

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	149

Interviewee Surname:	Barschak
Forename:	Fred
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	2 March 1931
Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview:	28 February 2007 and 7 March 2007
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	5 hours and 15 minutes

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

INTERVIEW: 149

NAME: FRED BARSCHAK

DATE: 28 FEBRUARY 2007

LOCATION: LONDON

INTERVIEWER: BEA LEWKOWICZ

TAPE 1

Tape 1: 0 minute 7 seconds

BL: Today is the 28th of February 2007. We're conducting an interview with Mr Fred Barschak. My name is Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London.

BL: Can you please tell me your name?

FB: Fred Barschak.

BL: And what was your name at birth?

FB: Fritz Barschak.

BL: And when were you born?

FB: 2nd of March, 1931.

BL: And how old are you today?

FB: I'm just thinking. I am 75 and 363 days.

BL: And where were you born?

FB: Vienna. Grosse Schiffgasse 3, Zweiter Bezirk.

BL: Mr Barschak, thank you very much for having agreed to be interviewed for Refugee Voices. Can you tell us something about your family background?

FB: Yes, my mother came from Czernowitz. She was... Sorry, I'm trying to think. Her father was one of nine siblings. Shall I say the founder of that family was a fellow called Moishe Loebel. He was a farmer actually. And he, I believe, was murdered carrying some money when he was going about his normal business. Now, she was born actually in a place called Sodagure, it's a suburb of Czernowitz. It's about three kilometres outside Czernowitz, which is the capital of Bukovina. And she grew up there. She was one of two. She had a sibling, her sister, whom I got to know very well

in my seven or eight years in Vienna. Her name was Sally, and she often was the one who looked after me because my mother was busy in the restaurant or in the hotel. And in fact Sally lived with us. The two girls came to... First of all they lost their mother in a fire in Sodagure. There weren't too many fires. This was a fire in ... Let's see, she was born in 1896 and she would have been ten. 1906 or 1907, something like that. In fact, many years later, I think it was in 1970, walking on the banks of the Thames at Henley, I was walking with a good friend of mine, who very casually told me that he saw that fire. He was there. I didn't even know that he grew up there. So I have confirmation, if you like.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 36 seconds

BL: What was your mother's name?

FB: Jutte – Jutte Loebel. And then she lost her father, who had a heart attack very young. I got to know all this in 1961 when I, for the first time, found some relatives of mine in this country. In one day I found all my mother's first and second cousins and so, if you like, I was able to learn a great deal about my family background then. My father was born in Tarnapol, which was the eastern-most outpost of the Austrian... of the monarchy, of the Empire, as it was called, and he grew up there. It's very strange. His father had already had two sons by his first wife and he then became a widower. The mother - and by the way the father's name was Öl – 'O' umlaut 'l' or is it o umlaut 'h'? I'm never quite sure. So we have a widower with two sons. And then somebody introduced that widower to a widow. I'm not sure what her married name was. I've never found that out. But I do know what her maiden name was. Her name was Barschak and there's here a little bit of Galizianer confusion going on. So, she was the Barschak. She was the granddaughter of the Chief Rabbi of Brody. I've just managed to unloosen this chair, but don't worry, don't worry, it can be repaired. So Mrs Barschak, if you like, had two daughters. So, we have a widower with two sons and a widow with two daughters. They were then introduced and they thought they should have one of their own. That was my father. Both parents then died and he became an orphan at the age of eight and he was brought up – and he was born in 1878 – he was brought up by his half sister. They were in the liquor business. But, by the age of 16, he decided that he should do something more useful in life than delivering the spirits – you know the vodka and the whatnot – to the Jewish innkeepers of that whole area. Cause a lot of Jews were in this business at that time.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 42 seconds

And he moved to Vienna. And he arrived in Vienna literally with, what shall I say, probably about the equivalent of a pound in his pocket. And he quickly got a job in a small place on the Obere Donau Strasse. A couple had this place. They had the freehold of a small restaurant with nine rooms above. He became the waiter, the major-domo, the manager, the just-about-everything. And, slowly but surely, it became known, if you like, as his place. However, he worked for very little money, and whenever he asked for a rise - and I found this out, oh, about 40 years later – the answer he got, as he told a friend, was 'Don't ask for it now.' 'Du bist schön versorgt', which means: 'you're well looked after.' And he had no idea what this meant. Finally, after the couple had died, he suddenly found...He gets a letter from the lawyer: 'You've inherited the place.' That was his start in life.

BL: You're talking about your father and it's interesting - he had his mother's name, this Barschak. Can you tell us about that?

