

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	8

Interviewee Surname:	Calma
Forename:	Dr. Italo
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	3 April 1915
Interviewee POB:	Milan, Italy

Date of Interview:	9 March 2003
Location of Interview:	Liverpool
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	5 hours and 30 minutes

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THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 8
NAME: DR ITALO CALMA
DATE: 9 MARCH 2003
LOCATION: LIVERPOOL
INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: My name is Rosalyn Livshin and I'm interviewing Dr Italo Calma on Sunday, 9 March 2003, in Liverpool, England. Can you tell me first your name?

IC: Italo Calma.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

IC: It is the same.

RL: Do you have any other names, any nicknames?

IC: No.

RL: And do you have a Hebrew name?

IC: No.

RL: Can you say when you were born?

IC: I was born on 3 February 1915.

RL: And how old does that make you now?

IC: I am very nearly 88.

RL: And where were you born?

IC: I was born in Milan, Italy.

RL: Okay. If we start first with your father and first of all his name?

IC: My father was Emanuele Calma.

RL: And where and when was he born?

IC: He was born in Padua on 24 October 1883.

RL: And do you remember his parents, that's your grandparents?

IC: Only his mother was alive when I was born. His father had died very young. And my paternal grandmother lived with us, in fact, when I was born.

RL: Do you know what your grandfather had done for a living?

IC: I think he was a businessman. As I said, he died very early. He was called Filitalo, and this name was applied to him because the whole family was very patriotic. And at that time the struggle for the independence and unity of Italy was on, so they gave themselves patriotic names. Filitalo meant, according to them, 'son of Italy'. And fortunately the dropped the 'Filo' in my case and my name became Italo.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 36 seconds

RL: So you were named after him?

IC: Yes, it was syncopated.

RL: How many siblings did your father have?

IC: He was an only son.

RL: What kind of religious and educational upbringing did he have?

IC: He had no religious education. He was very conscious of being a Jew, as I am, but he, philosophically, was a sort of positivist, and therefore religion didn't come in very much in his sort of general frame of things. And although I recognised the importance of religion in keeping the Jewish people as distinctive from other people, the religion doesn't come into my sort of philosophy either.

RL: You say he was a positivist. What exactly does that mean?

IC: Positivism is a philosophy which gives greater importance to scientific outlook as opposed to the religious outlook. It is a struggle which is going on even these days between the people who believe that there is a soul or there is a not very well-defined god and people, on the other hand, who if not atheist are at least agnostic.

RL: Right. And so the positivist falls onto the latter side?

IC: The positivist you can consider is either atheist or agnostic, yes. He was very much influenced by an Italian important figure in the struggle for the unity of Italy, which is called Risorgimento. Risorgimento is resurrection in Italian, resurrected.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 29 seconds

And this person was Guiseppe Mazzini who contributed quite powerfully to the idea of Italian unity. And he was actually a republican, so he was not seen very kindly by the King of Piedmont who, of course, being a king, was opposed to him as a Republican.

RL: What kind of education did your father have?

IC: My father had the sort of usual education that middle class children have in Italy, that is to say he went to the classical secondary school and then he went to the University of Bologna where he took a degree in engineering and he became a civil engineer. And this education was given to him, the chance of going to university was given to him by his maternal grandfather who was called Aronde Sacerdoti, who lived in Padua and he had a wholesale business and he made a lot of money that way. So he was given the family of his mother and my father, he paid their expenses and allowed my father to go to university. And having gone to university then, he was recruited immediately by the railways as a civil engineer.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 6 seconds

And through that eventually he was transferred to Milan and there he became the head of a special office for the technical problems connected with the reorganisation of the railway stations and lines in Milan. And he worked on it until he died in 1927 when my mother was 33, I was 12 and my brother 9 years old.

RL: He died quite young.

IC: Yes, it is in the family. I think his grandfather and father died, I think, of coronary attack, infarction of the heart. My father didn't die of that; he died of an infection which got localised in the heart. And at that time nothing could be done about it. Today I could be cured, it could be treated successfully, but at that time that type of diagnosis was equivalent to a death sentence.

RL: You mentioned your father working with the railway. Were there any major projects that he was involved in?

IC: Oh yes. I mean the whole project was a huge thing, because the main building of course was the central station in Milan. But then there were peripheral stations or services, there were another three or four stations and also there was the problem of railway lines coming into Milan to a station which was fairly central. And it was decided that rather than to run the lines in a trench, they ran the lines on bridges. So they had to design and build a system of bridges which would take the trains eastwards and north and south. So it was a very complicated kind of project. But the main building was the central station and the competition for the design of the station was started in 1908. And the result of the competition came out in 1913! This was two years before the outbreak of the First World War; I mean for Italy it was two years. And therefore the works could not be started until after the war, around about 1920, 1921.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 21 seconds

And it was finished in 1932, so my father didn't see the completion of the work. But he had to start, he did do quite a bit of the initial part. And I remember going with him, he took me to see this station being built. It was great fun for me to see the works and the exchanges between my father and the builders. I remember them very well.

RL: How did he get on with his colleagues and the builders?

IC: Very well indeed. They had a great opinion of his technical ability and of his unshakable honesty. So much so that when he died and the builders heard that my mother would be receiving a pension which was adequate but certainly not really great, because my father died fairly early in his career, they decided that they would give some more money for the education of myself and my brother as a sign of their appreciation of my father.

Tape 1: 15 minutes 26 seconds

RL: Coming on to your mother's family, first of all, what was her name?

IC: My mother was called Lucia Orefice, which translated into English means Lucia Goldsmith.

RL: Where and when was she born?

IC: She was born on 17 November 1893 in Venice, not very far from the ghetto. Her father was Venetian born and her mother was born in Padua. The family was in a way not very distinguished culturally or in the professions, in fact there was one architect in the family, but otherwise there is no cultural background.

RL: What did her father do for a living?

IC: My grandfather, her father, worked for the railways as well, but in a quite different field, he was a stationmaster. And he progressed from being a stationmaster in the godforsaken little stations in northern Italy and eventually he ended his career in a station not very far from Milan, an important industrial town where there was a lot of goods traffic. He was very fond of Venice and everything about Venice and that. And in the family they actually spoke Venetian dialect, which is not unusual in Italy. In every region of Italy there is a dialect, or you can almost say in every town of Italy there is a dialect. And my grandfather, grandmother and my mother spoke Venetian, and I was able to speak Venetian as well. I've forgotten most of it now, but I can still understand it.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 37 seconds

RL: So did she grow up in Venice or were the family moving around with her father's job?

IC: Yes, that was the trouble from the point of view of education of my mother and her sisters and brothers. They had to move. At the beginning of my grandfather's career, the villages or little towns he was sent didn't have really very good schools. Also it was a very large family: there were two sons and four daughters, so six children altogether. And the pay of a stationmaster was not really adequate. So what happened is that one daughter and the two sons got an education; one of them actually went to university and became a teacher in Classical Latin and Greek. But the daughters on the other hand didn't have a chance of a proper education, which was a great pity because my mother and particularly one of her sisters, Pia, had a very good brain and a very good character as well. And they would have done very well if they had had the chance of a proper secondary or university education.

RL: What kind of a religious upbringing did your mother have?

IC: Only the family tradition really, with the grandparents being alive in Padua with a very large family. There is a photograph of this family that I'll show you later. Their awareness of being Jewish, and of Jewish holidays was present, I mean to the mind of my mother, but again, I mean there was no really proper Jewish education for any of this family.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 49 seconds

RL: You say that her grandparents lived in Padua?

IC: The grandparents were in Padua and great-grandfather had a business in stone working, a prosperous business in making any work in building stone.

RL: So this was your great-grandfather, did you know him?

IC: Oh no, he died before I was born.

RL: Which was the ancestor that was a journalist?

IC: That was on my father's side. He was my great-grandfather. And he was born in Mantua in 1824 or 1826. At that time Jewish life was changing very, very rapidly, because the walls of the ghetto had been opened and the Jews were free to move out and to mix with the rest of the population. And there was equality, which was maintained until fascism came or even, I would put it, until 1938. So the Jews in Italy had freedom from 1800 until 1938; freedom, equality and acceptance. My grandfather became a businessman and he was leading in some way or another, I don't know in what capacity, but he was a businessman and he was travelling abroad quite frequently and he became very good with foreign languages, German and French. But he was not very successful from the point of view of money. So at a certain point in his life he changed and as he knew these foreign languages and he was interested in what was going on in the other countries around Italy, he thought of becoming a foreign commentator. And in fact he was writing for an Italian paper about foreign policies and also, I discovered from his obituaries, that he became chess correspondent for a weekly magazine in Italy. He seems to have been very popular amongst the newspaper journalist fraternity, because when he died quite a number of obituaries were written about him.

Tape 1: 25 minutes 48 seconds

And all seemed to have found him very conscientious and with a great appreciation of European problems. In fact, the day that he died he wrote an article of foreign policy about Ireland and he was hoping in this article that Great Britain would show generosity and understanding of the needs of Ireland, and he dropped dead after that.

RL: When was this?

IC: This was in 1881.

RL: And what was his name?

IC: Emanuele Calma, the same name as my father.

RL: So coming on to your parents, do you know how they met?

IC: My parents, yes, I think so, I think they met in Milan. As it happened, my grandfather, the stationmaster, did transfer to Milan and my father had been transferred to Milan to work for the railways. And my two grandmothers were both from Padua, so they knew one another from olden days and they got together. And my mother was an exceptionally beautiful woman and my father fell in love with her and they got married in 1914.

RL: So you were the first child?

Tape 1: 28 minutes 17 seconds

IC: I was the first and there was a second one born three years later, my brother Franco, who is now in California.

RL: How did the First World War affect the family?

IC: Well, I can't say that it affected the women very much. Two uncles went into the army. One was found to have some trouble with some foot I think, and he was excused from military service. But the other one went into the alpine troops and he went to fight against the Austrians on the Italian Alps. He was taken prisoner by the Austrians and then he was freed at the end of the war, of course; this is the teacher of Latin and Greek.

RL: And your father?

IC: My father had to supervise, to assess the damage done by the war behind the fighting lines, so he was travelling in that region to look after bridges which had been blown up, stations which had been bombed or railway lines which had been damaged. And after the war again he had to do a larger survey of the damage done.

RL: What is your earliest memory as a child?

IC: I think one of the earliest memories is the birth of my brother actually. I was three then and I said, 'How did he come here?' And my father took me to the window and he said, 'He came from up there.'

RL: Whereabouts were you living as a child?

Tape 1: 31 minutes 36 seconds

IC: We lived in Milan until 1921. And then, on the death of his grandfather, my father got some money, inherited some money, and with this money he bought a large villa, quite a huge thing, outside Milan. We had a fantastic garden, large garden and a vegetable plot with quite large dimensions. And it was a paradise for us children because we could play football and go on our bicycles and so on. And we had two dogs. It was quite a huge thing. My father and my mother had never been trained to look after a garden or a vegetable plot, and it was a bit too much for them. So we stayed in that villa for about three years I think, until 1924, when my father became the head of his office and he was offered a flat in an old building that the railways had. It had been the first station in fact, or the first railway line, which went from Milan to a neighbouring town called Monza. When he was offered this flat, which was on the ground floor, and the office was on the first floor, so it was very convenient for him not to waste any time commuting or travelling from home to the office. It was not very good for the family because it meant that he was longer at his office working instead of looking after us.

Tape 1: 34 minutes 40 seconds

RL: How big was the accommodation?

IC: Oh, it was quite good accommodation, yes.

RL: Can you describe what it was?

IC: Well there was a lounge and a dining room. And four bedrooms, services, it was adequate. It was not in an elegant part of town, but it was quite adequate from the point of view of room, yes.

RL: Did your mother have help in the house?

IC: Oh yes, we had a maid. That was the usual thing, I mean in a bourgeois family, to have a maid. And we had a maid in the great villa as well. Yes, and there was a period when a cousin of my father who was in the army, and he was between one assignment and another assignment in the army, so he asked my father if he could come and stay with us, so he stayed for a few months with us as well.

RL: What happened to the dogs when you moved?

IC: I'm afraid... Well, the villa was bought by an Italian lawyer who had married an English lady who had made a career in the theatre. And this English lady was very, very fond of animals. So she took the two dogs quite gladly under her tutelage.

RL: What did the family do for entertainment? Would you go out?

Tape 1: 37 minutes 7 seconds

IC: Well, when we were living in the great villa there was very little entertainment except neighbours, and naturally relatives, who came frequently. In Milan it was a bit better, there was more social life, above all when the cousin of my father came to stay with us. He was a great *bon viveur*, a man of the world. Flirting about from one side to the other and knowing practically everybody, so he introduced my father and my mother to a number of friends and colleagues. And my father and my mother started to have a more intense social life. It didn't last very long, because my father died so very early in 1927 and that was the end of it.

RL: Did your father belong to any clubs or societies?

IC: No.

RL: None at all?

IC: No.

RL: Did he have any hobbies?

IC: Nothing except work.

RL: Did he belong at all to any synagogue or any religious...

IC: No.

RL: Did the family keep any of the Jewish holidays at all?

IC: My mother's side yes. But the Calmas, on the other hand, the Calmas were really quite detached from religious life. On my mother's side, however, I mean there was greater observance.

RL: As a child, did you ever participate in any religious activities at all, or religious holidays?

IC: Not really. I'm a very funny type of Jew.

RL: Were you aware of them or were you not aware of them at that stage?

IC: I had a very vague idea I must confess. It was much later that I got to know a bit about religious observance.

RL: Were you aware that you were Jewish?

Tape 1: 40 minutes 5 seconds

IC: Oh yes.

RL: What about your education? Can you tell me something about that?

IC: Well, in Italy at that time you started school at six. The elementary school was between six and eleven. At eleven you went to the secondary school. And there was a choice, either you went to a technical secondary school or alternatively you went to the gymnasium, to the secondary school which would lead eventually..., which was based actually on classical studies. This classical secondary school consisted of five years called gymnasium and three years called liceo. The two schools were in the same building really, but they were divided in this way. You started with Latin immediately and a foreign language, and after three years you added Greek as well. And you learnt to translate from Latin and Greek into Italian, or from Italian into Latin or Greek. And you presented, you had to translate classical works starting from simple prose like Caesar, for instance, or the fables of Aesop. And then you graduated to Virgil and Cicero and Livy and Greek lyrics and Plato and Xenophon. I think it was a very good school.

RL: What was the school called?

