

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	224

Interviewee Surname:	Frankl
Forename:	Annie
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	18 June 1936
Interviewee POB:	Budapest, Hungary

Date of Interview:	23 May 2018
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 07 minutes



REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV224
NAME: Annie Frankl
DATE: 23rd May 2018
LOCATION: London, UK
INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

Today is the 23rd of May 2018 and we're conducting the interview with Mrs. Annie Frankl. And my name is Bea Lewkowicz and we're in London.

What is your name please?

Annie Frankl.

And when were you born?

A long time ago. In 1936.

And where?

In Budapest.

Mrs. Frankl, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for-

Pleasure.

- the Refugee Voices Project. Can you tell me something about your family background please?

Well, my- both my parents were born in a small town in Hungary in Gyöngyös. At that time, I remember they said the population was about 25,000 people. I know my mother- my grandfather on my mother's side was killed during the First World War. And my mother had two brothers. And, of course, her mother. And I think if I remember what they were telling, my grandmother lived for a long time with my mother. But the beginning, after the First World War when she when she became a widow, she was working in a little restaurant. I don't know whether she was cooking. Probably she was because she was a wonderful cook. And this little restaurant was by a railway station, between Gyöngyös and Budapest. But I think there were other members of her family who lived there, because there were ten of them - brothers and sisters. And she never lived on her own, so she must have lived with one or two of them who lived in the same town. But you know, she never talked. She didn't talk a lot about it. Occasionally she- she was telling little stories. And my mother's two brothers- one brother left for Paris shortly- shortly after the end of First World War. And the other brother stayed in Hungary. And he was- he was a wonderful person. We were very close to him, and the whole family. She never married until after the war. So she- sorry - he - never married after the war, the Second World War, but, he was a very active person. He had business. He was- I don't know what his real profession was but- expert in wine - in wineries, in all that sort of things.

[0:03:03]

What was his name?

But he- what- his name was Elemér, Karloyi - Elemér. I mean, he changed his name - his original Kohn from Kar- to Karloyi that was. So, he became- he was Karloyi, Elemér. And you know, I, he's- he lived always in Gyöngyös. Even after the Second World War, he went back. He was hiding in Budapest and then he went back to Gyöngyös, and he married a lovely woman who was an Auschwitz survivor. And she always showed me her numbers. And she was a musician, a pianist. She played live music in various places, but she studied as a serious classical musician. But that was before the war, of course. And my father, he had a sister. And they all lived in Gyöngyös until they were deported to Auschwitz in '43, '44. I

don't remember exactly when. And my father when he married my mother in 1932, then he moved to Budapest. He was a doctor, he had a job. There was a hospital called the Jewish Hospital in Budapest, which was very well known. So, he worked there for a- many years. And then afterwards, he worked in- after the war, he worked in various other hospitals. And he had a private office in our apartment. And he survived the Second World War. Of course, he survived the Revolution, in 1956, he and my mother- and after '56, sorry, after the Revolutions- so, in '57, they emigrated to France with my grandmother who lived with us. And- and then lived there in France for many years. And my grandmother died in '58 or '59; I don't remember exactly. Somewhere around that time. And my parents stayed there. My father got a job as a doctor, up in- in the Alps, in a... TB hospital. I don't know how you would call it.

[0:05:34]

Sanatorium.

Sanatorium - something like that. And he was working there. And then, when he retired, late 60s – '60. Yes, '69 when we moved here, then they moved here and stayed with us until both died, later.

So, they were both from Gyöngyös?

They were all- so all the family came from Gyöngyös.

And how far is it from Budapest?

Eighty kilometres.

Aha- not so far.

But those days, it was a long journey.

Yes. And do you know why they had moved there, or from where?

Well, they were born there- the, the- you know-

So, for many generations.

For many generations. I don't know how many generations, but some generations.

And do you know how your parents met or how...?

Well, I don't know how they met. But they- obviously they met in Gyöngyös. It's a small town, and, you know, I'm sure-

How many Jews lived there?

Well, quite a lot, I think. I don't know the number but quite a lot because, you know, there was a big synagogue. And there was, you know, there was a very, very important Jewish community. And some of the Jewish people were extremely wealthy.

And then your parents moved in '32?

Then they moved to- they- they got married in '32. And then they moved to- to Budapest.

And where did they settle in Budapest? Where did they?

[0:07:00]

I think they settled already in the apartment where I was born in '36.

Which was?

Which was Népszínház utca.

And which area of Budapest is it?

Well, it's very- it's right in the centre. It's very near- there was a beautiful National Theatre, which unfortunately, not that long ago, maybe- I mean, after the Revolution, many years after, they demolished, because they started building underground trains. And that was in the way, so they demolished it. But so this Népszínház utca started there, and we lived in number 19, which was very close.

And was it an apartment building?

It's an apartment building. Yes, yes.

And which floor were you on?

We were on the first floor, which meant second floor because there was a mezzanine, and then the first floor.

Yes. And your father had a-

He- we had a large, I mean, considerable- it's a four-room apartment. And I stayed, I- I think I shared a room with my grandmother. And then my parents had a room and then there was another room for what- where the patients had to wait. And then the last room was my father's office. And then the waiting room was where I- my father was amateur musician. He played the violin. And every Sunday, or every other Sunday, he had a- they had a doctor's quartet, string quartet. And they played for fun, for themselves. So, every other Sunday, they came to us. It was- it was- it was like a- like, you know, a must. But there were four of them, so they sh- they went wherever, you know, whichever Sunday whoever wanted to have them. But then they- they were really good. And then they went to give charity concerts. They played in hospitals, they played in other, you know, places like that. They were all amateurs, but their passion was music.

On your father's side. And your mother's side at all?

Not my mother's side. No, no. He just liked it, but- but she liked music, but she never played anything.

And did your mother- did she work?

[0:09:10]

She worked. Of course. Yes, she had always she worked in an office. She- she was a very, very respected person in her office. Usually what happened was in Budapest that they started early in the morning, eight- eight - I don't know - eight-thirty. But then there was a lunch break of one hour. But because the- the distances were not that far, so my mother took the tram, came home, had a quick lunch and ten-minute nap. And then she went back to the office. And that, you know, she enjoyed it. And then- that was a private firm that- where she worked. But then it, you know, after that- I don't know which year was it was it? Maybe '49 or '50, it was nationalised. So – everything. And then she went to work at another firm which basically dealt with the same things. They were, they were in an import export company. But I think the most important thing what- what they were dealing with, was wine. The Hungarian wine is very... famous, and there are lots of vineyards and lots of areas in Hungary where they produce wine. And they export wine and they, you know, so that was basically I think, the, the, the main income to this company. But the- you know, when it was nationalised, you know, I think they- they took over all what, what, what they had before. But of course, it became bigger, and- so my mother was there until she left Hungary.

[0:10:52]

And you were born in 1936. What are your first memories of growing up?

In Hungary?

Yes.

Well, first memories. For instance, I went- I loved bicycling, but my father was very worried that I will fall and something like, you know, a lonely child, a girl- those days it was for parents, but mainly my father worried about it. But then I had a friend. You know, we grew up together and she was more- even more passionate about so she decided, okay, we have to do something. So, we- together we went first. I went to her, she came to us. And then we decided we go to school by bicycle. So- and then that- that- by then we were eleven. So, my

father said, “Okay, okay, but be careful every morning. Be very careful!” But that was- that was really wonderful, to- to use the bicycle, and go with friends, and you know, to school.

That was after the war.

[0:12:00]

Sure. Yes, yes, yes. No, before the war.

Do you remember anything from-?

Before the war? Yes, well, we were hide- well, I was hiding alone, when my parents had to leave this hiding place. And we went down to the basement, to the cellar because of the bombings. It was already October, November - December of course. And that was really very scary. And you know, I remember we slept there and occasionally I- I don't even remember I went up to the apartment. But- but the grown-ups did go up. But- so we were there sitting and holding our ears because the bombing was terrible. But the most incredible time was already in January, when the Russians started invading Budapest. And we remember- I remember that was a very incredible thing that we heard – it was in the night - bang, bang, bang, bang on the wall of the cellar. And suddenly a hole appeared. And a Russian soldier came in. And he brought with him bread. And, you know, he was- he was soldier, he was filthy. He was, you know, but he had bags of, and sort of he threw out bread. That I remember. And I also remember which, of course, nobody spoke Russian that time, but- but I remember what they said [she mimics ‘speaking’ silently]. And then we understood why, because the German soldiers were marching on the street - it was a main road. Marching on the street - and they were house to house like that, occupying, started to occupy the city. And you know, there were, there were, I don't know, maybe ten blocks of flats in- in one block. So, they- they were just doing it one by one, one by one. So first one soldier, then two and then we saw guns. And then we learned the word, “*chasy, chasy*” which meant “watches”, because he came and they- the soldiers came and they took the watches from people who had wristwatches because that was their- their most important thing in life to- to own watch- watches. And soldiers, you could see them, you know, four, five, six, seven, eight watches on their arms. That was there. That was a thing. What I don't remember - I was too young to remember - that lots of soldiers

raped young women there. But that I don't remember. I was just- later on, I was just told that it happened. But you know, we heard the- the guns on the street with the Germans. And then- you know. So, that was the most scary part. But then we were liberated. Not the whole city, but that area.

[0:15:00]

Yes.

And then we could go up to the apartment. And then, one day, my father arrived. The thing was that when- they- when- they- they stayed a little bit in the outskirts, so they- their liberation was maybe later on. Few days later, or earlier. I don't know. But anyway, they came and they found me. And I can- I remember then- yes, I think they were liberated before us, because they were already in our own apartment, which was very interesting. First of all, when we went home- I mean, you can imagine. They didn't know if I was alive. I didn't know if they were alive.

How long had you not seen them?