FB: Yes, I can tell you. It was a very, very common practice in Galicia for people to take their mother's name. It confused the Austrian authorities first of all about going into the army. But in his case there was quite another motive, quite a different agenda. He was always very friendly with his two half brothers and with his half sisters. But he wanted somehow, I understand, to establish some sort of identity of his own. He was quite orthodox, not meschugge frumm, but orthodox. Indeed, how could you run an orthodox kosher – streng kosher - restaurant if you were not? And there was lurking in his family, his mother's family background shall I say – I don't know how to say this even in English - a very orthodox background and that was Rav Schlomo Kluger, who left about 140 books and what not and is well known by just about every rabbi in the world no matter what their denomination.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 49 seconds

For example, he decided, and nobody gainsaid it...He had an enormous problem, this rabbi, with agunot, with chained women. It's nothing new. There were thousands, literally thousands in his jurisdiction, whose husbands had gone to the United States saying: 'Look, when I've established myself I'll send for you and the children.' It's a very familiar story. Well, he didn't. What he did was to get involved with another woman. He was not averse to giving the Get [divorce document], not at all. But the problem was that Jewish Law said that in order for that Get to be valid it had to be taken by a Jewish man, from the hands of a man, and placed in the hands of a woman. That meant that somebody had to pay for that messenger to travel all the way by boat across the Atlantic – it cost a fortune – and then to go back. It's a two-way trip. Hardly anybody could afford this. And so you had these thousands upon thousands of chained women. And he made the decision. I have the decision in English and in Hebrew. It's in the book of Responses. He said: 'You do need a Jewish man to take it from the hand of the man to the post office in New Jersey. And you need another Jewish man to take it from the post office in Lemberg to...to, I don't know, to Stry. But, in between, there is a thing, a machine, called the post office. It is neither male nor female; it is neither Jew nor non-Jew. It is a machine. And everybody who works for that is part of the machine and that can be ignored. And that became the law and it is the law to this day.

Tape 1: 11 minutes 55 seconds

BL: So how was your mother related? – Sorry, your grandmother?

FB: My father's mother.

BL: Your father's mother, sorry.

FB: Her name was Barschak. My father's name was Öl, 'oil' in English. So he took his mother's name, which caused him a lot of problems some years later: first of all, when he was getting Austrian citizenship, because they said: 'Well, who the hell are you? Are you Mr Öl or are you Mr Barschak? Which are you?' And he had some

considerable trouble explaining to them that he was who he was. But he got over that. And then he got Austrian citizenship. But there was something else which, by the way, was the worst thing once the Anschluss came, was the worst thing you could have. It would have been much better to have Polish citizenship just for those few months. However, when he inherited the hotel there was a very, very pretty and brainy girl living on the first floor with her two parents; they had two rooms. And he decided he wanted to marry her and she made one condition - that he keep her parents in their place to the end of their days, which he did. And he then married. He had two daughters, one of whom survived until my time. His first wife was the...she actually ran things. She became the secretary of all the Jewish restaurateurs of Vienna. And there were quite a number of them.

Tape 1: 13 minutes 46 seconds

And then the following supervened. The eldest daughter, whom I got to know about many years later in England, a friend of my cousin, went to school with her. She went to the Heuss Gymnasium. It was the custom. My father had the custom of renting a hotel - once in Semmering but later on in Gleichenberg - for the summer, so he combined business with pleasure. All his kosher clients would come to him there and he would enjoy the pleasures of living in the country for about two months of the year. And his eldest daughter would come for the weekend. To get there she had to get on the train to Gleichenberg and then a bus for two stops. Getting off the bus... and she was already I think twenty years old, something like that, twenty, twenty-one. Indeed, I later found out that her parents were beginning to worry about her getting married. Twenty was not so young in those days. Anyhow, what happened was that getting off a bus she fell backwards and cracked her head. That she survived, but what she did not survive was that it released a tumour on the brain, which must have been dormant, and nine months later she was dead. I've actually seen the grave on a visit to Vienna.

Tape 1: 15 minutes 32 seconds

BL: Which year was that?

FB: That was 1923. In 1926 her mother died of a tumour as well. You know 19th century literature is full of expressions: 'She died of a broken heart.' According to the best medical opinion, there's no such thing as a broken heart. What there is, is a cancer released by extreme emotional disturbance and that is what then happened. So my father was then a widower with one daughter. The loss of a mother and daughter within three years disturbed the mental balance of the remaining daughter, who was sixteen, Linzi, and she was in and out, part of the time with father and part of the time in a hospital. Three years later my father walked in. He was by that time on the Kultusgemeinde and he was a well-known figure...

BL: What was his name? His full name please?

FB: Aaron Barschak. In fact, there is an enormous obituary of his first wife. I have them at home because the wife of a friend of mine is the official historian of the Jewish Community and quite a historian in her own right. Every time she comes across matters concerning my family she sends them to me. I've now got a file that

thick of advertisements and what have you. And the Chief Rabbi came to that funeral of the wife. Anyhow, one day walking into the Kultusgemeinde to see the secretary, who was a man called Eli Apt – A-P-T....Well, Eli Apt had a new secretary and that was my mother. And then, some time in 1929, and I have the honeymoon photograph 'cause I got that forty years later, they married. There was a son, the first son – I'm not the first born - who died of a children's disease, diphtheria I think it was, at the same time as I was born. So, if you like, my father had not had an enormous luck with his children. In fact, he called me the Kaddish and I was born the 2nd of March 1931, and I can tell you very little about my first two or three years, except I imagine, which certainly was the case when I had a memory – three, four, five – that we had a suite of rooms on the first floor and another forty-odd rooms besides. And I used to run about this place treating it as home. I wasn't confined to the suite of rooms; I was running all over the place and the restaurant as well. And I treated it as home 'cause it was home.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 56 seconds

BL: And when did your mother move to Vienna?

