Because I remember where we lived in Carshalton Beeches, we saw the doodlebugs going over and, like all stupid young people, we used to go outside and watch them and when the red light went off you rushed indoors, and hoped you'd make it, but it became a sort of a game. No, not otherwise, really, I mean you saw people sleeping in tubes, trains and tube stations and things, but all my money went in fares, because

I had to go up to– from Sutton, or Carshalton Beeches and change at Sutton, and go up to London I used to go back one stop and go on the Brighton Belle, which still existed in those days, and up to either Victoria and Waterloo, and then by tube to Swiss Cottage or Belsize Park. One of the mothers at the school, her husband was in the navy, and she had a young child, could never go out and leave the child, and had a room to let, did I know anybody, so I rented a room from her, I moved up to Eton College Road, which was in walking distance from the school, and she and I got on very well.

Tape 2: 41 minutes 27 seconds

One day I went down Eton Avenue towards Swiss Cottage, I was still living with the Yardley's then, and I met a girl I had been in school with in Germany, and she was in an ATS uniform, and she was delighted, we were delighted to see each other, and she said, why don't we go out somewhere together, and I said I couldn't, I had a train to catch, my time was always limited, I was a walking timetable, and she said well, can we meet here, I've got a day off whenever it was, can you manage then? And I said, yes, that'll be alright, so we arranged that, and we went to the Nuffield Club for Forces, that you could take other people along, and that's where I met Allan.

HL: Was your friend Jewish?

RJ: Yes. She'd been at school with me in Germany.

HL: And had you met any other Jewish people at all since you left Germany? Apart from Mr Levenson, of course.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 25 seconds

RJ: No I don't think so. Oh no, I'm sorry, no, you're quite right, I actually did. When I lived in Letchworth, we had the influx of a lot of Jewish people from the East End who were being evacuated to Letchworth, so whereas before I had tried the Free Church, I had tried the Quakers, I had even gone to the Catholics and I thought, why am I Jewish when everybody else is something different? I must find this out for myself, and I wasn't happy with any of them, because deep down I was Jewish. And then the– as I say, all these East End Jews were evacuated. I didn't mean that in a nasty way, 'East End Jews', and a Rabbi came as well, and they started– they had a sort of community in Letchworth, in quite a large area, they bought up a lot of houses which I was unaware of at the time; and where I went before my Girl Guide meeting, we had services there so I was able to go to Jewish services after that and I decided then that I wasn't going to change my religion, I would stay Jewish. And I also met a girl there I used to go to school with who was evacuated down to Letchworth for a short time I met her there. But other than that, no.

Tape 2: 43 minutes 56 seconds

HL: Now onto meeting your husband, what year, what month?

RJ: I think it was– I don't know when it was any more, that's silly, I should remember that.

HL: How old were you?

RJ: Eighteen, or nineteen. Nineteen. Because when we got married, I still had to get permission to get married. I was nearly twenty then.

HL: 1945?

RJ: [Nods] We got married in June ’45 and I was– my birthday was on the 13th and we got married on the 8th, so I was only just twenty, by five days.

HL: What was your husband doing at this club?

RJ: He was there with a friend, also going to have tea, or whatever you did at the Nuffield Club; it was just a Forces club they could go to when they were on leave. Sounds rather stupid, we’d had tea there, and decided nothing much was happening, and we decided we’d had enough so we were going to leave. So I went upstairs, and I realised I’d lost a button off my jacket. Now, in those days buttons were hard to come by, and I was looking myself silly on the stairs for this button and Allan was coming down with a friend and he said, could he help us. I’ve known since that he’s the worst person to ask to help you look for anything because he never sees anything, but he– I don’t think we ever found the button, I don’t remember, but I found him, and we sort of separated, and Heidi went with the other chap and I went with Allan and that was it.

Tape 2: 45 minutes 42 seconds

HL: What did you discover about his background?