Well, it must have been six weeks. I don't know. You know, because, you know, I didn't take notes of the dates. But it was interesting because we- it was walking distance, and we went out, and burnt-out buildings, ruins, everywhere, you know? And there was a big- very close there was a church which wasn't actually burned down, which was very strange. But next to it, there was a big... big, a big mall, not a mall, but like a big shop. But three floors- huge, like a mall, but a small mall. And there were all- it was all burned out, and inside the open windows, they put coffins with- with dead bodies. So, the whole- it looked like- like being almost in a cemetery. And then, on the other side of the road, there were dor- there were dead horses. And it was cold and snow. And we walked and we saw people cutting up the horses and taking meat and food. And then we went up to the- you know, I went, but by then my father- and they must have been there for a few days. And my grandmother was there. My mother was there. So, you know, for me, that was enough. But...this- because it used to be a Jewish house, once the Jews were deported, lots of Christian people from the countryside, they came and they just took possession of the apartments, which is not only- not only us, but lots of them. So, they stayed in our apartment. By that- by the time I went home, and my

father managed to get two rooms back for us. And then they stayed in the two other rooms. But you have to know they were- they had, I remember a huge dog with them as well. And they were, I don't know, four or five of them. And we were four of them, which was okay. But there was one toilet and one small bathroom. Of course, one kitchen. But that was what it was. And- but I don't remember how long- and I remember our piano. We had a piano in- in one of the rooms what this family occupied. And the dog was sleeping on the Persian carpets, of course, whatever. And the piano - top of the piano was food and you know, everything- everything what they could put on - rubbish and everything. So, my- for my father it was- how can they ruin the piano? But anyway, he was an early riser. He started working early, and by six o'clock he was ready to go. And he noticed from the bathroom when he was in the bathroom, he heard noises. And he noticed that these people left- I mean, the two younger ones - left in the morning with bags full of stuff, not- not only stealing from our- from our but from everywhere. You know, from other apartments that the Jews had to live. And they were not occupied yet by other people. So, the luckily- lucky thing was that on our corridor, there was this- these long corridors in those buildings. And at the end of the corridor, it just came the Social, Social Democratic, Social Democrat Party. They settled there, they opened an office. So, my father went in there and told them what he suspected was happening. So, they were very keen on looking into it. The next day they came, and they followed these people, and they arrested them. They took away what was still left, you know, in our apartment from them, and they threw them out - with the dog, everything. So, eventually, you know, the apartment was cleaned and we were very lucky because the building wasn't bombed.

[0:20:26]

Yeah. And it was rented- a rented apartment?

It was rented, of course. But you know, those days you rented apartments. Unless people had- were very rich and they had villas somewhere. But you know, these apartments - rented apartments. Yes.

Just to go back to the pre-war time. Who lived with you? Was it just your parents? Pre-war?

Pre-war my grandmother.

Was already with you?

Yes. Because she was a widow.

Yeah.

And that was very customary those days. She- you know what- what was- she was a wonderful cook, so she did all the cooking and cleaning or whatever. And my, my- my mother was working and my father as well. She looked after me - my grandmother. And when I was a child, she took me to a cinema, or to a concert because- or wherever - theatre because my parents were working. So- and if- before the war, they didn't let me go walk to school at the beginning. So, she walked with me to the school. She collected me at the school. She was a wonderful, wonderful.

What was her name?

Her surname was, before she married, Weiner. And Maria. But I named her Mimi. And I still have a friend here in London who knows- who remembers her. And Mimi, was the, the name I gave her. But me Mimike, was that- the diminutive thing. And my- this friend of mine who always said, "You know, I still remember Mimike, you know, because she- she made me sandwich to take to the school for- in- in the morning." I don't know, because we didn't have lunch at school. So, when we went to primary school, so I went with this friend of mine and then she loved the sandwich what my grandmother made for me. So, I- we always swapped half of it with her. So, it was a nice. No, she was a darling. She was really wonderful.

And what sort of school? Where did you go?

Well, it was a primary school, a primary school. Yes, it was very good. Of course, only for girls. And we had very good teachers.

And what sort of friends did you have? What sort of circles? Both your parents mixed with, and you?

[0:22:42]

Well, as a child, obviously I had-

As a child.

As a- I had school friends.

Yeah. Were they Jewish friends? Not Jewish friends? Mixed?

I think Jewish friends. I think so. I think so. That's, you know, a good question. But I never thought of that. But- this friend who is still- luckily, she is still alive, she was my best friend because that time they lived in the same house as- she was born in the same house as I was born - a few months earlier. But then later on her family moved- I mean, her parents with her, they moved to Dohány utca in another apartment. I don't remember which year, but- but then- but we went to the same school, because it was between the two streets. So it was, you know, ten, fifteen minutes' walk from both - for both of us.

So, she was your best friend?

Yeah, she was my- my best friend.

What's her name?

Her name was - very interesting. Judith... Frankl, because she- she is second cousin to my husband.

Aha?

So, their grandfathers were brothers. If I remember well. But I- you know at that time, we didn't- I didn't know him. So, you know, they all- the first time I met him was at a birthday- her birth- my friend's birthday. I think she must have been six years old or something like that. And they had a small upright piano. And... her- her mother- it was- wait a minute - she was six years. Yes, the- her father was taken to a labour camp and I think she died there.

He died?

[0:24:22]

He- he, he – sorry- he died there. Her mother survived. And that time, whether her father, my friend's father was still alive or not, I don't know. But what I know is that he- he wasn't there with us at this birthday party. But there were school friends, some friends. And we- we- and, you know, everybody gave her toys as presents. A doll, you know, whatever. And then suddenly, so we were very happy and playing and her mother said, “Now,” - the doorbell rang - “Now. This is your cousin who is coming and he's going to play the piano for us- for you all. And then you just keep quiet.” And then he came and I remember he was dressed up very elegantly, you know in- of course, a little suit but with short trousers. And then he sat down and he played – whatever, I don't know. But we were just looking at each other. And then there are all the toys and we want to- to open the boxes and we want to play! And he- we had to keep quiet. So that was the first time. But my cousin never, you know, was not interested in, in- not my cousin - his cousin - was never interested in- in music. He- she didn't have- she didn't have good ears until... then when she moved to London. And then we took her, you know, and then we went- took her to [inaudible], and she- she really loved ballet and- or whatever. But when a child, no. So afterwards, I went to music - into music. She- she went- she finished her school with a French language and everything. And then she- she went for the fourth- for the last four years to study chemistry. And then she- she worked- after she emigrated, she went to Canada, and then she came here. But that's a long story. But just to tell you that this is what I remember. I don't remember many things. You know.

What about your music? Your...?

[0:26:20]

Well, I started playing the piano when I was about six, I guess. Because my father was passionate about music. And they took me to concerts when I was very young. And you know, so, then, then- then I- I- I had better teacher, and then I had- I had actually my- one of my first teachers is still- is still alive, but she's not well. She lives in London and she's ninety-five. But we still see her and keep in touch with her.

What's her name?

Her... maiden name was when I got to know her – Surányi, Eva Surányi. But then she married a- a violinist that time- she studied also at the Academy, but she graduated, and she married a... a violinist [Josef Bernáth – she became Eva Bernáthová] who was from part of Slovakia. So, after the they got married in '47, I think or '48, then they moved to Prague. And then she lived in Prague until '60-something when they came to London. And then she lost her husband of course. And- but she's still around and she's- but now she's- she's- she's really not well.

She was your first piano teacher?

So, that was- she was one of the first, because I had another one who, just before the war, I think because she was- I think she was deported from Budapest. And then, then I had her and then I went to the Academy because those days you could study with assistant teachers, who were, who haven't, who hadn't qualified yet as piano teachers. But they were, this was part of that training, to teach children. So, I had three different teachers there. And then I- I was accepted at the- the next phase, which was a different- and then I, I had a very good professor. And I studied with this professor till I left Hungary.

Who was that?

[0:28:28]

Who was the same as Peter [Frankl - husband] studied with a bit later, he started studying a bit later. He had another professor, and then he moved to this one. He was one of the best those days, and his name was [Lajos] Hernádi. And he was also in- in concent- not concentration camp. He was also in labour camp. And his original name was Heimlich. And then after the-

Heimlich?

Heimlich. And then he- changed the name to Hernádi. But he is a very good- very excellent. You learned a lot from him.

And did you ever play with your father?

Just at home.

At home?

At home. And then occasionally when he- he had to go to play in a hospital, then he- the quartet was not free. Then he played solo piece and then I played with him. And then I also played. But you know that- I was still a child. But what- you know- you know, it was- it was fun. But he was- he was [inaudible]. In fact, it's very interesting, our son who's- who is a GP now, he started playing viol-cello, but he never- he was not interested in practising. So, you know, after when, when he realised- we realised earlier, but he realised also, that to play well the cello, he had to practice. Then- then I think in- good in time, he said, "Oh, I have too much schoolwork to do and to..." - you know, whatever. So, then he stopped that. But- he was very lucky. I mean, it's nothing to do with my- with our musical but just an interesting thing that he was very lucky, because he went to Chri- he went to Christ College School. And it was a grammar school. And they had a very, but very, very good music teacher. And there was a small choir. And for whatever reason, he realised that Andrew had good hearing – good, [inaudible] and there were other boys as well, who were good. And he said, "Look, he just heard that the English National Opera is going to audition for the Magic Flute and three boys- there are- I mean, there are three boys in this play and it would be very good if both- all three of you would go to this audition. And we'll see what happens." And the thing was that it was in April, the audition, something. And this was the summer - series of summer... thing... performances of The Magic Flute at the ENO. But we had already booked our holiday for this- for the summer. But anyway, we thought, he will never get it, they will never get it, you know, they are much too- so he went to- to the audition. And then he comes home and I opened the door for him and said, "So what happens?" "Mum - no." So, I said, "Doesn't matter. Don't worry. No. Doesn't matter, because we go on holiday." "No holiday." [laughing] That was the response, so he was very funny about that. Because the whole summer: rehearsals. And I mean that was a great experience. Fifteen performances during two seasons. And then he moved- he moved on singing. So, he still- he is not a solo singer but he's still part of choirs - several choirs and very active in there. You know, so he- that is

interesting, inherited from my father. And in fact, Peter's father who was also a- he was an amateur musician, but he also composed.

[0:32:00]

Yes.

So...

It carried on.

It carried on. So, we'll, you know. But that- I think that is in a way, that gives them more satisfaction than for a professional musician. Because it- it is- you know, it's joy. It- it- you know, they don't have to make a living out of it. And they just do as a pastime.