FB: 1906 – When she lost her father. She and her sister moved to Vienna into an orphanage and in fact – and I know this from my mother's cousins – when my mother agreed to marry my father...He was considerably older. She would have been thirty-three or thirty-two and he, in 1929, would already have been...Well, he was sixty in '38 after the Anschluss...he would have been 51. So there we are – thirty-three and fifty-one. And when she finally agreed to this she made one condition, and that condition was that he'd throw a very big party for all the children of the orphanage where she and her sister had been. And also that he provide accommodation for her sister, and she came and she lived with us. And, of course, her I remember extremely well. So that's it. I came into the world. I can tell you nothing more until I was about two or three years older.

BL: Just tell us - so what was the name of the hotel?

FB: Restaurant-Hotel Barschak.

Tape 1: 20 minutes 31 seconds

BL: And where was it? In what sort of area?

FB: Zweite Bezirk, in the Leopoldstadt.

BL: Can you just describe the Leopoldstadt and the Zweite Bezirk for us?

FB: The Leopoldstadt actually contained some very beautiful buildings. The idea that it was a very poor ghetto, a sort of East End, is absolutely untrue. First of all, I would say about forty or fifty percent of the people were Jewish. The others were not. The very poor district was the Zwanzigste Bezirk, 20th district, which was adjacent to it. That really was quite poor, but the Zweite Bezirk was not. It was not that much damaged in the bombardments during the war, the Russian bombardment. Quite a lot of it – I would say eighty or ninety percent of it - still exists as it was. By the way, the

hotel, the restaurant still exists - the building I mean. And of course it is right next to the Prater, which was the great playground at that time. In fact, I was very disappointed when I looked at it. You know, you get a picture in your mind of something and then you go and look at it twenty-five years later and it's lost all its charm. But it had lost all its charm because it had become completely run down. But, at that time, it was very, very exciting. The Zweite Bezirk certainly contained some of the great shuls [synagogues] of Vienna. Out of, I think about twenty-three major synagogues, I would say that at least one, two, three, five were in the Zweite Bezirk, five. There was then the great Stadttempel in the Tempelgasse. There was the Schiff Shul exactly opposite Restaurant Barschak. In fact, I watched it burn on the night of Kristallnacht. My bedroom window was thirty yards opposite the Schiff Shul. There was the Poilische Shul, as it was called, of which my father was one of the two Gabbai's for many, many years, and in which, if you like, I got my first musical sounds, which were the sounds of its most famous Hazzan, who was a teacher of Hazzunot as well, a very famous man called Oberkantor Fraenkel. Fraenkel was a legend in his own day. There were maybe thirty or forty good Hazzanim in Vienna, but there were two – you know all are equal but some are more equal than others - and these two, one was Leibisch Miller, who survived the war, and Fraenkel unfortunately did not. He made the mistake of going to Riga in Latvia and staying there. And he was murdered literally in the first three days and murdered by Latvians, by the way, not by Germans.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 6 seconds

BL: So was the Restaurant Barschak the only kosher restaurant in that area or...?

FB: Oh, good heavens no. There must have been at that time something about, maybe thirty, maybe thirty-five, maybe forty restaurants. But they fell into three different categories. Some had very good food and were hardly kosher at all. Some were glad kosher but the food was... I think in German you say 'unessbar'; it was simply uneatable. And there were one or two that managed to combine good food and kashrut and ours was one of them. There were two or three more: Schreiber, certainly. These two were so kosher that, in fact, when thousands, tens of thousands, of Galician Jews fleeing in front of the Russian armies in the First World War came through Vienna, the one thing they knew if they wanted to be kosher, they came to either Schreiber or Barschak. Schreiber of course was from the famous Schreiber family of Bratislava, from the family of Chassam Sofer, and representatives of that family still exist in London. But there were other restaurants that were kosher up to a point. They would serve kosher meat. The most famous of which was Neugroschl. Neugroschl was probably the most famous of the 'Jewish-style' restaurants. And in fact it may well be that he was kosher. I'm not a hundred percent sure.

BL: Because there was a hotel as well so what happened on Shabbat? Was the restaurant closed or...?