RJ: Well, nothing at first, because I thought he was in Royal Navy, you know, I obviously thought he was British, you know. And he thought the same of me. And we were talking and I said, what did he do in the navy, and he said, oh, he couldn’t really say because he was on Naval Intelligence afloat, but he said ‘oh, something to do with languages’, and I said ‘oh what languages do you speak? And he said ‘oh I know a little bit of German, a little bit of French, you know’. He didn’t want to say anything too much. And I said, ‘Oh well I know a little bit of German as well, and I learnt French at school.’ You know how you start conversing. And I thought he was going to say the most atrocious words in German to me, as usually when people try and talk German when they know– specially Forces: ‘*Ick liebe dick*, you know, and– I thought that’s what he was going to come out with. And he thought the same of me. And then we realised that we both spoke the language quite perfectly. And the ice was broken and, well, we’ve seen each other ever since.

HL: And tell me about his family.

Tape 2: 47 minutes 11 seconds

RJ: His family: his father was a Professor at the University in Marburg. Being Jewish he was thrown out in 1933, and took his life. Allan didn’t talk about that. He was– he had two sisters and a brother. At the time when all this happened, his mother thought it was best that he went to England, and he went to school here, went to school at Bunce Court, which was a German school evacuated to England in Faversham, in Kent. He realised that he wasn’t going to learn much English there, more German than English, everybody spoke German, so one of the teachers said they knew somebody who took in paying guests in Ramsgate and that he could maybe get into Ramsgate Grammar School, so he was determined to do that. He still went

home for the holidays, this was in 1935, '36, he was fifteen. And he went home every holiday and went to stay with these people in Ramsgate and went to Ramsgate School, where he took– No, he didn't take his Matric. There. I think his – When the war – I don't know whether it was then. It was difficult to get money out of Germany and his father– somebody at the University was from America and his mother somehow arranged that she paid this girl's university fees, or her board and lodging or whatever, and the parents from America would pay Allan, so that the money would come to him, but once America was in the war that finished, of course, and I think possibly before already. So, anyway, he was able at one stage– of course, while he still could go to Germany his mother had the money to pay for things, but once the war started– and anyway by this time he was– I think I must have got the years wrong because he was already twenty when the war started. And he took his Matric, externally in London in Red Lion Square and he went to the Regent Street Polytechnic. That's when the money dried up. And he couldn't study any more and he joined the army. He went like all refugees to the Pioneer Corps, and then they asked for volunteers to join the Navy and they had to do a written exam. And he was one of ten who was accepted and he became a Petty Officer, and would have gone on to being a Lieutenant but the war finished luckily enough so– His sister went to America and his other sister went to Switzerland. His brother stayed at home and was actually drafted into the German army for a short time. Even as a half Jew. But then he was thrown out again. And his mother– they had a very large house, it was a sort of eight bedroom affair, his mother was put into prison because they had billeted some Nazis in the house, and she had an argument and didn't mince her words, and so she was thrown into prison, but as they were quite well known and knew the right people they managed to get her out after a few weeks.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 9 seconds

And I got to know them all, only after the war, obviously, after the war. 1949 I think was the first time I went to Germany and met his mother.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 26 seconds

When did you find out what had happened to the rest of your family?

RJ: I got on to Bloomsbury House to see if they could find where my mother was, my father had been given a lethal injection at the Jewish Hospital. The Jewish Hospital stayed open all the war, you know. This is something that is very unknown. Because I have found a friend in America, who was actually nursing in the Jewish Hospital in Berlin and she sent me a book, and it remained open right through the war. It was used by the Nazis, but it was mainly, of course, for half Jews, Eichmann used to go there and collect so many people that he wanted to fill his trains. They had to do the Nazis' bidding, and the nurses were mostly half Jews. I think they all were half Jews actually, but it's something I didn't realise until I got the book, a few weeks ago I got this, that the hospital stayed open all the time. Anyway that's where my father ended up.

HL: How did you discover what had happened to your father?