Yeah.

But, you know, as much as they can, they can- they can do. In fact, the doctors where my father had a string quartet, after the war, they had an orchestra, a symphony orchestra. And a very good conductor who was also conducting at the music academy. And they gave concerts. And my hus- my father was part of it. Now, of course, he never played the violin after emigration. But he never- he had his violin. He- he took his violin. And then once they moved here, we enquired, and we knew that there was an orchestra half-amateur half-professional in Wembley, I think. But with a conductor, I can't remember the name who it was, but- but a good, professional conductor. So, my husband joined this- my- my father joined this orchestra. And they had concerts, and it was- and he was very happy. And they rehearsed there- I think the rehearsal was in Willesden.

Yes?

So, they did that. And once, my husband played with this orchestra in Wembley. There was a big concert hall in Wembley. I don't know if I remember the hall. And that- for my father, that was fantastic, because then my husband played the piano and he was in the orchestra. So that was-

Fantastic.

Yeah.

*So, when did things change for you in Budapest in your- as a child? When did you notice?
When did you...?*

Well, in- I think not before '44. I don't remember anything before '44.

What happened?

Well, I remember that we didn't go to school. But there was radio school. I remember that. So, in radio, depending on the age, or whatever, you know it- there were- there were, like, classes. So, we had a radio.

[inaudible]

Yes! I remember that. Am I the only one who remembers?

Yeah. I haven't heard that before.

Well, find out. [laughs]

[0:34:30]

But who- who organised that?

Listen, I was eight years old, you know.

Yeah.

I don't know! Seven years old, eight years old. But it was in the- I remember very well that, you know, I had to write things down and it was sort of- of course you didn't- you didn't... talk to the radio. It was not- but that- the school radio.

Interesting. And your parents were still working?

Well, they were still working until - I don't know until – they, they had to stop working.

When was your father taken to-you said your father had to do forced labour.

Yes. I don't know.

Maybe a bit before.

But I- I don't know. Maybe in '43, maybe '42, '43 - that I don't know.

What about yellow stars? Do you know?

Well, I remember my- my grandmother made very beautiful yellow stars. And she was the one who- who put all the yellow stars on our- on our coats and everything. But that was after '44 March, when- when, you know, we had the occupation. It was after that. But-

But how did you feel? Do you remember putting it on or...?

Yes, I remember putting it on but, you know, I don't have any- any memories or any event that I could remember happened that we were not stopped. I don't remember anything like that. I think maybe I was just lucky.

But you said your house became a Jewish house?

Mm hmm.

Can you explain that a little bit?

Well-

What did it mean?

Well, I think that the Jew- Jewish families were allowed to stay there. And the non-Jewish houses where there were Jewish families who lived, they moved into the Jewish houses.

Yes. So in your house?

But we didn't have- but I don't remember having, you know, a Jewish family staying with us.

Aha.

Maybe because my father was a doctor. And you know, he needed- because he, you know, he needed rooms to- to work. Maybe that's why. But I- but I know that other, you know, lots of Jewish families had to move into Jewish homes- Jewish houses. Where- where do you move? In other- with other families. But I don't remember liv- you know, having Jewish families, family, one family or one person in our house - in our apartment, until we came back after the war. And that was- they were not Jews. They were...

[0:37:00]

Yes, yes. At that point, what do you remember? Was your father still living with you? Or was he-because you said you remember him coming back.

I remember coming back. So that- probably he was not there for months.

Can you tell us about it? What is your memory of your father coming back?

They- the only memory I have that it was late at night or early morning or middle of the night. I don't know. He just appeared and then he came- because I was in the bed. I was asleep. And then he came and he- he hugged me, he kissed me. And I remember it was dark. And- and I remember, you know, he was wearing a- an unusual... this was not even a suit. It was, I don't know, something. Maybe- maybe he came back from- from the camp or- or I

don't know where from. But I don't remember him staying. I don't remember. Maybe he just arrived and left- had to leave again. That's very possible. But I- he never- he never talked about that.

But you know that he escaped?

Yes, yes. Yeah, I know- that, he told us.

So, what did he tell you?

Well, that- that he- they were marching. But I don't- I don't- I don't know where but they were marching, maybe in Budapest, maybe - I don't know where - somewhere else. I don't know. But marching, and he made sure that he was at the end of the row. And then there was a - something - an argument or something, so the- who was next to, you know, a soldier who was at that side of the- of the row, I don't know how many, maybe a hundred people I don't know. And then he had to go, he went forward. Then he suddenly realised that that's the time that I can- I can escape. I escape. And it was just around the corner, so he quickly ran- ran and disappeared and escaped and came home.

[0:38:50]

That- once. And then?

No, he- I think he escaped at least twice. But he- and I know where he was. He was in a- in a camp south of Budapest, but maybe many, many, many kilometres, which was called Sombor. Have you heard of that?

Yes.

Because that must have been another, you know, camp. And there was a pianist who was also there, whom he knew. And I remember him because I rem- I mean I didn't study with him, but it was- his name was Ivan Engel. And my father was with him in the camp; that I remember my father telling.

Right.

But after the war, I, I don't know when he- he- he was teaching in Budapest at the Academy and then he lived in Switzerland. But, so, but it was- it was a- I don't know how, whether the trains were running or, or buses, or, or- or lorries?

Yes.

I don't know. But-

But you know that he- he had joined you at the time-

He joined us when we went to- into hiding.

Yes. So at that point, you know.

That- that I know.

Yes. But tell us, before hiding- so you were staying in this Jewish house. The Germans came. Do you have any memories of that?

[0:40:10]

In the Jewish house, where we stayed, that the Germans came. I don't remember. I remember one thing that there was a priest, a Catholic priest, who came and he was in the courtyard down below us. And he said, "I'm going to," - how do you say? "Christianise" you, or whatever?

Baptise.

Bat- baptise. Okay - sorry. And so, we all stood on, you know, on the- on the corrid- on the- on this corridor out. And he was downstairs, and we saw that. And he gave- he spoke and spoke and spoke and catech- catechism: "You have to read..." - this and that. But, you know, we didn't care much about it. But if it saves- saves our life, why not? Our lives? Why not? So,

we did. We did. We stayed. That I remember. But that was a peaceful event; it was not that someone was, you know, forcing us to do this or that or whatever.

So, did he baptise everyone?

Well, what- what do you- what do you mean by that? [laughing] I don't even remember if he gave any papers. Maybe he gave; I don't know. But- but you know, it was just- just- I don't know. Maybe, you know, the thing was that those days people had to believe in something - to survive.

Yeah.

So if, if they went into hiding, whether they were hoping that the bombs are not going to come, or the Germans won't find them, or you know, that sort of things. And this was, again, one of them. But that's why I- okay, remember- remind me of something afterwards... because we have to talk to our friend, George.

OK.

Alright? Because he knows *so* much about it, by personal experience.

OK. OK. But today's your [inaudible]-

[0:42:18]

But today's my [inaudible], I know. But you know, so I said, I am not, because I – you know. And my parents, my father, and my- my mother too, I mean, and my grandmother, of course, they wanted to- to protect me, from all. You know - I was the only child. Like most Jewish families that time, they didn't want to have more or I don't know why. But anyway, so they said that, you know, they tried to, not to- not to terrorise. To give me sort of reasons to be terrorised, or- or frightened. You know.

Yes, they protected you.

Yes - yes.

Yes.

So-

So, in the Jewish house, what then happened? What?

I don't know...

No but you said,

In the Jewish house...

-the deportations. That- where you, the family, you expected to be deported.

Well, we, we, we had to go down one- one day they said we all go down and we are going to be taken to Tattersall, which was a- a place. I don't know, I've never been there. But it was a place where they- people, lots of- hundreds of people could stand and wait, and being transported. And that was- I don't remember the date, but I think it was in October sometime when Horthy sort of- I forgot. I read about it, but I- I don't want to be traumatised by it. But I remember that he tried to come to a kind of an agreement, sort of to keep the Jews in Budapest. Why? What- what was his mo-motivation? I don't even know. But that's what happened. So, we waited I don't know how long. Hours and hours and hours standing on the street and then suddenly they said, "Go back." And that was the time when my uncle who... who had these connections with Christian families, through his, you know, business then he knew now, this- this is the- you know, you can't take a risk- risks anymore because today it was lucky. But now- so then he arranged and he had, he took me first. He had a friend in this close by apartment building where I spent then the next several weeks. And this friend of hers knew - this friend of his - knew a very nice family where they had two teenager daughters. So, they thought, okay, I am not teenager yet, but I can be a family member. So, they kept- they- this friend of my uncle took me to this. But there it was not just by love; my- my uncle had money. And he paid this family for me. So, this family was happy to have me. Then my parents had to leave. So first they said, "Okay," my father was not there then.

Aha.

[0:45:24]

There- so my mother, my grandmother, no better- no, but four of us were in this room. My father was there. My father, my mother, my grandmother and me. They had like that sofa bed. And then they can, they could open it. And for me, the length was just perfect. But for the other- for the adults, that was not perfect. What happened was that they put chairs – stools. So, we- four of us slept there for a few days, maybe. I don't know how long.

Yes?

And then they said that, you know, it's too risky. What will the neighbours say? The neighbours knock on the door, we have to- you know, they will find out that you are here. So even with the money, so my uncle already had the other connection. And then he took my parents and my grandmother there.

But can I ask you, was your uncle by then in Budapest or had he stayed...?

Yes- no, no, no, then he came to Budapest. Because, you know, from the- from Gyöngyös already the Jews were deported.

So, he didn't go?

And because he didn't- he- he was not deported because he was constantly travelling, you know, with the, with the country, and this- you know, he was- that was his business.

Yes. So, he came to Budapest.

So, he came to Budapest, and either he stayed with us, or he had a girlfriend somewhere else he stayed. He was a [inaudible] a bachelor - that time, and very charming. And, oh, he was- oh, he was so wonderful. You know, really, really lovely, lovely person. So, you know, but it was a very- we were a very close family. And of course, by then, my parents didn't know

about my father's family in Gyöngyös. You know, we just heard that from the provinces they were taken. But there was no- how could you – there was no internet those days and no, nothing. So, you know, but we are very worried about, of course, because there was no news.