IC: Well, I went to two different schools and I must explain why now. When my father died, or actually before he died, he asked my uncle, the teacher of classical languages, to help my mother in the education of us two children, myself and my brother.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 38 seconds

And after my father died my mother was a bit worried about me. At that time I was not very strong physically. And also from the point of view intellectually, very probably I was a year

behind the norm. And my uncle then said to my mother, ‘Why don’t you let Italo come to stay with us?’ He was living in a town about 35 miles from Milan. The town was called Bergamo. It’s a lovely town. So I went there and there I found life so very much better in the school than in the school in Milan. I could play football, I’d go mountaineering and skiing, I developed very quickly there. And I stayed there for three years. I was going to Milan every month to see my mother and my brother, who had gone together, they had left our apartment. And my father had been the president of a cooperative, whose purpose was to build a block of flats for people, for civil servants mainly. Railway people were civil servants because the railways were nationalised. So my mother and her father and mother got together and they lived with my brother in this apartment. So every month I was going to see them. It was a great joy to be together with them and it was not without tears when I had to go back to Bergamo, although I liked the life there, I must say.

Tape 1: 46 minutes 25 seconds

So after three years in Bergamo I went back to Milan and I started on the second part of the classical school, liceo, for three years. So we come to 1933 when I went to the university. And I was in doubt what faculty to join. I thought about architecture, but I felt that I was not inventive enough or original enough to be able to see the structure as it would be when built. So then I had to choose between biology, that I liked, and medicine. And I chose medicine. Six years of medicine at the University of Milan. It was a new university. I think it was set up in 1924 and it was quite inadequate for the number of people that had joined university. It was also already, in 1933, of course in full fascist regime. Do you want me to say something about the political side?

RL: Yes, please.

IC: It’s a long story!

RL: Good.

IC: Well, Mussolini started as an elementary teacher and then became a journalist; that is before the First World War. When the First World War broke out Italy had to decide whether she’ll be neutral or whether she’ll join France and Great Britain. There was a great debate about it, as you can imagine. And Mussolini took a very violent sort of attitude in favour of joining, that Italy had to join in order to enter fully into the political life of Europe.

Tape 1: 49 minutes 40 seconds

And Italy had to get in in order to put forward certain claims. These claims were based on two towns, one Trento, the other one Trieste. They were occupied by the Austrians, by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And they were Italian towns, above all Trento, surrounded by an Italian region, so I think that the claim was justified. Also there was a claim by Italy to what is today Croatia, that is to say the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. And there was a secret treaty – we got to know about it later on – there was a secret treaty between Italy, Great Britain and France, that Dalmatia, this coastal region of the Adriatic, would be going to Italy. So Trieste and the coast of the Adriatic, where there is Dubrovnik now and Split, would be going to Italy. The claim was based on the fact that these towns, Dubrovnik and Split, are Venetian towns. If you look at them, you see the very great influence. They were ports when Venice was great and powerful. The countryside, on the other side, I must say, was not Italian at all. They spoke Croatian or whatever dialect of that type. So Mussolini then joined the party in favour of entering the war. And Italy got into the war some, say six or seven weeks after I was born. I chose very badly the date of my birth, because Italy got into the war on 24 May 1915.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 38 seconds

And it was a bloody war, mainly fought in the Alps, in the high mountains. I think Italy lost about three quarters of a million people, dead, and a million and a half wounded, so it was quite a bloody war. At the end of the war, at Versailles, they decided that the border between Austria and Italy would be determined by the watershed line. The rivers and torrents flowing north and feeding into the Danube would belong to Austria; and the part of the country where the waters would flow south towards the Po river which runs across the northern Italian plain, that part would belong to Italy. There were some valleys, where the war was fought, which were of Italian language and Italian traditions, but there were valleys on the other hand, which were very strongly Austrian regions in language, traditions, what is called South Tyrol. And that came to Italy. And this annexation, it was not an annexation really, but I mean this decision was not very popular in those valleys for several years. They thought, I mean they were Austrians. Now, after all that happened in that region in Europe between the wars and in the Second World War, I think that they have accepted, that they have been given by the Italian government certain financial inducements. And also they can use their own language now, German, so it's better now.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 34 seconds

RL: Can you sort of say how the political situation was affecting you as a family, or the Jews in Italy?

IC: Well, let me go back then to 1915 when Italy entered the war and the Peace Treaty of Versailles. When the war ended and the soldiers came back from the front, they found Italy in a state of utter poverty and disruption really. The political framework was also very fragile. There were several parties, anarchist, communist, socialist, centre parties, and then parties of the right; one of which had connection with the Vatican, the Popular Party. There was unemployment, huge unemployment, and there was social instability, social strife. The anarchists were throwing bombs in theatres and railway stations. And there was a parliament that was broken up in these tiny little different parties and there wasn't any party which would take over and take the situation in hand.

RL: We might just have to stop here because the film is about to end. We'll continue in a minute.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 40 seconds**Tape 1: 58 minutes 43 seconds**

RL: So you were saying about the parties and...

IC: Yes. It was an extremely difficult period and Italians were very much divided. In my own family, my father was a liberal and believed in parliamentary democracy. And eventually the situation: Mussolini in 1919 set up the fascist party. He founded an organisation called Fasci di combattimento. Fasci is - should I explain this? - fasci was a symbol in the time of Imperial Rome of the power. And it consisted of an axe, and the handle of the axe was surrounded by sticks which were tied together around the handle of the axe. And this was the fasces, which was carried by soldiers, I think, who accompanied the judiciary to the courthouse. They preceded the judge and it was the symbol of the state, the fasci was the symbol of the state. And Mussolini chose this for the name of his organisation, Fasci di

combattimento, which means fighting. Already you understand the mentality of the man. First of all, in favour of entering the war and sort of affirming the rights of Italy and the view of expansion as well of Italy to other lands, and now Fasci di combattimento.

Tape 1: 1 hour 1 minute 30 seconds.

And his political programme was that of putting some order in Italy, which was quite necessary, I must say. So much necessary that very many people, I mean bourgeois, professional people and so on, joined the party. And in 1922 when the situation became particularly acute and the then prime minister asked the king to have martial law declared, and the king refused, and instead he called in Mussolini and made him prime minister. There were no elections; Italians at that point did not elect Mussolini. And that was the beginning of the end because Mussolini had an organisation in the party which had done acts of violence against members of other parties, above all socialists and communists. They had two weapons: one was the cudgel, a very heavy stick; and the second one was castor oil. I remember seeing a socialist taken by a group of fascists and beaten up and then taken to the office of the fascist party to be given castor oil. There were also punitive expeditions where groups of fascists in their black shirts would go on a lorry to assault communist offices and socialist offices. This was even before he became prime minister. He became prime minister on 28 October 1922.

Tape 1: 1 hour 4 minutes 19 seconds

And as I said, quite a number of people joined the party because it was the party that promised order and discipline in the country. There were also several Jews who joined the party, for the same reasons. It was all very traumatic. In 1924 Mussolini, or his henchmen, got the secretary of the socialist party, Matteotti, murdered. The opposition to the fascist party, and to Mussolini of course, instead of doing something fundamental to rebel against this murder, they took a very negative sort of attitude. They stopped going to parliament in protest, and Mussolini took advantage of this and he declared new laws by which there would be only one party – the fascist party – no freedom of the press, no freedom of people to express political opinions, and so the dictatorship was set up, 1924. And from then it progressed, penetrating into every branch of activity of the state, even industrial life. Trade unions were abolished and in place of that they had some kind of industrial organisations which were controlled by the party.

RL: How did your father feel about this, about what was happening?

IC: My father was very much against it. And my maternal grandfather, he had been a mason, he belonged to the freemasons, and freemasons were abolished by Mussolini, so you couldn't go to meetings. That was finished.

RL: Was there any increase in anti-Jewish feeling at this stage?

Tape 1: 1 hour 7 minutes 18 seconds

IC: No. I must say that up to 1938 in Italy there was no discrimination at all against the Jews. In fact if there was any indiscriminate, it was in favour. It is interesting in fact to talk about the attitude of Mussolini in these early days. He never expressed anti-Jewish feeling. In fact, I mean he even had a lover, Margherita Sarfatti, who was actually a Jewish writer, and she became his lover. And from the Jewish point of view, the situation was exactly the same as before, that is to say a situation where the Jews were equal to anybody else. And in fact I remember a teacher telling me, 'You've got to do well because all the other Jewish children

that I had have been very good.' I mean this opinion about the Jews, that they were sort of hardworking, honest and reliable people.

RL: Were there Jewish children at the schools that you attended?

IC: Oh yes, yes. There was a Jewish school in Milan. But you see, Jewish schools could only be set up in towns where there was a large community. It would have been impossible. Well, as I said, I mean the influence of the party, the overwhelming pressure of the party, of the propaganda, was absolutely asphyxiating. I mean for years we never heard anything else except what they wanted to let us know. Opinions about Italy were only publicised in the papers if they were favourable to Italian fascism and so on. I mean the party controlled everything.

RL: Did that affect the teaching in schools?

IC: Yes, I'd say yes. Because the teachers, if they had a different point of view to put forward for instance, they would not be able to do it.

Tape 1: 1 hour 10 minutes 17 seconds

It affected for instance even ancient history. If you take for instance the Roman history at the time of Julius Caesar and then the creation of the empire and the end of any republican institution as it was earlier on in Rome, and this republican institution was abolished by Julius Caesar, and then, after the struggle, Augustus became the emperor and then he became a god. And this caused all the trouble in Judea, of course, as perhaps we'll pursue later on to talk about it. Because the Jews in Judea could not stomach a god in Rome in the person of the emperor and therefore the clash between the Jewish civilisation and the Roman civilisation was inevitable, and it ended badly for us, there as well. Well, going back now to fascism, as I said there was an influence which was all pervasive, even in the teaching. I mean the teachers could not say fully, they could hint but they didn't dare to go against, I mean they accepted the theories of the fascist party. There were certain things, in a way I think my father was-, he died in 1927, a few years later all civil servants had to be members of the fascist party. And my father would not have accepted that. And they had to give an oath of allegiance, and again, my father would not have done it. I don't know what would have happened had he not died when he did.

Tape 1: 1 hour 13 minutes 13 seconds

And so we come to 1933, Hitler comes to power in Germany. In two or three years he demolishes everything there was in Germany from the political point of view and he his the one Führer, one Reich, one Volk. It took him two or three years to do it, and then he started invading the Rhineland and Italy started invading Abyssinia and Franco started invading Spain from Morocco and the Spanish War started. And Italy and Germany sided with Franco.

RL: How did the Jewish community feel at this point? What was the feeling of your mother and your grandparents?

IC: A feeling of helplessness, you couldn't do anything. There was a secret police, you couldn't do anything in Italy in the way of political activity. In the university as well, the few people who tried to create an organisation to do something, antifascist propaganda, very, very quickly they were denounced by informers to the police, tried, sent to compulsory habitation in a godforsaken country, in villages, in the south of Italy. It is described very well by Carlo Levy, a Jewish writer and painter from Turin who was sent because of antifascist activity

down in the south of Italy. *Christo se fermato a Eboli, Christ stopped at Eboli*, a book which has been translated into very many languages. And he describes very well what it was like to live there.

Tape 1: 1 hour 15 minutes 42 seconds

So we come then continuously in a situation which was mounting in Europe to boiling point. The Abyssinian War, the Spanish War, the occupation of the Rhineland, the occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938, when Chamberlain gave in in front of.... And then in spring 1939 the occupation of the whole of Czechoslovakia, and Mussolini, to show that he was a great leader as well, he invades Albania. It was a crazy and absolutely idiotic move, because Albania did not have any importance whatsoever for Italy, and it was the wrong thing to do. From the Jewish point of view, the date to remember I think is 11 June 1938, when we opened the paper and saw in large characters the declaration of Italian racism. This was a bolt from the blue, I mean no one had expected it. To be quite truthful, in 1937 Italy and Germany had signed a pact, so-called 'steel pact' that they are united together against the-, what they called the plutocracies, the powers of wealth represented by France and Great Britain. They formed this pact. And out of the signing of this pact we saw a few officers walking about in uniform in Milan; we'd never seen anything like that before. That was a sign of the penetration of Nazis within the fascist party.

Tape 1: 1 hour 18 minutes 38 seconds

And then all of a sudden this declaration of Italian racism, a completely idiotic and dishonest document, because there can't be an Italian race. Italy has been invaded by practically every country in the world, from the Arabs to the Spanish to the French to the Austrians to the German tribes, you name it. I mean if you look at the Italian population, it is not uniform. The population in the north is different, even from physical characteristics, quite apart from mental characteristics and traditions and so on, from the south, completely different. Even today, after so many years, the south is quite a different kind of thing from the north of Italy. So I mean, the declaration of Italian racism, it was dishonest and it was ludicrous. But it was signed by journalists, by artists, by university professors, by people who by doing that, were ingratiating themselves to the party and obviously hoping for preferment in their careers. At that time, in summer 1938, we decided in the family that my brother Franco who was a university student in business studies, would go to London to perfect his English. He had already done some English at school and university, but we sent him to England to get better English. And I decided to go abroad for the first time in my life, I was 23 then, and I thought that I would go to France and I would go to Paris. Try to find out whether it was possible for me to find work in France as a doctor after my degree.

RL: You didn't want to stay in Italy?

Tape 1: 1 hour 21 minutes 29 seconds

IC: That's right, yes. I have no gratitude whatsoever to Italian universities in general. Perhaps there are some individuals that I can pick out as decent scientists and teachers, but the whole organisation was completely inadequate from the point of view of numbers, and the teachers stayed sort of bound to old theories which were already being discarded as being completely false. And the second point, from the scientific point of view, or from the point of view of a scientific career, there was nothing for me in Italy. The third point is that Italian careers in Italian universities were very unsatisfactory. Unless somebody became a professor, he was depended on somebody else on top of him who could dismiss him at his pleasure. The whole thing was so very rotten to the core that I felt I didn't have any... I felt that people got

places because their father knew somebody who knew somebody else and so on. It was a sort of ‘Scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours.’ And I as an orphan, no father, without any support really, not knowing anybody, would have a very difficult time to get anywhere. And therefore I decided then that my place was not in Italy. The other thing that is important is that medicine at those days in the 30s was, compared to today’s medicine, extremely primitive.

Tape 1: 1 hour 24 minutes 9 seconds

I mean the first patients that I had to look after in the hospitals were affected by illnesses which we couldn’t treat. And the feeling of being completely powerless, without any possibility of doing anything! And I thought that the only thing that I could do was to do research in order to be able to improve the situation a little bit. So between my aversion to the Italian morals, ethos, the nauseating atmosphere of university, and this inability to see a way of progress in Italy, persuaded me that I should go to try to find something abroad. Unfortunately I didn’t know any English at that time. I knew a little bit of German because I had been told earlier on that German was the language of science. And then they appreciated that America, Great Britain, the Commonwealth, were coming along very fast on the scientific world and that the future was in English-speaking countries rather than in Germany and Austria. So I decided to go to Paris. It was summer, the French were all on holiday. There was no one to be seen. And the only thing that I could see was Paris and the museums and the lovely things you can see in Paris. And then after a fortnight in Paris I went back to Italy. But before I came back to entering Italy I wanted to go and see – I was very fond of mountains, very fond of mountaineering - I wanted to go and see ‘La Mer de Glace’ in Chamonix. And so I got to Chamonix and slept there. And in the morning I went to the railway station which goes up to this glacier, ‘La Mer de Glace’. It was very misty and the trains would not run and everybody was queuing. And in front of me was a little man who turned round and started speaking in French and we conversed and so on.