Tape 2: 52 minutes 40 seconds

RJ: My mother told me. My mother told me that my father had died, but I didn't know how or where. My mother went into hiding with my sister in 1942. My sister had to do forced labour

and one day they came round and wanted to measure everybody's heads, and I don't know, sorting them out, who was going to go where, and my mother said 'you're not going back today, stay here, and we'll pack our things and go into hiding. So they lived– I think they went to --- I think the Catholics, there was a convent that put them up for a couple of nights, then there were various farms, and they slept in haylofts and when things looked a bit dicey, they went along the railway lines to the next field, next station, and my mother was a bit daring, I believe, she went back to the flat every now and again, although she shouldn't have done. She took the star off which she had to wear. I think she– maybe she could have got out of wearing the star, not being Jewish, but as she kept on pronouncing the fact that she was Jewish, and she protected my sister, I think, all the time. Later on actually, after the war, my sister became a nurse in that Jewish Hospital.

Tape 2: 54 minutes 20 seconds

HL: How did they feed themselves for three years?

RJ: Well, yes, the farmers gave them food, and I think my mother must have gone back to her family who gave her things. Because they had no ration books. I'm ashamed to have to admit that when we got my mother out of Germany in 1948, and my sister in 1949, I didn't ask them any questions. I waited for my mother to tell me, and all I know is what she has told me, which I now find is very little, and I wish I'd pumped her more, but I didn't want her to relive it all, so I didn't ask her. And I wish I had done. My sister, I think– although I did ask her, nature made her forget everything. She always used to say 'I don't remember that, I don't remember living there, I don't remember this, and I don't remember that'. And I think it was the kindest way, that nature made her forget everything.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 31 seconds

HL: Tell me about getting married, and how long you'd known your husband when you got married.

RJ: Not so very long. Well I suppose barely a year, but he had no home, I had no home, there was no reason not to get married, I thought it was a bit of a farce that I had to get a permission to get married. I had to see a– I have a feeling his name was Lord Goddard, at Bloomsbury House. And we just sat there and he talked to us for five minutes and said 'Yes, alright'. And I thought afterwards how did he know that it was going to be alright. Mr Levenson didn't seem to worry very much. I did go and take Allan to see Mr Levenson. And we had a meal, he lived in a hotel, he was very ill by this time. And we had a meal with him and his wife. But he felt that he'd wasted all his money on me, that I now was going to get married. And all this training I'd had, and all the money he'd paid for my education was going to waste. So when we got married we had a little visiting card from him and he scrawled on the back 'Best wishes', with three guineas in with it. That was that, and I heard no more, ever again, which I think is a bit off.

Tape 2: 57 minutes 9 seconds

End of tape 2.

TAPE 3

HL: Tell me about your wedding day in June 1945.

RJ: The whole of London seemed to celebrate because it was VE Day. We went along to the Hampstead Town Hall with two witnesses, friends of ours, one was a Belgian, and one was ex-German, anyway he'd been here for many years. And we all went to the– after the wedding, the Registry ceremony, which lasted about five minutes, people were queueing up outside, 'next in', it was a bit like going to the dentist, really. All I remember is that he burbled something and then said 'seven and six, please' which is how much it cost in those days so Allan always thought he'd got me very cheaply. We went to Swiss Cottage to the Cosmo Restaurant, which only recently closed actually, which was open all these years, where Jewish refugees used to meet, and we had a meal there. In those days they were five shilling meals. You couldn't have more than that. Everything was rationed, of course, and then we went down to the Embankment and enjoyed seeing the fireworks. We didn't have money to go on a honeymoon. We rented a room in Swiss Cottage, in Belsize Square, oddly enough, where Miss Marples used to live, but this was only one room, and I bought some cakes and we had some afternoon tea together with our two friends, and I don't think very much happened any more after that. The room was just like a sitting room but had a bed in it, and in one corner was a cupboard and if you opened that, it had a sink in it, and you opened another cupboard, it had cooking facilities but it was all in one room. There was a bathroom to share and a toilet to share with the rest of the tenants.