[0:47:20]

What about in the- when your parents had to leave? How- do you remember how you felt staying there by yourself?

Oh, yes, I am- I'm sure that it was a traumatising experience when- when they left. Of course, and I was crying. I remember. I cried even before joining this family with this other very kind lady there in their same building. And I remember crying, crying and she said, "Don't cry! Your fam- your family- your parents will come, and then," - and then they came. But they didn't stay there, of course.

So first you were taken?

I was taken-

Then your parents joined you?

Then my-

And then they had to-

Then they had to leave.

Yeah. So that was - quite hard.

Yes. That was very hard. Yes, yes. Yes. So, you know, this was- this was something which most families experienced.

And that was in October?

Yes, that was in October. That- yes. Which part of October, I don't remember.

No, but at that point of course you didn't know how long-

Who knew that? Who knew what- what was going to happen? And the thing was that because of the bombings, I think my parents were more worried about me than I was worried about them because I was a child. You know, I was just afraid of the bombing. But- but-

Did you get on with the other daughters there?

Yes, yes. Yes. They were very nice, you know. No problem. No problem. I was fed. I was- you know. I don't remember how long we stayed before we went down to the cellar. Because you know, when the big bombing started, then of course we had to be down.

You were in the cellar?

Yes, yes. Yes. So- but- and even afterwards, they said that one of the girls, the teenager girls was raped. But how- how do I know? I don't know. By- by the Russians.

But you stayed together with the family?

Yeah, yes, I was there. Yes. And- and, and I remember there were carpets or rugs where we slept and some food came in. But I'm sure we stayed there for weeks, because this bombing- I don't know when- I mean that- I wouldn't like to give any dates because I have no idea.

But, so in fact, when you were hiding, you were not in hiding. You were pretending to be one of the family.

[0:49:39]

I had to pretend. Yes.

Yes. And what- did you have a different name? What did they call you?

Yes. My name was Anna, that state, Varga.

And you were a relative from...?

They had a family- they had, you know, cousins or whatever in the country and they were bombed out.

Right.

And they- they picked me up and then I stayed with them. But nobody has ever- nobody has come or ever questioned. Nobody. I don't remember any- anything like that.

Right. And when your parents came, you were- they just were in the flat with you?

Yes, yes. Yes.

So, what about the next hiding place? Where- how did they hide?

Well, they hide in a- it was a little bit at the outskirts of the city. And it was in a small- behind. You know, I think I've- I went there afterwards, because they wanted to show me where they stayed. But they had a big kitchen, these people. Had the kitchen and eating- tables, whatever. And then there was a like, like this one, but much be bigger. And behind that, there- I mean, there was a wall. And there was a little hall where they got food. So, I don't know how they climbed in, but they did.

So it was a fake wall?

A fake-

With a space behind?

A space - yes, well, no, it was a- I don't know if it was a fake wall or not, it probably was not. But I remember that- telling that my grandmother also had to climb there and there were six other people. So, there were ten of them.

In that space?

In that space. And that they couldn't sleep. They couldn't- lie down, because it was too small. But they got food and they had pots.

They were not allowed to go out from there?

They were not allowed to go out. But I don't know how long they, they, they had to stay there. Few weeks - but I don't know how long. And the- they were very nice. Even after the war, the people- he was a wine merchant, but very nice family. As I remember my parents kept in touch with them. After the war.

What- did they get paid as well?

[0:51:49]

By my uncle. I'm sure he paid. I'm sure. Listen, my uncle made enough money. He- he didn't have a family.

But they put themselves at a great risk.

And they put themselves in a great risk, of course. So it was, you know, it was natural whatever he had – money – he- he paid. And I'm sure my parents also paid whatever, they had money. But they were working and they had a family. So, you know, they had to support me and my grandmother. So, you know, and we had a nice apartment. I don't know- and I think my uncle stayed with us that time or with, with friends. I- I- that I don't know. But I know that after the war I went, they had when- when he married this lovely woman, then- then I spent holidays there, in Gyöngyös, with them in their apartment. And she- I even remember, her father also survived, but not the mother. And she- they had a little house on the mountain next to Gyöngyös about twenty kilometres. And even there, they had this little house which was in- not in ruins, but totally, you know, in terrible condition. And I went there to spend some time with them in- in Gyöngyös. And then he took- she, she, my aunt, my aunt took me to this house. So, we stayed there a few days. And because of me, they

bought a little dog. A little white- I don't know the- what, what name was it. And... I by that time I went to the French school and I learned French. And I- I- and they said, "Well, give the dog a name." So, I said, "The dog will be called *Jolie*," which French means "beautiful", and the dog was really very beautiful and sort of- and then when they came to visit us in Budapest, I heard the dog barking in front of our door before they rang the bell. And I said, "They- they are here, they are here!" Because they brought the dog as well. So, you know, it was a lovely, lovely - in a way - lovely childhood.

[0:54:12]

Yes.

Because we never had any pets at home.

Yeah.

No.

And did they have children, or...?

No, they didn't have children. No. But by that time... So, this was- but this, this- this was- but after the war, somehow everything turned for the best un- for the better - until the Russians came and then- and then it was really, really absolutely terrible, because- because my uncle was a bourgeois. They called him a bourgeois. He was interviewed, interrogated, several times by the Russian ÁVH [*Államvédelmi Hatóság* – Hungarian State Security Police]- what they called AVO [*Államvédelmi Osztály* – State Security Agency] they called it in those days in Hungary.

The Security Service?

Yes. And they took everything what he had, you know, possession and. And it was- it was- it was very, very, very hard. And, and even, you know, my father said immediately once the Russians came, said, "We have to go out, we have to- we have to leave." And he went to Paris to visit - he- that- in '47 you could still travel if you had the means to travel - just to

look around in Paris. He went to my uncle. And- and then he came back, he says, “It’s a wonderful city.” And, “Oh, yes...” He was there for two weeks, or whatever. But you know, I think at the moment, it would be very hard for us to start life there, because I would need to start, you know, as a doctor, you cannot work there. I had to start everything and my mother didn't speak any French. You know. I was studying, I was happy there and- so then, then, then they said, “Well, later on, we'll see what happens.” So then, then came the Revolution, which nobody expected that time. But-

[0:56:05]

So just to go back. So, when the war ended, you said your father came to look for you.

Mn-hnn.

And then he went back to the flat.

Yeah.

And then things became-

Yes, slowly, slowly but it came, you know, it turned normal.

Who- who did you lose in your family? Who didn't survive?

Well, everybody in Gyöngyös. You know, we had lots of- I had lots of- my- as I told you, my grandmother came from Gyöngyös and they- there was ten of them. So, they- they had families and grandchildren. I had lots of cousins. For the Jewish holidays, we went always to Gyöngyös.

Aha?

Before the war. Our neighbour came in after the war. Now that was before the war. And I, you know, and- and, you know, I remember twenty of us sitting. And- and I was a lousy eater. I ate very little and I, I, you know I was choosy and I- and my grandmother, poor

woman, she was stand- she was sitting next to me and she said, “Just-” she said, “Just pretend that you, you, you eat and then I will finish it for you” - or whatever. Because you had the matzoh balls like that. I mean, you know. I- I had a tiny bit of it and then I was full, so, you know- but I remember this, you know, huge family. And that was – when? – ’40, ’41, ’42 at the, you know, latest.

Your parents- your father's parents?

No, that was my mother- mother's family. Not my, my, my grandmother's brothers and sisters and their children and whatever. My- my father's family, we always visited them. My- my grandparents and my aunt and my uncle, but we never stayed there for long. They had a small house. My fr-grandfather had a- a grocery store. And my grandmother was a school teacher, teaching children who couldn't speak, couldn't hear. What was do you call it? Now suddenly I- deaf and dumb, or whatever. So, you know, like that. That- that's what she did. So, they were not wealthy people. And you know, they were- they were lovely people and my father adored them. And, and I think my aunt was also a teacher, a school teacher, and my uncle, I don't know what he did. That I don't remember. But, you know, after- after that, I was so small then I, I, I lost touch with them. So- then they were deported. So, I don't know when. I don't even know which year. Maybe on the- in the papers there are some things which will-

So all- everyone disappeared?

All. And the- and- maybe I remember after the war, visiting Gyöngyös and maybe I remember one sister of my grandmother who survived and her son. They- they moved to Budapest so they- they survived. And then another one, they moved to Szeged. So, he survived - a brother. And- but, but all those who stayed in Gyöngyös, they were all deported. And I have one- it's a first cousin of my mother, but she is almost my- she's a few years older than I am, because they had several children also. Her sister- she was also in Auschwitz. And her parents and everybody - died. Her sister died - older sister - but she survived because she was young and I don't know what they did with her. And sort of she has these memories, but- she lives in, in Canada. And I keep in touch with her. But she also she said, “Well, let's not talk about Auschwitz. Don't- not talk.” You know. There are people who need to talk, but there are people, you know, she lost her sister, her mother, her father; she doesn't- she doesn't want to - you know. And I can understand that.

[1:00:15]

Yeah. How did your parents deal with this loss?

My father, it was very hard for him - very, very hard. Because, you know, he was very close to his family and, and, and he- and it was- you know, he just found this, he- that- he said afterwards, "You know what, whoever did it, whatever, we should not stay here. You should not grow up here." So, when the- when, when this chance came, which was a really, I don't know if you are interested to hear how I got- why I came there. Then he said, "You know, that's the best thing could happen, and doesn't matter if we will not have a nice apartment. Who- who cares about it? But we live in a free, free world - free country." So, but what I wanted to- just to say briefly, that I wanted to go to Paris in the summer during the holidays, but I didn't get a passport. Because it was quite difficult. So, for some reason, my parents had connection, which I don't remember what, and one day I got a passport. But I remember going to the passport office, passport office, to the- to the Interior Ministry in Budapest in '56. And there was a man and who gave me the passport. And he said, "But you have to promise you will come back." I said, "Of course I will come back. I'm studying. I'm a student." And I didn't have *any* idea that I would not go back. So, I had that. Once I had the passport I applied for a French visa, but that was very complicated. They had to send me letters and go into the French Embassy and back and forth and letters to Paris – you know. I got my French visa end of September. And but just normally the school year started first of September, but that particular year it started in October, early October, because there was our International Piano Competition. And so, the, you know, the whole Music Academy was- was busy with that. So, we started a month later. Now, that was my luck. Because I, I- I had to apply for a month's holiday. And I had a very good friend and he was in- he was involved in the youth organisation there, a nice Jewish friend. And he said, "Don't worry, I will give you a letter and you take this letter." And he wrote a beautiful letter that he guarantees that I will come back. Of course, you know, I guaranteed - everybody guaranteed - and, and, and- and how important it is for me just to look into the French musical world, and to, to experience something. So, I got an official one-month leave.