Tape 1: 1 hour 27 minutes 40 seconds

And when he understood that I was Italian he said, ‘There is a bit of trouble in Italy now.’ This was August 1938. ‘Yes’, I said, ‘there is trouble, above all for the Jews as well.’ ‘Oh’, he said, ‘you are Jewish?’ He was a Russian émigré. He had emigrated from Russia at the time of the Revolution, he was a lawyer. He had gone to Turkey where he set up some office, but then he went to Paris and he was doing very well in Paris. And he said to me, ‘You are a young man, you got to get out of Italy as quickly as you can. And the first thing to do is to send some money abroad. When you get out you need some money to live until you find some work?’ I said, ‘Yes. Unfortunately it is illegal to send money abroad from Italy.’ ‘Well, you’ve got to try. You’ve got to try some other way.’ Then the railway didn’t start till lunchtime; we had lunch together. And then he said, ‘I’ve got to see the wife of a client. She is a lovely lady and she’s got a smashing daughter. Come and see them.’ So we went there to visit this lady. Unfortunately her daughter made a brief appearance and then she had an appointment for a gallop in the woods and off she went. And I went back to Italy. And my brother came back from London soon after and we discussed the situation with my mother and we said, ‘We’ve got to go away. We can’t stay in this country with the situation as it is, as it will be.’ In fact the first laws came out in September, October 1938 and they implied that Jews could not be civil servants, Jews could not have businesses with more than, I don’t remember how many workers in it, they couldn’t occupy high positions in industries, the children couldn’t go to school.

Tape 1: 1 hour 30 minutes 46 seconds

In other words the Jews became second-class citizens, very much restricted in all their activities commercial, financial, intellectual, everything had changed all of a sudden. When

these laws came out, my uncle who had looked after me, and his wife, she was not Jewish by the way, she was Catholic, they asked for a family council. So they came down from Bergamo and we sat around the table and they said, 'What do you want to do in this situation?' So my mother said, 'The children want to go abroad, and as soon as they are settled there the idea is that I'll join them.' It was very difficult because grandfather and grandmother were there. And what that meant-, of course they had a number of other daughters to look after them and this one son, but in any case, the family would be completely broken up. My uncle and his wife, she was very good to me, his wife, she was very much attached to the family and when I was living with them she was like a mother to me. But she had very limited views. She was very good with the family and so on, but very limited intellectual views.

Tape 1: 1 hour 33 minutes 8 seconds

And my uncle and his wife said, 'Oh no, we can't even think of leaving Italy.' And we got another plan. We thought that it would be very nice if we altogether went to the Catholic bishop of Bergamo and converted to the Catholic religion. My grandfather, the old mason, said, 'Not on my life!', and we said the same, and they left very meekly to their own future. Which was for my uncle, to convert, claiming that he has seen some images, some saint or I don't know... I must say that, apart from my family, I'm not very proud of the way that the Jewish community in Italy actually behaved when the racial laws were promulgated. Because there was a considerable number of them who immediately converted, went to the nearest church. There were some exemptions to these laws, the people who had fought in the First World War or the people who had helped the fascist party originally, in the beginning, were exempted from some of these laws. But in general the community didn't stick together at all. Everybody for himself worked in secret. People who had money no doubt tried to send this money out in one way or another. Others tried to become over-friendly with some fascist big boss. And it was not dignified.

Tape 1: 1 hour 36 minutes 19 seconds

It was a very assimilated community, completely assimilated community who in 130 years of freedom of persecution had forgotten what is to have a dignified behaviour in front of persecution. They paid very dearly for it because very many of them actually ended up very badly. Well, the situation for myself and my brother in relation to this idea of going abroad was like this: in autumn 1938 I still had one year of university before my degree. And then I would have to have a pre-registration here in hospital in order to be recognised in the register of doctors. So it meant that I couldn't... If I wanted to have the whole..., get my degree and also to be registered as a doctor, I would have to stay in Italy until 1941. My brother would have to stay in Italy to get his degree in business studies until 1940. And this was one difficulty, that we had these dates. The other thing that immediately transpired as we started going from consulate to consulate to consulate, trying to find a country where to go, that it was extremely difficult to find anywhere to go. We didn't think very deeply about it, very probably we excluded some countries where perhaps we might have gone; I'm thinking for instance South Africa. I say South Africa because one of my two wives was South African, Joyce, and she told me that 'Had you come to South Africa, you would have been welcomed. There was a very large community, a very powerful community in Johannesburg. You are white, you would have been welcomed.' But we never thought about that.

Tape 1: 1 hour 39 minutes 43 seconds

We thought that Australia was too far away, and then there was the question of the language. But other countries, I mean they had quotas, not in the United States, but we couldn't go there. In France it was very difficult to settle here. There was unemployment in Great Britain,

it was not very... We thought about Scandinavia, but it was very vague. One day something happened that solved part of the problem. My brother had a great friend from school. He was the son of a very well to do, very wealthy businessman who had family connections throughout Europe, Switzerland, Germany, and in America as well. And he decided when the laws came out that he would take the family to the United States. And one day he called my brother who had been in his house many, many times. And my brother is a very good talker, very good company. And he said, 'Look, I decided to take the family to the United States. But my conscience is not at peace at the thought that my son, your friend, would be safe and you on the other hand would be left in Italy in danger, in Europe in danger. In very great danger because of what's going to happen in Europe.' He knew it all, I mean from being with his connections abroad, I mean he was very much alive to these things that in fascist Italy it was impossible to get to know. 'So if your family is agreeable I'll provide you with an affidavit.'

Tape 1: 1 hour 42 minutes 33 seconds

An affidavit is the declaration that an American citizen makes, promising that he will provide the immigrant with the necessities of life and that the immigrant will not become a charge to public funds. And when my brother came home and told us this we were obviously overjoyed. I mean one part of the problem was solved. But I was the problem. I was the problem, that I had, to be fully qualified, I had to stay in Italy until 1941. So first of all we decided my brother and I that we would try to learn a trade, because at the beginning of our life in the new country we have to be very adaptable. So my brother learnt to be a furrier, which is a long business because you've got to have an eye for the colour of the skins and it's not a very simple thing. And the eyes of my brother weren't quite good enough. And I had to study for my degree and the only thing that I could think about was to become a masseur. So very early in the morning I was going to the hospital to try to do these very simple techniques of massage and so on, and then I would go to the hospital as a medical student. And in the meantime my mother bought a huge trunk worthy of an actress and she filled it with everything that my brother could need in the new country. And we booked a place on the *Normandie*, which was a French transatlantic vessel from Le Havre to New York for the summer of 1939, beginning of August 1939.

Tape 1: 1 hour 45 minutes 30 seconds

In the beginning it was a very traumatic experience because first of all it meant that we would leave my mother in Italy; grandparents that we would probably never see again; the family as a whole – I mean the whole thing was coming apart, the elements of our life were coming apart. And I got my degree on 11 July 1939 and I decided that I would come to London to learn English. I'd been learning English, I had a few lessons in Italy, but it was useless. So my brother and I left Italy, we left Milan together at the end of July 1939. I remember we left from the station that my father built. Grandparents were there, mother, cousins, friends. And we went as far as Bern together and then we parted. My brother had a French visa to cross France to go to Le Havre. I applied for the visa to the French consulate, but being Italian I didn't get it, because at that time of course Italians were very unpopular. So I had to come from Basel to England through Germany. It was a horrendous journey for me, having left everybody behind, my brother gone, and going through enemy country.

Tape 1: 1 hour 48 minutes 15 seconds

I remember the train stopped at the station of Cologne in the early hours of the day. The police came and spotted a poor Jewish family, a father and mother, two young children. They got them out of the train and I remember seeing them on the platform, surrounded by their luggage. It must have been 2 or 3 o'clock at night, in the cold of the night. The train left and they were still there. I don't know what happened to them. So to Cologne, Brussels,

Ostend and Dover. And another problem started there because I think they were trying to control the people who were coming in. So I appeared in front of an immigration officer. His French was not very good, my English was non-existent, but we talked in French. He asked me why I came to England, I said I came to England to learn English. 'What are you doing? How much money have you got?' It was very little. 'Can you go back to Italy?' 'Yes.', I said, which was the truth, but not the whole truth. And he gave me a permit for two months. So I arrived in London. And a cousin of mine had already come here and I went to the same house, which was run by a lady, the owner of the house, who was a Russian émigré. I think she had been Jewish and she married a Mr Pritchard who had passed on. She was very fond of socialists, she was a socialist.

Tape 1: 1 hour 51 minutes 22 seconds

And she knew quite a number of Italian socialists who were exiled in London, they had left Italy at the time that Mussolini created the dictatorship. Some of them went to Paris, some came to England and some came to London. So I stayed there for three or four weeks. Now, in Milan I had a friend who was a German refugee. He was called Heinz Meierhof. His father had been killed fighting in the German army during the First World War. His mother had a millinery shop in one of the main streets in Berlin and she had raised this only son with all the love of a Jewish mother. When Hitler came to power, Heinz came to Italy as a refugee and he was a wonderful person, extremely intelligent, gifted, great sportsman, not a bookish person, full of life, enjoying life. And he was earning his living doing drawings for advertisements. Every week he had to present an agency with some drawings. At the same time he was a medical student, and as I said, he was an exceptional person. It was from him that I took a number of German lessons, because I'd been told that German was necessary. One of the first things in the racial laws put up by the fascist party was against these refugee people, people who had come as refugees to Italy. They had to leave Italy within six months, otherwise they would be taken to the frontier and given up to the German authorities.

Tape 1: 1 hour 54 minutes 16 seconds

By that time, Heinz's mother had come to Italy as well and she was working as a house helper with a family. And Heinz had to start finding a country where to go, he had his mother. And they didn't have any money. And it was extremely difficult for him. And I met other friends of his in the same situation. One of them was so desperate that he ended up emigrating to Hong Kong, the only place that he could enter. Well, one day I met Heinz and I said, 'How is it going?' 'Well, there is somebody in such and such a consulate, that says that he can give me a visa to go to this country if I give him so and so much money. And I haven't got this money.' So we collected money for him and I gave it to Heinz who gave it to this person who disappeared – gone! However, Heinz - I think one of the professors had taken a liking to him, - was offered a scholarship by a society that existed in those days, the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. It was a society with an office in Cambridge, a tiny little office with a secretary in it. And they were giving £150 a year to single persons and £210 to married persons. And there were a number of scholars in Cambridge and elsewhere, Oxford, London, who were receiving this. He also found, the Royal Society found a scientist, he was called Salomon, who was interested in the potato. He knew everything about the potato, the history, the methods of the different species, the way of growing them, the pathology of the potato, everything about the potato.

Tape 1: 1 hour 57 minutes 34 seconds

And he took Heinz as his researcher and he gave him the research to isolate a virus which was very pernicious for the potato. And so he started in Cambridge and his mother came with him. She was working as a house helper in an English family and Heinz was doing this work.

RL: We'll just have to stop here because the tape is coming to an end.

Tape 1: 1 hour 58 minutes 22 seconds

Tape 1: 1 hour 58 minutes 42 seconds

RL: Can I just ask you, you said you came over to London, to England to learn English. Was it your plan to stay or just to come for a short time and go back to Italy?

IC: I had a difficult problem, because I still had to do the pre-registration here in order to have the official inscription in the register. On the other hand, the plan was that my brother would find work in the United States and then he would be able to sign an affidavit for me to join him. So without war I think I would have gone back to Italy for a year and then gone to the States. To go to the States it would have been useful to have some better English than I had then at that time. So that was the plan as I came in through Dover.

RL: How much had you brought with you for the visit; I mean in terms of luggage, in terms of possessions?

IC: Very little, only summer things. And very, very little money, just a little bit more than for two months. But I mean nothing very much. So I told you about Heinz Meierhof and I went to see him in Cambridge.

Tape 1: 2 hours 1 minute 16 seconds

And when I got to Cambridge I was absolutely enchanted! Ah, I mean those colleges and that river and those river banks there, it was something extraordinary. Such peace! And you could see these people on the bicycle with the basket in front; and on the bicycle it might have been a Nobel Prize winner and he simply moved along quietly. It was peace, I mean it was terrific. Heinz said, 'Why do you stay in London? It is such an expensive place. Why don't you come to Cambridge? We can be together, spend time together. And you can go to lectures and you can go to libraries.' And so I did. I went to Cambridge and I tried to get a job. By that time the war had broken out on 3 September 1939 and everybody, I mean the whole life in the country was moving from a peacetime sort of situation to wartime. All the factories folded up, people going to the army and so on. In Cambridge as well, in the colleges, there was movement, terrific movement. And everybody, there was quite a number of German refugees there, which I got to know through Heinz, and everybody was telling me, 'Go to the States, go to the States. Here there is a war, here there is no peaceful future for you.' And I published one paper, it was my dissertation, thesis, but I couldn't find anybody who offered me any job.

Tape 1: 2 hours 4 minutes 1 second

There is another thing which happened which I don't understand now. I had a permit to stay here for two months. What happened was that two weeks after the beginning of the war the Home Office put out a regulation that all these temporary permits to stay would be prolonged sine die, forever, you could stay forever, and therefore I didn't have to go away in October. And at that point actually, it was sort of a subconscious feeling probably thinking back, perhaps I should have gone back to Italy in order to be near my mother and to get my full qualification. But I decided on the other hand not to do so. It was-, I can't explain. Very probably I was wrong. I don't know, as a good son, I should have gone back. Fortunately, nothing happened to my mother, fortunately – I'll explain later. But my mother survived and so did my grandmother. My grandfather died soon after we left. I was trying desperately to

find work then in this country, but without any success. And so I wrote to my brother who had great difficulties. It was possible for him to find work, but he had great difficulties to find suitable work for himself. But I wrote to him, I said, 'Please send me an affidavit so I can come to the States.' And we come now to the summer of 1940, and on 10 June 1940 Italy declares war on France, Great Britain, the British Empire. And from being simply an alien, I became an enemy alien.

RL: Can I just ask you what were you doing in Cambridge at this time?

Tape 1: 2 hours 7 minutes 11 seconds

IC: I was trying to study and to go and see people, try to get work.

RL: And did you get any work?

IC: No.

RL: So how were you paying, were you having to pay a rent for rooms?

IC: Yes. I lived very, very poorly, minimally, sub-minimally.

RL: Did you earn any money at all?

IC: No.

RL: So where did you get the money from?