Tape 3: 2 minutes 30 seconds

Now these rooms and flats that these lovely old houses had been turned into, are now turned back into single family homes and cost a fortune. In fact, I saw the other day when I was in London, just a flat, just one flat in one of those houses, is £660,000. So, I mean, I remember we paid 25 shillings a week for a room. Which was a lot of money for us.

Allan went to work at the French bank, he came out of the Navy, had no job, no written qualifications, and most people who came out of the services either went back to the jobs they had before, or were in the same boat that he was in. I urged him to carry on with his studies, but he didn't want to any more; now he was 27 he wanted to earn some money and not borrow money, which we would have had to loan from somewhere, and pay back, and so I taught in the school, still in Eton Avenue, and he went into the City, walked into the French Bank, spoke to them in French, and they took him on. And his Belgian friend did the same to another French bank. So the two of them came home quite happy that day. Most days they came home miserable and said they hadn't got a job. So we stayed there in Belsize Square for some time and then it was about the time my mother came over. We had to put by a certain amount of money because we had to sign that she would not be a burden on the state and we would keep her. We couldn't have her in the same room, so we had to rent another room. It became rather hard for us because we now had to pay for two rooms. But, you know, we didn't mind, we could help her. My mother came, she arrived at Liverpool Street Station, and we went to meet her, and she was very– well, she didn't look so thin, but I thought she'd be very thin. Because she'd got a– not this rug, she had a Persian rug round her middle. She was only allowed to bring what she could carry. So, being my mother, she put the Persian rug around herself –she was very skinny- she fastened it with safety pins, she put a lot of silver in the lining of her coat, and I think she must have rattled when she went along, but it always amazes me, the things that she did manage to bring over. But here I was with a mother I couldn't converse with very easily, I hadn't seen for nine years; I'd left as a child, and I was now a married woman, it was a very odd situation. And although I knew German, I couldn't

speak it, not the way -the easy way- you should be able to speak the language. I mean, we never speak German to each other. It really was a chore. However. But we– so she lived with us in that other room and then we found– we got in touch with a distant cousin of hers, who then lived in Brighton, and she said she could live with her because it was a better situation. So my mother went to live in Brighton, which was just as well, because we managed to get a flat in Russell Court, so that we had our own bathroom, our own toilet, our own kitchen and everything else, and we thought we were in heaven. Because really in Belsize Square, the mice took over the bathroom, and I never had a bath there, I couldn't bear it, they had their young in the bath, and it wasn't really ideal for me.

Tape 3: 6 minutes 31 seconds

HL: You mentioned that at Cosmo, where you had your wedding lunch, was a place where Jewish refugees went. Were you in touch with any other Jewish refugees?

Not really. I mean the people who lived in the house were all Jewish. Austrian mostly. I was friendly with one of them and she lived in London, but at the back of the house was a garden and a church, but now there's quite a well-known synagogue there. And evidently they must have had, or they did have, meeting rooms before which I wasn't aware of. I didn't go there in those days, no. And I– but I did meet another girl who had been at school with me in Germany. She was looking after the displaced persons from the camps in Belsize Avenue. So I used to go there. There used to be something called 'British Restaurants' and this was called 'Jewish British Restaurant'. And we went there sometimes and we saw her. But other than that– Well you can hardly escape being with Jewish people when you live in Hampstead, can you?

Tape 3: 7 minutes 47 seconds

HL: Did you meet many people who'd come from the camps and who'd been displaced?

RJ: The children she looked after. We met them, but only --- just to pass the time of day, not really very much, no.

HL: What kind of children did you teach in the school?