FB: Not at all. Restaurants in Vienna and all over the continent as well. All restaurants were open and the method that they used was this. Most of the restaurants by this time had a good clientele, regular clientele, and they were known as the Stammgasts, the established clientele. We had markers, I remember them. They had eight sides and they were in bronze and they were numbered. Every table had a

number. If Mr Cohen came in and had a meal on Shabbat, there was a box – there were maybe eighty boxes - and a little marker was put into that box and that meant that on Sunday, if father was doing the accounts or his cashier was doing the accounts, he would send out a bill to Mr Cohen whose address he knew. Or in fact he didn't have to because Mr Cohen usually either paid before or afterwards. Now, as to the casual visitors, my father always took a chance. If somebody wanted a meal on Shabbat, he got it even if he hadn't paid. I heard from his cashier, whom I met. My father's only niece – no not his only niece, his only niece that was still in existence in 1975 – and that's when I met my only relatives on my father's side, by accident. She had been looking for me for thirty-seven years and she was his cashier. She said: 'Believe it or not, he hardly ever lost any money. He took a chance and that was it. There weren't so many...'

Tape 1: 27 minutes 53 seconds

BL: But on Shabbat it means the kitchen was running on Shabbat.

FB: Yes, the staff were non-Jewish on Shabbat and this was the method that was used all over Vienna. The same in Berlin, the same in Lemberg in Poland...

BL: So when was it busiest, the restaurant? On Shabbat?

FB: Without a doubt. And especially on Shabbat... You know you asked me about the Zweite Bezirk and I remember... There was an aroma pervading the whole of the Zweite Bezirk and it was the aroma of Slivovitz and Pfefferkichel, pepper biscuits, or today we call them onion biscuits. Grodzynski makes them, but they are not quite authentic. You could smell this all over Vienna, sorry, all over the Zweite Bezirk.

BL: So, what sort of food was served at the Restaurant Barschak?

FB: Obviously stuffed carp... Are you talking about on Shabbat or on Friday night?

BL: Both.

FB: Friday night you had a full menu. You had a full menu. You would have a choice of stuffed carp, six other hors d'oeuvres at least. Friday night, it was usually only one soup, which was chicken soup with whatever you wanted in it. And I've often wondered why it is... by the way, when it comes to... I am fairly accurate in two things. A friend of ours and a relative of yours, Joe Horowitz, says that anybody playing the fiddle has to have a very good sense of intonation. My sense of intonation is very, very accurate. I am always haunted. Heifetz was not the world's best teacher of violin, but he could teach and in fact I've got some videos of Heifetz teaching. And on one he is heard to be saying: 'I am sorry sir, no approximate intonation please. Get the note right.' And the same thing with the taste buds. Either the thing tastes right or it doesn't taste right.

And about the only thing I had when I left Vienna, my taste buds were formed, but I couldn't boil an egg. I had no idea. That came later.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 29 seconds

So what I wanted to say is: Why did the chicken soup of Vienna...and even to this day I've been into a kosher restaurant in Vienna; the chicken soup tastes somewhat different to the best chicken soup? Of course, everybody claims their chicken soup is the best. We think it's among the best, ours. But yet it tastes different. And it's very simple. It's the water. I learnt this...There is a famous biscuit in Vienna called Manner Schnitten. They are amongst the best biscuits in the world. And all the imitations do not match it. Manner Schnitten in 1959 were persuaded by the then Irish government to manufacture in Ireland – not Northern Ireland – Ireland. The economic situation of southern Ireland was desperate at the time. They would do anything to attract investment. They offered them five years no taxation, five years no rates, no council taxes, loans for establishing a factory and almost a negligible rate of interest, anything, so they would give employment to a hundred or two hundred people. They established the factory and closed it after one year. And I was talking to a management representative – I learnt this from him – he said: 'It's very simple. The air's not the same; the water's not the same and that affects the taste of everything.' Nobody would buy the biscuits made in Ireland. They said: 'We want the original.' They had no choice. I imagine it's the same with chicken soup.

BL: So...what...?

FB: And then we finished with...and then they could have roast chicken, roast duck. Chulent with it...no sorry Chulent was Shabbat morning...Braised beef, which we called – it has a specific name – Gedämpftes Fleisch.

BL: What was it called?

FB: Gedämpftes Fleisch. It's a piece of meat - the best piece is actually top rib. It's in the oven. It's not roasted; it's baked sitting on a bed of vegetables. I'm sure you know the dish. You may call it by a different name. We had a full range. We had about fourteen entrees.

BL: And Saturday, Shabbat?

Tape 1: 33 minutes 13 seconds

FB: Shabbat it was more limited. The fish was always there. The gefilte fish, the stuffed carp, and above all stuffed Hecht, pike, which is a labour of love. It is a schwere Arbeit, you know. To bake a stuffed pike this is what you have to do: you have to take the pike in your left hand, use a very sharp fishmonger's knife here, go around getting the skin away from the flesh and you peel the skin of this long fish as if it were a stocking. It's quite a... you could spend twenty minutes. You mustn't pierce the skin because if you do you'll have to sew it up. And you get all the flesh away and you keep the bone. From the flesh you make the minced fish and you never have just the pike. Gefillte fish is always better when it's made from three fish. You choose what you want. You usually choose whiting and you can choose...Mackerel is not good. Funnily enough, hake is quite good, makes more jelly. And then you have a recipe: onions, almonds, a little salt, pepper and certainly sugar if you come from Galicia. And then you mix the fish and you put the fish into the stocking. Separately, with the bones and whatever else, you make a stock and in that stock, which takes three-quarters of an hour at least, you poach the fish in a fish kettle very, very gently