IC: Well, I mean the little bit of money that I had-, my mother was able to send me every week some money, but as I say, minimal, minimal. I was able to buy a bicycle, with a basket in front.

RL: So your studies were then mainly to learn English?

IC: No, medical, I was trying to read.. You see, there is one thing, it's quite extraordinary. In Italy the books which were at our disposal were antiquated. And the reason is simply this, that the medical market in Italy is very limited. It's not like in Great Britain, that when a publisher published a book you can export it to the Empire or to America because of the community of language, so it is a huge market. So it is perfectly possible for a publisher to have frequent editions of a book, revised editions of books and so on. Also, the university libraries in this country subscribe to journals from every part of the world and they are available to anybody who is interested to follow what is happening in the scientific world. In Italy, all this doesn't apply. A German book might have been written in, I don't know, say in 1925. By the time it is translated and published in Italy it is 1928 or 1929. By the time it falls into your hands it's old stuff, no use at all. And when I came to London, for instance, I went to the Lewis Library in Gower Street, next to University College. I went there and I saw all those books, all those journals, all books on practical medicine, things we never had, it opened up a world, a new world.

Tape 1: 2 hours 10 minutes 44 seconds

You could study, you could learn, you could practice what you learnt.

RL: But these were all in English?

IC: In English.

RL: So how long did it take you to come to grips?

IC: It took me some time, but it is one thing to translate and to read English, and one thing is to listen to English, or to speak English. I mean there are differences in difficulties. But I never lost my accent of course, I still have a foreign accent, but I got a working knowledge of English pretty quickly, so I could read a little bit. Well, when Italy entered the war my position vis-à-vis the authorities had changed because I had become an enemy alien. But apart from that, at that time, Germany had started a real war with the invasion of Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium. And the British Army in France had been pushed back to Dunkerque and saved by the skin of their teeth and there was panic in Whitehall. The invasion of these countries by Germany had been aided by the so-called fifth column, which is a Spanish expression. It is derived from the Spanish War when two apparently simple tourists turned out to be spies for Germany or for Italy and helping Franco against the legal government of the country

Tape 1: 2 hours 13 minutes 26 seconds

And they got afraid in Whitehall that the same thing might apply here. And therefore they panicked and they interned all men, enemy aliens, and all women who lived on the coast or in a coastal area. And Heinz was interned and I was interned. I think, looking back, I think the internment was justified because the situation was very dire. No one could exclude at that time the possibility of an invasion from France. So I accept what they did; what I can't accept is the lack of preparation. There was not enough food in the various camps where we went. You see, from Cambridge I was brought to a barracks in Bedford, stayed there one or two days. Then, under military escort by train I was taken to Kempton racecourse where we lived under tents in near proximity to a brigade of the Guards, big fellows who made it very clear to us that they won't put up with any silly thing from us. And there, there was no food at all and we stayed there for about a week, ten days. Then military escort, and we were taken to Bury, near Manchester, and put in a disused factory which must have been closed since the great crisis of 1930. On the floor there was a layer of grime and oil. The roof was partly broken glass, so that when it rained we had the benefit of some water coming in.

Tape 1: 2 hours 16 minutes 28 seconds

And by that time I realised that some of my co-inmates were people in need of medical help. There were people who were diabetics, who had high blood pressure, TB, you name it, gastric abscess. I mean I was unattached, I didn't have any family, I was alone. But some of them had families and businesses, and just like that, to be taken away, it was a terrible thing for them. I must say that they behaved very well, but some of them really were under very great stress. And from there they took us to the Isle of Man where we were housed in Douglas, just on the waterfront. It was a group of the last hotels on the parade there. It was called the Palace Camp. And the group of these hotels had been enclosed in a double fence of barbed wire, and soldiers with rifles were in between the two fences, guarding us. And it was a lovely summer. Except for the news. We saw the flames of the fires from the docks in Liverpool. We were under-, I was feeling that an invasion-, not only for general political reasons, but also because I thought, well, I mean, if the Germans come, they'll catch me like a rat in the trap, I couldn't go anywhere. The only place that I thought of going was Ireland, but then, how do I go from the Isle of Man to Ireland? It was a worrying situation.

Tape 1: 2 hours 19 minutes 20 seconds

My cousin - I told you that a cousin was already here and for a few weeks we were together in London - had found work actually at the BBC, as translator and announcer, broadcasting to Italy. But he too was interned. But not only that, he was put on the *Arandora Star*, which was a large ship, transatlantic ship, which was torpedoed just south of Ireland. And he told me how he saved himself. He waited for the right moment when the ship had already leaned towards one side and the distance from the water was not very great and then he jumped into the water. It was night time and he found a piece of wood and held himself. He himself was not physically strong at all and not a very good swimmer either, but he managed to keep afloat. And then he saw a lifeboat, not very far away, so he went there. And there was a boat where there were some British soldiers. There was an army captain and there was a naval officer as well. The army captain said, 'Oh no, we don't pick him up. We've got to pick up our own people.' And the naval man said, 'No, the law of the sea is that we have to pick up everybody that we can pick up.' So he was picked up. And then at dawn one destroyer came and he was transferred there from the lifeboat, taken to Glasgow to hospital, and after a few days he was back in London. And later on he became professor of Italian in Cambridge and he became quite a big researcher in Italian literature.

RL: What was his name?

IC: His name is Limentani, which is the name of that family, of the grandfather of my mother.

Tape 1: 2 hours 22 minutes 10 seconds

RL: You were on the Isle of Man. How were you treated there?

IC: Well, it was okay. After the first few two or three weeks, food was properly organised. In our camp of course there were a lot of ordinary Italians, non-Jewish Italians. You see, there were German camps and there were Italian camps. And the differences between the two camps, they were quite different. The German camps, there were quite a lot of Jewish refugees, highly cultured men, people, who had occupied important positions in the law or universities or arts and so on, and so they had a splendid life of continuous enlargement of their education and so on. In the Italian camps of course there were the ordinary Italians; mainly immigrants who'd come to England throughout the years from 1900 onwards and they came as hotel workers, waiters, cooks, ice-cream people, fish and chips people, hotel directors, club directors - these were the aristocracy of the place. The hotel directors and club directors were the upper class of immigrants. There was a group of Jewish people and some of them made quite an impact in the intellectual or industrial life of the country. Some became professors, Fellows of the Royal Society and so on. One is Pontecorvo, who was a geneticist and became a Fellow of the Royal Society. Another one was Shield, who was a pharmacologist and became professor at University College. And then we organised a minor sort of club where we could talk to one another about these things. And there was a Bridge club as well where I learnt to play Bridge.

Tape 1: 2 hours 25 minutes 14 seconds.

At that time, when the internment policy was put into effect, the *Manchester Guardian*, as then it was, a very great liberal paper, published leaders saying 'What are we doing? These people are friends. They are going to help us and we put them into internment camps, it's completely silly.' So they instituted tribunals. And each one of us was supposed to appear in front of the tribunal and say what was his position and so on, and some would be freed from

internment. My position was that I had this affidavit to go to the States. And when this was made clear to the authorities, they said, 'Then you go to London and try to find the means to go to the States.' There was another person who was in the same situation. He was a man from Turin called Achille Foa. He made a great career for himself with the Olivetti typewriter company, which was making very good typewriters in Italy. And the company had to sack him because of the racial laws and he decided to emigrate. And Olivetti said, 'Okay, if you go to England, why don't you try to sell some of our machines there, typewriters?' And so he was in the camp with me, although our situation was completely different. He was a well-to-do man, he had money and he had a career, he had proved himself in business and organisation and so on. I was nobody, I mean I was somebody who'd finished university, yes, I had published my dissertation, but I didn't have anything to show, professionally. I was in a terrible situation and I did not have the full registration as a doctor in Italy and therefore I could not be registered here either. Very difficult.

Tape 1: 2 hours 28 minutes 50 seconds

RL: What subject was your dissertation on?

IC: It was on pathology. I wanted to be a pathologist.

RL: Where was it published?

IC: It was published in the journal *Tuberculosis*, it was a medical journal. So I was free from internment then because I was emigrating to the States.

RL: So how long were you interned, when were you freed?

IC: June, July, August, September, October – five months. Very quick, I was one of the first out, together with Achille Foa. I went to London and the Blitz was on every night, punctually, you know how systematic the Germans are, they are very methodical, so they arrived every day, every evening at half past five and stayed with us for a number of hours. Bombs were falling, screaming down, incendiaries, high explosives and so on. I was trying to find a ship to go to the States, or a plane, but it was impossible. Very few places were available in any case, and very many of them were taken by officials who would go to Canada or the Caribbean islands on business of the state. Very, very difficult.

RL: Where were you staying, where were you living at this point?

IC: I stayed in a boarding house, I had a room. First of all in Holloway, near Holloway Prison. But then I graduated to Swiss Cottage. But money was disappearing and I really didn't know what to do when I saw in the paper an advertisement by the BBC for a place of translator and announcer.

Tape 1: 2 hours 31 minutes 28 seconds

And I applied for that and got it. And I started working in the BBC; I started having some money. And I did extra work as well, I was still looking for a medical job. But I wanted to be a pathologist, or a physiologist, because in Italy I had done some special courses, extra courses besides the medical one. Not that I learnt very much. Yes, I learnt something in pathology, but physiology was very badly organised, of course. However, I did learn something there as well. So I worked at the BBC for some time.

RL: Can you tell me about the kind of work you were doing there at the BBC, what kind of things?

IC: Oh yes. Well, we worked in shifts. The first shift was at half past five in the morning, I think, the first bulletin, or six o'clock in the morning, so we had to sleep over in Bush House. I don't know if you know London? It's in a very central position, it's in Aldwych. Aldwych is a crescent of buildings and Bush House is in the centre of it. The European Service, as it was called, occupied one floor. The studios were down in the deeper basement. The floor above us, that was the secret part we learnt later on. Well, we knew that it was a secret organisation organising secret things. It had a name, but I've forgotten now. In any case, there were people organising secret affairs, I don't know.

Tape 1: 2 hours 34 minutes 14 seconds

There was a head editor and then each service, Italian Service, French Service, German Service, Austrian Service, Hungarian and so on, Spanish, there was a section editor and sub-editor, two or three editors, and they were receiving all the information, passed to them from the chief editor to the section editors. And then the section editors gave this to us to translate. And if we were possessed with a suitable voice, suitable for broadcasting, then we would go down to the studio, accompanied by an English national, which was called a switch censor. The reason is that when you are in the studio you had a microphone in front of you and on the table on the side. There was a switch and when you had a cough or something you could press the switch and cut the studio off the line. Similarly, had we tried to do some funny business of shafting some propaganda stuff or some silly thing, the switch censor would have been able to cut us off from the line. It was a group of... Very many of us were Jewish refugees, a few were English people and had lived in Italy for very many years. In fact, they were Italians; they knew Italian better than English. And it was a kind of interesting work; not as interesting as medical work. Eventually I wrote a letter, one of many letters, to Professor Samson Wright. He was professor of physiology at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School. And I explained to him that I was a refugee and I wanted to do some work that I had received some training in Italy. And Samson Wright was one of the great figures in my life, in fact I owe everything to him.

Tape 1: 2 hours 37 minutes 19 seconds

He was a Jew, a Zionist, very much involved in the Jewish life and Jewish representation towards the authorities. At that time, the great problem was the problem of Palestine, as it is now. But then the problem was even more pressing because there were all these refugees who had to come out of Germany and Austria and Czechoslovakia and Poland and had to find some place where to go. And after the war there were people who had come out of the camps and they had to find some place where to go and live. And there were people in Palestine waiting for them with open arms, but they couldn't go because of the policy of the Colonial Office. And Samson Wright was involved in this. More than that, quite a number of refugees from Germany and Austria and Czechoslovakia were adopted and their degree was not recognised in this country, so they had to study from the beginning again, not only clinical medicine, practical medicine, but they had to study simple anatomy, physiology, pharmacology and pathology and so on, in English. And some of them were not young anymore. And these people had to find some money to live, they had families. And Samson Wright threw himself into this business of political business and refugee business. Fully, I mean he put everything that he had into it. So when he received my letter, mine was one of the very many letters that he had received in those years, he wrote back to me saying, 'Yes, I can give you bench space, but no money.' And I accepted, because I had put away some

money working for the BBC, doing a lot of extra things and so on, so I had put together a little bit of money in the nine months I think that I worked at the BBC.

Tape 1: 2 hours 40 minutes 32 seconds

And also I thought that I was well on, I mean I was with the people there, and I thought I can go and work at the BBC at weekends and perhaps in the evening. Unfortunately, the Middlesex Medical School had been evacuated to Leeds because of the bombs. So what I could do was to go to London from Leeds to work at the BBC, only at the weekends. And in any case, it was not a suitable arrangement. However, we didn't stay very long in Leeds. I arrived there in December 1941 and I left in the summer 1942, so I stayed in Leeds for six months.

RL: And what were you doing there?

IC: I was learning. I was learning physiology. I was a sort of, even less than a research assistant, I really was learning, I was very green. Because I mean physiology is very, very strong in this country, very strong, great. Quite a lot of progress in physiology has been done because of work in this country.

RL: Did you make contact with the community in Leeds at all?

IC: No.

RL: What did you think of Leeds as a place?

IC: Hell! Hell. I remember the first day that I arrived in Leeds I went to the secretary of the school, 'Please give me a list of possible digs for me.' And she gave me the list and I went up to a place which is called Hyde Park, on top of the university, and I looked down on the other side and I saw rows and rows and rows, interminable rows of back-to-back homes, each one with a chimney from which smoke was coming out and the atmosphere was green and irritating to the nose and to the eyes. And I looked down on the smoke spreading over the town. I said, 'This is like Dante's hell!'

Tape 1: 2 hours 43 minutes 23 seconds

I had never seen anything so depressing like that one. But I found very good accommodation, very near Hyde Park. A kind lady who had a daughter, about 24, 25 I think she was, who had trouble with one knee. They were Christian Scientists and they believed that prayer would do the trick. And every day people, the same congregation, would come and read the Bible. I suppose, whatever it was it didn't do any good. And the son of this lady had been recruited in the air force, so there was a room available, and she was very good. I had a study for myself; not entirely for myself, I was joined by a vet, but we went along very well together. He even invited me to a cricket match, at Headingley, so I went to see my first cricket match in Leeds.

RL: What did you make of it?

IC: Not much! So I went back to London then. And then it was easier to work part-time for the BBC, freelance entirely.

RL: Can I just ask you about the BBC: was it in the Italian Service, in the Italian Station that you were translating or was it other European languages as well?

IC: I told you, there were all these various sections, so I mean we used the same studios in turn, but we followed the French or the French followed us or the Germans and Czech people and so on, and Spanish. And the great thing, the importance of the BBC actually from the point of view of the war was that it was transmitting news. In Italy, I mean they didn't take very much to certain things that we were doing. To talk about the intellectual life in London or the fact that there had been an Italian opera produced in some theatre or other; I mean this is all completely useless stuff.