RJ: In the Windrush School they were a mixture, it was a private school, they were mostly Jewish people, mostly Jewish children, and we prepared them to go to the Hall School which still exists, I believe. Actually they offered– the school– at the school we had a cook who made the most wonderful meals, specially with rationing, she offered to make us a wedding breakfast. Her son worked at the Waldorf, and he probably could get some sugar, and she could make the wedding cake. And I don't know why, but I didn't want any of that. And it was a bit silly when I think about it. I didn't want any of that. I mean, we could have had all the staff from the school there, and they were quite willing to do it at the school but I didn't want it.

HL: So your mother moved to Brighton: how did your life carry on from then?

Tape 3: 9 minutes 15 seconds

RJ: My mother moved to Brighton and she did a lot of sewing and cooking and baking for people, because she wanted to get the money together to send to Germany to get my sister out. And we lived in Russell Court, which was a private block of flats and I still worked in– oh no, I'd left the Windrush school, and I was teaching children, small groups of children, in Hampstead Garden Suburb. And then somebody said, we could do with a nursery school, why don't you open one? And so I opened my first nursery school, in Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage.

HL: In which year?

RJ: In– wait a minute, it must have been '47, '48, maybe it was '48, I don't think I had it when my mother was there --- first came. And with another woman we opened this nursery school which did very well, and we had mostly children of professional people who were working in London and although they had their nannies for their children they wanted them to have nursery school education. But that is all that big building now, the Library now, isn't it, in Swiss Cottage, that's where the school was.

HL: You were very young to open a school, weren't you?

RJ: Well, I suppose I was, yes. People were looking after children then, there weren't any nurseries about. And playgroups certainly didn't exist. And most schools didn't take children that age, you know, so there was quite a demand, and I did it together with another woman, we shared it, and then in 1950 to '51 I was expecting Miriam, and she bought me out, as it were. And we lived in Russell Court anyway, and I went to Swiss Cottage every day until I had her. And my idea was that if you have a child you look after it, you don't farm it out. And so I enjoyed my motherhood, shall we say. And the only thing was, we lived on the ninth floor, and we had Russell Square to go to, we had the Embankment Gardens, I could walk down, I could meet Allan, who was working by this time in Conduit Street, and I could meet him in the West End somewhere, pushing the pram. I walked miles, I think, I even walked to Regent's Park from there, which if you think about it, isn't that far. But we got into, or Allan got into conversation with somebody who used to live in that block of flats and said, oh, she wished she could go back, and she lived in Streatham and she didn't like living there, and she had a garden flat, don't you know anybody, and so Allan's ears pricked up and said 'we might be interested'. And so we exchanged flats with her. And so we moved to Streatham. And we lived there for seven and a half years, seven years; Miriam was about six months when we moved there. And it was only a small block of flats with a garden. We had a ground-floor flat. And Allan had a longer way to go to work, but there were buses and in time– oh yes, Miriam started ballet dancing when she was seven, and she was in various ballets being performed here and there, as a small child, did all her Royal Academy exams, and we thought of sending her to a ballet school, which she actually passed to go to one, near East Grinstead, she would have had either a long journey - we didn't have a car - or else it would have meant boarding, and then the major reason against it was, the main subjects were taught in the afternoon, and it was ballet all morning. Now if she should break her leg, or grow too tall, or whatever, she wouldn't have had much of an education to do anything else, and we thought that wasn't right. So she went to a school by the side of Streatham Common, a private school, until she was seven and a half and we moved to just outside Leicester to a place called– a place just outside Coalville.

Tape 3: 14 minutes 43 seconds

HL: When were your other children born?