[1:03:13]

So, I was clear, and – perfect; I went to Paris and then return. And then when the Revolution broke out, it was difficult to phone from, from Paris to Budapest. And then my- then finally we got hold of them. And the only thing my father said, “Don't come back! Stay! Whatever you will do, stay! Don't come back, and we will join you whenever it will be possible.” And my- my mother was worried because of my grandmother. But my grandmother was so easy. You know, she took the train, she came to Paris, she spoke Yiddish on the train. And- and she, she, she went to Paris and then she stayed with my, my uncle there. But- but then when my parents came, and then he- my father got a job up in a sanatorium, then they, they had a little apartment, so they took my grandmother with them. And she died there. But, you know, so- and my father was very happy. You know. They treated him like a human being and not like, like the Gestapo or the, the, the AVO you know, in Budapest. Because there, you know, when you had a, a- a job, there, you had to be, you know, sure. You had to, to be watched, because you had to make sure that you are following the politics of the- if you are a doctor, or if you are - whoever. It was part of it.

But you were lucky that you had an uncle in, in Paris.

[1:04:53]

Yes, yes, absolutely!

Otherwise, you couldn't have] done it.

No, no, absolutely. Because the- you know, I studied French. And I, I just- and then, the- I mean, there were a couple of very nice coincidences. One of the first days in Paris, I was sitting I was standing at a bus stop. And one of the pianists who took part in the competition in Budapest was standing there. And I knew her. I got to know her because I, I didn't work as an interpreter, but I, I was, you know, I just could manage to, to speak with them with the French, and helping them in whatever - finding a studio where to practice, or whatever. And, and I- and, and this French girl, you know, and I just bumped into her. So, she said, “Where are you?” I- so I said, I said, “I, well,” “Well, you best come. Come, come. You come for lunch.” And her parents were still alive. She lived in a very nice place and she was studying there. And through her I got the best teacher at the conservatorium in Paris because she studied with her and she, she listened, this other woman, this- she listened to me, and she

accepted me. So that was another luck. Another coincidence: I was on the street walking towards the Opera, beginning of November. By then, you know, I knew I would not go back to Hungary. And then suddenly I bumped into a colleague with his girlfriend, walking. "What? What are you doing?" "We arrived. We arrived here last night." "Fantastic," I said, "How did you escape?" So, we started talking. And then he said, "Look, I was given in Vienna, address of the Hung- of the French student association here in Paris. And I'm just looking for the street. It's- it is a small- small street somewhere. Do you speak French?" I said, "Yes. Yes, I mean, I'm not perfect, but I can..." "Come with us. Please come, and then had me with- because I don't speak a word of French." So, I went with them. I had my passport with- always had my, my- in my purse, my passport, Hungarian passport. Then I went in and they were waiting for the refugee slide that open ups the French student association. And immediately gave us forms to fill out. We filled out the forms and it said, you know, how? Are you escaped and-what about- what do you want to study? And everything. So, I said, "But listen, I have my- how can I say that I'm a refugee?" And- and he, he was very clever. He said, "Look, you just ignore. You don't- you are- you don't have a passport. You are- want to be a refugee from now on." You know, "That's it. Don't worry about when you arrived here, whatever. You are here. You are a refugee, wants to study, want to..." [inaudible] Now that's what happened. And last year I am- he lives now in, in Denmark. He has lived there most of his life. And always when I, "Do you remember Tomás, that, that it's thanks to you that I got a scholarship to study in Paris?" He said, "No, I don't remember. I remember you came with us to- to fill out the form and everything to help." Because I- you know, they couldn't understand a word, so it would, it would have been really difficult.

Because you'd been to a French tutor-

[1:08:20]

And then- and I- from then on, I had French lessons - private French lessons. My parents were very keen that, that I have to learn. Because Russian, we studied at school for four years. But that was, you know, the teacher was very nice, but it was not a teacher, you know.

But they wanted you to learn French.

But that- but I had a tutor in French and-

But you were also home-schooled for some time?

Yes, so I had French lessons and then whatever I had to- I don't remember.

And home-schooled because of the...?

The piano. Because of the music. Why? I had to have it- but that was-

So, you were at the Liszt Academy in Budapest?

Yes.

From when to when?

From '47 I started but '48 let's say. But '47 was just – till '56.

So, was Peter there at the same time?

He was there at the same time. Yes.

And did you...?

And we- and we were in the same school, but he was in the boys' class. I was in the girls' class. So, we had, you know, after we- we met there after I met him when I was six years old. Then- then we met him. And we studied at the same time, but- but basically, we were just friends, you know, colleagues and friends there. And then he came to Paris already '56 and '57. So then- then where we became very close. And then we got married in '58.

And your parents were already...?

Yes.

Yeah.

And that's another story - a Jewish story.

OK. Just before that story, how did you parents- how easy was it then for your parents to get out?

They left everything: their apartment, the furniture, everything what they what they, what they had. And if you did that, you got a passport. And because my- my grandmother had a passport because of- her son lived in Paris, so that was not a problem. So, but, but, but only my parents, they left this very nice- we had a very nice flat there. And piano- there were two pianos by then. And, you know- and so-

[1:10:33]

So, they left everything?

They left everything.

And they- officially they were allowed to...?

And they- official- they took the train and they came to Paris. But what was I going to say? Yes, that- so '58 they lived already in Paris.

Yeah.

But they didn't have a job yet. My father didn't have a job- job yet. My mother was babysitting, I think, with somebody just to make some- some money and... My- my grandmother stayed with- with her son. And Peter had- so we decided to get married already May, June '58 and found a date in June- in July. And Peter had a concert in August sometime, later in August in Monte Carlo- Menton. Sorry - in Menton. And he- he accepted this engagement. And then we told our parents, my- you know, then we waited for the permit to get married from the French police, whatever, I don't know. So- but we waited, waited, waited, no permit - nothing. So, I don't know what's going to happen, we said, but we still

didn't hear- hear from them. So, we said to my parents and you know, my grandmother, that, "Well, listen, we want to go on honeymoon to Menton and to, you know, next to it, Monte-Monte Carlo. The money he will get for the concert. We will," - I still had a scholarship. Peter had won a competition in '57. He had engagements. So, you know, we could manage it, a one-week honeymoon in Monte Carlo. But my grandmother, "You can't go on honeymoon without getting married."

[1:12:28]

But I said, "We can't get married because we don't have a permit." "Well, that's bad. Doesn't matter. You will, you will get married, married go and go on honeymoon later. Peter goes to play his concert. He comes back, and then after..." So, I said, "It's a waste of money and it's- it's ridiculous" - you know. So, we managed to persuade my mother who- at least that was not difficult. My father was not difficult at all. But my mother had a friend there, who worked at a Jewish organisation in Paris. And she heard about all this - noise. And she said, "Look, I know a very nice rabbi. And he won't ask for the papers. Just give him, whatever, the money and he comes, and he will do a Jewish wedding without the civil." Because at that time, that was the- the rule. He didn't ask for any permit. And well, my- my mother's, you know, they- they rented an apartment was big enough to put the chuppah there. So, we had a Jewish wedding. And my mother- grandmother was happy; then we could go on honeymoon.

Of course.

And then on the way back from the honeymoon, my father was waiting for us at the train station with a letter. "You got permission to get married!" So, then we had our civil wedding. So that was it. My husband maybe told you that. But anyway, that's- that's the- that's the story.

But you were then still stateless- you were stateless?

Stateless. We were stateless until- until we got the- the British citizenship. Yeah.

That's why you needed the- the permission to marry?

[1:14:10]

No, no! We wanted to get married.

Yes, but there was special permission. Was it because you were stateless, or?

Maybe.

Yeah.

Maybe. I don't know.

Yeah.

Or maybe just French bureaucracy.

Yes.

I don't know.

Yes. So-

So.

At what point then did you decide to-

Then-

...to leave?

Well, I'm sure Peter told you that.

Yes, but-

But I have to tell it?

Yes, yes.

Well, because- because professionally, we felt that France, though he had engagements there, but it was not- not the right... environment and everything. So, so we- then he won another competition and we were- became very- he became very friendly and then I got to know her. Wonderful Hungarian pianist and teacher who- who taught- who lived here for many years. I mean, before the war he came- she came to, to England. And she said that, "You are crazy. Don't stay in Paris, that's not for a musician there. No- no." Just, just, just, "Here is a letter." And she wrote a letter, "I am going - you will be my student, you will get a visa to come here." And we got a visa to come here. Because she said he would be her student. So, we came here. But we stayed with some friends a few weeks. And then- then we rented an apartment in West Hampstead. And then, then- then, you know, then we didn't even- you- we had a- what was it called? Green- it was not- not the American green card, but it was green. Something to do with green. And it was for- for, I don't know, six months or whatever.

Yes.

So, we were happy and then we will reapply. And during this time, we got a letter that, "You got permanent residency." Residence- it was a green Residence Card.

Yes?

And then we got it, and then permanent residency. And then we waited till the- the five years then we applied for citizenship. And in '67 we got the citizenship. The British-

And was it important for you?

Very important. Absolutely- not- what about you?

I'll tell you later.

[01:16:32]

Okay. Now, for us it was very important, very important. And the children were born here. And, you know, that, that's- that's, that's after living through what we- we have lived through...

Yeah. You wanted to obtain the right papers.

Exactly. And we didn't want to move to America or, you know. Okay, we had lots of friends who move there and- but we never, never, never wanted to leave- we- we felt so happy and-

What was it about England or what- that made you feel that way?