Tape 1: 2 hours 46 minutes 19 seconds

The important thing was news, and above all good news, which came very late; it took a long time to come, because it was one defeat after another in 1940 and 1941 and 1942. And it's only in 1943 that El Alamein was the first victory. Of course there had been smaller things, like the *Graf Spee* being sunk in Montevideo or the *Bismarck* sunk in the Atlantic or some other good news. I can't find it actually.

RL: And were you the announcer of this news?

IC: I was first of all translating and then going down with the switch censor to the studio to broadcast, yes. It was good.

RL: How many hours a day were you doing this?

IC: Well, the first bulletin was, as I said, at half past five, six o'clock. Then there was an early afternoon, then mid-afternoon, and then two or three during the evening and at midnight. And the people who were doing the nightshift would come in at ten o'clock and would do the midnight bulletin. And then down at the very bottom of Bush House there was a dormitory and the people who had to do the early bulletin slept in there. It was atrocious. Snoring and smell and people who had to get up at various times for various bulletins during the night; it was awful. So we got up rather groggy in the morning and we had to go upstairs and quickly do a translation in time for the first bulletin. And one of my colleagues was so sleepy that he went down to the studio and started saying, 'Here Moscow!', because he had translated something about Russia and his head was full of Russia and instead of saying, 'Here London!' – 'Here Moscow!'

Tape 1: 2 hours 49 minutes 18 seconds

RL: How long did each broadcast last?

IC: Usually the bulletin was quarter of an hour, twenty minutes, something of that sort. Then there were talks as well. And I did write talks as well, but there was one man who was very popular in Italy. And he was called in Italy Colonel Buona Sera; 'buona sera' means 'good evening'. Because at the end of his talk, he was an army man, Colonel Stephen; his mother was Italian, from Naples, and his father was in Italy as a military attaché. And he met this beautiful Neapolitan girl and married her and produced Colonel Stephen, who had a fairly good, not quite perfect, but very good Italian pronunciation. And he was speaking with a sort of detachment and he became very popular in Italy and he was known as Colonel Buona Sera. The hidden secret thing was that the text of his talks was written by an Italian Jewish refugee, who was a journalist and he could write. And he had the training of being a journalist and he was witty - when necessary. And Colonel Stephen was simply a voice. He didn't contribute anything at all of his own, except for the voice.

RL: Who was the refugee that wrote the script, what was his name?

IC: Cassuto. I can't remember his first name.

RL: Did you say you participated in these talks as well, or you wrote for these talks?

IC: I wrote talks and I broadcast them, yes. And I did bulletins as well. It was the only thing I could do really in the circumstances, towards the war. The other possibility was to go to the pioneer corps and dig trenches or something like that, but I preferred to work at the BBC.

Tape 1: 2 hours 52 minutes 21 seconds

RL: So you came back to London. And what were you doing when you came back the second time to London? You worked part-time for the BBC?

IC: And also part-time at the Middlesex. However, I think, if I may at this point, I would like to go back to the time that I was released from the Isle of Man and I was in London looking for transport to the States. And one day, it was very near Christmas, I was walking in Piccadilly, and by chance I meet Achille Foa, who, as I mentioned before was on the Isle of Man with me, and ditto was trying to get into the States. We had met actually, when we were released from the Isle of Man. We were taken to Lingfield Racecourse and accommodated under this tribune, what do you call it, where the public stands – the stands, under the stands. And we stayed there for some days together and became friends. And we met in Piccadilly Circus and he said, 'I'm looking for some mistletoe.' It is traditional to have mistletoe for Christmas. 'Come with me and we can talk in the meantime.' So I went along and talking about it and so on. And then it was roundabout four o'clock. I don't think he found any mistletoe if I remember correctly, couldn't find it. But he said, 'Well, the Germans are coming very soon.' Roundabout five, half past five they were expected every evening. 'We'd better go home. But give me your telephone number, I'm trying to organise an afternoon with some friends and I would like you to come.' So we parted. He was living then in London, in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, in the house of friends he had met in Italy. He was a very good man to connect up with people, to make an impression on people.

Tape 1: 2 hours 55 minutes 17 seconds

These people had been sent to the Bahamas on business for the Admiralty, and the house was left empty to Achille. And there was also his sister in London, who had emigrated from Italy, but she had found accommodation which was not suitable for her.

RL: We'll just have to stop here because the film is coming to an end.

TAPE 2

Tape 2: 10 seconds

IC: Can I say a few words to link it up? You can always cut it.

RL: Okay. So if you'd like to start.

IC: Well, I was talking about the meeting with Achille Foa in Piccadilly just before Christmas, and he promised to invite me to a get-together with other friends of his later on in

January, which he did. And so I went to Hampstead Garden Suburb to this house in which he lived with his sister Annie and a dog which belonged to the people who had gone to the Bahamas. And they were in charge of the house and the dog. Annie had been a teacher in secondary schools in Italy, having been trained in classical languages. And she had emigrated to England in early 1940, where she was actually simply a house helper to an Italian lady who was secretary at the Italian embassy. And this lady of course left England on the last diplomatic train when Italy declared war and so Annie had to leave that place and joined her brother in this Hampstead Suburb house. And I didn't see Annie for quite a time, and then in 1942 I think, when I was working at the BBC, Annie got a job herself in the Italian Intelligence Unit of the BBC, so I met her again. And we liked each other's company and we fell in love. And we got married at the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in Lincoln Avenue in London. And my daughter is the result of our union; she was born in 1947 here in Liverpool. But we got married in 1946. 1946 is an important year. I was still working at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School in the Department of Physiology and doing experimental work for Samson Wright who had a terrific knowledge of medical literature and a wide view. He was perhaps less clever with his hands, but I was doing that type of work and together we published several papers. And in fact we went to the International Physiological Congress in 1946, which was the first one held after the war, when people of France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, from the whole of Europe, physiologists, were able to get together again after the war.

Tape 2: 4 minutes 46 seconds

And some wrote important stories, like, for instance, the man called Cough, I think, Dutch, who invented the dialysis apparatus for renal trouble, and other advances of that type. But above all it was a reunion of scientists who had been separated by politics and war.

RL: What was the research that you yourself were doing at the time?

IC: We were working, Samson Wright and I, on the nervous system of the spinal cord, trying to find what is the transmitter, the substance which transmits impulses. It was a very, very early attempt in that field. My position at the Middlesex Hospital was lovely, with Samson Wright as a teacher and co-worker. It was less happy from the point of view of the money, because it was still paltry, although I was doing some teaching, practical classes and some lectures as well. Also people who had been working at the Middlesex before the war and then they had been recruited in the army or the air force or the navy were coming back, of course, to their own jobs. And therefore, given the fact that the department was very small in size, I felt that there was no possibility for me to reach a suitable academic position. And one day a friend told me, 'There is an advertisement for a post in Liverpool. It might be alright for you because they are trying to expand the medical school in Liverpool, particularly in physiology.' So I applied and I got the job. That was in 1946. And the job started on 1 October 1946, with a salary of then £450. So Annie and I went home for the first time after the war to Italy that summer. You can imagine the flood of memories and of emotions to see my mother again and my grandmother and my friends, and cousins who when I left were still little children and had grown to be young ladies, and some-, no they didn't have children yet, but they were on their way to have children. So it was very emotional-

Tape 2: 8 minutes 30 seconds

I realise now that I haven't said anything very much about my mother. This didn't fit in because I described life in England; it's not neglect, but simply that she didn't fit in into that narration. I left my mother in 1939 and once we left, my brother and I left, mother and the grandparents decided that the house was too big. In any case, the rent from that flat in which

we lived would be very useful, both for my mother and for my grandparents, if they went to a smaller accommodation. And this is what my mother did. My grandparents found room too, with another daughter who had rooms to spare. My mother rented a flat and she was offered to look after two Jewish children whose parents lived in a small town in Piedmont, Alessandria, where there were very few Jews living, therefore there was no possibility of creating a Jewish school for these few children of the few families in Alessandria. And they had to come to Milan where the old Jewish school was going to be enlarged. There were plenty of teachers who had been sacked because of the racial laws who needed to find employment. They were also able to teach very well, very properly, because some of them were really very good teachers. So my mother was offered to look after two of these children who frequented the Jewish school, and so she did. And then later on my mother went to help a sister-in-law who was ill in Bergamo; the lady who had looked after me so well. It was a fatal disease and she passed on. But being in Bergamo she was able to connect up, to get to know other families.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 4 seconds

Bergamo and the region round about is a Catholic region, very strongly Catholic. But these people didn't mind, like all Italians. I mean, 'You are Jewish and I'm Catholic, so what?' So she became friendly at least with one family of them. The situation of my mother and of all the Italian Jews in Italy changed abruptly and drastically and tragically on 8 September 1943. By that time Italy had been defeated in Ethiopia, Abyssinia and had been defeated in Libya. The Eight Army had swept over to Tripoli, the Americans and British troops had landed in Tunisia and they had crossed the Mediterranean and invaded Sicily. The Grand Council of the Fascist Party at a meeting decided that Mussolini had led them astray. They voted against him. He went to see the king, who had lost all the colonies and Sicily and he got Mussolini arrested and appointed a marshal of the Army, Marshal Badoglio. At the same time Marshal Badoglio then started to get in touch with emissaries of Great Britain and America to ask for an armistice. All relations between these countries had been broken. And apparently he had difficulties in trying to be secret, he didn't want the Germans to know about it. And he found it very, very difficult to connect up with the Americans or the British and ask for an armistice. There is a tale, I don't know whether it is true, that a cousin of my father, the one who lived with us for a time, he was in Portugal selling arms on behalf of Italian industries. He was the army man who had become a businessman. And they say that he would have been in Lisbon for many years now and he got to know everybody, because he was that type of man that was able to connect up very easily. They say that he helped Badoglio as a first link to the allies. In fact, the armistice was granted but naturally, the Germans were livid. An ally who withdraws from the war when the war goes bad is not a very good ally. And so they sent troops now to Italy in order to stop the advance of the Americans and the British up the peninsula.

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But also they managed to get Mussolini, who was imprisoned, they made a raid by sort of, what do you call it, shock troops, and they got Mussolini free. And Mussolini was appointed then nominal head of a republic in the rest of the Italian territory. It was called the Republic of Salò. Salò is not a very large town, a small town on Lake Garda. Together with the troops they also sent the Gestapo, they also sent political people. The Republic of Salò was a nominal thing, however able to do enormous damage. Even the son-in-law of Mussolini was arrested and killed, and so were members of the Fascist Party who had sided against Mussolini at the time of the assembly of the Grand Council of the Fascist Party. Also, the Republic of Salò cooperated with the Germans in everything that they were going to do. And what they were going to do was to start deportations of Jews and people who they suspected to be unfavourable to fascism and Nazism. And then the situation of my mother, from the 8

September, became critical. She was at that time living as a friend, paying her own way, in a house of a very devout Catholic lady that she had known during her stay in Bergamo. And as the days went on it became apparent to my mother, hearing that such and such a person had disappeared, that such and such a person had been killed, that the situation was getting dangerous. And a similar thought was present in the minds of the members of the family whose children my mother took care of in the Jewish school. And they tried to fish around to find information about the best way of crossing illegally into Switzerland. It was an extremely difficult job. First of all it had to be secret. Then my mother was operating from a little village, not very far from Bergamo, but quite a village out of main traffic. She didn't know anybody who could be useful in finding a link with people who'd help her across the frontier.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 4 seconds

And then eventually she heard that perhaps there was a priest up in some village up in the mountains who was said to be able to do something. So they went to see him. And he said, 'I don't know anything at all about it. I'm here in this village, away from the frontier, there is nothing I can do from here. But I heard that there are some people on Lake Como', and he mentioned a village on Lake Como, 'that help people across.' And my mother and this family of friends, father, mother and two children.. The father was already old, over 60 I think, he was a pharmacist. The mother was a bit younger, but constitutionally, mentally not very strong, not a very practical woman or able to cope with difficult situations. The children, one I think must have been 16, the other about 13. And they went. It was dangerous to travel in those days because the police was at every station. They went to this village on Lake Como. And I think they might have been given a name to ask for. And this person introduced them to two smugglers. These were two smugglers born in that village who were crossing to and from Switzerland, taking something or other that they had in Italy to sell in Switzerland, and taking coffee, cigarettes, tobacco, watches and so on from Switzerland into Italy. It was a situation, I don't know how to define it, an extremely dangerous combination of people. Because the smugglers had only one aim, that of crossing as quickly as possible by even a difficult path into Switzerland, not to be caught by the frontier guards. On the other hand, this family of friends, above all father and mother, were far from strong, far from trained. My mother was then 50, but she was physically strong. Well, they started going, the mountains were already covered by snow. And very soon they sank into the snow up to their hips. They quickly became exhausted as well and they had to shelter in one of those shacks that peasants put up to put in tools and things for the summer.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 5 seconds

They were joined there by an English soldier who had escaped from a prisoners of war camp and whose shoes were all broken up. So they gave him a pair of leather shoes that they had. I don't know, they had one pair too many. And he went his own way, he was strong and with good shoes on his feet he could run. But my mother and the others of course were different kind of people. However, the smugglers at a certain point said, 'You go that way and we go this way.' And they went away, stealing some of their belongings, too. My mother and this family of friends crossed the frontier. They didn't find any guard. And they got down to the first Swiss village and they went to the police station and said, 'We are from Italy, we are refugees. We'd like to be taken in the camps in Switzerland.' So they rang up the Ministry in Bern, and the Ministry said, 'Send them back, the camps are full.' The mother of the family was mentally completely unstable by that time. The father had frostbitten toes, and they were allowed to stay. But my mother and the two children were taken to the Italian frontier and the Swiss guards indicated roughly the way they should go. So they started going and they came across an Italian soldier who belonged to that part of the Italian army which is responsible for stopping smuggling. It's called Finance Guard, it's a special part of the army. And he said, 'I

won't interfere at all with you, I mean I understand your predicament. I certainly won't do anything. But you have been very lucky. Had you come five minutes before, you would have found here two fascist militia soldiers who would have taken a very different view of this affair.' And he indicated to them the way down to a village, which they reached after walking for a whole day. They reached it in the evening, completely... You can imagine the depression and desperation really, having been chucked out from Switzerland, and all the physical efforts that they had to do in those days. The following morning, very early, fortunately it was a village where there was a railway, and the railway stopped there, the train stopped there, or at least the first train in the morning stopped there.