RJ: Simon was born when she was– Simon was born when she was seven and a half, so he was born in 1958 and we moved to Coalville at the beginning of '59. We were only there two years because the firm was bought out by an American firm, and we had to move again, or rather Allan had to find another job, and we went back to– wanted to get back to London, but of course even by that time London prices had gone up, and that was our first house, we felt very grand, we both of us got compensation for loss of education in Germany - and we put that money down towards a house. Allan's grandparents had a very wonderful house in Lüneburg, but there were sixteen children who inherited, so we got our sixteenth of that, and all that went down to buy our first house. But, even so, buying a house – prices now would be ridiculous. People thought we were silly paying three thousand five hundred pounds for a house. Why pay three thousand pounds if you could have got one for one thousand five hundred or two thousand? Now you can't even get a garage for that money. So we moved, tried to move back to London, or Surrey. I still used to see the Yardley's at odd times, and couldn't find anything. My mother and my sister meanwhile had moved to Kent, to Rainham, my sister said they were building some houses in a place called Cuxton near Rochester, just by - actually - the bridge across the river there. And so we had a look and said, yes, we'd move there. Simon was two and a half, nearly three, and, again there were no nursery schools there, and somehow people found out that I had run a nursery school in London, and would I open one there, and in fact it was the vicar who asked me, and there was a brand new Scout hut, and he said, You could have that, I'm sure, I could put a good word in for you, and he did, and there was a nice garden, so I started a nursery there, and I had two women who helped me and one of them actually drove round the villages collecting other children, because there wasn't anything for children in those days. But they weren't coming to the school because their parents were working; they were just coming to learn to socialise, and to learn things. Then I, when Simon was nearly five, I had Tim. I had my children very well spaced out, so they were each like only children to me, and I said I wouldn't run the school whilst I had a baby to look after, and I didn't want him to feel pushed out. But I still ran the school from home, as it were, the others were doing the donkey work, and when he was about two I went back to this school. He was the sort of child who used to sleep a lot during the day, so I said that providing it didn't do anything to his well-being, I would carry on running the school, or the nursery, and I did.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 30 seconds

And in fact it's flourishing now, I believe. And until we had to move here which was because of Allan's work - he tried to get another job, but then we decided– he didn't have to leave the firm, but we didn't feel like moving here. Anyway, then everybody said, oh yes, the Vale of Evesham is wonderful, you know; we're still trying to move back to London but we can't make it. So when Tim was nearly five, we moved here. And he went to school here. Miriam by this time was at London University, and so she was only a sort of rare visitor to this house. Simon went to the local school here, he was ten, and he passed his eleven plus which was still in operation then and went to the Evesham Grammar School which had a very good name in those days, and he learnt Russian there because he said he'd be different from the rest of us, learn a different language. Miriam did languages at University, and Tim, being five years younger, was still at school. By the time he was eleven, or ten, there was no more eleven plus; and the local High School– and the local High School, that was at the time not very good - they hadn't enough classrooms, they hadn't enough books, the children were sitting in the hallway - and so we went round trying to find another school for him, and we found– yes,

he's very musical, he plays the piano, plays any instrument and he had a very nice singing voice, and he got to the Abbey School at Tewkesbury on a singing– on a music scholarship. Before all that, of course, I opened the local school here. That only came about because when we were all moved up here, a lot of the other staff from the export department of that firm, Morgan Crucibles, were moved up here. And one of the women said to me that her older children had been to a very good nursery school in Hampshire, but there was nothing here for her youngest child, and she'd heard that I used to run nursery schools, how about it? You know, we could use her house, and she'd been Northern Nanny trained, so the two of us got together.

Tape 3: 21 minutes 3 seconds

and Alex, her daughter, was one of our first children, and I collected the children in Pershore and we went to a little village called Stoulton up the road and started there.