for two and a quarter hours. And then you do have a gefilte fish. And that's why it's called gefilte fish. It's not the balls that you get in England. There you are... And of course the chulent. The chulent was different at Barschak. They still used a little bit of smoked meat as well as non-smoked meat. Where does this come from? From his first marriage. They found out that this was very popular. The Hungarian Jews put in, in addition to all the normal ingredients of Chulent, they put in some smoked meat – geräuchertes fleisch. And that gives it a very special flavour. And that is what Barschak's was known for.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 5 seconds

BL: So...

FB: And then, of course, you could have any cold meats that you wanted, but that was it. That was it. The chicken soup was kept on a very, very, very low light for the whole night. Cause we had a cellar basement, a huge cellar, and all the cold entrees and that is what was served on Shabbat lunchtime. And doubtless Kompott, doubtless, I imagine, and then endless, endless lemon tea.

But then, the moment lunch was finished, the restaurant closed for the whole day. There was nothing available on Saturday evening, nothing at all. Because, on that night, my parents went either to the Opera or to the Operetta; they were very fond of it. And that was every Saturday night, without fail.

BL: So, growing up in this hotel-restaurant, tell us about your earliest memories.

FB: Well, I think this is my earliest memory, but it's so specific that I imagine... Well, it's one of my earliest memories and I never realised how young I was when I had a memory. I had a memory... it was always a great... My father didn't have a car by the way. He never drove. Taxis were so cheap in Vienna. He said: 'It's not worthwhile to have a car.' And so he never drove. I loved cars and one of his nieces had married somebody who had a car. Their name was Rackower and when he came it was an absolute delight because he used to take me out...

BL: That's the microphone...

FB: Is it still all right? And whenever this cousin came it was a great delight if he would take me out for a spin. But my father didn't have a car. By the way, those cousins, their only daughter came on the Kindertransport. I met her in Manchester in 1938. She was a beautiful woman; she was seventeen already. And, unfortunately, she was killed by a flying bomb in 1944. That was the end of the Rackowers.

Tape 1: 38 minutes 46 seconds

But you asked about my earliest memory. The two things I enjoyed most were going for a walk across the bridge into the Erste Bezirk, and usually they were long walks. And the other was to go out into the country with my father into the Wienerwald - anyhow, that's something else - which we did every Sunday morning. He was never available on Sunday afternoon. I later found out why. He was visiting my half sister in hospital every Sunday afternoon. I knew that there was a half sister, but I knew that I'd never seen her. Anyhow, be that as it may. On this occasion, my father and I went

for a walk and we must have walked a very long way, past the Stefansdom and we finished up in the Ringstrasse at the Parliament building. In German we called it Parlament; in English we call it Parliament. And I saw a gigantic queue of human beings. Now queuing is not a very familiar thing in Austria, nor in Germany for that matter. So to see a queue all together, an orderly queue, waiting to go in. I had no idea that this was a Parliament. I thought it was perhaps a church. And I remember exactly my words: 'What's going on? Ist das einer von seinen Festtage? Is it one of their religious holidays?' – Their – And his answer was fairly precise, it was: 'Es ist kein Festtag. Der wichtigste Mensch in Oesterreich ist getötet.' And then he said something which must have meant: 'They're going to pay their respects.'

Tape 1: 41 minutes 0 second

There was in my whole life only one 'wichtige mensch' that was 'getötet' and it was Dollfuss and it was July 1934, and I was three and a quarter years old. That is one of my first memories. I may have others but I don't remember them, not like I remember that. Now when did I find this out? I had this memory and I never bothered with it. But, when you only have the memories you polish the memories. So I kept the memory alive and, sitting in Queen's College Library, supposedly, I don't know, reading the books on the law of contract or cases, I must have had a diversion. I remember the diversion because I began to read the Nuremberg Trials endlessly for three months. I didn't get a good mark in law of contract then, the next term, but never mind. But, amongst many other things, I must have got hold of a book, and I remember the book because I used it in the Anschluss exhibition very, very much. And indeed I had the pleasure of inviting the son of the man who wrote it. It was Gedye's 'Fallen Bastions', Gedye the Daily Telegraph correspondent in Vienna. Although the Daily Telegraph was a supporter of Chamberlain, not quite to the extent of Dawson of the Times, nevertheless it gave total freedom to their journalists to report on what was going on from the moment of the Anschluss. And Gedye not only reported it, but wrote a book describing in the greatest detail Hitler's occupation, coming to Vienna and then Prague. That's why they were called Fallen Bastions. And I had the pleasure of inviting his son, who was again sitting, manning the central European desk of the Daily Telegraph at the time, and he came to the exhibition. So what I found out was the history of the assassination of Dollfuss. And then, suddenly, I put two and two together. That's what I saw; I didn't know it before; I didn't think about it before.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 24 seconds

BL: What else do you remember of growing up in Vienna in the 30s?

