

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	140

Interviewee Surname:	Kahan
Forename:	Rachel
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	24 July 1927
Interviewee POB:	Ujfeharto, Hungary

Date of Interview:	29 November 2006
Location of Interview:	Salford, Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	3 hours

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 140

NAME: RACHEL KAHAN

DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 2006

LOCATION: SALFORD, MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

Tape 1: 0 minute 18 seconds

RL: Today I'm interviewing Rachel Kahan and today's date is the 30th of November 2006. The interview is taking place in Salford, Manchester and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

RL: What is your name?

RK: You said it already.

RL: I know

RK: Rachel Kahan.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

RK: Rozie Kraus. This is how I was registered.

RL: Did you have any other names?

RK: No. Not as far as I know.

RL: And where were you born?

RK: Ujfeherto, Hungary, in Hoidomede – no – it's Szabolcs. That's a county.

RL: And when were you born?

RK: 24th of July 1927.

RL: Can you tell me first of all something about your family background?

RK: In what way? I mean you know, all this family background - it's so ordinary. I mean, if I ask you, 'What have you done?' I mean, you went to school, and my father

went to work and we waited till he comes home and we tried to help. You know, it's all normal. I went to play with my cousins when they had the time.

RL: Let's think in terms at the moment of your father's family background, his parents, your grandparents, what your memories are of his family - your father's family.

RK: I had a grandmother a few miles away so when it was holiday we went to her. And all my father's sisters and brothers, they all lived in a different location. I don't know what you call it; villages, or a bit bigger. They had their own family and it wasn't so easy to get together with horse and cart, you know, when a *yomtov* (festival) come, you didn't have a car or a train - a train maybe - but we just hired a horse and cart and we got together every so often, on *yomtov*. You know, you have to imagine the background before this tragedy came is just ordinary. I mean if I ask you 'What have you done?' it's like next-door neighbour, and it's all uniform in a way. One was better off, one was poorer and came to the door to do - what do you call it - for *schnorrering* (begging) - or you know, a get-together.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 26 seconds

RL: We're interested in the way of life of those communities.

RK: Well that was the way of life, Rosalyn!

RL: But I'd like to have more.

RK: Like what?

RL: So if I ask you things...

RK: No, go on let me see, yeah.

RL: So you mentioned - was it your father's mother, the grandmother that you remember?

RK: Yeah.

RL: Can you just tell me a little bit about her? What do you remember about her?

RK: Only that she was always in the kitchen, and cooking, and she was feeding us.

RL: Where did she live?

RK: In Téglás, with her youngest daughter. And I've got no idea about my mother's parents or my father's father. I've got no idea when they died or what happened. You see in those days, everything was a secret. They don't tell you anything what's happening in the family, in a way. And now you really miss it especially...nobody to ask. So just...it's just buried.

RL: So you never met your mother's parents?

RK: No. No mother's parents, no father's... One thing I know, my mother's father was quite well off because he was doing rag and bone man. In the old days, you know, and all the old stuff and leather they brought in...and then I think he sent it abroad. You know, that was his profession, and then when he passed away he give it over to his only son because my mother had...they were three sons...three daughters and a son. And he carried on the business and of course there was a bit of a quarrel because...the usual thing, you know. He takes everything and he got the three sons and the youngest daughter wanted to have some of it as well but I've got no idea how they sorted it out. In the end he sorted it out – Hitler – in a way. No, but he died well before so I got no idea who he was or what he was, my grandfather.

Tape 1: 5 minutes 47 seconds

RL: Where was he? Where was he living – where was the family?

RK: In Ujfeherto – yeah. Once for a joke I asked my cousin, you know he is a very *frum* (orthodox) fellow. I said, 'Chaim! How do you know that our *zayde* (grandfather) was Jewish?' You know, just for a joke. He said 'He must have been Jewish because he was married - his wife – his brother - was married to a very *frum* woman.' That was the only answer. Because you know the way we were, nothing ... everything was a secret and even the family, you know, one sister didn't say to the other. And then the children grew up and then they got together. But somehow, I don't know – today it is not like this. Everything is open and they get together. Maybe because you always lived in a - what you call it? - not a fear, but you didn't feel that you are at home because you are surrounded with *goyim* (non-Jews) always. And you know, going to school so there is a *goyim* behind me with a dog. Because they decided that the Jews are cowards. So you start the dog and you throw, you know, you instigate it on him. And you always had that background fear in a way, what you only realise after, when you see some other way of life. You know, you recall it.

Tape 1: 7 minutes 30 seconds

RL: Coming back to your father's family, how many brothers and sisters did he have?

RK: I think three and three. You see my mother's youngest sister had nine children, Rosalyn. Not one of them came back. Not one of them. And I always beg my children. Her name was Yachad and how can you...how can you accept a child should go with a name Yachad? I mean today its 'Tanya' and all this. Anyway actually one managed to give...you know, Hindy Yachad...And the uncle has got the name Boruch, Bernard, you know. But it always crossed my mind. Her oldest child was at that time nineteen and not one of them came back from that family.

RL: You said your mother had another two sisters. What families did they have?

RK: Oh, one of them had twelve and only three came back, one sister. And one brother lived in – let me see - one sister lived in Téglás. You see Téglás was like you have, what you call it, Lancashire and Cheshire. We lived in Szabolcs and she lived in Hoidu. And that area – the Germans didn't have time to gather them together to, you

know...and there this aunt of mine, her children survived, four. But the husband was already called away about two years before. You know what Munkator is? He was in Munkator and never came back, we never seen him. She remained with three boys and a girl – so they went to I think to Theresienstadt...No, they didn't even, no, no, a lot of Budapest people wasn't *schlepped* (dragged) away, wasn't dragged away, because they didn't have time any more. The Russians came. And those families came back.

Tape 1:10 minutes 18 seconds

RL: What about your mother's brother. Did he have a family?

RK: My mother's brother, yeah, this Chaim Klein you know, who took over from his father, from the *zayde*, the rag and bone man business. That's all he had. There were three sisters and this brother, and I tell you the youngest sister had nine, ten children. None of them came back. And one sister had twelve, and three girls came back.

RL: And the sister in Téglás?

RK: Yeah, that's the one in this county who weren't dragged away like the others. They remained a family, you know. They had a business, with all sorts. You know, with materials and food and things. Yeah, so made a living that way.

RL: And what about your father's brothers and sisters? Did any of their families survive?

RK: No, none of them. Maybe one or two cousins. They lived quite a scattered way from Ujfeherto, and some of them, you don't even know. And don't forget you don't live together that you should be so close, so en passant you got to know, this one has survived. But if you have no connection... I mean when the Americans came, so they took a group of people to Sweden, yeah? I was liberated by the Russians, and the Russians, all they want to do is rape you. I mean, the Germans at least gave you one meal a day. But the Russians, all they wanted, you know. We were going in a group and they got together 'We're going to steal all the things from the Germans'. And as I went into a room, this Russian soldier behind me, and I could see he wants to close the door, you know, to grab me, and all I had time to put my feet before he could close it. So I run away. And then were about two or three soldiers behind us and one was a Jewish fellow – a Jewish Russian – and he was telling us 'Keep away from them', because all they wanted is rape you. And so then you had to look after yourself, so we went in the fields and looking for some fruit, some food – you know, anything – whatever was going...

Tape 1:13 minutes 9 seconds

RL: We'll come back to this story...

RK: No, you're talking about family.

RL: Yes, so I'll just ask you just to try and fill in a bit of a picture of your father's family – what you know about them.

RK: No. Not much really. Only this sister who was in Téglás. Because she went in Theresienstadt and there was no *Vernichtungslager* – that's a German word. I'm sure you've heard it before. And when the Russians... I think Theresienstadt was liberated by the English, I think, or the Americans, I don't know exactly. Anyway they were liberated and they were looked after and they were OK. And they tried all to go back, because we all thought we're going back to Ujfeherto because we've got all the family there. And all you had is ghosts. So this is how it was, our '45 liberation.

RL: Do you know what kind of education your father or mother had had?

Tape 1:14 minutes 16 seconds

RK: I've got no idea. They could read and write, that's the only thing I know. I mean, my father most probably had some sort of educational standard. One thing I know, whenever he had time he sat down and he had a *Gemora* (Hebrew text) in front of him and he was *shokling* (swaying) and learning and many times he fell asleep between. But otherwise I don't think. We went to – you know, as children – we went to ordinary elementary schools till age of twelve and what the hell do you do after the age of twelve? I just don't know. They tried to put me in with somebody who knew how to sew underwear, shirts and things so... 'Ok, you go to learn sewing'. But otherwise – I don't know, it always puzzles me. And listen, those days they all concentrated, you know, if you had a *shidduch* (arranged marriage), all you have to do is be *balebusteh* (good homemaker). Never mind the degrees, can you bake a *challah* (festive bread), and can you lay the table nicely? And that was all the **mailess** in those days. Unless you were very clever and you dared to go to Budapest. You see, if you went to Budapest all the Jews were worried that they will lose, you know, all the *frumkeit* (orthodoxy). So anybody decided to go to Budapest – it was such a problem – such a drawback. The parents were scared that, you know, they will forget where they come from.

RL: Did your parents belong to a *Hasidic* (very religious) group?

RK: In a way. All these *Hasidim* they had a *rebbe* (rabbi) to follow. They all had which *rebbe* you follow, and my father did go to one of them. I've got no idea where. No I don't.

RL: Do you know how your parents met?

RK: Oh Rosalyn! I've got no idea! With a *shadchan* (person who arranges marriages). I'm sure they didn't fall in love I can assure you. Didn't meet in a - what you call – in a corner. Definitely it was some sort of woman – somebody, you know. No. And don't forget, Rosalyn, in those days a lot of cousins get married you know. Today they discourage it.

RL: So were they related?

RK: No, not as far as I know. As I told you I thought maybe he's a *goy*.

RL: When did they marry?

RK: I don't know. They must have married before they had children.

RL: Who was the oldest child?

RK: My sister – she was liberated with me. My oldest.

RL: When was she born?

RK: 1920.

Tape 1: 17 minutes 27 seconds

RL: So she was born 1920. So they married before 1920.

RK: Yeah. Before 1920. Yeah.

RL: Do you know what happened with your father during the First World War? Did he ever speak about the First World War?

RK: No. No idea. How old was he? Was he an adult then? Yeah, just about. But they were all called into the army, no? I don't think he was in the army. I don't know. I've got no idea. No.

RL: So what children did they have? You mentioned your older sister. What was her name?

RK: Chaya Sura.

RL: And then?

RK: And then. They lost two children in between – I was always told. One was Rivke and then one was I don't know the name, and then was me, and then Avrumke – Goldie really.

RL: When was she born?

RK: Goldie? 1929.

RL: And what was your father doing for a living?

RK: Yeah! Feather merchant. You know what does it mean?

RL: No, tell us, what did that entail?

RK: It means that you go to the villages, I mean you go to farmers who bring up ducks and geese. And every so often you have to pluck them, you know – down and feather. And the farmers - exactly like you go to the sheep farm for wool. And you go

to feather and he brings it – it's all in a sack – he brings it home then you've got a big working place and you sort out the feather and the down because down is so much more than feather. And then you know, in the wings you have all those long feathers. No, you don't do you? And that has to be sorted out as well.

Tape 1: 20 minutes 1 second

RL: What happens to the different feathers?

RK: It gets sold! Sold abroad. Even chicken feathers, yeah. It's been sold abroad. And then you've got the factory. I don't know if it's - what you call it - if it's in a factory or abroad. I think in Hungary was already a feather factory, yeah, to make cushions and things – the end product. Yeah. So that was his...and quite a lot was on the street, what wasn't very [...] because he'd go from one farm to the other and then...