Tape 3: 21 minutes 17 seconds

And then the Headmistress of this school in Pershore, Lee School, which was a small school for children up to the age of eleven, up to the eleven plus age, was retiring, and the parents were upset because now where would they send their children and all the rest. Somehow my name came up and I was asked, would I take over; I went to see them, and I said I wouldn't take them, not up to the age of ten, but I would do the seven plus Common Entrance age, so I took over the Lee School, and the– actually the friend who lived in Stoulton, her husband then left Morgans's and went somewhere else, or she didn't come with me, she only worked for a short time with me, and I was really left with doing it all on my own, and I felt how can I, you know I'm always happy if there's somebody to fall back on, but, no, I managed. And I had the same staff all the thirty years that I had the school. And I'm still friendly with the staff, we still go swimming and see each other and everything else. Tim went to– yes he couldn't take his eleven plus, so he got a scholarship for a school that had just opened in Tewkesbury, had been a Grammar but was now a private– Grammar was private originally, a pre– a prep school, and he passed his Common Entrance to the Kings' School in Worcester, but he didn't get a scholarship. So that meant we had to pay for him. I was a bit worried about how my other children would feel. Miriam had had a private education, up to her age of eleven, and Simon - the middle one - had had a good education but not private, so I said to him, how would you feel about it, so he said, well, I don't mind because, after all, it isn't his fault that there is no more eleven plus. Had there been, he would have got into the King's School anyway because he was very bright. So I felt quite happy doing it, so I was working at the school, I took him to the school, well, I used to drive to Tewkesbury every day with him, and then rush back to the school here and all my earnings went into his education.

Tape 3: 23 minutes 46 seconds

HL: To what extent did your children have a Jewish upbringing?

RJ: Not very much. They knew that– obviously, that I was Jewish. Allan was nothing, and he didn't want his children to be named as anything because he didn't want them to go through what we went through, but I always lit the candles on a Friday night, and I still do. They have on odd occasions been to the synagogue with me. Miriam is more inclined to being Jewish than anything else. And she says to me: 'It's funny, when I meet people and really get on with

them, I always find out they're as Jewish as I am.' So. But they didn't marry in church or anything like that, and the two boys did not marry Jewish girls.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 35 seconds

HL: Was your husband's name 'Jackson' when you got married?

RJ: Yes, because as a fighting force he could hardly be captured – maybe - by the Germans with the name of Jakobsohn. So, yes, they were all given English names, or advised to, so it was easiest to use the same initials.

HL: And do you go to the synagogue?

RJ: I do, yes. But not very often. I only go on High Days and Holidays, to Cheltenham.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 16 seconds

HL: What's your own sense of your identity, is it German, Jewish, English?

RJ: I don't feel German at all. I don't know what other people think of me, but I feel English, and Jewish last. And that's maybe a funny thing to say. We met somebody the other day who's very Jewish; they live in Cheltenham now, they used to live in Wembley, and they seemed to be– they'd been on holiday and we met them again after the holiday and they were telling me how awful these English people were, wherever you go, English people you can tell them a mile off, and– and they always wear these clothes. I was saying to myself, why are you saying this when you are English? They regard themselves as Jewish first and English second. And that I can't understand, because, I mean, to me, I know being Jewish is also a way of life, but if you're inclined that way, you should live in Israel. I could not understand why they were downing the English when to my mind they were both born in this country - and their parents were - why don't they consider themselves English?

HL: You said that you went quite soon after the war to meet your husband's relatives. What was that like?

RJ: In '49. Alright. But I felt then that I was happy with them because I knew who they were but I wasn't happy with anybody else in the town, and we did meet up with– went out one day with Allan's brother to have a drink in a similar thing to a pub here, and Allan and I were talking English to each other and a woman came up - we didn't know her from Adam - and said, 'Just want to tell you that we didn't know all the things that were happening.' And she kept on and on and on about it. And there was this big guilt written all over her. But I did feel there were an awful lot of people my age or a bit older than me, say, Allan's age, who I dressed in Nazi uniform. And I wasn't happy staying in hotels or anything, I didn't mind staying with the family, I didn't feel comfortable. And we, neither of us, would want to ever go back there to live. The only reason we've ever gone back was because his mother was there, and then his– now all his family other than the younger generation have died anyway. We wouldn't– we'd only go to visit.

Tape 3: 28 minutes 11 seconds

HL: Did your mother go back?

RJ: No. Never.

HL: And your grandmother had died by this time.

RJ: She died in 1942, yes.

HL: Before we end the interview, any more memories of your life since the war that we should cover?

RJ: Since the war?

HL: Yes.