FB: Well...yes. What do I remember? I certainly remember... And Peter Pulzer, whom you know, drew my attention to this. He knew the story I'm about to tell you. You'll see why...what it eventually was... I remember I used to love to help in the business. Exactly the same mentality asserted itself in Hull when I wanted to help the foster father in his business. I always had a...we call it 'Drang nach Geschäft'. I suppose I wanted to make a contribution. And, on one occasion, somebody asked for melon. By melon you meant watermelon. It was a good first course or a last course, I don't know. And the hotel almost overlooked the Karmeliten Market, which was a market between the Grosse Schiffsgasse and the Leopoldsgasse where the Poilische

shul was - 40 or 50 stalls. For example, that's where he bought the carp. And in this case he said: 'Bitte get a melon.' And the melon, quite frankly, was bigger than me. And I carried this bloody melon from the store and, just as I was going through the swing doors, somebody else was going out and made me drop the melon; it fell to pieces, made a mess on the floor. All my father said, he said: 'Now go and get another melon.' No argument, no Gewalt, nothing. Just carry on. Very calm. In fact, I remember my mother losing her temper more than once, especially if I didn't practice. But I never saw my father actually lose his temper. He may well have done so but not in my presence. Anyhow, be that as it may...What do I remember? Well, I remember school.

Tape 1: 46 minutes 7 seconds

Well, I remember school. School was very interesting, strange to say. Of course in Vienna you had school from eight till one. Saturday was compulsory. I'm, sure the Hasidim did not send their children to school. But there was a whole group of orthodox parents who agreed to do it. But they made conditions and the authorities complied with conditions: 1) Our children will not write. That was the main thing. They will not write and you will release them by ten o'clock. They will come from eight till ten and that's it. The others stayed on for longer. Why ten o'clock? So that they would have the opportunity to go to shul. And of course I always remember. I remember the abacus. No writing. And, actually, I have great affection for the abacus; it's quite a useful thing, even today. Anyhow, I remember I never ran directly to the shul, which tells me that the school must have been quite close to the restaurant. Anyhow, I ran to the restaurant, ran straight to the kitchen and had my favourite thing at that time of the day, which was either a little chopped liver – I used to drive the chef mad - and, if not, something outrageous (good job I didn't have a date with a girl at that age!), which was some beautiful sweet onion with chicken fat and salt and some bread. The calories of this are unbelievable. But that was it and then I ran to the shul to be able to join the services.

BL: This was the Poilische shul?

FB: This was the Poilische shul.

BL: Can you describe a bit your impressions from the synagogue?

Tape 1: 48 minutes 9 seconds

FB: From the synagogue? Well of course it had three Chazzanim, can you imagine? - Chazzan Rishon [first Chazzan], Chazzan Sheni [second Chazzan], Chazzan Shlishi [third Chazzan]. I must have known a number of the congregates, especially the ones that later would come to eat at the hotel. There's one in particular that I most certainly did know, a great friend of my father, called Doctor Leo Landau, whose nephew is a very good friend of mine, who did not come with the Kindertransport but he came with his parents from Vienna. He's nine years older than me and of course has a much better memory. He spends half of his time here, half of it there. He's a very well known journalist. His name is Edwin Roth. In fact, he helped me enormously in the research for the exhibition because he's very well known in Vienna as well. He still operates as a journalist there and then six months of his time here. And his partner is

the one who became quite a well known philosopher, then became a historian, and has now become the official historian of the Gemeinde, all the Gemeindes of Vienna. And now she's on the Vierte Gemeinde which is the post-war one. She wrote a very good book on the 3rd Gemeinde. I had no idea of course of the warfare that was going on because of the different sections of the community. Absolutely no idea.

BL: So tell me about the Poilische shul.

FB: The Poilische shul? First of all, I have beautiful pictures of it. I should have brought them, but I didn't. I could show you them another time.

BL: Don't worry about it.

FB: It was not...of course to me everything was large...But in retrospect it was not too large. It was an average size, so it was a more intimate place. You had this extraordinary Hazzan, Fraenkel. All my knowledge of the Nussach is actually all from him. What I learned in my first...because I went there quite a...And if you have a musical ear, you actually...It's not just the tunes; it's his way of doing it. It stays in your head. What can I tell you? I know only that when the Leining [reading from the Torah] started my father vanished and stood on the Bima because he was dishing out the Aliyas. He was calling people up to the reading of the law...

BL: So he was very involved in the...?

Tape 1: 51 minutes 18 seconds

FB: Very involved. What else? I remember the choir, the choir which...The Hazzan stood there and the choir to the left. And it was a very impressive choir...

BL: A male choir?