RL: Did he have people working for him or with him?

RK: Yeah he had one or two, and we mucked in as well, the kids, when we had no school any more – twelve, thirteen. So you go help your father. Besides you know, we were playing in the street. In those days you had big, big, big, big you know, when you can play in the water and you take your shoes and socks off...what do you call them?

RL: Paddling?

RK: Paddling, yeah that's right those big paddling things. Because they hadn't yet no draining there. You had these paddling pools and it drained down but before it drained down the kids all went and play in the water. That was part of entertainment.

RL: So did your father bring the feathers back to the house or the home, or did he have a place?

RK: Yeah he had a place for his material. He had a place and we all went there – the whole family whoever could, started sorting out the feather to the down.

RL: Can you describe your home? Where were you living? What was it like?

Tape 1: 22 minutes 29 seconds

RK: Rosalyn I tell you, the house was like your house and next door house. My father was out. He came home. We had supper and we didn't have a bathroom. We had a basin to have wash and to wash our hair. And when the kids come to the garden we go to play. You know what we do a lot? I wanted to have a doll, so how do I have a doll? I sew my own doll! We had a few *shmattes* (rags) so we made our own dolls and our own you know, playing things, what we could. Because you know it's like you go round here, in any place. What will they tell you what they done at home? You know it is normal. After, when this tragedy came, then it's already a different story.

RL: Did you live in an apartment?

RK: Ah no, in a house, in a house, yeah everybody. I didn't know what 'floors' means before I left Hungary, before I left Ujfeherto. I'd never seen one. How is it possible to have so many stairs of house? Once I went to Mirtaz in Debrecen and then I seen what a town looks like.

RL: And just take me through your house, you know, what it looked like.

RK: Right, my house. What about my house. First of all you know what stove they used those days?

RL: Describe it.

RK: First of all you had to chop wood. You have no coal. And we used that for cooking. And we had a stove like this and it had two holes. And here was the thing to feed with the wood and that's it! No, in fact we had the bakery, and if we wanted to – I mean not we – the village had a bakery, so we got some bread there. And for *Shabbas* (Sabbath), the *cholent* (Sabbath meal) on Friday we used to take it to the bakery and they finalised it and *Shabbas* lunchtime we went and picked it up. And we had a kitchen, we ate in the kitchen obviously. And then *Shabbas* we had a dining room of some sort and the rest was bedroom. I think two or three bedrooms. And of course, you know, you had a toilet – outside, dug out with a thing. Ah you know when I think of it. And every so often the people came to collect the rubbish and it was all open then. It wasn't in bags, I can assure you. Just threw it there and they came with a shovel and they put it on their...it's incredible - incredible.

Tape 1: 26 minutes 17 seconds

RL: Did you have running water?

RK: Oh, of course not! You know what fridge we had? We had a giant thing – water, yeah? Below there was the water. It's in concrete here. And there was the water right down there. Our water wasn't drinkable – didn't taste right. We had to go to the third or fourth neighbour – their water was all right. But if we want something cool, so we had a saucepan and we tied it with string and you lowered it down to the water that it should keep cool. And when you're ready to eat it so you took it back. And that was our fridge.

RL: So where was this?

RK: In the middle of the outside. In our garden - middle of the garden. But the nicest you know was when the winter came. You see here the way they build windows is so stupid. In Hungary or on the continent I don't know, you build the houses...Here is your outside window and here is your inside window and you've got a window ledge. So first of all you can clean your windows yourself, because it all comes inside. And then anything cold outside so you put the food on the window ledge because it's so nice and cool. And it's covered. And this is how we improvised what you take here for granted. But I am so surprised that nobody here or anywhere in the West - they don't copy that patent. First of all this window cleaning is so illogical somehow. The way you open the window, you close it.

RL: Coming back to the water, so if you wanted water for drinking, you had to go to a neighbour's well?

RK: Well no there was one, a public one as well. You plunk, plunk, plunk, plunk and came there drinking water.

RL: How did you store it in your house? How did you keep it at home?

RK: Well, you know, in a bucket. You can always have fresh water, always there's a job: 'Go on – go to get a bucket of water, we've run out!' you know. And we had a bath in a thing like this (motions circular bath) and I don't think everybody had to have one bath. I got the feeling we had to have the same bath. Aaah, anyway, anyway. Everything in its time. You know, when you think of it I always say 'You should never be in a position how much you can put up with'. You know what I mean? Because you know, when somebody tells me: 'Ah, I can't take any more' it irritates me because, you know, I went through so much. You've gone through so many...it's just you know, such a clever saying. G-d forbid you should go through with it.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 3 seconds

RL: What's your earliest memory as a child?

RK: Oh. In a way, when I was with my grandmother in Téglás, they sent me into a *Cheder* (religious school) when I was five or six or something. And somehow, this I remember, learning Hebrew. To read and to *modeh ani* (morning prayer) and all this, sort of important first time. You know, as you start growing up, this order of priorities.

RL: So were you living with her at the time?

RK: For a time, yeah, living with my grandmother. I don't know why they sent me there for a bit. And then I came home so I joined the Téglás – I mean the Ujfeherto school. And I wasn't a first class pupil at all. I was very stupid, and just went through school.

RL: It was a Jewish school?

RK: Yes it was.

RL: Was it boys and girls?

RK: I don't think they had boys you know. I can't even remember. No I think they only had girls.

RL: Do you remember anything from school? Any incidents?

RK: Not really. Only thing, we just played together and this string, what you call it. You know, when the two girls hold and...

RL: Skipping?

RK: Skipping, yeah. And what else? Only all sorts of games and things and get together. And waiting to have dinner. Otherwise I can't... it's so hard to remember because all this thing in between, it just blackens everything, you know, because that's already nothing. It's always how and what and why?

RL: What about shul? What did your family belong to?

Tape 1: 32 minutes 30 seconds

RK: Oh! Very *frum* born and we didn't have to, but we *davened* (prayed) at home. Although we didn't understand a word from it but that doesn't matter. You just, you know, comes the Friday night you said *l'chu neranena* (Friday evening prayer) and then come *Shabbas* you said *nish mas kol hai* (Sabbath prayer) you know - the usual thing, and then you kept the *yontev* and so you had to go – you know all these routine things, even what you see today. Today it's such an extreme that they don't know where to stop.

RL: Did your father build a Sukkah?

RK: Yeah. I don't know if he built it but we had a *Sukkah* (booth built for Tabernacles). Yes of course a *Sukkah* we had, and *etrog* and *lulav* (items for Tabernacles) and all these important.. When you think of it - really.

RL: Did you ever go to a *shul* (synagogue) there?

RK: Yeah we went to a *shul*. Yeah. *Yontoivim*.

RL: Was there just one *shul* in that area?

RK: No each group had two or three *shuls* there. Mind you, what's the difference? How do I know? What would it mean to you? Nothing. No. I don't think they had more than two, three. I don't even know how many Jews lived there. First I knew. I forgot already. I don't know, three hundred, or three hundred families, or people – I don't know. I don't know. Well, now is nobody there.

RL: How organised a community was it? Do you remember anything about what was available? What facilities there were, Jewish-wise?

RK: There wasn't sort of committees who look after you, no there wasn't. I don't even know what they done with their ill people. I've got no idea if there was a hospital or what.

RL: Were there any Jewish shops?

RK: Yeah. My aunt's in *Téglás*. You know, the youngest sister of my father. Because they built up some sort of Jewish shop. But in those days there was no kosher manufacturing – nothing like it! It's just everything at home. I remember I told you that stove, what we had. I mean with coal and with wood. You had to chop the wood

and get the thing going, and *Shabbas* you had to have next door and they came in, goyim, and they helped us out.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 19 seconds

RL: Your neighbours next door?

RK: Next door or three doors away, yeah, with the light and all this.

RL: How did you get on with them?

RK: Well, they knew we are Jewish. You know it kills me when people say...it I should be broken...it should be eradicated from earth – as a phrase – ‘and they all went to the- just, you know, like sheep.’ I just don’t...I mean if you just think for a – You know, two *cşendōrs* (military police) came to our house, yeah? First of all you have all old people, and you have only *kinder* – children, because all the adult men were called into the Munkatabor. And even if anybody would have dared to lift a...couldn’t! they would have been dead. And secondly, all those neighbours would have helped the *cşendōrs*. So you know when I hear this ‘You know they went like sheep’ my stomach is churning. I went to the...I don’t know if you were there... and there was a talk about Theresienstadt, and this fellow – were you there? – was mentioning about ‘They went like sheep’. Why even a phrase like this has to be printed? Because then he tells us all the obstacles, what we, what they went through. So what the hell do I have to justify myself because you don’t...I mean even if you think how much you have to build up to resist anything and how many people get killed in between, that even should anybody think of a thing like that. I was so upset the whole evening, it’s terrible.

RL: Coming back to your neighbours, you said they used to come in and light the fire?

Tape 1: 37 minutes 36 seconds

RK: Yeah, two or three, they were quite you know, friendly but it means nothing...you had no social. (RK speaks in Hungarian) You know, ‘Good morning, how are you?’ And we went there for the milk. You got the milk there and then from the cow, while they were milking we took the milk home. You know that was our connection. And when Christmas came, all we heard, they’re slaughtering their pigs: (imitates squeal) Eeee – you know the whole night you could hear, *nebbech*, (poor thing) this screaming from pain their pigs how they slaughter them. I’m just telling you the sound from the neighbours. Well, that was their...that was Christmas, you know – if you heard all this screaming from the *chazer* (pig) - and then they had food for the rest of the year from one pig or so. But, you know like...one auntie was doing sewing, yeah? So the neighbour went to have them made a short or a skirt or something. But I mean you didn’t go socialising, have a meal together or anything like this. I mean they were so *ungeheten* or protected. You know, *le ma’an hashem* (for G-d’s sake) you shouldn’t be *traife* (non-kosher) or mixed or anything. That was our friendly neighbourhood.

RL: Did you suffer from anti-Semitism as a child?

RK: You had a complex about it. I mean what way? I mean, you know many children go on the street, so they come home 'Oh you know this fellow threw a stone at me' or, 'This group started with a dog on us'. So you see when I was a child that was the mode, the fashion that you have to hate the Jews. And you know what peculiar how things go? First you are a coward – yeah? You don't fight. Then you fight in Israel, that's no good because they won. I mean those were no good. I mean who the hell am I going to please? You know, people are so...I don't know what to say... gullible – gullible I think. First of all, all you felt full of hatred, only follow all the influence, what you don't think, you just follow. I mean how does this Irving David make sense to you? Supposed to be a clever fellow and he's full of facts and facts and facts and facts, and he tells you that it's a tale. I mean so who is clever? I get so frustrated when I hear things like that.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 10 seconds

RL: Coming back to your story...

RK: Right.

RL: How aware were you of what was happening ? For instance with Germany and in the '30s. Were you aware of anything?

RK: No...no. Nothing. No, no we didn't. Whatever we heard we didn't want to believe. And then, you know, come 1944...

RL: Well let's just keep to when war broke out in 1939.

RK: Yeah. We were so-called normal. No, we had the hatred, you know, the Nylosh. The Nyloshuk is like the Nazis, so you did have a complex already and sort of a fear that they are the enemies. That they hate us and we don't know why. Just because you happen to be a Jew, so that's why they had these. So we just carried on, I mean especially me, I was only - how old was I? – seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. . You know, the most precious child years.

RL: 1939 you were twelve.

RK: Yeah, twelve, thirteen, fourteen. Yeah.

RL: So did things change at all?