RJ: I don't know.

HL: What have you done apart from teaching and bringing up three children?

RJ: Bringing up three children, yes, trying to do my best for them, hopefully.

Tape 3: 28 minutes 44 seconds

I feel we've made sure that they had a good education; Simon's done very well: he works at the University College Hospital in Cardiff, but he is employed by the University as a Senior Lecturer and Director of the Research Department, so he's alright, we feel we've done well there, or he's done well. Miriam, as I said, teaches at King Alfred's. And Tim is now a housefather with two young children and they live near Brighton. But what we like about our children is they phone each other very often, they visit each other, and they stay with each other even if they have --- you know, a big family comes along, you know Simon has two children, and he'll go down and stay with Tim and his family with two children and another friend as well, and they all muck in together as long as they can see each other. And I think we've always– maybe because we've had to leave home, maybe because I had to leave home as a young child, I've always had this feeling that I must know where they are, where they're going so wherever they've been– when they were still at home and they went out for the evening, and they were going to be late, they would always phone. And when they moved away from home, we didn't stop them doing that, but they would always phone when they got there, always phone what was happening, and Tim always phones on a Friday night, Simon always phones me at the weekend, the grandchildren always phone on a Saturday and I think we're a sort of tight-knit little family, and there's nobody else, and we feel we're always quite horrified when we find out that other people say, oh, I haven't heard from them for a long time.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 52 seconds

HL Have you ever belonged to any organisation outside the family or had hobbies outside the family?

RJ: We belong to the U3A, only recently, I don't think Allan is the joining type, really. I'm much more the sort of person who needs other people around, he's quite happy with his own company. We travel abroad when we can, or can afford, shall we say; no, and I thought I'd

retired from the school in 2000, at the end of the summer term 2000, and the– there was a school in Malvern, somebody knew somebody who knew me, and they were short-staffed because one of their staff had cancer and had to go into hospital, and so they said would I mind helping out until she was able to come back or they had more staff. So I did. So I didn't retire, really. I went straight there. So every day I drove over from here to Malvern. Sadly, my daughter then also had breast cancer so we went through the same trauma. And as far as we know, she's alright and then when I finished teaching at the Malvern school, again somebody who knew somebody else said they needed somebody to help with the dyslexics, would I like to come and see what they do? So I said, yes I'll come and visit. I'll sit in, which I did, and then a member of staff went and they said, would you take over? And I said, well, I will until you find somebody and they said, why do we need to find somebody, we found you, you know, so there I am. Now I'm teaching there, and I'm teaching dyslexic children at home as well. And I think that's enough really.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 58 seconds

HL: Would you have any message for anyone hearing this video in the future?

RJ: I think we all have a lot to learn, I think we should all–we don't want any of this to happen to any other children, ever, ever again. That's my hope. Unfortunately a lot happens all over the world at this present moment. It doesn't very much look like we'll ever, ever learn a lesson.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 45 seconds

END OF INTERVIEW.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 48 seconds

PHOTOGRAPHS.

This is the house where I was born, number 21 Schicklerstrasse, Eberswalde. And here I am, aged two, with my sister aged 12 and my brother aged 9.

HL When was that?

RJ: 1928.

Tape 3: 34 minutes 18 seconds
RJ: this is my admission document that I received from England to say that I could enter the country. It was made out on the 17th of June 1939, for me to leave at the end of July '39.

Tape 3: 34 minutes 43 seconds
This is a Red Cross letter I had from my mother in 1943, telling me that my sister had got married and that they have a son, and that they're all well. It was sent from our old address in Berlin Charlottenburg.

Tape 3: 35 minutes 8 seconds
My Jewish identity card made out in April 1939, with my fingerprints and my left ear showing. I was also given the additional name of Sarah.

Tape 3: 35 minutes 31 seconds
My children's passport, made out in July 1939 on entering this country.

[2 shots, front and back   NB. It is a Berlin child's identity card - *Kinderausweis*]