Well, I don't know. I- it- I liked the- the- the honesty of the people. You could trust them. I- although my- I was once my hand- I had some ten pounds or twenty pounds- lots of money because I wanted to buy loads of things for our apartment, and then they stole it from my handbag. In a shop. So that was- that was the first disappointment. But it happens everywhere. And you know, I just- we just felt- and then we learnt English as fast as we could. Never- you know, never went to school, but- but- you know, that's why we make mistakes. But you know, it's good enough to, to live. And our children always corrected us, so that was fine.

Because then Peter commuted- he had a job in America.

Well, but that started later-

Later.

In '87.

Right.

Up to- up to '87 he was just a, you know, freelance musician.

What about you? Did you continue your music, or...?

[01:18:26]

No. No, I didn't. I prefer to be, you know, the wife and mother and, and daughter and whatever. And then I- I had always students who come- coming here. But, you know, twice I had to replace- once I had to replace this Eva who taught at the Trinity College. And she went on a tour to South Africa. She was away for six weeks or whatever. And she asked me so I went there to- to replace her. And then another friend who was teaching in Manchester, so I went to replace her for I don't know when- for what the reasons were.

And-

But- but I didn't- I didn't want to commit myself to any- any permanent work because, you know, your family comes first. That's what I-

Did you ever play with- together with Peter?

No, just for fun at home you know, but no, no concerts- yes. Yeah. Sorry. We did a recording.

Aha?

Yes. Yes.

Of what?

Of Schumann pieces. But I had to play very little. It was a, I don't know, three-hand work and he only has two hands. So, the third hand I had to play. But that was fun. And, you know, we did it in Paris. But every time we went back to Paris, we love Paris, and I, I- I was there- we were there a couple of years ago. But now they say it's not the same. I don't know. Maybe it's not the same but which- one- where? You know, unfortunately things happen.

And what happened to your uncle? Did he stay?

[01:20:06]

Oh, well he died. Of-

Yes.

Of course. He died.

But he stayed in Paris?

Yes, they lived in Paris. And then my aunt died, and-

And your other uncle?

My other- he died in Budapest. He had- he was very ill. He had cancer and then he died.

I feel draft coming from underneath. Sorry. No, not you?

I don't feel it-

Okay? I just thought that maybe somewhere a door opened or something. Okay.

And tell me you- you raised your children here.

Sure.

You settled in England- in Golders Green.

Yeah.

What sort of identity-how did you want to raise them? What?

I wanted to be- I wanted *them* to be happy. And I hope they are happy.

Did you speak Hungarian to them?

Yes- yes. Yes. Because the two of us, we always speak Hungarian. So, when they join us- and of course, when my mother lived with us, when my father died, then she lived- she was alone with us. And, you know, she didn't learn English. And she, she- she, you know, she became British subject. So, you know, she- she knew. But, but she didn't, you know, she could just get by. But she- she, she didn't really learn. And all her friends- here are lots of Hungarian friends.

So, she had her circle?

Yes, yeah, absolutely.

But what's amazing, that you moved and the parents moved. That-

Yes, yes. Well, as you can see family was- but my mother-in-law never wanted to move from Budapest. It's interesting. Not even when Peter's sister left. [referring to the draft mentioned earlier] Listen, there is something strange here.

You want to stop and?

[Sound break]

So, you were saying that Peter's mother didn't- never wanted to emigrate?

She never wanted to emigrate. No. She was very happy there. And her daughter left also later on, but, you know, she never wanted to leave. So, we, you know, she had her right to stay. She was very comfortable in her little- well, not very little, you know, normal apartment and she had lots of friends.

[01:22:14]

And what do you think your parents were different? They...?

It was my father, who hated- who, who was- who couldn't bear the thought to live- to stay in a country where they killed her parents. Not- they didn't kill her- kill the parents there, but because of the, the- what happened.

Did he feel bitter about it?

He- he was, you know, he just couldn't forgive them. So, but, you know, and then the communists. And he saw what happened during the Communism - and everything. So, he just hated- absolutely-

How did it affect him, as a doctor?

Well, he was- he- he- he was not affected by forbidding him to be a doctor, but, for instance, he knew that one of the nurses was working there with several doctors, or you know, in this department - she was a spy. He knew- my father knew it! You- you know, he had reasons to know it. And I mean, how can you work, you know? But a political spy, not a- I mean, if it- if- if there was a bad doctor, and if she maybe-

Yes, yes. No, I understand.

... objected to that, that I can understand. But a political-so you had to be careful what you said to a patient or what- what- what not to. You know. I mean, that was- you know, he- he just hated. So, he worked, and- and he played music. And, and that was it. And tried- and, *and...* I remember in my childhood, we listened to the- he listened to the BBC radio. But, like that. [indicating that it was done secretively] And- and we were covered, you know-

Yes.

... by that. And then, God forbid if the doorbell rang, you know, everything had to be shut and- that was also forbidden. I mean, you know, to live in a- to live like that. He- he- there were people who, who- who didn't mind that so much. They got used to it. But my father couldn't. And- but I think the first thing was that- what happened to the Jews. That was the first thing. He was not a practising Jew. See, I mean, you know, he never wore that a kippah

or he never- he fasted - maybe - when I was a child, but later when he was older, no, he didn't. He was not someone who went to the synagogue every Friday.

Yeah.

But, you know, he was- he was, he was very committed to his religion.

Yes.

But it's a- you know, a different-

Yeah – yeah.

So, he worked. He was, you know, that was- that, that was- that was his life. But he could not bear injustice. And for him, this sort of thing- it was- it was- for my mother it was different, because she was, you know, she ignored that, I think. Because you know, women they- sit down, and they talk, and they have coffee or they have- it was different. And, and- and- and the baby, when I was born, you know, it was different. But- but for a- for man, you know, it was- it was- for my father, you know, even if you know he- he could not make much money- enough just to survive in Paris. You know, it would have been perfect.

But he also managed to get another job.

But he managed- it was- no- no, because he knew some French- he, he- he spoke some French. And for this job he didn't need- doing all the- the medical examinations, at his age.

Right.

You know, he was sixty years old. You don't start, you know, school at this age. So, but for that he, you know, he got this job so, you know, it was - fine.

[01:26:06]

And speaking of Jewish things, did you, when you came here did you join anything? Did you- was that a- important for you, or-?

We had most of- you know, even now, and whenever - most of our friends are Jewish. But secular. Hungarian, but all- not Hungarian. But some, some are more religious than others, but most are secular Jewish people. But, you know, that's- I don't think there's anything wrong in it.

No.

Because the way you look at the world, you, you, lead your home life, it's, it's- it's there.

Yeah. It's similar. I mean-

It is, it is in there.

Yeah. And what do you think is different? What do you think?

I don't know. But sometimes, for instance, I have- maybe you can cut this out, but I have to tell you. I have a very nice, very good-

We can't cut it out, so don't- [inaudible] before- if you don't want to say it, don't say it.

No, I want to say it, but just- but- but it's nothing to do with my- our life. But a very, very nice Polish cleaning lady. And she has been working for us for twelve, thirteen years. Once a week she comes. She is better than a Jewish mother. Because she constantly calls her family in Poland. And "my Ada" and "my Angelica" – my- she doesn't tell me "Angelica" or- "My" – "My". And she- the phone rings and they call her, you know, and she- that's, you know, a family woman. I've never seen a better one in a Jewish family. But we always say she's like the best Jewish mother. So, you know, that's- that, you don't have to be religious to be like that. But it's very rare with - I think - not being Jewish, because all our, you know, friends, I know how they feel. You know.

[01:28:09]

So you think - affected- the importance of family?

Family, and- and, and justice and, and- and-

Values?

Being honest- values, honesty. I don't say that there are no dishonest people among Jews.

Yeah.

Because we are not- Jewish- Jews- Jews are not all perfect. We are not perfect. That- I don't say that. But if this is important for us-

Yeah.

And I think, you know- I- I admire- my grandmother could read the, the book and then she- she... whether she understood it or not, I don't know, but she took it very seriously. But that was her generation. You know? My mother was not brought up like that. But my grandmother, every Friday- Friday evening she did that.

Yes. And did you go- post-war did you go to the synagogue at all, in Budapest, or-?

Post- war? Yes. Because our neighbours...

Aha? Who were the neighbours?

Well, I don't remember them. Even their names I've forgot. But- and one family who were also very nice friends, above, on the next floor, they lost their son in either concentration camp or- or, or labour. Forced labour. I don't know. They were there every Friday with this family. You know? With this- and big holidays and everything, they were always there.

Right.

They were- before, they were not- that what I was told I remember, they were never religious, but because they lost their son, they became religious.

Aha.

And they, you know, they needed. They needed this, like – you know. And, and it was just fantastic to- to have this psychological help. This spiritual help.

[01:30:15]

Yes. And when was it, the first time you went back to Budapest?

In... '71 or '72.

So quite a long time.

Yes.

And what was that like to go back?

Well, it was interesting, because we went back because he [Peter Frankl] was invited to give a concert. And that was the first time we- most of our teachers were still alive – our professors. And they were- they- they were at the concert and they, they, you know- and it was just very, very moving. Extremely moving. The last- not this time, but maybe two years ago, three years ago, we went back- went back with this friend who is my childhood friend. We were there. And she said- we passed- we were walking in Budapest and we said, “Let's go to Népszínház utca”, you know, where I stayed. And I- I, “Let's go in and just how it looks.” So there- those days you could enter the gate to the door. Now, there was a door barrier to ring, but luckily, the caretaker just came in. And, you know, we started talking. Peter was there also. So, the three of us and then a caretaker. And she said- and I- I told her actually that I just wanted to- to, to remember, you know, where we've spent our childhood with my friend, and sort of- “Yeah, come in. Where did you stay?”, she said. And I said, “In that apartment, so, you know, fir- name's ‘first floor’ - but second floor.” And she said, “Oh

yeah, that- this-...this..." And sort of is- she started talking, "Who- who are still living here?" I said, "I don't remember." You know, "I'm- I'm old already, so don't worry." And suddenly, the new- the person who lives there now was walking by the corridor, took out her key and was going to open her door there. And the- the caretaker shouted up, "Mrs. Whoever - just wait a minute. How long have you lived here?" And she- she looks down. She said, "Since 1953." I said, "It's a big lie. Because I lived here till 1956. And my parents left at '57." And she went in and banged the door. So, I said, "I never go back to see it." What would it matter to her? She could have said, you know, '57 or '58, or whenever doesn't matter, or, "I don't remember." And then if she would be sort of, nicer, she would have said, "Well, do you want to come in and have a look?" Where I said my spent my childhood? Why not, you know? I would have allowed people to come in. So, I said, "No thank you. Finished." There- you know, this is typical.