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And they got on this train and they went back to Milan. It must have been a very terribly worrying journey because the trains were inspected every now and then by guards. Every station had informers and military guards, if not German Gestapo people. But they had been extremely lucky. They got to Milan station. There they changed train to go to Bergamo and back again from the place from which they had started. And the Catholic lady, Mrs Marcasoli, said, 'You know, you can't stay here in my house. My house is in the middle of the village and people would notice that there are other people here, two young men and a new lady. You can't stay here, the danger is too great for you and for me. But I've got a little farm at the edge of the village and this farm hasn't got any windows towards the street. It is made in such a way that there is a central courtyard where the peasants do their work and so on. And the windows all look towards this central courtyard area. And I promise to let you have every day food and drink, but you must not get out of the house on any account.' So my mother and the two young men stayed there from November 1943 until May 1945

Tape 2: 30 minutes 35 seconds

when the war ended. And then my mother went back to Milan. She was able to claim the flat that she had left; it had been occupied by somebody else, but she got it back. And she started again, I mean life there. She had two sisters in Milan. She was very close to one of them. And she helped an old uncle who had lost his wife and he was extremely depressed, so much so that a few months later he committed suicide. He had lost his wife, he had lost one of his sons, that was the one who came to England, so he was away. The other son was a doctor, but very busy professionally, I don't know. In any case, he was extremely depressed and he committed suicide.

Tape 2: 32 minutes 7 seconds

But my mother helped him. He used to go and see my mother very nearly every afternoon and my mother used to give him a cup of coffee, which in those days was very difficult to get in Italy. My mother was capable of... She was a passionate woman, both in charity and good works as well as in disapproval and even hate. Hate is too much a word, but she was a woman of passions. And she was very kind to him, kept him company and so on.

RL: You said that your grandmother also survived?

IC: Yes, my grandmother survived. She lived with another daughter, as I said. And in 1946 when we went to Milan I was able to see her, to talk to her. But I'm afraid she had deteriorated mentally. She addressed me in the formal type of address that you've got in Italian. 'But grandma, I'm your grandchild! Italo, don't you remember me? We lived together for so very many years. Why do you treat me like a stranger?' I think she was not the same; she lost part of her higher functions. Pity! She was a lovely woman, very beautiful. Well, so

we got to 1946 and I got married in February 1946 to Annie Foa. And I had a job in Liverpool to go to. So I came to Liverpool. I went to the medical school, they gave me a list of flats that I could have. And I got a flat in Mount Pleasant, at the corner of Benson Street, in the house of Dr Bligh, who had a very large house and the top floor had been the nursery flat and we got that. And it was the first time that Annie had been in the north of England. Liverpool in 1946 was a terrible sight. There was a lot of destruction and a lot of poverty. But Benson Street and streets nearby were far from an acceptable neighbourhood for anybody. Dr Bligh was a GP and his wife was very active in Catholic organisations. And they had been living there for very many years; they had their surgery there, so they were accustomed to that environment. But for Annie and I, although we were refugees with very little money between us, it was not the right place to be.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 26 seconds

And when Annie became pregnant, early in 1947, we decided that this was not the place to have a baby. Our baby deserved something much better than that. And Emma was born at the end of October 1947, and by that time we decided to buy a house. We didn't have any money apart from a few hundred pounds, but we got a mortgage and the university gave me a loan to be repaid in instalments. My brother-in-law Achille gave us £600 which were repaid regularly. Annie was a wonderful maker of a home. She was from Turin. And in Turin there was not only a very strong antifascist opposition, but also there was a nucleus of Zionists. And somehow or other, being a big town, but not so big as to be diluted by a lot of different tendencies, they had been able to keep their Jewishness together. For instance, they had a club amongst the young people in their teens and so on, where they would meet and discuss and exchange books and so on and talk about Zionism. And she was a person very strong in adversity, a great companion, and she was a wonderful mother. And I'm happy to say that Emma was influenced very much in her opinion by her mother. She got very many of her best qualities.

RL: Okay. We'll stop there.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 37 seconds

TAPE 3

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RL: Can I just ask you something I haven't asked before, which was when you first came to this country, to England, what your first impressions were of the place?

IC: When I got on the train at Dover I was completely shattered of course, after the night journey through Germany and having left Italy and so on. And across from the corridor, on the same carriage, was a family who was coming home after a lovely holiday on the continent. And I was looking at them and there was such a difference: these people were coming home and I was going away. And these people had a lovely holiday and can go back to their own patients [sic]. And I am here, not knowing what is going to happen to me. And then they ordered tea; at that time you could order tea on the train. They were munching their sweets. It was very different. I mean I understood how much more settled the world was in this country compared with the turbulent fascist nations in Europe. And then, coming through Kent towns and so on, all these houses, all exactly the same, the same each one with their fences to make sure that everybody knew what belonged to whom, it was quite different from what you see on the continent, where you have these blocks of flats, quite a different thing.

And then I remember in the taxi from Victoria Station in London to Bayswater, where I was going to stay for a few weeks, we passed by Hyde Park Corner, I saw people walking, gently, peacefully along, as if nothing had happened. Some wore uniform, I remember, but I mean there was such a feeling of peace. And I didn't know anybody, I was in London, I didn't have any letter of introduction to anybody. I didn't have enough money to go to a school. Or rather, I probably would have had enough money to go to a school, but I was afraid of spending the money in case I might have to need it. And so I decided, in order to hear some spoken English, I would go every day to the National Gallery where there were lecturers who were giving a lecture in front of a picture and they were talking about this picture and the author and so on. And having done that, I would go to Hyde Park Corner to hear the public speakers speaking a different kind of English. It was very-, for a young man, I was 24 then, it was not a proper life. And so I went to Cambridge.

Tape 3: 4 minutes 38 seconds

RL: Did you not have any formal English lessons in London?

IC: No.

RL: So you just picked it up as you went along?

IC: Yes. But I don't recommend this type of life to anybody. Don't do it. Don't find yourself in such a terrible mess like I was.

RL: What did you think of London itself?

IC: Oh, I mean a town not as beautiful as for instance Paris. In Paris the river is exploited to create a sort of monumental ensemble suitable for a capital city. The river in London, above all in those days, the south bank was a disaster. I mean it was unbelievable. In front of the Houses of Parliament, where there was St Thomas's Hospital, but then on the other side it was all factories, completely decayed, worthless buildings, no architecture at all. On the other hand, I mean London had all the parks, to begin with. Bond Street, I remember my first trip down Bond Street, that there was a Stradivarius in a shop window, the exquisite elegance that you could see there. Milan in those days was not the capital of fashion; it became the capital of fashion just very recently. But it was quite-, there is no comparison. And of course the mixture of people, different races and so on that you could see. And the other thing that strikes you very much is that people are so very careful not to give..., not to interfere in any way. I mean neighbours, if they go to a shop and they open the door and somebody follows you, you keep the thing open. That kind of courtesy, that kind of kindness, tacit recognition that makes life a little bit easier, it is a sort of oil which lubricates the intercourse between people, quite apart from the dignity. Say for instance the Houses of Parliament, you make a quarrel with the gothic architecture which I mean after all they've been built relatively recently, and the gothic architecture is medieval architecture, but it has got this sort of air of dignity and antiquity, even if it is false antiquity.

Tape 3: 8 minutes 30 seconds

And the same in Cambridge, you see, these colleges, they gave you a sense of permanence. There are things going on. It was built in 1470 or something, but it is still here, I mean 1900 and so on. I mean the thing stability, stability instead of the mad thoughtlessness, completely thoughtless. I mean the recent history of Italy is something of an adventurer, like Mussolini, without any deep, cultural basis really. He was out to do something for himself, not in a

thoughtful, organised way, but living from day to day. The persecution of the Jews came all of a sudden because he made a pact with the Germans. He made a pact with the Germans because he wanted to make a slight to the plutocracies, France and England. And the Jews were persecuted because of this. The whole thing has got a feeling of lack of balance, lack of thought, lack of civilisation. Because in Italy of course you get civilisation of the Renaissance, Middle Ages, I mean buildings, paintings, statues galore. But the modern history of Italy is really very, very shaky. I mean even now I can say that parliament doesn't work properly in Italy. The prime minister is somebody who should be impeached in any other nation, instead he is still prime minister, elected prime minister. It shows something is lacking in the way of stability. But I suppose we should go back to 1946.

RL: It's just two more questions while we are on that little bit of an earlier period of your first arrival. How did you feel you were received here in this country when you arrived?

IC: I'm afraid that I was a very odd man out here, quite apart from all the rest, simply because I didn't have any language. I couldn't communicate. I couldn't communicate.

RL: And when finally you could speak some English, how did you feel?

IC: Yes, then it was fine, I mean one thing for instance, I was never asked to present, to show my medical degree. My declaration to have this degree was taken as a declaration, I never had to present evidence.

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The only difficulty that I found was when I wanted to marry Annie. Then I went to Bevis Mark and I said, 'I want to get married. I'm a Jew, I want to get married.' 'Oh, yes, come in, come and sit down, sit down.' So I sat down and they said, 'Well, your name is?' 'Calma.' 'Say again?' 'Calma.' 'Is that a Jewish name?' 'Well', I said, 'as a matter of fact, it is the only family in Italy, it is true, it is the only Calma family in Italy, but it is a Jewish family.' 'And your first name?' 'Italo.' 'Say it again? And your Jewish name?' 'I haven't got one.' And I thought, well, this is no good, they didn't want-, they are not interested. 'Well, tell me about the proposed wife.' 'Anna Foa.' 'Ah, Foa, that's fine, that's a good name, we know this name.' Because Foa apparently derives from the fact that the people escaped the inquisition from Spain, crossed the southern part of France, where there was a area called Foix. And this one became Foa in Italy. So they knew about it. 'And the first name?' 'Anna.' 'Ah, that's fine, too, that's fine.' But they didn't want to marry me until two members of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation vouched that they knew that my parents had been married according to the Law of Moses and David, only then.

RL: And could two members do that?

IC: Two members did that. And then we got married.

RL: Why was that synagogue chosen for your marriage?

IC: Well, when we come to my first days in England, I remembered that this congregation arranged tea in the afternoon, a get together, sort of, in the synagogue of Lincoln Avenue. So I went there two or three times. But there were all these young men like me, all of them wanted the same thing, a job, I mean some purpose in life, some kind of life at all. And they were very few actually, so it was a bit empty. And I mean impatient men, I was impatient. I didn't have very much to do, but still, it was a waste of time I thought, to be frank. But they were

kind, they felt that they have a duty towards these people who had come, 300 years after them.

Tape 3: 17 minutes 0 second

RL: So was that your only connection with that synagogue, or did Annie have a connection with it?

IC: No, she did not. We got married there though.

RL: How many people were at the wedding?

IC: Oh, we still didn't have any money at all. I think there were very probably less than a dozen people, there were very probably ten people altogether. There was a dear lady called Mrs Foa, no relation at all, but a different family of Foas, from the same region, but different. And she pretended to be the mother, and my cousin pretended to be my father. The rabbi was a refugee from Yugoslavia. It was very simple. I know it was moving because [...] our people there. We went to have lunch and I invited Samson Wright to come. And in the evening, Annie was at the Polytechnic in London teaching Italian, and that evening she was due to have a class. And when one of our friends, a Viennese economist, when she heard that she had proposed to go and teach that evening, she said, 'You are not going to do it! You two go away and have a good evening together.' And she went to teach; or somebody else went to teach, they found somebody to go there. We were so very extraordinarily poor really, you know. And when I see these weddings now, it makes me laugh, really.

RL: Which really brings us up to 1946 now, and your life from this point on.

IC: Yes. From 1947 it is a different kind of life. I was happily married, had a wonderful baby, I had a house, I had a job. So I was settled. I mean it too depended on me, I mean on what I did in my private life and in my professional life. But it was a life like many other lives, nothing extraordinary about it, no dangers.

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The only thing of course that always rankles is the fact that our little family lost a father, and there were three of us. And we were living one in California, one in England, and my mother in Italy. And we are very close, my brother and I. We didn't see each other for 14 years; the first time I saw my brother was in 1953, fourteen years! But we are very close. There has always been some very strong glue, even now when we meet, it is such a great pleasure, although he lives in a different country with different habits, different general life altogether. I mean Californian life cannot be compared with Liverpoolian life or English life at all, it is completely different. In spite of that, at the beginning of our meetings, we sort of grate a little bit, we got to get on the same wavelength again, but then again we are so very happy together and we feel we had been cheated really of family life in the real sense of the word, first of all because of the loss of the father, and second because of this immigration. You see, what happened to my brother that is also important, isn't it? Or perhaps I can say a few words about this. When he got to America he was leaning on the railings of the ship and crying as the ship went away from the port. And a little man came to him and said, 'Why do you cry? Don't you see that you should be happy? All this that you see here will go up in smoke. There will be a fantastic tragedy in here. And you are going to a country which can offer you great opportunities. You can help other people as well. You can help your people to come, to join you. You should be happy.' He was the general secretary of the Furriers Union and he

provided my brother with a trial job in New York. And he went along, but their methods of working were completely different. While in Italy they used every little bit of the fur and so on, in America it was a question of speed. 'This is the skin, cut here and cut there and the right shape, right colour, okay, put it in that place! Another one!' Speed, speed, speed! And having worked for a few days, 'Look, you are not properly trained in our methods.' So he had to go through a series of the most demeaning jobs really, the lowest possible jobs, from dishwasher in a restaurant to something else.

Tape 3: 24 minute 44 seconds

But his name must have been put down, or he put down his name in some register or other, of a refugee who had been a university student. Because one day he got a large parcel containing bedding things and towels and things like that, and then the offer of a scholarship for the University of North Carolina. So he went down there. He was doing some sort of menial job in New York without any satisfaction and he got down to North Carolina and they asked him, 'What course do you want to take?' And he was in a hurry to get a job in order to help me, very probably, and mother, so he said, 'I want to stay to become an accountant.' 'Well, if you pass all the examinations, it can take as little as one year.' So he took that course and he became an accountant and he also, whilst he was at college, he got to know a bright young lady called Philippa Shaw who belongs to a protestant Dutch..., something Dutch. In any case, she is of sort of protestant stock, Quaker stock. And they got married. And immediately after my brother got the degree in accounting and then he was drafted. He wanted to be drafted because he wanted to do something for the war and he wanted to be a citizen in order to have some rights. And they sent him, when they heard that he was a good skier, they sent him to the mountain troops in Colorado. And then they realised that the mountain troops were not very useful at that moment in the war. In that war they needed really assault troops to assault the various pacific islands that the Americans had to capture in order to get near to Japan. So they put him in the assault troops.