Tape 1: 42 minutes 33 seconds

RK: In that three or four years? No, no nothing changed. You just plod along and you hoped to make a living.

RL: You say some of the men were taken away.

RK: Yeah they went to the Munkatabor.

RL: Were any men in your family taken away?

RK: No, I didn't have many. I only had my father and he was at home. But my uncle went. Oh it was...he was such ...a good businessman, you know, he ran a shop with all sorts of....No...no. We just, day in... like here. Like when we went to Iraq. Will we win or won't we? You just sit back and see what happened. Also we didn't have...in those days there was no papers. So how did we know the news? Did you know that every corner of a place, a fellow came with what you call those – what you bang and you say the news? In Hungarian you say *dobolás* (drum). I don't know how you say it in English. But you know what I mean?

RL: Right...

RK: And then he reads the paper and he tells you the news of the world. The world or of Ujfeherto I don't know. And that's it! So then we heard that Germany is losing. Well that's it, no detail, or how bad or whatever it is.

RL: So did your father continue with his work as normal?

RK: Yes. I think so yeah.

RL: So life really just went on as normal?

RK: Just went on as normal but just you were very anxious what's going to happen. Because we knew that- no good for the Jews and many a time you didn't want to believe what you heard because it was the Hungarian bad part of the...Germans you know, they fought with them because Germany promised Hungary they won and they will give them back their land what was taken in the First World War, like Romania and Czechoslovakia. But of course it didn't happen because they lost and still they come back to Slovakia and Romania, what the Hungarians think is their land.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 9 seconds

RL: Was there less food around because of the war?

RK: Yes, you know what's happened? You know, not in towns, in little villages there was plenty of food from the fields. So to make a bit of money a lot of people filled up a suitcase with food and we went to Budapest, and we sold the food for whatever they gave and that was a bit of an income. And it's a black market in a way. But who cares? In those days you want some food and in this house they improvised.

RL: So did you yourself do that?

RK: Yeah! And I wasn't caught.

RL: What kind of food were you taking?

RK: Any food. From the fields, apples and whatever food was on the fields, what you can cook from the fields. Oh, we made ready-made bread and something like that and butter. I don't even know – they just filled up our case and we went.

RL: Where would you go in Budapest? How did you know where to go?

RK: Well, you find it. Where do you buy today all this...all this what do you call it? All this...drugs? Where do you buy those drugs? Same way – exactly – you don't know. But if you would deal with it you would know where to go. The same with this food, you know – the corner, or somebody, you pass it on from one to the other.

RL: How often did you do that?

RK: No it wasn't...by the time we done it already the war was at the end of the crisis.

RL: Did you grow your own food?

RK: Yeah we had a little garden – yeah. Tomatoes, and we had a big nut tree. And every day you come out you saw already the tomatoes getting red so there and then...yeah, we had a bit of garden. And we had cucumbers, very nice.

Tape 1: 47 minutes 49 seconds

RL: What about vegetables?

RK: Yeah! Paprika and carrots and parsley and all these. Radishes.

RL: Who used to see to the garden?

RK: Oh, we all together.

RL: So did you have a big garden?

RK: No – no. It's a house garden.

RL: Did you use to keep any animals?

RK: Yeah, chicken...we did have some chickens and I was watching how they laid their eggs. And some of them they had little chickens, you know. Broodies, we had and they were making the chickens – the little chick, chick, chicks. I don't know what we done with them. I think we just grew them. And we had to take it to *shochet* (slaughterer), I don't know. I don't know if they killed them. Yeah. You know the nicest, we'd go to a market and we'd buy fish. And the fish is alive when you buy it in the market. And we bring it home. Today I can't believe it. And you scrape it, and you opened it, while the fish is alive. And it tastes delicious. Ah, funny. Don't forget, as a child you don't think. Because you just do it a task. As a routine you have to do it.

RL: What kind of fish did you buy?

RK: *Hecht* – always full of bones you know. Not salmon I can assure you. I didn't know that salmon existed. No, mainly *Hecht* I think. *Hecht* and *ponty* (carp)– you don't know what it is, it's another type of...yeah.

RL: What kind of meals did you eat? What sort of food did you cook?

Tape 1: 50 minutes 3 seconds

RK: I don't know, I mean it's ordinary – potatoes and *lokshen* (noodles) and just you had... I don't know what's the main thing. Eggs we had plenty, and butter and milk stuff. Just you know, nothing special. Whatever.

RL: What about *flaishig* (meat)? What did you have for *flaishig*?

RK: Only chicken. And we had no beef. They don't supply or we hadn't a lot of ...I don't know what.

RL: So you never had any meat?

RK: Not beef no, only chicken and duck and geese...you know. Do you know how to fatten the geese and the duck? You didn't know that? You take a duck, yeah, and there is corn soaked in water and you get this duck, *nebbech*, and you just... you take a handful of this corn and you just stick it through his mouth like this. And you test their belly – the stomach, is it full up? Yeah. So you let it go. And they get fat this way. You had no oil those days. So the *schmaltz* (fat) from this duck we used it for the rest of the things what we needed. And the meat of course. So we had geese and duck and chicken.

RL: So did you actually have these animals? Did you keep them and fatten them?

RK: No we didn't. No we went to the butcher. I think they had a butcher there. Yeah. And we had a *shochet*. We went to deliver the chickens to the *shochet* and he *shechts* (slaughters) there and then. And we had to bring it home and pluck it and making kosher. And that was a full time occupation all the things what you take it for granted today – everything ready. And so you did have you know, time to fill out.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 40 seconds

RL: How often would you have duck or goose?

RK: Oh very rare, once a week had to be – on *Shabbas*. But otherwise, no hardly, no. It was very, you know, very expensive.

RL: So would you buy that for maybe a special *yomtov* or something?

RK: Yeah, *yomtov* and *Shabbas* we had it.

RL: You had duck and geese for *Shabbas*?

RK: Chicken, yeah, that was imperative. It's part of the deal so to speak.

RL: And what about when it came to *Pesach* (Passover)? What about *matzos* (unleavened bread for Passover)?

RK: Yeah we had *matzos*.

RL: Were they baked in the town?

RK: No, no, no they came from somewhere, I don't know.

RK: It happened *Motsei Shabbas* (at the end of the Sabbath) you know, *Motsei Pesach* (at the end of Passover), when they started to *schlepping* us away. Not one crumb of bread in the house. I'm sure you know it, no?

RL: Right. Wine, that was the last thing I was going to ask you.

RK: Yeah, yeah. I had my uncle in Téglás he had a beautiful winery – yeah. And he had an orchard as well with fruit. I mean far away from the house, but we had a horse and cart and we went to take all the grapes and put it in the pressure. And he had a cellar and we put all the wine there. Yeah, in the summer it was fantastic.

RL: So you used to help?

RK: Yeah we all went over and mucked in.

RL: Was that his business, the winery?

RK: I think it was just a side-line. I mean by the time he finished with the family I don't think there was anything left for the... I think so. I don't know. I mean the whole year round he used it for *Shabbas*, so I don't know. It's very hard to know all these details. You just cross your mind and 'How was it, or, was it?' You just leave it.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 17 seconds

RL: So coming on to 1944 and the events as they unfolded. When did the Germans come in? Was it March?

RK: April. Well *Pesach* finished *Motsei* whatever. And next day it started. April, I think it was. And I'm sure you know it already, they bacht [?] everything.

RL: Well we need your story. This is the thing.

RK: But it's all the same, Rosalyn.

RL: Everybody's story is slightly different and it's important to build up a picture of each person.

RK: They came, there came two policemen, *cşendör* they called them. They let you take whatever you want. I mean how much can you take, whatever? And I don't even know if we marched or we were put into a horse and cart. I think we just marched

through the town. And the *goyim*, they're standing and you know they are just looking on. At the gates. Have you ever been to a place where, you know, you just stand in the front of the house, these villages. And the neighbours get together and yackety-yak. And then there comes something to see and 'Ah-ha, you know. They're taking the Jews away...taking the Jews.' And so we went, must have been in the train because we went from Újfeherto to Debretze, a big town where there was the ghetto. All these Jews were collected there in that ghetto. And then we were there I think four to six weeks in this ghetto.

RL: This tape's about to end. We'll start with the next one with the ghetto, so we'll not go into the detail just now.

RK: I see. Ah-ha.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 34 seconds.
End of Tape One

TAPE 2

Tape 2: 0 minute 7 seconds

RL: This is the interview with Rachel Kahan and it's Tape Two.

So, you were being taken to the ghetto. Just tell me again where the ghetto that you were taken to, where was it?

RK: In Nyírcsászári.

RL: And how long was the journey?

RK: Well Nyírcsászári and Újfehértó is about 30 kilometers, maybe 25. I just can't remember how did we go there? It couldn't be an auto obviously, or horse and cart. Honestly, unless we just marched, I don't...Oh no, we went by train! What am I...?

RL: What did you take with you?

RK: Whatever we could really, whatever clothes and whatever you could. Because we didn't know what was happening and who was going to have it. And we didn't know what you need or what you don't. You took whatever you think you need it or worthwhile saving, so-called.

RL: So do you remember what it was?

RK: No. No I just don't know. I don't know even if we took pots and pans – I don't know! No... you are in the dark; you don't know what you need and what you don't need. You just follow the 'Go, go, go!' Don't give you a minute to think. Especially the house hasn't got a crumb of bread because it was *Matzo Pesach*, so everything cleared out.

RL: And what happened when you arrived?

RK: When we arrived, we met with all sorts of people from the area - of course everybody Jewish, obviously. And we started to improvise, to make some sort of...not living - to be able to eat something.

RL: First of all where did you actually stay?

RK: I think they emptied some big place. And we were there for four weeks, so where was a bed, and where? See I can't remember any of these important details how they arranged it. Mind you, they must have organised it a bit beforehand that they will bring them here. And I didn't know, did they have in mind that you'd be there a few weeks and then they take you to the *Vernichtungslager* or they take you straight away to the working place? So we don't know what they have planned. We just have to go, 'Come on, come on, come on.'

Tape 2: 3 minutes 15 seconds

RL: So what are your memories of the ghetto?

RK: We stayed there for four weeks. Then they took us to Auschwitz...

RL: Now before you went on to Auschwitz, have you got any other memories of your four weeks in the ghetto? What happened, how you lived?

RK: No, no. Very haphazardly. You lived but you don't know what's happening. Once I am going, one thing you know they're going to kill you. That was always on your mind - 'How long will they stay, how long will they stay?' But there was nothing so-called.

RL: And food?

RK: I don't know if we were given food or we improvised food. They must have brought in some food. It's so frustrating, all this that you just go one day after another and you don't know what's happening, and who to turn... you have got nobody to turn to. And then we went...

RL: How were you taken?

RK: By train! To Auschwitz. So we went to Auschwitz...

RL: Can you describe the journey?

RK: Squashed together. You don't stop. It's the usual, you know...just like an animal, like you don't need anything. At least an animal you stop to pass - you know - your necessities. And then we arrive in Auschwitz. You see they needed some workers and then ... No, you know, before we went to Auschwitz they took us somewhere else and they took everything away.

Tape 2: 5 minutes 13 seconds

And then they took us from there to Plaszow. Plaszow is the outskirts of Krakow. And there was a big, big place where they were mending military uniforms – you know what was torn apart in the front. So all these people were doing sewing like I was. So I don't know for how...And this Plaszow was a bit like, not normal but freedom, because the Polish were there, and they were selling coffee. '*Kaffe goronza! Kaffe goronza!*' – That was all. But I don't know how... we didn't have Polish money. I just can't recall all this but this is so clear that we mended all the German uniforms from the front what were torn and then there was some sort of food given out. There was a kitchen. And then they took us to...