FB: A male choir, yes, with very impressive baritones and basses. Anybody can get hold of tenors, but what makes the choir...And of course later on in life I realised that there's an extraordinary connection, a musical connection, between the Nussach of the Jewish choir accompanying Hazzan and, dare I say it, the music of the Russian Orthodox Church. When you hear the one you think you hear echoes of the other, without any question. And all this made an enormous impression on me. You know, put it this way: I was telling my wife: I think for me, apart from the meaning of the prayers, listening to this production was almost the equivalent of going to an opera. There were certain things that imbued me with a sense of foreboding and fear, especially on the High Holy Days. There is one prayer, *u'netaneh tokef*, I know it by heart, – 'On Rosh Hashanah it is written and on Yom Kippur it is inscribed, who shall live, who shall die. Who shall finish his...?' You know what I'm talking about. It goes into every detail and what time...So the question then is: 'Where is free will if everything is written?' However, for a little boy who took this seriously that prayer became awe-inspiring and remains so. And I'd better use the expression 'Remains so.' From time to time I think to myself: 'Well, there must be something in it.' I'm not sure I understand it, but there it is. You've asked me what impression it made on me as a child. It made a very, very great impression. And I suppose what made perhaps the greatest impression was the High Holy Days after the Anschluss. The shul was

still in being. Kristallnacht was not until November the 9th and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were somewhere in September and October.

Tape 1: 54 minutes 30 seconds

And the shuls were packed to overflowing. And the prayers had a certain quality of desperation. That certainly made an impression on me. In fact, I may as well tell you now. It's a good place to tell it. I think it must have been 1947, 1946 when we knew the truth about everything. Although I formally remained attached to the orthodox... You know I used to go to shul, not every Shabbat...I began to drift away vastly. The observances were perfunctory. They didn't actually have that much meaning for me. I decided: 'I don't understand what's happened and, if that can happen, I'm not sure I want to stay.' That was my situation. OK, somebody said Shiva I would help, I would attend. I used to go to shul on Shabbat, when I was home. In the Air Force I didn't, hardly bothered. I would eat...I wouldn't eat treif [non-kosher food] deliberately, but I ceased to be meticulous about kosher at all, except certain things that I wouldn't go anywhere near. And, in fact, it was very, very funny. One of my duties as a Sergeant in the Air Force was to once a month, as Orderly Sergeant, to inspect what was going on in the cook house. We had 1,000 mouths to feed. I had to do it at one o'clock in the morning to see if the breakfasts were coming on all right and lunches. And I always took a Corporal with me and when I passed where they were cooking the bacon said: 'you carry on, taste it, taste it,. You tell me if it's all right' and that sort of thing. But I wasn't too involved. I began to come back, strangely, under the influence of Cecil Roth, the famous historian, whose house was open to students at Oxford every Shabbat. I began to learn more about Jewish history there. Although I'd given up history and I was doing law, I was very much attracted to it and so, if you like, knowing who you've been tells you sometimes who you are. What else can I tell you about? I can't think of anything more specific than that. Yes, one thing: I used to love to go...It wasn't every Sunday but most Sundays in the better weather from about March till September, October, Sunday morning my father took me to the Vienna woods and particularly one restaurant sitting on top of – now, where was it? You know my memory's gone - the Klagenfurt, perhaps. No it wasn't, just outside Vienna. I've forgotten the name. It's right on top of a huge hill and I was always treated to a glass of sour milk. We got a tram to a certain point. It was out in the country already and it doesn't exist anymore. I've tried desperately on my four visits to Vienna to find that tram and I never could find it. And then there was always a bus waiting at the end of the tram and that bus took us through the woods to the café, which does exist because on the last visit I visited the café and we had a glass of sour milk in summer.

BL: Mr Barschak we need to make a break

FB: I need that tape...that break very much.

Tape 1 - 58 minutes 50 seconds

End of Tape One

TAPE 2

Tape 2: 0 minute 6 seconds

BL: This is tape two. We're conducting an interview with Mr Fred Barschak. You were talking about your memories of the synagogue.

FB: Yes, that's right.

BL: Can you tell us a bit about other experiences... can you remember your friends from school or other friends?

FB: I actually rediscovered one friend, the only one that I have some memory of. And this was...it's probably perfectly typical of people from that time. You're looking for each other. You don't even exist and suddenly you stumble across one of your closest relatives. It happened in 1975. In 1961 I discovered all the relatives on my mother's side in England, in America, even in Romania. There were two judges, also cousins, second cousins and so on, not a single relative of my father. By the way, I would have discovered my mother's relatives much sooner had I had the common sense to start looking for them under her maiden name – Loebel. I was looking under Barschak. There were no Barschaks. Anyhow, that was that. In 1975, by that time I had a small business in Israel. By that time we were going frequently to Israel. I had a small business there, some property that I bought in Akko the - what is it called? - the Bazaar Turkiye behind the main...have you ever been to Akko ? Those fifteen little, little shops behind the mosque built by Suleyman. Anyhow I bought them. I bought them and that was that. I don't own them now. I sold them back to the government about fifteen years later. Anyhow, that's not the point. I needed to come to Israel more frequently than I otherwise would. And, on one of those journeys, I decided that we should have one Pesach completely away - all of us. So we moved into what I used to consider my sub-office, the Sharon Hotel in Herzliya. We moved in there and we went the Shabbat before Pesach, a few days before, because I wanted to attend a Bar Mitzvah of cousins of cousins. He also was, originally was from Poland, but his sister was from Vienna – not important. We went to the Bar Mitzvah in Haifa and, as was the custom in those days, Bar Mitzvahs were held in the home, unlike what goes on now which is nonsense. And they were held...afterwards the lunch or the party was held in the grandfather's home and the grandparents were friends of ours, although they were considerably older than us.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 48 seconds