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And then they realised after two weeks that one eye of my brother was deficient, so he became a sergeant in charge of a prisoners of war camp near San Francisco, near Auckland really, of Italian prisoners. And so he looked after these prisoners for two or three years, and took one shipload of them back to Naples. And that was in early 1946, that he arrived in Naples. But he managed to cable my mother that he would be staying in Naples for two or three days, could she come to meet him? And the poor woman did all the journey from Milan to Naples! In those conditions, in 1945/46, when all the railways were completely shot up, the bridges were down. It was dangerous to go about. There were all sorts of terrible characters about, who had come out of prisons, camps, and I mean you have no idea what it was like in 1945, 1946 in Italian towns. But she got to Naples and met my brother. And they spent one day and a half together and then the ship was turning around and going away. And my brother went to the American captain of the port and said, 'Look, I haven't seen my mother for so very many years. She has come down from Milan, now the ship is going, what shall I say?' 'Well', the captain said, 'I know what I would do. I would miss the ship.' And so he did. Without any consequence, except that the journey back from Naples to New York was done in such atrocious conditions on the sea that he was really ill. But he managed to stay with my mother for a day longer. I must tell you also what happened to my mother eventually. In 1948 she decided that she would join my brother in California. And my mother was already, 48 plus 7 - she was 55, 56. She did have an embryonic knowledge of English, no money. And she got to America, to California. And she started living with my brother, but there were difficulties between my mother and my sister-in-law. They were both respectable women, but they were brought up in completely different countries, no language.

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The mother of the children was going out to work every day, my mother stayed at home with the children. When the mother came back home, the children had bonded with my mother. And the thing didn't work. And so my mother said, 'Okay.' She started going as a mother's help in homes and so on, and doing all sorts of work, doing lessons for children and things like that, knitting and so on. But to make a very long story short: I got a Fulbright Scholarship to go to America in 1953, to work as a physiologist. And of course I chose to go and work in Los Angeles, where my brother and mother and the family were. Annie and Emma came as well. And I spent six months there with a lot of work. And when we were about to arrive, my brother said to my mother, 'Look, Italo and family are coming, so they need to have a house, to live somewhere. My house is too small for the three of them. But you've got \$3,000 in the bank. Why don't you take these \$3,000, put them down to buy a house?' My mother said, 'You are mad!' 'No, you can do it, you can do it.' So she put down \$3,000, then she got a mortgage and she bought what they call a duplex. This is a bungalow which contains a flat with three bedrooms and then a smaller flat with one bedroom. And what was done was that the little flat was let and with the revenue of that she was able to pay the mortgage and she was still able to do the work that she was doing, knitting and so on. She was knitting two pullovers a week for a, what do you call it, a Hollywood main road, this famous road where all the actresses and actors were selling each one of these things at enormous prices and mother was getting benefit from it. Well, from that my brother was transferred to San Francisco by the firm and they went to live in a little university town, Palo Alto, a lovely town in California, quite different from the usual American towns, which are a disaster. This one is a very civilised one, an old Spanish town, with a university, Stanford University, attached to it. Lovely, wonderful opportunities for everyone there, intellectual, sport, and so on.

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Well, they went to live there and my mother sold the Los Angeles duplex and bought a complex of six flats. She rented five and lived in one. And she was getting quite a good revenue. And then she bought another one. And all these, my brother helped an awful lot, repairs and so on, but I mean it was all done through her work and his work really. Then they bought another one on top of that, of twelve apartments, that was not so good, from a financial point of view. Because the people were very messy and they didn't pay and they quarrelled and they damaged, all the usual things. But when she died, she died at 93 in 1986, she was not rich by American standards, but she was very, very comfortable. And it was all due to the work, her work really, and the help of my brother. It is a fantastic story, that one of my mother.

RL: Maybe if we could come back to your career and if you can take me through to what happened with you in this country and your work and what you did.

IC: Well, I came to Liverpool in 1946. After one year as an assistant lecturer, which is the lowest level, after a year I became a lecturer. And when I returned from California they made me senior lecturer and I went on, doing research on the nervous system and teaching medical students and science students. And then this special course that you were doing for a BSc degree in physiology. This was a course which we tried to keep as high as it was possible, even compared with similar courses in other universities, I think we were doing very well. And very many of our students actually reached very high positions, either medically or... One of them recently became master of a college in Oxford, but she was a wonderful student, very intelligent.

RL: We'll have to stop here because the film is coming to an end.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 54 seconds

TAPE 4

Tape 4: 0 minutes 21 seconds

RL: So you were telling me about your work and teaching at the university. What about publications and that sort of side of it?

IC: Yes. I have a number of publications, all about physiology or the nervous system. I had to fight against great difficulties in Liverpool, because when I went in, the department was in a terrible shape. And it had been neglected by the previous professor for very many years. And the new professor, who attracted me actually to come here, because he was a good physiologist and there were these plans in the faculty for enlargement and so on; they wanted to have two chairs of physiology instead of only one. Well, because of this neglect that had been for years and years, the department was in an awful state. Technical assistance was non-existent and money was... This was what I didn't expect. I did expect that with a new professor there would be more money made available. If they wanted to build a department, you can't build a department without technical assistance and without money. Instead it was a great disappointment. The new professor must have stayed here only two years and then he became professor in Edinburgh, because Edinburgh is an older university and he thought this was a job he couldn't refuse. I'm afraid the poor man died very soon after reaching Edinburgh. And the new professor was a very good physiologist, but extremely selfish. So I had a lot of trouble to get money from him and to persuade him that it was necessary to improve the technical side, because these days you can't do fine work unless you got very reliable instruments and so on. However I did a lot of work. And I think I taught a great number of students and I think they have been able to use what I taught to them very well because they learnt a great deal. One of them got to Baltimore, to the University in Baltimore, a famous university, the great University in Baltimore, and he wrote a book actually about quite a different field, not the nervous system, but the dedication was to three of us here in the department here in Liverpool who 'taught him to think'. I think that was...

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RL: Did you ever come across any anti-Semitism at all within the university?

IC: Yes. Not personally. In fact we had a great number of friends, because Annie became a teacher at Liverpool University; she got into the Department of Italian. And between the two of us we had quite a number of friends in different departments and so on. But when I said anti-Semitism, there has been one episode, which left me sort of very angry. I was having lunch in the staff house and there was a professor of bacteriology across the table with a guest. And they were talking about students and so on. And I heard them say, 'Of course we limit the number of [Jewish] medical students coming in.' This was news to me. I didn't have any inkling of that. And I burst out, I said, 'I thought that Jewish students should be admitted to the university according to their merit and not on the basis of whether they were Jewish or non-Jewish.' But they didn't take any notice. And when I tried to find out whether the thing actually could be statistically proved, whether this was happening, it proved very difficult, because students are chosen by interview. And the name, in any case..., Whether somebody is Jewish or not, if you don't want him or her, it's easy to pass them by. There is no way that

you can prove it. They can say, 'Well, she didn't do very well at the interview.', and that's that. But to me-, this was a very good bacteriologist, he was on top of his profession, but he was somebody who believed that this was right. And I did say this to various other people, friends, I mean close friends in university. In any case, they could investigate or..., but it boiled down to nothing because it is unprovable, it's far too easy to do it. You have no redress. Otherwise personally I had only help rather. I remember for instance that there was the case of Pontecorvo. Perhaps you don't remember, Pontecorvo is the brother of one of those who was in the internment camp with me, and he was a physicist involved in the atomic bomb in America.

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And he was appointed professor of physics here in Liverpool. And they were expecting him to come just before the beginning of the term when - he was in Italy - when they heard that he left Italy and had flown through Helsinki to Russia. He was one of those who took secrets of the atomic bomb to Russia. He was the same like the others who had been caught, or those who escaped like Maclean and Burgess. But these two, Burgess and Maclean, were not physicists; Pontecorvo was a top physicist. Well, when this happened, the vice chancellor inquired with a friend of mine whether I was comfortable or whether I had had any trouble or anything said to me. So, I mean, the head of the institution... I thought it was very, very kind to inquire, I was then a lecturer or senior lecturer, I don't remember, to inquire whether everything was okay. And all the others, I mean, religion, it didn't make a jot of difference at all.

RL: When did you retire?

IC: 1982, just in time! After that, *après moi le deluge*. After me – trouble. Thatcher cut the funds, and everybody else after her did the same, year in, year out, like for the National Health Service. Every year the funds are either cut or they don't take in consideration inflation or number of students and expenses and so on. I mean it has been a disaster. And they introduced bureaucratic things; you've got to fill out every week how you spent your time during the week: how much time for reading in the library, contact with students, lecturing, experiments, and so on. Before it was so free, it was the envy of any foreign colleague, coming to England, to an English university. This question of trust to begin with, that you are part of the university and you are trustworthy. You spend your time as it should be spent. It is not always true, I mean I know that there are some people in university who didn't spend their time properly, that they were lazy, or they had private things, nothing to do with their subject. But by and large, in our university, the people had been hardworking, particularly in my department, from the professor to quite a number of the lecturers. I mean they spent 70 to 80 hours a week just to put a finger to it, completely committed. And there it is.

Tape 4: 13 minutes 8 seconds

RL: Have you been involved in any organisations in this country?

IC: There is the Physiological Society. It is a very active society, they meet ten times a year, so leaving out the summer holiday, practically every month, in a different university. And people read papers and give demonstrations and they discuss every paper and so on. Very, very useful, very, very active. Physiology in this country, it has a very high standard.

RL: Any other societies?

IC: Not really, none of any importance. I was very busy with my physiology. There is an enormous amount of reading to be done, apart from reading and teaching. But the number of journals, even if you take only the journals which deal with neurology, there are thirty journals which pour out papers and papers and papers. It's very difficult to follow really. You could spend all your weekend and a day of 48 hours simply checking up what goes on. And on top of that all the preparation for experiments and teaching-. And I've been really very loyal to the university in the sense that I spent all my time doing my best actually.

RL: Did you have any kind of social life?

IC: Yes, yes. We have friends. And we used to go to Italy very-, not every year, because my first wife Annie had a sister in Tel Aviv and they were very close. And it was quite moving actually to go and see them; they were so full of love and welcoming and determined to show us the best of the country. It was very lovely. So it was the call to Israel, it was the call to Italy, it was the call to California, so we couldn't go every year to Italy. But we went several times and after I got my first car, which was not very early, we went by car and we stopped to see the towns on the way, which were always full of interesting things, cathedrals, museums, views and such things.

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And Emma had to put up with all this historical information that we were pouring out to her. I spent also three months working in Paris in a physiological place, which was very good for Annie and Emma, because for three months they were in Paris and they went round and round and round to see everything.

RL: Coming back to your social life, who did you mix with socially, who was your social group?

IC: Well, there was the Jewish group. There was Professor Rosenhead and his wife Esther. They felt very much at ease with Jews. They were relaxed. If there was somebody who was not Jewish they seemed to be more on their guard. But every Saturday they invited people, it was a good mixture of business people and people interested in various things. So we got to know quite a number of people, the Samuels, the Sorskys, the Linskils, and so on. And then there were old university people, people in the Classics, Professor Houston and the greatest friend of all, Professor Walbank and his wife. He was professor of Latin, but really he's a historian. He's a very well known classical historian and he became professor of ancient history when the chair became vacant. And he is still in Cambridge now because his daughter has become a famous Egyptologist and she works from Cambridge. And they have been very, very great friends. Then there were all the people from Modern Languages, doing Spanish or French or Italian and so on. So it was a mixture of people, Jewish and non-Jewish. And we didn't make any difference; we invited them independent of their religion, which is the thing that ought to be done.

RL: What kind of upbringing did you give Emma?

IC: I felt, Annie was okay, I mean she had had a religious instruction, the family was very keen on Jewish... And there was this group in Turin, as I explained, that was very active intellectually and also from the point of view of the Zionist movement.

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And I learnt from Annie a great deal in the sense of my orientation. Not religious, because, quite frankly, I can't believe in a God which is not defined. I can't believe in a Jewish God, or any other God for that matter of course even less, because I don't have a clear idea of what is meant by the word. I mean other religions, they have a figure, Christ or Mohammed, and the Jewish God is not a person. And if it is not a person, what is it? So I find this obstacle-, do I horrify you?

RL: No. So you were saying about the upbringing of Emma that ...

IC: So, I am very conscious of my shortcomings in this field, and I thought it was wrong what my father did to me, not to give me an education into the history, into the meaning of Jewishness. Because Jewishness is really a search; there isn't a God because it has to be defined, because it's still got to be-, I mean we are in search of one. So it is difficult for a child to understand this. But we thought we should try to tell Emma about the history and about the language, and she got private tuition by a rabbi here in Liverpool. And she married a Jewish man of a family that was rather religious in the sense that they respect the formalities of the religion and of course the holidays and all that. And she became a good Jewess. Her children, that's a problem because they don't seem to follow according to what you would expect from this upbringing. They seem to be detached really from... But they come home for the holidays, but this is not what we are looking for. I would like a greater commitment. They are very probably even worse than I was when I was a young man, from that point of view, more detached. And it is a pity because Emma had been very observant.

RL: Who did Emma marry?

Tape 4: 24 minutes 51 seconds

IC: Emma is married to this fellow, David Harris, His Honour, - he's a judge. And he's particularly interested in family law. Very high up in family law, very active in this part of the law, or British law, which is due to all the changes that have been in the way of creating children, one egg from one side and the sperm from another and the womb from a third one and so on and so on, which gives rise to all sorts of legal difficulties. The law is defined, exact. So apart from that he's got a very great sense of duty towards all the cases, the majority of them, which involve the future of children. When you've got to decide whether the child is going this way or that way and who has got the right. He has been involved in the case of the Maltese twins; I can give you a lecture on that.

RL: What are the names of your grandchildren? What grandchildren do you have?

IC: Julian, who is nearly 29; Jeremy, 26; and Anna, 23.

RL: What schools did they go to, what primary schools?

IC: They went to a Jewish school, all three of them. And then Julian went to Bristol University to read law and is now a lawyer for the sport firm Nike. He is taking care of one section of their business. Jeremy will finish in September his period of training as a lawyer in a big firm in London. And Anna got a degree in psychology at Nottingham University and got a Master's degree in psychology at Leeds, just now.

RL: Are any of them married?

IC: Not yet.

RL: Did you naturalise?

IC: Yes.

RL: When did that happen?

IC: Well, it's a good question. It happened in 1948. I said a good question because at that time the Palestine problem was ... I must say I had definitely divided loyalties at that moment because I didn't approve of the policy of this country. It was difficult to attempt to become a subject of His Majesty, given the situation in Palestine.

Tape 4: 28 minutes 54 seconds

RL: But you became naturalised in 1948?

IC: Yes.

RL: So what are your feelings towards Israel?

IC: I feel absolutely... I went to work in Israel as well one summer, at the Weitzman Institute. And I mean it was such a wonderful country, it was such a wonderful country. And then, I mean trouble started. It started with first of all the compensations, which divided the country; some got money, the others were very poor; then scandals in the Labour Party, then bailing, taking a sort of very narrow view of things. And now I can't, I don't know what they should do. Mind you, they've been attacked, three wars and then all these terrorist attacks. I don't know what they should do. But I've got one criticism, and that goes back to even early Zionism, that they never considered properly the needs of the Palestinians. The needs of the Jews were paramount very probably, as they should be, but they never thought about the fact the Palestinians need water, for instance. They could have done a lot of good by doing something about water. And they also lack a feeling, I mean, in the great passion of building up a country and to make it a great country, with culture and art and a modern country. This passion actually blinded them to the fact that there was the other side as well, that they should have taken care of. Little by little we come to this now.