RL: Were you all together there, in Plaszow? Was the whole family still together?

RK: No! No we went to Auschwitz just to - selected out, but we already split up.

RL: So when did that happen?

RK: About six weeks after the ghetto. And then we were in Plaszow for another six weeks, and then they took us to Auschwitz.

RL: So when you were first separated out, how did that happen? Do you remember that?

RK: Yeah you just go this way and this way – that was the family together. When you come with the family first time to Auschwitz. And then when they took us back from Krakow and then back to Auschwitz, and then again separated who were too thin or too ill, go this way and this way. And only then did I get their number – their tattoos (indicates forearm).

Tape 2: 7 minutes 41 seconds

RL: So when you first arrived in Auschwitz, as a family, who was separated? Who came with you? Who didn't come with you?

RK: We were all together in allowed. But there was that...I don't know who, Mengele or what...He just done this and this. Any children or any old people they didn't want because they don't work. And you know, just this and this and this and this. We were all five together yeah, so they could see I'm young enough and my sister. And then you go this way and another one the other way.

RL: So who of your family went the other way?

RK: My parents and my sister. And then they take you in a bath and give you a bath and they cut you all your hair off and all the, you know, and they give you a uniform - striped dress of some sort - and then they put you again in a group of some sort. And this how they took me to Krakow – Plaszow.

RL: Did you know at that point what was happening to the people – to your mother and father and sister?

RK: Rosalyn, we didn't know anything. We only knew that all they want to kill us. And we were so naïve after the liberation. We were all going home because we're going to meet our family, you know. I went back with my sister to Újfehértó. I was half dead already because I had TB. But oh, what I come back to - it's already another story.

RL: Yeah, we'll not come up to that yet. So you had no idea at this point...

RK: I tell you. You do have an idea but you don't want to face it, in a way. Because then you always think, 'Oh, how will it happen? How will it happen that they kill you?' On the other hand if you are not the only one. If it's a group, you know you don't take it in a hysteric manner. Do you agree with me? You wouldn't know, you should never be in the same position. Yeah, because somehow you know we all... Many a time people are together, 'Don't worry, we are all together in it'. And this how it applies psychologically to survive a problem like this, somehow to people who put up with it so to speak.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 32 seconds

RL: So how long were you in Auschwitz that first time?

RK: Only about three or four days. Because they needed this mending I think in Krakow Plaszow. They needed some workers. And once that was done, we finished with the Krakow Plaszow because I think it's collapsing or something, the Germans were turning. So all back again to Auschwitz.

RL: What were the conditions like in Plaszow?

RK: Very interesting because there was possible cooking amenities but I don't understand how they were selling, going around '*Kaffe goronza, Kaffe goronza!*' and cost you so many zlotys. But who there had the money? Mind you there was Polish land there and they had connection with the outside world, the Polish people. So only a scattered of our type I think, were thrown in there. But the main grounding was already established a while ago. I mean, I never met anybody who was in Krakow Plaszow. And so you don't know all these details.

RL: What kind of building were you in?

RK: It's a big giant building just full of sewing machines.

RL: Where did you sleep?

RK: We sleep one, two, and three (indicates ascending bunk levels) you know these bunkers, yeah.

RL: Did you used to have to walk to work?

RK: No, no, no, it was next to it. Next to it. Was one blanket I think, for everybody.

RL: What food were you getting?

RK: *Chazerai* (rubbish). Do I know what food? It wasn't on a menu card.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 29 seconds

RL: How were you treated at work?

RK: Some people got quite a lot of, you know, *schmeiss*, beaten. Quite a lot got beaten. What for, I don't know, they just invented you know, for an example for the others. Of course some people got beaten up

RL: Who was in charge of you?

RK: The SS. I tell you Rosalyn, you see, the place was surrounded and that surrounded place had a big hole, like you know, for paddling. And there we felt always smell of body burning. And those bodies were killed by the Germans because they were spies, so called. They are Polish Christian, they are resistance, and we knew somehow that those are bodies smell...smell of bodies. That was in Poland, not in Auschwitz.

RL: So this is in Plaszow?

RK: In Plaszow yeah. But there's a big paddling pool there and they threw the bodies there and burned them in there. Those are the resistance of the Polish people.

RL: How many people were working?

RK: Hundreds, I think, hundreds.

RL: And were they men and women or just women?

RK: Just women. Just women. Funny, you know, you never even think of this. ...yeah it must have been just women, yeah. We were all women, just taken for granted.

RL: And were you yourself beaten at all?

RK: No, no. I was always with my sister. No...no. Always you know, keep up with a group somehow. No you just, you know, you see some people and they specially make an exhibition of it in the middle of the field, start to...beating and beating.

RL: Did you have roll-calls?

Tape 2: 15 minutes 7 seconds

RK: Yeah, every so often – *Zählappell* we called it in German. *Zählappell*, five in a row. But that was mainly in Auschwitz.

RL: In Plaszow?

RK: Yeah...no, no...no I mean in Plaszow. Yeah, Auschwitz as well. And then when they took us back to Auschwitz, then I got this tattoo, and they give you...

RL: What number did you get?

RK: 21758.

RL: Can we see it on the camera?

RK: You want to see it...21758. Got it?

RL: Ok, so you received the number and then how did life continue?

RK: Let's see, we had to stand in a row, yeah? And it's so peculiar, you're a young girl and I said, 'I must have it (gestures to the tattoo) somehow hidden'. I didn't want it here because it will show so it has to be so, inside it. Even then, you think you are a young girl so...

Yeah, so then we went back to Auschwitz for another few weeks. And you know always *Zählappell* and what do you call it, choosing who will live. Because if you're too ill they don't want to carry on. Then another firm needed workers, aeroplane spare parts. So we were chosen to go to St Georgenthal. St Georgenthal is near Dresden in Germany, so we went there...

RL: So can I just ask you about the few weeks you were in Auschwitz? What did you do during the day?

Tape 2: 17 minutes 29 seconds

RK: Nothing! You know you just go on the bank there, and every so often *Zählappell*. You go in five in a row. And what did we do? Actually nothing, somehow. Walked about in this big grass.

RL: Which camp were you in? Which part were you in?

RK: In Auschwitz? Do I know? I've no idea how it was...what do you mean, how it was parted... how it was parted I don't know, which part was what. And then again I don't know how many few weeks I stayed in Auschwitz. Then we went to St Georgenthal that's near Dresden and then they already took us in, somehow in a little house with one bed and things. Because we had to work to repair aeroplane spare parts. Giant big machine, with oils and you can see, you know you pull it down and you have to screw pieces to fit into the aeroplane. And when we'd been there for months and months my pores in the arm – you know it was in and I washed it and I cleaned it and it all was black, black. And eventually after weeks and months it grew out and we got... but it was in the skin itself. But eventually it went. You can't see that I'm dirty.

RL: So you were actually put into houses?

RK: Yeah I think so, it was a house already, because they needed these aeroplanes very badly, whatever it needed doing.

RL: How big a group were you there?

Tape 2: 19 minutes 55 seconds

RK: Only a hundred I think. I don't know where they...Somehow you have nothing to do with each other you stand in the queue, *Zählappell*, and then you get some food if you're lucky and then you stretch out and the next day again. They're always there to wake you – not the fellow, the *Aufseherin* – you know the...the women who take charge of you.

RL: What were they called?

RK: *Aufseherin* – don't ask me...it's a German word.

RL: And how did they behave towards you?

RK: Very sadistically, and every time you went a bit not straight they give you a *khap* (grab), you know, a *patsch* (slap) and things. And screaming... It's so peculiar. I had one *Aufseherin* and she had a pair of earrings, was always shaking in her ear. And whenever I see – first of all I would never buy earrings what shaking – you know what I mean? Because that woman always reminds me, poor woman I'm sure she's dead a long time ago but you know the way she *patsched* you and the thing in her face you know shaking. And every time I see somebody wearing earrings like this so I just keep away from it. Maybe it's the personal things I suppose you remember.

RL: So were you hit? Did she hit you?

RK: Yeah once or twice I had a *patsch* or two. I don't know why – I mean what's the difference. Makes no difference. Yeah...give you a *patsch*. How do you say it in English?

RL: Was anybody killed?

RK: No, not in the workings place. Only when you went back to Auschwitz because that was the factory and if anybody, you know, wasn't well enough so it's just this and this and this. But you know what it means? You know there was three sisters and they were like this (indicates thin as a finger) and you have five in a row yeah? *Zählappell*. And these girls were always the last in the row. And, like you are in a row and the SS was there already. So, somebody changed with her. You know the healthy one, so-called, went to that row and this girl came here. And that's the way she was never caught that she...You know, somehow in a way you know the will of living you give yourself a way out, in a way. And it worked for her. Because we always thought, impossible that they should... you know they were so thin and they done it, they made it.

Tape 2: 23 minutes 26 seconds

RL: How difficult was the work in that aircraft factory?

RK: No you were at it, at it. A giant factory with oil, and pulling round you...Not sort of a physical effort, but just the surrounding and atmosphere and all this oil around you stinking.

RL: Were there other workers working there?

RK: Yeah! Yeah a whole group of girls.

RL: Besides the girls from Auschwitz, were there non-Jewish workers there?

RK: No, I don't think. They didn't mix with anybody, only, only so-called your own type

RL: So you had no contact with anybody else?

RK: No. Only these women. We were so isolated, you know, make sure that you had no private contact. And in any case the Poles - some were you know also against...you know like partisans. But they were in the woods, not among the DPs.

RL: Did you have any information about what was happening in the war?

RK: No. No. Only thing we knew when it was the liberation.

RL: But at this point in time you didn't know?

RK: No. Nothing came through.

RL: How many days a week were you working?

Tape 2: 25 minutes 5 seconds

RK: Seven...Every day. You don't know if it was *Shabbas* or Sunday... You didn't know. Nothing normal somehow.

RL: So you worked Sunday as well?

RK: Yes as far as I know. You know it all happened so long ago and what you take today for normal I mean you never even give it a thought that it should be 'Tomorrow is Sunday so we...' They just... you know it's like an animal in a way. You know there is no routine and what you do and what you don't do, you just get up and again if you're lucky enough. You didn't have to undress or dress, you had nothing to wear. You were in this striped dress from day until night.

RL: You say you remember being in a house. How many were in the house?

RK: Hundreds. I've got no idea really. There was a group of people. They need them to go to the factory to manufacture spare parts and you had no connection with anybody in a way to compare. I don't know everybody was so busy 'Are we

surviving? Are we surviving?’ Maybe that’s why. And then everybody was so busy they were forced to do this, forced to do that. I presume you know, your mind was that way working - or it didn’t work.

RL: What about food? Do you remember what you received?

RK: No. Was food, you gobbled it down and that’s it. You liked it or didn’t like it doesn’t matter. I mean you had something in your stomach and that’s what mattered. I mean you didn’t sit down. They just plunked it on your lap. And you didn’t think twice. Yeah.

RL: How did you keep yourself going?

RK: Well it was a routine, Rosalyn. You just got up and waited - maybe the war is over and maybe you will go back to your parents or whatever and liberate. That’s when there was a rumour that Germany is losing and we’ll be liberated. Everybody shush-shushking, you know. And then all of a sudden the Russkies arrived.

Tape 2: 28 minutes 6 seconds

RL: Where were you at this time?