[01:33:20]

And do you follow the Hungarian situation today?

Well, not- not, really not in detail, but we cannot avoid following because we get emails and we were there- we were in Hungary in, in April. And, you know, you see- you see things. But when we go there, we go to- just a limited time when he is busy. And, and that's it. I don't- once I walked on my own. I wanted to, to see an exhibition but I- but it was just closed there. So, I, I went there, but I couldn't go there. That was it. Otherwise, you know, I'm not interested anymore. No, I- It's- it's been- the only thing is I don't lose my Hungarian being because I- that's the best- the language that I speak the best. And I like the food very much. So, when I go to Hungary these are the two things which- and of course, you know, I like to go- we went to the opera, but not to the Opera House because it's closed. There is another big, big place we went to. Okay - fine. But I can go to opera anywhere. So, it's not something- it's- what I like is to go to the Music Academy because I have very, you know, happy childhood there. So, you know that, that's- that's always nice and you know, now they criticise it because they have renovated it and it looks different. It sounds a bit different. Yes. Okay. Not so- not-

[01:35:09]

So, for you, what is the most important part of your Hungarian Jewish identity or Hungarian identity?

Important?

Mn-hnn.

Well, that I was born to a family who were wonderful. And, and I married a wonderful Hungarian Jewish person. And we have lots of Hungarian friends. And certain things, you know, there are, there are certain wonderful things. But I had- we had now last- a few days ago, friends from Hungary visiting London.

Yes?

So, we took them. And we went to Kenwood. They have never been there, and looked at the flowers and everything. And then what they said, "Oh, it's..." They couldn't speak, you know, how beautiful. They said, "No, no, in Hungary you don't see that." I said, "But why do you say it? There are parks!" "Yes, but they are not well looked after and they are dirty and they are..." You know – "[expression of disgust]" So, I was so proud, you see? But-

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

Well, I cannot deny that I was born Hungarian. So, you know, this is part of- part of me. And I don't want to deny I was born Jewish. And I'm very sad to think of all these people whom I lost. And I'm very happy to be, live here, because I found that here I – here, I can be- I can be myself. And then immediately I open my mouth they know I'm not Hungarian- I'm not English. And so, what? You know, I do my best. I don't like English food particularly, but even Hungarian food now, it- it fills my stomach. It's not- it's not the best thing for me now. So, you know-

Do you cook Hungarian food? What- what's your favourite?

[01:37:15]

Well, I do cook. But I- I cook it the simpler way – way. I don't bake, and I could never bake. I didn't like to bake. Because when I cook, I can change the- the, the ingredient in it. So, if it's not enough salted, I can put some more and- but when I- if I would bake, you know, it's done! Finished! [Bea laughs] Either it's good or bad. No, thank you. I didn't do that. So, you know, but I- I like, and then- and it's very nice that I love the way we live here, in a house. That's- that's something which, you know, gives - I don't know. It's privacy, and at the same time we belong to a- to an area. We- you know. It's not like we have friends in the street. We hardly know anybody apart from this and this. But we are not 'friends' friends. It's not- it's not that. But you know we- we just- the children went to school locally here. And- and I feel- I feel at home when I go out. And after that many years it is- it is normal. And I- in Budapest I know every, you know, the- the things and I don't feel at home anymore. How could I feel at home? You know, I know it here. But, but- feel- feeling? No. And I have- and still, we have very nice friends there. But unfortunately, our generation as you can well imagine, is dying out. So, every- every time we go one less is alive.

Yeah.

Or two less, alive. So, you know, that's, that's- that's fact of life! There's nothing we can do about it. And it happens here too. But, if we get some- a kind of a freedom of thinking here and you know, some, some- I don't know. It's- it's- it- we just- we just feel- and that we owe a *lot* to Britain. We feel that. So, we shouldn't complain about paying income tax, or council tax, or this- I don't know what. But, you know, we owe- we owe Britain - Great Britain, London, or the UK, or England or wherever you call it - our life. Because they accepted us. And for me that's, that's- that's an important thing.

And did you talk to your children about the past? Did you-was that a...?

[01:40:03]

Well, we took them a lot to Hungary when- you know, for holidays.

And their grandmother was there?

And- grandmother, of course. But also, the holidays, you know, when we visited and we rented- I remember on the Lake Balaton we rented a little house when my, my mother-in-law was there. And that time my sister-in-law lived there too. So, we spent two weeks or three weeks there - lovely. It was really, very recent. And, and you know, we went- we have lots of nice memories with the kids there. They say, "Remember...", you know, the shops, they said, "Does that shop still exist?" You know, because there are those days there are lovely shops where you could buy pencils and pen and this and that and much, much better than here.

Yeah.

You know? But now it has changed everywhere. No, no, it's fine! You know, the children- they speak Hungarian. Not perfectly.

Yes?

But- but why not? It's- it's a- it's a free- it's a free-of-charge language for them.

So, they have a connection?

They have a connection, but they were- they were angry too, because they- when they were little, they- opposite my mother-in-law's place there was a shop - not a shop, was - a delicatessen shop or something, and they sold ice cream. And there was a long list of ice cream. And they went in and, and I said, "Let's just go in and get whatever you like." But of course, they couldn't read twenty different ice cream. And then- then- then they said, you know, they said in Hungarian, "But what kind of ...?" And then they said, "Well, I don't know." And then they, "Well, read it." But they couldn't read it. So, they- they left; they were very angry. But the nicest story is, a friend's son, a friend sent her son there who spoke - also they lived in Holland, but who spoke - Hungarian and- to buy bread. Great. So, he went down. He had the money. And then they- they, cut half and they give it to him. And he said, "Can I have some papers?" But this he said it in Hungarian: "papers". I said, "Where do you live?"

And then, you know, he said, "In Holland", and they gave him paper. And this boy was maybe six, seven years old. And went home and told to his parents, "I don't understand. He- she asked me very rudely, where do I live that I want paper? And when I said I lived in

Holland, there was paper.” And that's typical Hungarian. You know, this has gone through generations now this story, because this is, you know, if you come from abroad, then you can get this or that. If you are here: “Why do you need paper? You don't need paper. You just take it home and...” [Bea laughs]

[01:42:54]

And how do you think- I mean how did your experiences affect your later life? Do you think they affected you?

Which experience?

The war experience.

The war experience? Well, you know, I'm not somebody who is- who is thinking of bad events of my life, if possible. It's my character. It's not that I forced myself. You know, it's my character. So, these documents that you will see from parents, my mother collected, put them in a, you know, box or wherever, so I just took it out and I- you know, I am not the type who would just week by week, going through, “Oh, my God, what they had gone through?” or, “What happened to them?” I loved them when I was, you know, they were- and I have great memories of them. But I'm not the type - maybe it's- it's wrong - who would almost say, ‘enjoy’, but like that, you know, thinking of the bad events of the past.

Yeah.

No. I- I- my personality is more living in the present, and thinking ahead- ahead of the future with limitation, but try to make the most of everyday life. Now, this is my day today, so I'm thinking a lot about them.

Yes.

But by tomorrow, you know, hope- life will just go back to, to normal.

And do you think it affected your children somehow, or...?

I- I think so. They are not- they are not, you know, would ponder over bad- bad memories. Well, you know, you dream. Of course, you dream about things. And there are events that would bring you back memories. Then of course, that's different. But just to- to think back constantly, and, you know, "Why didn't- didn't we leave Hungary in '37 or '38? They could have. They were young, they could have left. Why?" Now shall I- shall I ponder over it? No point. But there are people who cannot avoid that, you know, saying, you know, that life would have turned differently.

Yeah.

Sure! Things- if I hadn't met this girlfriend- this- this French pianist who became a very close friend in Paris, I would have had- maybe I- I- because I stayed in Paris in a- in the- in a place called *Cité Universitaire*. And that's like a, like a- like a city where you- students live there, and they eat, they practice. There was a studio to practice the piano. But when she came there and she said, "Well, no, you have to come and stay with us." They had a big apartment, I had my room. I could practice- they had two pianos in a room and another. And, you know, and I- I was speaking French the whole time. So, you know, it was a great thing for me.

Yeah – opportunity.

[01:45:55]

So, I- I was staying with them until we got married. Because I didn't want to- you know, my- my uncle's second wife- the first wife died shortly after the war. And he married an- a woman who was from Transylvania. And she was deported with her child who was a two-year-old little boy. And the little boy was taken away from her. And she, she never- she could never- I don't blame her! She never survived this experience. She was very, you know, depressed. And for me, it was- it was very hard. And when I had this opportunity to move first from them, to the, to the *Cité Universitaire*, I took this opportunity then. And, and, you know, I think they were also happy. They didn't say that, "Oh, why?" and I mean, "This should be your home!" and whatever. But – no. I knew, I- I felt. And then afterwards when I moved to my friend then- then that was natural, so they didn't mind.

Do you have any regrets?

Of what?

I don't know – anything.

Not that I can think of. Not that- you know, nothing, nothing that- that would haunt me.

And do you have any message for anyone who might watch this video this interview later?

Based on your experiences?

[01:47:49]

Well, that- even, you know, that first of all, you know, I was lucky because I survived. And I- my close family - stayed alive. You know, that was absolutely lucky. That's, that's, that's, you know, you cannot arrange it in life, right? You know. But, you know, talking about my father, for instance, who lost his family. I think- I think, you know, it's a great example, that he struggled through this trauma. And, and then, you know, he had the- he had a family. A close, you know, only one daughter, but still. And, you know, he probably had a difficult life because of his profession and of his emigration and all that; it was not easy. But- but he managed it. And- and, you know, we- even my children remember him, because he died in '73 so they were little. But still, you know? But, no, you have to take things that you cannot change. There is no- no point struggling through mentally, emotionally. Because it doesn't, it- it doesn't- Ok, there are people I know, people who go regularly to psychiatrist or psychologist or to- you know, that kind of things. And for them it helps. I would never need it or I would never, you know, it would never occur to me because, you know-

Yes.