RL: What did Zionism mean to you when you were in Italy? Did you have any contact with it?

IC: Yes, I went to two lectures. And I must say that I was blind, I mean they didn't persuade me, they did not. It's partly due to the fact that the family as a whole, my father and none of my family really showed any interest at all in it. I became a Zionist through the influence of my wife really, and after what happened in Europe of course.

Tape 4: 32 minutes 54 seconds

RL: When did you join the AJR? When was your contact established with that group?

IC: It must have been about a year ago, summer last year I think.

RL: How did that come about?

IC: Somebody told me there was a meeting. And then I went to see the Holocaust Museum in York; there was a trip from here. I gave a talk to them, they invited me to give a talk and I chose... I thought that the majority of the audience were formed by people who left Europe when they were very young, still children. Most of them were from the Kindertransport. And so I thought that I'd talk about the 1930s, recollections of the 1930s, and then a little bit about the Italian story, how it came about and so on.

RL: That is how you made contact?

IC: Yes, I mean during the trip as well I met a number of people. And I met a number of people from other towns as well, each one with a different story, a completely different story, some very happy ones, some middling, and some bad.

RL: Did you have any contact with any refugee organisations whilst you've been in this country?

IC: Well, I registered as soon as I... I registered at Bloomsbury House in London, it is in Bloomsbury, very near the British Museum. And there was an Italian office. They were of course overwhelmed by people coming from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and Italian Jews were really very few and quite unimportant. I went there because I wanted to be recognised in this country as a refugee. But I never heard anything from them, they didn't offer any help, a complete waste of time.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 24 seconds

RL: And in Liverpool, have you had much contact with the Jewish community here?

IC: Well, I'm a member of Princes Road Synagogue, and occasionally I go to some talks, but ... And I've got to give a talk to the Liverpool Historical Society in a few months, which frightens me because if they are real historians, I'll be out on a limb.

RL: How do you describe yourself in terms of nationality?

IC: Well, I can't describe myself as an Italian. I think I am a mixed race animal. In Italian you'd be called 'bastards'; the term hasn't got the same meaning as it has got here. But bastard is the right word. I mean I am mixed. Culturally I've got deep roots in Italian history. However, I developed to some extent, I try to absorb something from English history, English literature and so on. And in a way I'm agnostic in the sense that I recognise that there is good and bad everywhere practically. That there is, not only in Europe, if you go through these periods that my generation had to go through, and you see the enormous cruelty that's happened, you can't say that France is perfect or Holland is perfect. Even Holland, who was such an evolved nation, has some black points. So there is no nation in Europe which behaved really a hundred percent.

RL: We are just going to have to stop here because the film is coming to an end.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 49 seconds

TAPE 5**Tape 5: 0 minute 17 seconds**

RL: Would you say you feel at home in Britain?

IC: Yes, I think so, yes.

RL: Do you feel you've been accepted here?

IC: Well, not really, in a way, because as soon as I open my mouth, they detect that there is a foreign accent. And while some people may be agreeable with it or not have any hostile reaction, there are some people, on the other hand, who immediately feel, 'Oh, he's a foreigner!' And I feel it immediately, it's unmistakable. But I got accustomed to it in a way, above all now that I'm retired. We feel-, say in professional life it would be different. But I'm retired now, I've got nothing to sell and very little to buy. And if people have got such reactions it is their business rather than mine. So I got over that. But I do admit that for very many years I was always under this fear really, not to be discriminated against simply because of a foreign accent. And it was not my fault that I came at 24 here rather than 14. If I had come at 14 it would be quite different. People at 14 absorb the..., but I didn't.

RL: What language did you speak with your wife at home?

IC: It was Italian, and Venetian dialect.

RL: And did Emma learn the language?

IC: Yes. Emma is perfectly bilingual. In fact she teaches Italian. She actually got a degree in biology and she taught for several years in schools, until she got fed up with the load of being a biology teacher, and also with the fact that the schools that she was teaching in didn't have an academic trend, an academic aim. And the children, when they came to the age of 14 or 15, were thinking of becoming manicurists or hairdressers or models or whatever like that, and they wouldn't do any work at all. The conditions of teachers in Liverpool in these schools are abysmal; I mean there is no thought of giving them decent conditions. I mean a table where they can do their work, and assistance, technical assistance is negligible. I mean they can't teach practically, in science you can't do that. You've got a period of forty minutes and you got to get the apparatus out from the shelves, put it on the thing, get the children in, explain what to do and what not to do and why and so on and so on – forty minutes, you can't do it! I mean there are some great schools in this country, fantastic schools. I'm amazed at the knowledge of some and the behaviour and the personal characteristics actually of children coming from some schools. I mean when I was in the presence of university students I could almost immediately find out the students who came from good schools and those who came from other schools, because those who came from these other schools, they didn't want to be noticed. They sort of cowered in the corner, they didn't put any questions in, and if they didn't understand, they didn't come and talk.

Tape 5: 5 minute 1 second

The others came and put questions and their behaviour was between equals, respectful. But the others were disappearing under the bench, not to be seen. It is a pity. There is a very great difference in schools in this country, that's the trouble. And very many schools don't teach anything.

RL: So you say Emma now teaches Italian?

IC: Yes. Well, she was fed up with schools, so she got a qualification to teach Italian in the Institute of Linguists. And she is a very successful teacher of Italian, very, very popular. She has got courses in community schools, secondary schools, courses at the university for people who do continuation studies in the old university. And this year she had a course also in the John Moore's University, which is of very recent formation. And they wanted to have a course of Italian for people who have commercial links with Italy, so she had to teach about Italian economic history, which really she is not qualified to talk about. But I think she found the job very difficult and she won't do it again, she tells me. She prefers to teach the language and, well, she is doing very well. One of her pupils got a gold medal as the best interpreter of the year and she went to London to see him get the medal, so it was very good. He is very good indeed. And she is a lovely lady really, she takes good care of me as well.

RL: And how do you feel towards Italy?

IC: It is a lovely country, lovely art, lovely lakes, lovely mountains. The people have proved to be very kind. Perhaps Signora Marcasoli is only one of very many of them who have saved people. For instance the father of Annie and an aunt of Annie were saved by a friend of Annie who found a hospital to put these very old people in. And the mother superior of the hospital, who, when the Germans came and saw the door, 'What is there?', 'Oh, this is the department of infectious diseases.'

Tape 5: 8 minutes 52 seconds

Now, if you say this to a German in Italy, they think first of all that Italy is a dirty country, full of diseases and germs which cannot be treated. This is the traditional background. So to be told by the mother superior this is the infectious part that was enough to turn them away. But it was touch and go. So they proved to be, they are very humane. The peasants have been traditionally always in very bad conditions, I mean in real poverty, extreme poverty. They know what it is to have hardship. And they know what is the arrogance of owners and lack of consideration by other people. So they sheltered prisoners of war, for instance, Jews, people persecuted and so on. There is a feeling of common destiny. Of course there has been a minority of other people who did the opposite: people who informed the police, people who got whole families killed by denouncing them to the police. I mean we lost a whole family of friends. And it happened that the younger son was walking in Milan and he met a school fellow who asked him, 'Come in and have a drink.' So they went to a bar and they had some coffee or something. And the friend said, 'I've got to make a telephone call.' And he rang up the police, the police arrived, got my friend, took him home, got his mother, his sister and his other brother, the whole family went to Auschwitz and it was the end.

RL: Do you feel this was a minority of people?

IC: I'm sure that it was the minority of people.

RL: How do you feel towards the British?

IC: I think they have been able to build a civilisation, a way of living, and a system of relations and that, maybe creaking at points and so on, it's not a hundred percent perfect. But I mean there is this trust between people, unless you have proved to be untrustworthy, they trust you. There is an ability to consider two aspects of the question. And in a way they built a

system of life where you find yourself to be relatively secure. I say relatively secure because after what happened to me in Italy, there isn't a hundred percent of it, but there is a great probability that you are secure in England and people respect your rights. There are many, many things which are... Fairness is the other thing; I mean there is a tendency to consider both sides of the question in fairness to both parties.

Tape 5: 13 minutes 26 seconds

RL: It just occurred to me that we have not mentioned at all your second wife and what happened to Annie and your second marriage.

IC: Oh yes. Ruth was born in Johannesburg. There was a large family firm, and therefore the family was very rich. To be rich in Johannesburg means having servants galore, blacks galore and so on. The mother was from Leeds, born in utter poverty. But she went to visit an uncle in Johannesburg and met this man Bloch, who was so very rich and so on. And she became his wife and produced three children. The eldest was Ruth, then there was a boy and then there were two daughters. Ruth went to university, she had an extremely good mind and she was an avid reader about everything, history, sociology, novels galore. She was extremely well read, extremely cultured, a very good speaker, a very good communicator.

RL: What was her maiden name?

IC: Bloch, Ruth Bloch. I fell in love with her and we got married. I mean I was already 62, 63 and she was eight years younger.

RL: Was this her first marriage?

IC: No. Yes, I must tell you about her story, because it's very, very interesting.

RL: If we can keep it brief because I want to include the photographs on the end of this film, so I don't want to run out of-

IC: She got a degree in English at the University of Witwatersrand. And she married a young man who was still in the Forces I think, because it was soon after, either towards the end of the war or after the end of the war.

Tape 5: 16 minutes 55 seconds

And he still had some examinations to do to become a lawyer. But they got married and it was a very happy marriage with three children, very brilliant children, who live now in London, all three of them, all in very good positions, very well off and so on. The husband was an extremely popular person in Johannesburg, and Ruth was very active politically. The family didn't want to know about politics. But she was really very much on the side of the blacks. And when the National Party came to power and brought about the separation of the races, what do you call it?

RL: Apartheid?

IC: Apartheid, Ruth became passionately involved in the opposition and she belonged to the Committee of the Liberal Party, run by Alan Paton, who was the great opponent of Apartheid. And one day they heard - they had already three children - one day they heard that the members of the Committee would be deprived of their passports. That meant a signal of

danger. And I think Ruth was moved actually by the thought of what the children... She was very intelligent, but she was really a very committed mother. And in three days they left, they left everything in the house as it was, they took their luggage. Her husband was a lawyer, he had a legal study; he left it as it was. They closed the door and they came to England, where they had very good introductions in London. The husband was interviewed by Marks & Spencer for a job and they said, 'Well, yes, you've got qualifications, some, but at the moment we don't need persons like you. But there is a business man in Liverpool who has several factories and he might like to have a look at a possibility of employing you.' So he came to Liverpool and he was given the job. And after one year he became managing director of this firm, with 23 factories spread out between Ireland and Northern England and a great supplier to Marks & Spencer. He was extremely popular in Liverpool, he had great friends at the golf club and so, he was a great man, it was a very happy marriage. Unfortunately he had a coronary condition and he had an attack in Dubrovnik where they were spending a holiday, and then he died. He collapsed while he was talking in an assembly of workers and it was extremely shattering for Ruth.

Tape 5: 21 minutes 2 seconds

And we met several years after that. And we felt great attraction to one another. And unfortunately, three weeks before we got married, she found a little thing here on the skin and she went to the hospital and the hospital said, 'You got a melanoma.' She rang me up – I was in Liverpool, she was in London – and, what could I do? I know that melanoma could have been fatal within a few months or she could have been blind or lose one leg in a few months. But I couldn't say 'I don't want to marry you.' And we got married. And over the years she had several of these episodes of things going up, always in the same position. And they were removed surgically and then she underwent a radiological treatment and the things disappeared for eleven, twelve years, and we thought, 'Well, finished now, let's not think about it.' When she mentioned it, I'd say, 'Don't think anymore about it, it's very unlikely.' But one day she felt here and she had an enlarged gland here and when it was examined it was a melanoma. And she had also secondaries in the brain; and within six months she was dead. I gave up everything and I stayed with her. I did everything that had to be done. I was very glad to do it.

RL: How long ago was that?

IC: She died at the end of July 2000.

RL: And what had happened to Annie, your first wife?

IC: Oh yes. Well, she had a condition, a family condition really, high blood pressure and coronary trouble. And the two are a terrible combination.

RL: When did she die?

IC: She died in 1975. She was able to see the first grandchild, just.

RL: Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

Tape 5: 24 minutes 35 seconds

IC: No. I don't know what people can make out of my story. I suppose I had hoped that my story might be important for my grandchildren, both as people living in this country and

also as Jews. Because for 24 years of my life I was considering myself essentially Italian, of Jewish religion or of Jewish stock, but I was considering myself like any other young men in Italy. But the situation can change and it can change with very dramatic and traumatic consequences. But I find it very difficult in the present situation in this country to persuade them that things can happen. Things can happen if you ally bad economic conditions with political instability, and you had extremists cropping up, and that spells danger for either one or other community. I think that's all.

RL: Okay. Thank you very much.

Tape 5: 26 minutes 40 seconds

[Short break]

Tape 5: 26 minutes 48 seconds

RL: Okay. If you can just tell us who this is?

IC:

Picture1 Emanuele Calma, journalist, photographed round about 1860. He was a journalist, writing about foreign policy for an Italian paper and he was chess correspondent for *Illustrazione Italiana*.

- 2 Photograph of the family of Angelo Limentani, he and Grazia Alpron, Padua, on the occasion of their 50th anniversary of their wedding. My great-grandfather and great-grandmother on my mother's side, done in Padua in the year 1902 on the occasion of their wedding anniversary.
- 3 Photograph of Vittorio Orefice and Cesira Limentani, done round about their wedding day, approx. in 1880. They were my grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side.
- 4 Diplomatic passport given to my father, Emanuele Calma, to go and study railway installations in France and Germany in the year 1920. He also visited London, perhaps on a later date.
- 5 Medal struck in 1932 on the occasion of the inauguration of the central station of Milan. The works to build the station were directed by my father, Emanuele Calma, until the year 1927, when he died.
- 6 Photograph of my mother, Lucia Calma, aged about 28 or 29, taken at Sondrio.
- 7 Photograph of my mother, Lucia Calma, aged about 75, taken in California.
- 8 Photograph of my brother, Frank Calma, taken in California, aged about 75 plus or minus two or three. The photograph was taken in about 1983.
- 9 Photograph of my son-in-law, His Honour David Harris, and my daughter, Emma Lucia Calma, taken in Liverpool, approx. in the year 1997.

10 Photographs of the grandchildren. From left: Jeremy, Anna and Julian, taken about in the year 2000 in Liverpool.

Tape 5: 33 minutes 58 seconds

THE END