RK: In St Georgenthal, the same place as the manufacturing. And then the Russians come, and a big *yomtov*, you know, singing and dancing. And then they showed their maleness [?], you know. All they wanted is just to rape you and dancing together and all they wanted...And even what the Germans gave you, they had a priority. I never! Mind you I was told these people came from back and beyond from Russia. They were never out and in desperation they draw in anybody for the army, and they just throw them anywhere where they thought would be useful. But that was so heart breaking, you know. If you could have seen how we’re hiding in the toilet – in a giant big toilet. And flooded with, with *shmutz* (filth). And we had to hide there otherwise they’d just finish you off. You know when I think of that scene, it’s really a miracle that you didn’t drop there. But you didn’t want them, so they went away, the Russkies, because they had to go further to liberate. No, at first they went with us to *zabrane* – You know what *zabrane* is? Stealing, that’s a Russian word. ‘Come on, come on! *Zabrane! Zabrane!*’ And they went to every German house, they went. Whatever they could – not they, we - whatever they could, and whatever we could we taken. You know for six months I wore a little dress – a two year-old baby’s dress – pink baby’s dress I was wearing. I had no other thing. And then the morning we go on the fields to try to find some beetroots or whatever there is on the soil, because they gave you nothing, the Russians. You see when the English liberated and the Americans the *lagers* were full of you know food and everything. That’s also overdone because they had some typhus, and it wasn’t ideal for the body to take it. But still better than the Russian done it.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 5 seconds

RL: So where were you living after liberation?

RK: After liberation – so what do you do? Where do you go? How do you go? So we went to every station - railway station - wherever the train went we just climbed on it on top of the oil tanker. Doesn't matter if it's south or east or north, doesn't matter. Got no idea, so we just went and then had to walk to the station. And my sister kept telling me 'Come on. Come on!' And I couldn't, because I had TB – an active TB – which we didn't know! Didn't know (mimics being out of breath) because they were after us. Anyway, so eventually we arrived to Újfehértó after four weeks. I don't know where we ate or where we slept. It's just incredible, really. We arrived in Hungary, in Újfehértó - of course nothing there. Empty. A few youngsters came back and they already moved into their house and there was some food already. And my sister took me straight away to a doctor and I went to a sanatorium in Debrecen – a TB sanatorium. And she went to my aunt who lived in Téglás, because she wasn't in a concentration camp. And I was in Debrecen in a sanatorium. And then they were there and they all want to go to Palestine. Everybody is Palestine. And my sister got... they made a *shidduch* – the most terrible *shidduch* they made for her. She married somebody...the most impossible union. Anyway she put up with him. Then they all went to Palestine. – no they didn't. They stayed in packing. There is a packing where the *lager* was. You know all these refugees they had to be housed somewhere. I think the Americans and the British looked after them. And I remained in Debrecen. And my sister went with her husband's family back to Germany. And I remained there. And then you know in Germany there was a *bricha* (organization to help refugees escape). Did you know that? A *bricha* who was working for refugees to bring them back from Russia. And my sister got in touch with this group. And she came with this group to bring me back to where she is, Germany. And then when we arrived she took me to Gauting, another sanatorium - TB sanatorium. She left me there.

Tape 2: 34 minutes 53 seconds

RL: What was the story about her husband?

RK: Nothing. There was no story.

RL: Where was he from?

RK: Hungary – from around there. They just lived but it wasn't that... And then, where have I got to – oh yes, she came back for me from Hungary to Germany and in meantime it become 1948, yeah?

RL: Wait a minute so let's just go through...So you were liberated in...?

RK: '45. And then we tried to come back to Hungary.

RL: How long did it take you to get back to your home town?

RK: Weeks and weeks, I don't know, climbing from one train to the other. And then as soon as we came back I went to that TB sanatorium.

RL: How long were you in there?

RK: About a year, nine months I was there.

RL: What do you remember about that time?

RK: Well it's a TB home where you're not supposed to work and you don't get any treatment. You just rest and I don't really. Oh yes, I had some pneumothorax, X-rays they made, you know, pneumothorax? Put air in your chest in your lungs to squash your...together. Anyway you don't know all this.

RL: So you were there about a year?

RK: About, yeah. In the meantime my sister got married. It was in '48, when the state was established, and they all went on Aliya. And they were also you know they lived on *ma'abarot* (refugee camps) and ...terrible. So I was in Gauting, near Munich and she went to Israel – so called.

RL: How was that sanatorium? Did it differ from the last one?

Tape 2: 37 minutes 27 seconds

RK: Well Gauting, there was all sorts of people there. Hundreds of them. All these liberated people, Russians and Germans, all Hungarians and Jews and not Jews. And then I was told that there is a committee in Switzerland who wants to save Jewish TBs to bring them to Switzerland in the summer time. They were called...not the *bricha* – another one, I think Arie Handler was in it. So there was a few – four or five *frum* patients and they brought us over to Switzerland. Brought us to Switzerland. They put us in a sanatorium there.

RL: Were you able to keep anything at all? You know when you say four or five *frum* people.

RK: I mean what for a woman. I didn't have to *daven*. I didn't have the...I don't know. I mean, I didn't have to cook for myself. You know you're not rigid at all. Just you go along, you just improvise, not touching it at *Shabbas* or something like that. You can't, I mean, you don't want to.

RL: Were you aware when it was *yomtov* or the Jewish calendar?

RK: Yes I think so. Eventually, yeah. You catch up with realities or with what's happening.

RL: Were you able to keep anything at all in the sanatorium?

RK: In which one?

RL: Any of them.

RK: Yeah in the Schweitzer one yeah. Not in the other ones. You don't have to keep anything. I mean really what's there to keep – a woman especially. You can't do sewing you can't do writing, you have nothing. But when we were in Switzerland you

know I had to have an operation. And then there was a new medication for TB in...in 1950 years. So I got that and I think that done the trick - I think.

RL: How did the Swiss sanatorium differ to the others?

Tape 2: 40 minutes 23 seconds

RK: You can't compare. *Kodem kol* (first of all), Gauting is a hotchpotch of all sorts of millions of people. And they put it up on the spur of the moment. And the Augustine in Debrecen also which was Hungarian and I don't even know how they run it. It's an old establishment. But the Swiss I mean that's their *parnosseh* (way to make money), I mean, they're up to date with it. So and this new medication came out, so that done the trick in a way, you know. And then this organisation guaranteed for the Swiss that they will look after us and once you become healthy they want to get rid of you. You have to go. You have to leave. So at that time I think I already got married. I met with my husband in Switzerland. He was also, you know, *frum*. A few *frum* people were saved from this *goyishe* place there in Gauting. You know because it was all *goyim* and all sorts of people there.

RL: Was he there?

RK: Yes he was also there.

RL: In Gauting?

RK: Gauting.

RL: Was he not well also?

RK: Yeah but not so bad. I mean he could have gone years before... You got nowhere to go. I mean where did you go?

RL: Did he also have TB?

RK: Yes, but not in an active manner like I had. I had an operation. He didn't have to; just by itself whatever was available, you know, not in a manner.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 24 seconds

RL: So when did you get married?

RK: In '51.

RL: In Switzerland?

RK: In Switzerland, in Geneva.

RL: Who did the wedding?

RK: Who was it? I don't know - Rabbi Weiss, I think...somebody who was before Rabbi Levy – you know Levy who was in Switzerland? You know Levy? Yeah, from Gateshead. You know him? Know the name. Before him, whoever was the rabbi?

RL: Were you in touch with the Jewish community in Switzerland?

RK: Yeah. I was. Oh yeah.

RL: Were you actually living in the sanatorium?

RK: No, no. Yeah, but once you are discharged you are discharged. I lived with a lady in Zurich for a bit. She was very nice. But from Switzerland you have to leave because...

RL: So when you were living with the lady in Zurich were you still going to the sanatorium or were you completely finished?

RK: No, completely finished. Every four weeks I had to go for treatment. You know some more pneumothorax. But otherwise...I went to another sewing class of some sort - in Zurich. It wasn't so interesting. And then we decided to get married. And where do you go, and what do you do? When I think of it really, so abnormal everything. You know you get married – whom do you have there? A few strange people around you. I don't know. So. You see, you have TB. You can't go to America. You can't go to Canada. You go to Palestine, Israel. You can go to Italy. Or you go to... Switzerland, they don't let you. You see you could go to Canada but they don't let you because you have TB. Italy decided to let in some of them and England also. So these people arranged to have working – no, as a student. We came here as students Meyer and me, to go on a *hachsharah* (preparation to move to Israel) in Thaxted.

Tape 2: 45 minutes 13 seconds

RL: Who arranged that?

RK: The Bachad in Zurich and London. And Gubbi Hafner. Some of the English people. At first they didn't want us because, 'What shall we do with two ill people?' Anyway in the end they decided to have us and we went to Thaxted *hachsharah*.

RL: When did you come over?

RK: Because we are here students we are learning...in 1951 I think.

RL: So you had just got married?

RK: Yeah.

RL: How long had you been married?

RK: Four weeks – few weeks.

RL: So just staying with Switzerland for the moment, I mean how do you feel you were treated there? How were you received?

RK: Maybe a bit of warmth. You know when we were in Auschwitz, every Sunday they gave us jacket potatoes – on Sunday. And we were in Switzerland, there was quite a few of our background. And Switzerland served you Friday jacket potato. And the whole *heder ochel* (dining hall) was in... they throw it in. It was an upheaval. We had again in concentration camp because they gave us jacket potato. You see you never had jacket potatoes at home, you know – especially the Hungarians or anywhere. It was an upheaval – what type of people did they send here? I'm just telling you that little incident what brings on... Then we came to Switzerland and then we got married. And then we went on this *hachsharah* as students.

RL: So how did you come across to England? What was the journey?

Tape 2: 47 minutes 37 seconds

RK: Flying. Was all right, yeah. I mean they seen to all the expenses, the *Bachad* (religious Zionist youth movement). And we came as students. And you see Meyer was working in the poultry and I was working in the *machsan begadim*. You know what *machsan begadim* is? Clothing – washing and ironing and all this.

RL: Right...

RK: And then what he done, Meyer, was too hard. So he worked in the office. And then they started nagging us we should go on *aliya* (emigrate to Israel). How the hell can I go on *aliyah*? I hadn't got a penny to my name. I haven't got the clothes to my name because they don't pay you. I haven't got a profession. So Meyer became a *mashgiach* (kosher food supervisor) because he was a student and a *mashgiach* you got working permission. So if you are four years a student – four years working as a religious supervisor, they give you permission to stay. And he was the whole day *mashgiach* and the evening he went to college. And this way he became an accountant.

RL: Where was he *mashgiach*?

RK: Hyman's. In the Waterloo Road.

RL: In Manchester?

RK: Yes.

RL: So how did you get to Manchester?

RK: Well the *Bachad* – it was Thaxted was here, the *hachsharah*. You know Thaxted? And then they send that they found a position here in Manchester to be a *mashgiach*. And then after four years you become British and then he could take a position as an accountant. And this is how he became a certified accountant.

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about Thaxted, what life was like there?

Tape 2: 49 minutes 59 seconds

RK: Thaxted *Hachsharah* you've never been there? Very idealistic, yeah? I mean once we had a *mesibah* (meeting/party) and the whole topic of the - no the whole agenda was, 'If we go in a Kibbutz, should we sit on an ordinary chair or on a - like a - soft chair?' I'm just telling you an example, and things like that. And... what else was there? I mean they were just working on the fields - poultry and wheat and everything. And then every so often they went on *aliyah* - some of them.

RL: How many were in Thaxted when you were there?

RK: I don't think there were more than sixty.

RL: And who was in charge?