You know, I can- I can- I can handle life. And I hope I can do it until the- the last day of my life. But you never know what happens.

Do you ever regret that you didn't pursue a music profession?

[01:49:45]

No, because it was my decision. It was entirely my decision. I didn't ask any advice. And, and I remember when I told him he got such a shock that he couldn't- he said, he thought, you know, that I got *meschugge*. But then- then afterwards, I explained that- and he, he accepted it. And - you know. I think maybe my parents probably felt it, that I shouldn't have done it because I mean, after all, since childhood, I was studying and- but then I explained to her, you know, what I have learned, it- nothing has been lost.

Right.

I mean, you know, I that- I then- either I know it or I remember it, or, or I just, you know, go over it. But that's one thing. The other thing is to, to, to make the life of that, you know. And- because I know pianists who never had children because that, you know, they wanted to pursue a career. And, you know, for me, that's, that would have been out of the question, number one. Number two- or maybe number- changing around number one, I knew deeply down I was never made out of it. Because for me to- to go, you know, on stage and whatever, I had limitations. I had very small hands. So that was one thing. Okay, there are other pianists who can manage because they select their repertoire and everything with small hands. But that's- that's already one thing which- which helped me to come to the decision. But the other thing is, you know, I could see him, and he was much, much better - always. So, you know, and even he, a concert is a stress- strenuous. Why should I spend my life? It's enough with him, but for me? And then, neglect my family, or not to have a family - was totally crazy! But I had to get to this stage where I was maybe twenty- twenty-four, when- when I- I realised it. I was twenty-two when we got married. I still pursued and went to competitions. I had third- third prize in a competition in Germany- in Munich. "Okay, but so what?", I said. And then, then- then the year after I think then that was the time when I said, "No thank you." So!

[01:52:18]

Okay. Is there anything else I haven't asked you, you would like to add?

Not that it comes to my mind, but if- if it comes when you, you know, I can always-

Yes, you can.

Send- send you a note.

I think we have discussed many things... From my side I have asked you...

You have enough.

I think I have asked you many questions.

But no wonder that I couldn't reply to some questions that- because I was too small and I-

Yeah, you were very young.

Yeah, young, and I don't remember.

Sure – sure.

And because my parents didn't, you know, didn't insist that I remember, that I should do- that I should write it down. No, they didn't.

Maybe one last question: Do you think your life would be- sometimes you think about it how different life would have been let's say, without the war? If- if the war hadn't happened?

Well, this is- this is impossible to know. Impossible.

Yeah.

Who knows? But maybe this- the, the, the experience of war, maybe it gave me lots of, you know, lots of- to accept many things that otherwise I wouldn't have accepted. To be grateful to things that maybe I wouldn't have picked as, as something to be grateful for. Maybe. Maybe that. That- yes. Because to survive, that was the number one thing. To, to find the family - the close family - that was...

Yeah.

And- and, you know, we were not imprisoned, you know. So, all that I- we have to be grateful- I have to be grateful for. It could have turned much worse. So, I think, yes. Yes. I've learned a lot from that and I am- I am very grateful.

Ok.

Ok?

Thank you very much for this interview again-

Good.

And we're going to-

Good.

Have a break and then look at your-

The papers – afterwards. Yeah. I didn't take many photos. There's no point.

Ok.

Just, you know, where, you know, the- this family and- and I have my parents -got photo, you know, which we then- and you know, I, I- you know, I have dozens of albums with my childhood photos. Who doesn't? [inaudible]

Ok. We'll see what there is.

I just put those closest, you know,

Ok.

...to me, and I'm sure- and then there are lots of papers, original papers, which are coming already... apart, so- and they are in Hungarian. I don't know. He has a camera but I don't think you need them translated. But if you want to take photos about my father and you know all that, *that* by all means, yes, you take photos.

[End of interview]

[01:55:40]

[01:55:58]

[Start of photographs and documents]

Photo 1

So, this photo was taken somewhere in Italy. Probably in Bordighera, but I am not sure. And it must have been on the honeymoon which was, which happened in 1932. Although they got married in October, but this seems, I mean, in Italy, the weather was always nice then. So.

Photo 2

So, this is [coughs] This is my father when he was a young doctor. Actually, he started studying medicine in Budapest, but because of *numerus clausus*, he couldn't continue. He couldn't finish his studies. So, he had to go to a provincial city, south of Hungary, Pécs. They had a very good, very well-known medical school. And then he finished his studies. And I'm not sure whether this photo was taken there or already when he finished his degree. When he got his degree then he worked obviously at the beginning in a laboratory. And this is a photo that was taken from him as- of him as a very young doctor.

Photo 3

This is a photo of my mother before she married my father. She was working, actually, I think at a bank from the age of fourteen or fifteen, when she finished her schooling. And she loved her work. She was a secretary. She did all accounting and everything and she was brilliant. And later on, when they got married, she continued working in- in an office all the time through- through all those years she lived in Budapest, before she left in 1957.

Photo 4

This photo was taken, and- on Margit-sziget, which is a lovely part between Pest and Buda. A little island. And we used to go there very often. There was fresh air and play- playing possibility for kids. And I- it just says below the photo that I got tired so I wanted to sit down and then I sat between my father and my mother. And it must have been around '41 - '42 the latest.

Photo 5

This photo was taken also in Margit-sziget – 1941. For- between '40 and '42, I'm not sure of the date. And I just say on it that- I say- I told my mum and my dad: have a good rest now and until I go and look at the little lake my- by myself.

[01:58:54]

Photo 6

Hello! I was about six years old, I would think, maybe seven, even. And it was taken in the castle area in Budapest. And it was summer, obviously. And it was, again, one of those beautiful spots in the capital of Hungary. There we could go, you know, in less than half an hour from anywhere in the city, and spend beautiful weekends in the sun.

Photo 7

So, this photograph was taken after the war, maybe '46 or '47, something like that. And beside myself, my mother and then the other side there was my uncle from Paris who visited us. Then aunt in Buda, who lived in Budapest or actually in Gyöngyös with my uncle. And next to her is the Parisian aunt, who was the wife of my uncle there. And unfortunately, she died shortly afterwards. So, it must have been at their only visit after the war – '46, '47 something like that.

Photo 8

This was on the balcony of our apartment in Budapest - Népszínház utca. This was on the side street. And- with my grandmother, and her daughter-in-law. And they- they lived in Gyöngyös my, my aunt and my uncle, and they visited us very often in Budapest. And my grandmother was very happy when they came. So that photo was taken there. Yes.

[02:00:48]

Photo 9

So, this is my beloved grandmother, Mimi. And this picture was taken, I am absolutely sure, in France. And she must have been eighty-seven or eighty-eight years old. She died when she was eighty-nine. So, it was - nearly eighty-nine when she died, so it must have been about a year before her death.

Photo10

This photograph was taken in the French Alps in the early '60s, where my father was working in a sanatorium, and we visited my parents. And I think I took this picture because I'm not on it. So, it's my father and the rest of the family, my mother, my grandmother and my husband, Peter.

Photo 11

This was my uncle, my mother's elder brother. And he was the one who saved our lives during the last few months of the war, World War Two. Because he found a- very nice Christian families - two of them - who were hiding us afterwards, who were willing to hide us for the rest of the war, which took about six weeks to eight weeks, I think. And he was a lovely person. He taught me ice skating. And he was just a wonderful person. I loved her- I- I loved him and he loved me. He never had any children. So, I was like, her- *his* daughter.

And what was his name again?

Karolyi, Elemér.

Thank you.

[02:02:38]

Photo 12

This photo was taken in our house, in the early 70s. And the family, all our family, who lived here were on this photograph. My father, my mother, my husband, the two children and

myself. I don't remember who took this photo, but it was in December obviously because there was also a tree here in- in the- in the house to- just for decoration.

Photo 13

We were on holiday the four of us, two children, about five years ago in Vietnam and in Saigon - Ho Chi Minh City. We were- we were on New Year's Eve and also around Christmas time so I don't know what day it was. But then we had dinner in a very nice restaurant. And as you can see, it was- the weather was summery, and we had a wonderful holiday there.

Photo 14

Well, this picture was taken on a cruise ship, going to the Baltic states. My husband was performing on the ship I think once or twice, and then the rest of the time we just had a wonderful time. And it was between 2006 and 2008 - somewhere around there. And it was a great, great holiday. Highly recommended.

[02:04:12]

Document 1

This is a certificate that my father was applying for an immigration from Budapest from Hungary to France in 1957. And it also tells about his, his presence at- at- in 1944 - in Hungary, when he was taken- actually it was not in November it was earlier - in force labour camp. And then he escaped from there, and then he went into hiding. But this translation is basically telling about this, and also about his request to leave the country officially in-

Document 2

This is a Refugee Certificate, which all of us received in France upon arrival there. And also, my grandmother. So, we have all become refugees while we were living there. And this certificate is- belonged to my grandmother.

Document 3

And this is my mother's Certificate of Naturalisation here in the United Kingdom. And this was a very, very happy day for her. And she was also very sad that my father died before he

could apply for citizenship, because he would have been the happiest person in the world to obtain British citizenship. But unfortunately, he died before.

Mrs. Frankl, thank you again for this interview-

Thank you very much for interviewing-

And for telling your story and your photos and documents. Thank you so much.

And I hope that all this documentation will be enough for you. If not, you can always come back and get some more.

We'll come back. Thank you.

[02:07:00]

Photo 15

These are my grandparents from my father's side. My grandmother, my grandfather in the middle of the picture. On the left side, there is my uncle. And on the right side, my aunt, and my aunt was the daughter of my grandparents and they perished in Auschwitz. And this was taken probably a couple of years – two, three years - before they were deported to Auschwitz.

Thank you very much.

[End of photographs and documents]

[02:07:35]