RK: Benno Landau - you know him? Max Kopfstein - you know him? Gubbi Hafner, you know him? Asher Keilingold, you know him? If I were to explain I'm sure. Edna Lonzer you know her? Do you know, let me see...who else? Manfred Lehman, you know him? You know this Manfred Lehman and Chava Lehman she started - she started this...you know, 'Binoh'. You know this new...children's... not normal you know... disabled children. You know, was there not one in London?

RL: The Binoh Organisation?

RK: Yeah, but that...

RL: Helping children with learning difficulties?

Tape 2: 52 minutes 29 seconds

RK: No...no. Yeah but this was started before what do you call it? In London you have those two houses for disabled children.

RL: There's 'Kisharon'.

RK: Kisharon. Chava Lehman started Kisharon. And Manfred... You see, all sort of ... one follows the other somehow. One thing flows out of the other, like Chava was in *hachsharah*. I don't know how she came to the idea that you need a place like Kisharon. Yeah...

RL: What was life like in Thaxted?

RK: Not very *chaverish* (friendly). Listen when I came to England I thought I knew English. And I go to Thaxted, you hear nothing except English. And you know you feel like in the water, you know, - drowning. I don't hear the words. It was really hard. Ugh, it was horrible in a way. It was horrible. No Hungarian - didn't speak Yiddish. And I can't say they were very friendly. They couldn't care less if you come from the hell or from *gan eden* (the Garden of Eden) you know. No they didn't realise

really what's going on in another world, another life you know – especially England. They didn't know anything about how to treat, how to approach these people.

RL: How many came over?

RK: From that little group? No, only about half a dozen.

RL: And you all went to Thaxted?

RK: Ah, no. How many came over from where, from Hungary?

RL: No, from Switzerland. Was it just you and your husband that came? Or did Bachad organise other people to come as well?

RK: No I was in Thaxted. I mean Gauting has got nothing to do with Thaxted. We just happened...the Swiss...

RL: No I know. But I'm saying how many came over to Thaxted?

RK: Oh only about half a dozen, not even ...only a few.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 22 seconds

RK: They had all sorts of people in Switzerland – I don't know where from - their own or from the continent, I don't know. Because they took, what you call it, patients to make money. Only thing that they wouldn't let us stay there. We are stateless. So but these people guaranteed us over there. 'They will be taken somewhere.' We were the *chalutzim* (pioneers), can you imagine?

RL: How did you learn English?

RK: I tell you I had to because nobody spoke anything except English. When I read my first English book it was such a *simcha* (happiness). I could never believe it that I would read an English book. And today I don't know which is my mother tongue - Hungarian or English - yeah. It's very hard. Hardly anybody spoke Yiddish - Only English, English.

RL: Did you have any lessons at all, or you just picked it up?

RK: No, I had lessons and I came here and I thought I know English but I didn't. Even if I had English.

RL: So where did you go for lessons?

RK: No, on the premises somebody gave us a few lessons, yeah. Yeah.

RL: Ok. So this film is about to end so we'll just stop there.

RK: Yeah.

Tape 2: 57 minutes 2 seconds**End of Tape Two****TAPE 3****Tape 3: 0 minute 11 seconds**

RL: This is the interview with Rachel Kahan and it's Tape Three.

So how long were you in Thaxted? How long were you there?

RK: Three years? Three years about.

RL: Three years?

RK: I think so, because Naftalie was born. Naftalie was born between London and Thaxted – not Bishop's Stortford, another one. You know, it's so funny, when I think of it. I became pregnant yeah? And not a soul was there who has got anything to do. So I pack my *pecklach* (baggage) and I was nine months pregnant. On my own so I went to this hospital, no, I was in Bearsted Hospital but before...I don't know...Before I went to Bearsted I went to Bishop's Stortford and I mostly... I can't remember exactly but it doesn't matter. So I went into the Bearsted with all my *pecklach* on my own and I was in labour. And I was...you know they just left me - another day and another day. You know when I think of it, really. And anyway I had my child – Naftalie, the eldest. You know they had the *briss* (circumcision) there in the Bearsted. But you felt so ... nothing. I got a depression. I didn't even know what a depression... So in the hospital they told me, 'You go back to Thaxted and a nurse will come, or somebody will come to put you right. You know somebody to give you advice.' So like you came - nobody came. All on my own nobody to turn to – nobody to ask. Anyway I survived somehow and after the baby it was eight months after they came to Manchester because somebody here, he arranged to Naftalie – no, Meyer, to have a position there as a *mashgiach*. Because we didn't want to stay any more in Thaxted. It was no point and you have to make up your mind, or go to Israel or not? And so he done this *mashgiach* for three years and then he went for articles and he managed to pass his exam.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 24 seconds

RL: So where was he *mashgiach*?

RK: For the *Beth Din* (rabbinical court). And he was working for Hyman, you know, Waterloo Road.

RL: And where did you live?

RK: In the *bayit* (house belonging to B'nai Akiva organization) – B'nai Akiva *bayit*. I didn't have a penny to my name. So at least a B'nai Akiva *bayit* so-called, they didn't pay but I stayed there.

RL: Did you have to be involved in any activities there?

RK: In B'nai Akiva? Yeah, we had to run the house, there's some *shlichah* (emissary work). You know Cecil Goldstein from Liverpool, he's gone to Israel now. And he was there also as a *shaliach* (emissary) for B'nai Akiva. And gradually I... you know, when I think of it, people are so cold, so nothing. Only one, you know Marian Lopian and Yankel. They were the only people who showed you there is a home, there is somebody to talk to. Somehow I can never, I know Audrey Binstock – you know Binstock? No you don't – the bungalow, she lives there. You know if you like, you like. It's like you don't exist for her... I can't understand it. Mind you, maybe they're not interested really. In those days they were so busy with themselves. Maybe today they're also busy with themselves. But at that time I just swam in...in ...in...in you know in ignoramus people, how they – cold and nothing – you know like you're not there.

Tape 3: 5 minutes 30 seconds

Anyway somehow you survive. And then Meyer said 'Listen you have to decide. Or we go, or have to learn.' And then there was a group from B'nai Akiva who went to Israel and Meyer and me went with them. We were as a guide of the group. And at least we stayed there for you know, three weeks and see if it is possible for us to stay. In the meantime I had Naftalie and Arie - so what do I do with those two children you know? I was going around with them. 'What will happen if we die?' or, you know, 'nobody's here'. So I thought 'Oh, I know here a family who have got no children. Maybe they will adopt them.' This went through my mind. And besides that, the Laski Home – you know the Laski Home in your time? They accepted the children, but they needed somebody to sign responsibility in case we don't come back, we don't want the children and they're not prepared to keep them. So somebody had to sign. And so we asked somebody. I don't want to say who, and she refused. We were all so...And I went to Marian and Yankel and I was telling Yankel and Marian. So Marian said 'What do you mean? Bring it here! I'll sign it for you!' And funnily enough I can't forget a thing like that. Because it was so, you know... In any case I was so involved already, so attached and so worried that what will happen and not sign it. So this was this other incident in Manchester...

Tape 3: 7 minutes 34 seconds

RL: So you went to Israel for three weeks?

RK: We went to Israel for three weeks. And...And we still couldn't, couldn't, we just couldn't. What will you do there? You know going again on a kibbutz. I just wouldn't be on a kibbutz - it wasn't for me. And then... I don't know Meyer had his wages £10 a week or something...so we went to a flat, moved out from the *bayit*. You know because once you don't go on *aliyah*, it's not for you. And went out of the *bayit* and the Germans gave us some sort of minimum of compensation. So we put down a deposit. We bought a house on Cavendish Road and this how we sort of progress. And I had another child and another child. And I had students in my house. You know sometimes I had seven boys and myself. My five lot and two students and I managed, and was very happy emotionally. And...well financially you think gradually you will pick up and eventually it will fall into place. Well thank G-d I don't need anybody's financial help. You know, once Meyer was working somewhere and then Yankel offered him a partnership, you know, Yankel Lopian. And then you

know already it's a different...you know, it's a different, such an uplift such a nice feeling that somebody really...you know, shows a bit of...of, a bit off enlightenment so to speak. And this is how we've carried on in a way. You know, kids born and then bring them up and I was always so concerned that they shouldn't get a complex because we're the only one and we've got no other, you know, nobody just you and me and me and you. But I never found it that they should have a drawback because of it. I think they brought... I think they grew up quite normal. Many a time I think it's a miracle that those kids are normal and I am not in a mental home but it just shows you nature sort of ... takes care of itself in a way.

Tape 3: 10 minutes 42 seconds

But one shouldn't be kept in such a tight position. Of course it's not an everyday thing because you don't have a... Many a time when I'm thinking that all these anti-Semites and all this ... and it just doesn't make sense. You have a handful of people, these Jews now. Millions and millions of other people. How is it all century go through, that they always started with us? Does it – did it ever occur to you? It just doesn't make sense somehow. First of all you bring up all this generation after generation full of hatred – not hatred, lies. I mean it's - one goes with the other obviously. If you don't lie, why should I hate you? So I try and tell you all sort of dirty lies and then I hate you. But they couldn't defend themselves, because they were only a handful – the Jews themselves. I mean, look at Germany. They have to have an Aryan state, that's why Hitler killed all those. And what have they got? Never in German history did they have so many foreigners, Jews and gypsies and Turks as they have today. But people don't learn history somehow. It doesn't make sense.

Tape 3: 12 minutes 33 seconds

RL: When you first arrived in England, what did you think of the country? What kind of impression did you get of the place?

RK: Yeah. It was friendly. Very warmish, yeah. Especially somebody who picked me up, Yitzhak Greenwald from Sunderland – you know him? You know him, Yitzhak Greenwald? And *noch* (yet) somebody else came to Euston station to pick us up and they took us to the farm – he took us to the farm. But the farm itself, the people weren't very friendly. First of all the matron was from Tunisia. And why she was so horrible to me I don't know. Today she's dead already that's why I can say. She went on *aliyah*, she was in Israel. She was so horrible. And one or two they were nice, but not naturally. I don't know maybe they also came from all sorts of different backgrounds, those members who were on the... some of them came against their parents' will. I don't know... and they were youngsters. So I don't know. But England people were quite friendly - impression - in a way. And we just...

RL: How did you spend your time in Thaxted, what were you doing?

RK: Me, I was on the *mercas begadim* (clothing centre)

RL: The whole time you were there?

RK: Yeah. I was in charge, you know I ironed about fifty shirts a week, and pyjamas and underwear. You know how many...I think we had about thirty-five boys

on *hachsharah* and maybe a bit less girls. But I was working there as another one. I was all the time in the *begadim* because they knew that I had TB so they can't put me in a hard work like in the kitchen or something like that. So they gave me an easy job, so-called. You should have seen the pram I had for Naftalie. I mean an antique piece wouldn't have been older, wasn't one older than this one. Anyway you know. Such a compare everything from one time to the other.

Tape 3: 15 minutes 17 seconds

RL: Were there other married couples?

RK: No. When I was there nobody, but about six months later – do you know Landau? Benno Landau?

RL: I've heard of him yes.

RK: He was - he came as a *shaliach* – never went back. He came with two children, one was the same age as Naftalie. The other one was older I think but between you and me, I don't want to say...she wasn't an angel. Hester, no, didn't give you a hand...no. Otherwise all was single ones, and youngsters. And you don't know what background they come from. If it's you know nice background or they protestors or...

RL: Were they foreign?

RK: No, English. English. English.

RL: Were there any other refugees?

RK: No. No, not in there. I know some of them when I went, about two years ago I went to Israel for Pesach with Herschi and I went to Lavi. We stayed in Lavi. And you know Lavi – it is from English, England, and two or three are still there from *hachshara* from Thaxted. Percy Luxemburg, Edith Eisfelt...Yeah, a few are still there.

RL: And then when you moved to Manchester and you were living in the *bayit*, what kind of things did you have to do?

RK: For the *bayit*? Nothing special. Only like a household thing. Who did I have to cook? I don't even know who I have to cook? Did anybody stay in the *bayit*? I know Cecil the *shaliach* was B'nai Akiva. I looked after him, and just had to run the house. Because when you had functions you know...but I don't think... nobody else lived there then. No. Just keep the *bayit* going when the people stayed overnight or they stayed in the *bayit* so I have to see to them, that's all. It wasn't so hard. It was all right.

Tape 3: 17 minutes 47 seconds

RL: How long were you in the *bayit* for?

RK: In the *bayit*? Let' see...Naftalie was born in '54 and Arie was '57...'58...about four years, is it possible? Is it possible, yeah – in the *bayit* because, did I tell you we took a group of B'nai Akiva children to Israel to see them if they want to live there? Roslyn Fischer was with them and Lorraine Jaffa - you know Lorraine Jaffa? And Geoffrey Cohen and Mark Potter...do you know any of these names?

RL: I know some of those names, yes. So when did you take that group?

RK: In '57. Arie was about six months old. We took them for six weeks – yeah I think I told you we took them for six weeks and we looked and you know, we had a guide there who took us up to the big mountain...

RL: Mount Hermon?

RK: Hermon no. Another one near...

RL: Carmel?

RK: Near the Dead Sea.

RL: Massada?

RK: Massada yeah. Went up with them - well on top of it. And so we spent about six weeks there. And then Meyer finished his profession.

RL: Is that when you left the children behind?

RK: Yeah. Yeah.

RL: That was when you left the children behind.

RK: Yeah. You know I imagined also, you imagine you got nobody here, two children – no relations – who knows what can happen? So it didn't happen nothing thank G-d.

RL: Did you become friendly with any other couples besides Marian Lopian?

Tape 3: 20 minutes 6 seconds

RK: Yeah, gradually yeah, I got friendly with Eva Newman, you know her...and all this little circle – Doris, Doris Buchsbaum. I don't want to sort of mention too many. Gradually, very gradually. But you always felt part of the...don't know why. Mind you many of them, I mean Ruby was – Ruby Smith you knew her, no? All this little circle, and I still have, I mean every...I mean Doris and Maxine here, and Marian - we always have a game of bridge. Yeah.

RL: Which *shul* did you join?

RK: I tell you at first Meyer I think *davened* in B'nai Akiva or Stenecourt - I don't know. And then he decided that Wine Street will fit in with him best and we stared Wine Street. I don't know if we tried the – what do you call it – the Stenecourt or not. And that was the choice only in any case, they haven't got all those *shtiblach* (small prayer houses) what you have today. Every other house is a *shtibl*. They're building – look at the King's Road and on every other... I don't know.

RL: And did Meyer join anything else in Manchester? Did he belong to any other organisation?

RK: Well he was...he was working for B'nai Akiva Bachad further, further but otherwise no, only was involved with the...

RL: So he continued to work for Bachad even when he was doing his other jobs?

RK: Yes I think so. But then he started, once the children started to go to school he got involved with Jewish Grammar. And I think he still carried on Bachad for a while. You see at that time they got a new *shaliach* coming. And then we had to leave already. He wanted to leave the *bayit* because two families you know, especially Israelis - they're not so easy to put up with. Yeah.

Tape 3: 22 minutes 55 seconds

RL: You mentioned Naftalie and Arie. When were the other two born?

RK: Herschy was born 1960 and Baruch '63.

RL: Right. And what schools did they go to?

RK: Broughton Jewish and Jewish Grammar. There was no other choice really. Well we had, no I'm just thinking...no leave it.

RL: Did they belong to any youth groups?

RK: Ezra. Naftalie tried B'nai Akiva but didn't... they all belonged to Ezra. You know the *frumkeit*, no, they went on to Ezra after, joined this group. That was their circle. They didn't take to the *bayit* of B'nai Akiva. No – especially today I mean...Today everybody's different.

RL: And what did they do after they left school?

RK: Naftalie went to Yeshiva for three years; two years Gateshead and a year in Israel. And then he went to university, took a degree, and he became an accountant, articulated. You know he worked for Peat, Marwick and Mitchell. In the meantime after three years I think, he married. He married, and she's from Brussels. And they were here till he finished his articles. Then they went to Brussels, I mean to Antwerp. And once he got his articles, Naftalie, he could see he's got no future there, so he gave them notice of Friday and he started to go in the Bourse on Monday. And that was the end of his profession. Isn't it incredible?

Tape 3: 25 minutes 45 seconds

RL: And he still lives in Antwerp?

RK: Yes he still lives in Antwerp. He's got two sons married, each with three children, and they live in London. And his daughter is married and she's having a baby in February. She is in a very *frum* Yeshiva, his wife Neuberger – you know her? Neuberger, you know? You know Simon, and Arie is also an accountant. And he was in London. He had a job there, and once I lost Meyer he had to...Meyer told him, 'You know you come back you can have my practice. Think about it.' If he wouldn't have come I would have had to move on my own. Can you imagine staying here on my own? Anyway they came back and I think they settled nicely.

RL: So that's Arie?

RK: That's Arie with three children.

RL: What did he do after school?

RK: Oh, he went Yeshiva. And he took a degree. He took a law degree. He didn't like it, so he converted to the accountancy.

RL: And who did he marry?

RK: Anne...Anne Weber from London. You don't know them?

RL: What was the name?

RK: Anne - Annette Weber.

RL: Weber?

RK: Annette Weber, yeah.

RL: Right, yeah.

RK: I think you met her no? Somewhere. Did you ever join the choir? No.

RL: And how many children do they have?

Tape 3: 27 minutes 42 seconds

RK: They have three. Two boys and a girl.

RL: Naftalie, how many children did they have? You mentioned the married ones, are there any unmarried ones?...

RK: Yeah they have six - four boys and two girls.

RL: Right. And then the next one, Alex. What did he do after school?

RK: Yeshiva, Gateshead. They take them over to Israel as well a few months. And then he took a degree in law, and he didn't like it, and took a conversion for accountancy.

RL: And who did he marry?

RK: Annette Weber.

RL: That – Arie...yeah – yeah. We've done that one.

RK: And he's got three boys and a girl. That you've done.

RL: Right, and then?

RK: Then we've got Herschy – I mean Henry – Herschy, and he has got three boys and two girls. And he went to Yeshiva in Israel...What's it called the Yeshiva he went to? Hadera – Hadera, he went, with Rabbi Olifant, I think. I think he was two years in Hadera and two years in *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem) with Tzvi Kushalevsky. The Yeshiva's name was...when we finish it I'll remember, I suppose.

RL: Where does he live?

RK: He lives in London.

RL: Who did he marry?

RK: Shoshana Watchman. And he has got two girls and three boys.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 3 seconds

RL: What does he do for a living?

RK: Optician...Oh I know, Hechal HaTorah b'Tsion – that's Kushalevsky's Yeshiva.

RL: And Baruch?

RK: And Baruch has got a HARDWARE SHOP! Thank you. The whole time I'm bringing. How that you didn't think of it?

RL: A hardware shop...

RK: Yeah, hardware shop and he has got two and two. Two boys and two girls.

RL: And who did he marry?

RK: He married Friedman's...you know the Hager *mishpoche* (family)? *Rabbonisher* (rabbinical)? He has got a *kollel* (Jewish Education College). He married Sarale Friedman.

RL: And they live in London. Which part of London?

RK: Golders Green. He's got this hardware shop in Temple Fortune. You know he took over this shop, and it was open on Saturday and closed on Sunday. And Baruch took it over and lo and behold it's closed on Saturday and opens on Monday. And he built a *mikve* (ritual bath) to *toivel* (ritually cleanse) the *keilim* (dishes). And thank G-d he just about copes with the customers. It's amazing, you know. It's a lovely position, Temple Fortune and before that he had a wine shop, 'Sussers', you know? And he was so harassed and so not happy with it, so he managed to sell it. And that was on the market and his father-in-law told him that he should buy it. And he bought it and he never looks back. I'm so happy for it's somewhere where it's everyday life you know. And then he decided the *mikve* for *keilim* and it's a very big plus for all those people buying all sorts of things, and you have to dip it. Yeah.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 6 seconds

RL: Do you think that your experiences affected the way you brought up your children in any way?

RK: It always crosses my mind you know, that hard... I have the impression that they don't want to make an issue of it. That mummy's this, that mummy's...you see, what the trouble with us is - many of these survivors, at least like my friend Eva Newman. He wasn't a survivor but she was - Harvey. But we're both survivors Meyer and me, so it's a bit stronger, you know, more stigma. But what can you do, it just happens. I don't know if any of the other children of the survivors, how they feel or have they got any sort of complex about it. I don't know. Especially here I don't see anyone.

RL: Do your children ever ask you, you know about your...about anything?

RK: No, no. No. Only one of them always interested very much. Otherwise, unless they know it or sometimes you have a defence if something hurts you, you don't want to know it, you just...I know I've got my niece in Israel and if I ask her, you know, when it's really bitter, especially now the Lebanon thing... She said she doesn't want to see the radio - to listen, or the papers. I mean it's a defence for them, most probably this is how they can cope. However much you fool yourself. But if you see it you'll get upset. So maybe these children the same. Unless it doesn't apply any more today, because they're so busy with their own family, then they don't give you... maybe it's just a burden all this so-called 'Poor Mummy' you know. Maybe you know 'She's old and I have to look after her.' I don't know how they...

Tape 3: 35 minutes 36 seconds

RL: Did your experiences affect you psychologically in any way?

RK: What, that I was in...in...a survivor?

RL: You know what you had to go through, did it affect you psychologically?

RK: No I just take it as a fact. It just happened. That era was...whoever lived there, it's...psychologically... no, you always have a...sort of a...not a burden – a complex about it. You do feel...I don't feel like part of you. I feel you know, it's me. Because I mean, I don't thrive on it and I don't throw it about – just the opposite. But subconsciously I am aware of it. So not to be miserable with it but just, just sort of...aware of it.

RL: Did it affect your religious beliefs in any way?

RK: Rosalyn, that's a very, very tricky question. When we were in...you know in very, very ... had terrible era, time, and then liberation. And when people were talking about *Sukkos* or any *yomtov* I thought, 'They're crazy.' How can anybody still believe what we were taught? But people do. We have to hold on to something. Look at...What do you see the other side? Drinking and howling or whatever, but this is also not such a nice escape really. I don't know. They have to hold on to something. But it's not it's not...it's not a founding in a way. Somehow. I don't know how to explain. I mean you know, I pray to G-d and nothing happens. I get disappointed. On the other hand if you want to think positive when something happens and it's right, then you say He does look after me. And a lot of people, they need something – somebody to thank. You know like I got my cleaning lady. She went on holiday and she broke one of her feet or something. And she comes back. She has to go to church to say Thank G-d that she's not broken her...I mean I don't know how much you keep, but... so a lot of people is that way. But you know after the liberation when I heard about all these things, you know *etrog* and *lulav* and *Sukkot* and *Pesach* and *matzo*... You know at that time you thought 'That's the end of religion, nobody will ever carry on' but... You can see I don't have to tell you the progress today. We've got nothing else to think of.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 20 seconds

RL: How long did it take you to come back to...?

RK: Normality? You can't say because I was always in a different situation. You can't just tie me...Time till I got ill, and you know from married, and move from one place and move another place. You know you nerves just got worn off and worn off and worn off. And always this insecurity - where to go and what to do and how will you do it? All this I think eats you up in a way, unless you become a piece of brick then you just take things as they are. Well you can't, because you have to decide. And I don't think my children are aware of it because this generation takes everything for granted. I mean they can because they have it for granted. I don't hold it against them. Mind you they also got a lot of problems of their own, with children.

Tape 3: 40 minutes 32 seconds

RL: How had your husband survived?

RK: How? *Kodem kol* he was liberated by the Americans, or by the English.

RL: Where had he been during the war?

RK: I don't know. He was in Romania. When he was a young kid he was at *cheder*. And his father was also in Munkatabor, and otherwise he was also brought up in the same way I suppose. I was in Hungary and he was in...it's got nothing to do with each other. It's like when you met your husband – you've got nothing to do with his way of life till you met. And the same with Meyer and me, in a way.

RL: Where was he when he was liberated? Where was he at the end of the war?

RK: I think he was liberated in Bergen Belsen by the English. And they really...I mean compare...It doesn't even compare to the Russians. And then he stayed always in Germany. You know he didn't go back like me and my sister. He stayed there and I think the Americans liberated them. And he had his father in Romania. And his father remarried and his father had another son and two daughters. And then they went to Israel. And then they reunited. I tell you, what a life. What a... get together. It's just amazing. And they become so *frum*, like the Vishnitzer Hasidim. Mind you, he wasn't in a concentration camp. He was only in the Munkatabor, Meyer's father. And Meyer was never so ill that he should have to have treatment, actually he was in a little sanatorium for a short while. But he just knew where to go, so he stayed in the sanatorium. So that's how we got to know each other.

RL: In terms of nationality, how would you describe yourself?

Tape 3: 43 minutes 15 seconds

RK: Today? You mean if I'm more English than Hungarian? That's definite. I mean, first of all my language. I don't know if it's Hungarian...you know, my mother tongue. What's my mother tongue today? It's not Hungarian. When I speak with Monica so many times I ask her you know, 'What is the name of this or that?' But definitely I don't think I could live in Hungary, to be part of what always was, probably. You know just say, 'Why you did – why that?' No I saw a lot of drawbacks there.

RL: Have you ever been back?

RK: Yeah...I went there a few years ago. I went with Herschy. Yeah.

RL: How was that?

RK: Not a very joyful reunion. I mean nothing. You know you just looked at it in an outside world – you know, in an objective manner. And we were only there ten days.

RL: Did you meet anybody that you knew?

RK: Nah. First of all I never went so far, to where I was born – too far. I couldn't go. No I mean everybody's dead. I didn't meet anybody. No.

RL: So you didn't go to your home town?

RK: No it was too far. From Budapest to Debrecen is about, I think, 250 miles. I don't know. It was too far away. We decided not to. Have to come again.

Tape 3: 45 minutes 10 seconds

RL: How did you feel going back?

RK: I felt...I could only see in a negative manner how stupid and petty and ...No, no I didn't see any positive in there somehow.

RL: How do you feel towards the Germans?

RK: I tell you. I wouldn't like to say. I feel sorry for them. You know why? I mean look this new generation is growing up, yeah? And my father and my grandfather, maybe they are murderers. So how do these generations live with their conscience? Did it ever occur to you? I can't just say 'I hate all the Germans' because it just crossed my mind. But if I look at that generation and it's my closest relation, maybe he's a murderer. Unless I couldn't care less, maybe I would, I wish I could do it. You know what I mean? Maybe they think that way. I know when people are telling you know, 'Oh it's a German. I can't stand it. I can't stand it' next to him. Not that I say you know, I would love them, or something but I just...I would love – I would love to live there six months just to see how they take it. Mind, you can imagine really. Each person is an individual how they take it. Because I'm sure they think about it. Unless you just read in the books. You know when you open a novel so you always see, 'Oh I don't know. I don't want to read about this German', but then you read the story and if you know that they touched the subject, so it just makes you think of it. Yeah. It always goes, how it goes...

Tape 3: 47 minutes 46 seconds

RL: In this country, did you ever make any contact with any other refugees or any refugee organisations?

RK: No, it never came about. I mean on the farm we had nobody. And London I went for treatment. Here I got to go...no. Not really – Manchester, no, funnily enough. And I didn't need refugees. I wanted some normal people but they didn't want me, I think. So you can't win. Yeah.

RL: Just coming back to the question about nationality. What nationality are you?

RK: Oh, I'm British. We took both the nationality you know. And the children are British obviously even if we wouldn't be, yeah. After four years.

RL: In what way do you feel different from the British?

RK: I don't come from England and that's it. You are born in another...yeah.

RL: Do you think you've got still a continental sort of identity at all?

RK: No I don't think so. Because...listen I'm not clamouring for any of those nations. When I see all these you know, comparisons, the only one who is really *mensch* (honourable people) is the English. You know Switzerland – ugh, it's so selfish, all they want is your money. And so heartless, and the French the same. The only thing bothers me with the British, they're too lenient and they let themselves be taken advantage. I have to say this. How they're flooded with all these, all sorts – it doesn't give you any asset. Although...I don't know. But definitely they are the most understanding and lenient, the British, so far. I mean as far as I knew and you can then generalise already...how the whole country runs.

RL: Have you ever come across any anti-Semitism in this country?

Tape 3: 50 minutes 43 seconds

RK: No, I never had a chance. I've got nothing to do with them. No. No. You have to have some sort of contact. I mean whatever you read in the paper, it's nothing to go by. And in any case, why the hell should be there anti-Semitism? I would love to see the Chief Rabbi going on the television and tell the people, 'What do you want? What the hell do you want of this handful of people when you've got millions and millions of others?' The least calm, they tell you, whatever positive things you can enumerate, there's plenty of it. It's all positive – what harm did they do, they're not burglars, they're not murderers, and they're not thieves. They don't break into anybody's house. What the hell do you...and why can't I see that on the box? On the media? And even the *yidden* (Jews) when they come around. Anti-Semitism ... I hate it when I see it on anywhere in the media. They make big *tuml* (noise, racket) 'Anti-Semite!' So he's going to chop you off? So what? Just tell him that he's talking rubbish and explain that you are fed up with dirty lies and they just thrive on it. Yes, my love, yeah, how we doing?

RL: Have you belonged to any committee or organisation in Manchester?

Tape 3: 52 minutes 33 seconds

RK: Yeah, in Jewish Grammar we helped. And Emunah – the Emunah Mizrachi (women's religious Zionist organization), yeah. Did I ever meet you in that place? You don't go?

RL: No.

RK: I thought, no, B'nai Akiva – no nothing?

RL: Did you belong to an Emunah group? Do you belong to an Emunah group?

RK: Yeah...only the Emunah is a much younger group than me. The one below I think...

RL: What one do you belong to?

RK: I think it's just Mizrachi. You know, where Mrs Zlotky – that group and you know Belle Ansel? Yeah, that's it.

RL: I think they all call themselves Emunah now; they've changed the name to Emunah.

RK: Yeah because it's so small over there, they got together – amalgamated.

RL: So do you go to meetings? Were you active in that group?

RK: Well I don't go to meetings because it interferes with my bridge. Yeah... But I mean if they've got something on, then I go. Otherwise I leave their meetings to the big *machers* (influential people).

RL: So you play bridge?

RK: Yeah I go to a club, twice, three times a week.

RL: Which club do you go to?

RK: It's in Whitefield there is a club. And one is in the Conservative...what do you call it... Conservative place or party or Conservative house or something. I don't know, something – it belongs to them. And there is one in the Holy Law in the afternoon.

RL: When did you first learn to play?

Tape 3: 54 minutes 23 seconds

RK: I tell you when. When I told you when we took those groups to B'nai Akiva and six weeks we were on the 'Artza', on the boat. It took us six weeks on the boat to go to Israel from Southampton, the boats go. And there was Meyer and me and another couple, somebody there. And this is where I learnt to play bridge, all those weeks on the boat, on the 'Artza'. And then Marian and Yankel learned to play. And we always got together Meyer and Yankel - not here, *nebbech* - and Marian and me. So you know once a week we had a game of bridge. And since then I suppose we improved a bit. So he is not here, and he is not here. So we found somebody in the clubs – you've always got a partner you get together. Yeah, and these sort of things one develops or gets on with.

RL: Do you belong to anything else?

RK: Jewish Grammar we were very busy but not now, all the youngsters they go...Oh, I've got a soup kitchen Sunday mornings.

RL: What do you do there?

RK: What do I do there? Well I help out whatever they need...they prepare the meals or...Monday. You never been on the soup kitchen? You know how it runs?

RL: On a Monday.

RK: Oh you go on a Monday. Are you cooking or are you delivering?

RL: In the kitchen.

RK: Yeah, delivering or...? Ah in the kitchen...what's your department, the fish?

RL: How long have you been doing that?

RK: Oh for months and months... in the soup kitchen a while already. I can't remember. Definitely more than months and months.

RL: Just in the last year?

RK: No, even before, yeah. Because at one time I went and I stopped and then I restarted again. Yeah.

RL: So we're coming to the end of this tape. Is there anything you'd like to add or any message you'd like to finish with?

RK: You mean something personal? I don't know. Shall I say it? It was a bit of...first I remind you of all those long time ago's, what hopefully it's correct and it's a bit... how shall I say, not moving or carried - no. I can't find the right words. It's not upsetting, definitely not. Nostalgic - is that correct? Maybe it would be correct. I don't know. But once I see it most probably I'll be sorry.

RL: Thank you very much.

Tape 3: 58 minutes 6 seconds

End of Tape Three

TAPE 4
Photographs

Tape 4: 0 minute 7 seconds

RK: This is the interview with Rachel Kahan and it's Tape Four.

So if you could just describe this photograph.

RK: Right. This is my father. His name is Naftuli Hertz Kraus. He was born in the 30s I think - I'm not so sure. And he was born in Teglas, that's in Hoidomede, Hungary. That's it.

RL: He wasn't born in...this was taken in the '30s.

RK: He was born in Téglás!

RL: No, but this was taken...

RK: This was taken approximately 1930s.

RL: In Téglás?

RK: In Téglás.

RK: This is me. Who is me? Rachel and Meyer Kahan. The photo was taken in Switzerland, 1951. That's it.

RK: This is me. At that time I was Rozie Kraus and this is a friend of mine Reuben Feuerstein. He was in Davos with me, he had TB. And unfortunately I didn't see him just once or twice in between. He lives now in Israel. He's a very well known...not scientist...he deals with remedial children who are not right. And according to him any child that is born there is a way to put them right. He's very well known in Israel.

RL: When was this taken?

RK: It was taken in...oh 1947, '48. I think before the state of Israel.

RK: Those are my four boys, from right. Naftalie Hertz Kahan, Arie Shloime Kahan, Herschy – forgot his second name – Herschy, Herschy...another one, and Baruch. That's Baruch's Bar Mitzvah and that photo was taken in 1987.

RL: '76.

RK: '76 – Sorry! Herschy...what was Herschy's name? Herschy...

Tape 4: 2 minutes 59 seconds

RK: That's it. Right, that's me in the middle. Above me is my husband Meyer Kahan. And there are all the husbands with their wives one to each other. One is Herschy – Shosanna, Arie and Annette, Tsippi and Naftalie, and Sorah and Baruch. It was taken in London in 1991.

RK: That's a picture taken in London at my 40th anniversary. That's all my family but since then I've still got a few. Thank you.

RL: And the date? The year?

RK: I've said it 1951.

RL: 19...

RK: Oh! 1991...Yeah? We got married in 1951.

Tape 4: 4 minutes 6 seconds

End of Photographs
End Tape Four