And, while we were there, somebody came up to me and addressed me in Hebrew - my Hebrew is fairly fluent – and said: 'Are you Braschak, the son of Barschak?' I said: 'Yes.' So he said: 'You don't know me, but are you aware that you have a very close relative alive and well?' - Sie haben eine sehr nahe Verwandte. Then he switched to German: sehr nahe Verwandte?' I said: Yesh li harbe krovim [Hebrew]- 'I have many, many relatives, you know, first and second cousins of my mother, second cousins of mine...' He said, 'I don't speak about first and second cousins on your mother's side. I speak about possibly an aunt on your father's side.' I said: 'Really?' Now I'd had this nonsense many times - 'Verwandte' turned into 'Bekannte' – so I said: 'Look, I said...' I was very, very dubious and somewhat suspicious. I said: 'What makes you so sure that this lady is a close relative of my father, even perhaps a sister?' He said: 'Very simple. Because she is my wife's aunt and my wife is busy sitting chatting to your wife on that couch there.' I said: 'Really? What's the name of this lady?' – 'Was ist der Name dieser Dame?' He said 'Rosner!

Rosner!’ It meant nothing to me and: ‘What is the first name?’ ‘Regina.’ And when he said Regina all the years fell away. I seemed to remember that I’d had an aunt Regina. I didn’t need to know was she an aunt or a real aunt? Was she a real aunt because in those days if children had elder relatives who were much older they became uncle and aunt? They weren’t real uncles and they weren’t real aunts. I said: ‘Right, listen to me. Can I phone you? I’m going back to Tel Aviv this evening immediately. Can I phone you and get the telephone number of this lady?’ ‘Yes.’ Which is precisely what I did.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 35 seconds

And then I thought: ‘How shall I approach her? She’s in her 70s – she was. If she’s a real aunt or something it will be quite a shock for her.’ So I invented something. My German wasn’t that good; it isn’t that good now. I thought: ‘Well, I’ll start in this way.’ I rang and her voice could have been in the next room. A very strong voice came on and said, ‘Rosner!’ Very interesting in England and France you answer with the number – 6 2 4 91 – who’s speaking? And in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and all points east, you answer with the name ‘Schmidt’, ‘Cohen’, ‘Rosner!’ ‘Lewkowicz!’ I then said something which must have sounded crazy! ‘Frau Rosner, ich hab für Ihnen einen Gruss von ihrer Nichte, Carmella. Wir waren zusammen bei einer Bar Mitzvah.’ ‘Oh yes. Yes, that’s very, very nice. Thank you so much. And who is speaking?’ Again I was frightened to say. I said: ‘Frau Rosner...’ and then I used something that you can say in German and in French but not in English – ‘Man hat mir gesagt...’ ‘On m’a dit’ You can’t say: ‘One has told me.’ – ‘I have been told’, which sounds ridiculous. ‘Man hat mir gesagt’ - Someone has told me ‘Sie haben einmal ein Herr Barschak aus Wien gekannt.’ And there was a deathly silence. ‘Was meinen Sie gekannt? Er war mein Onkel...Und jetzt wer spricht?’ ‘And now, who is speaking?’ And she said: ‘Was meinen Sie “gekant”?’ ‘Knew? He was my uncle! And now, who is speaking?’ I thought, well I must tell her now. ‘Jetzt spricht der Sohn, Fritz Barschak.’ I used Fritz, she wouldn’t know me... Fritz Barschak, das ist 37 Jahre dass ich hab Dich besucht.’

Tape 2: 9 minutes 13 seconds

I said listen, I don’t know, maybe I could speak it in English – in German...I was so involved shall we say. So I said listen, ‘Herz... Reginakönnen Sie mir geben noch eine halbe Stunde? Ich will etwas arrangieren. Wir müssen zusammen kommen, aber jetzt.’ She said, ‘Genau, genau! Mach was du kannst.’ And suddenly we were not strangers. She was using ‘du’ and I really felt...I couldn’t visualise what she looked like, but I felt that she was who she said she was.

I ran downstairs in the Sharon Hotel, there’s a Peltour Office in the hotel – or there was. I went there. I said: ‘Listen, can you fly me to Zurich for one day?’ She looked at me as though I was insane. She said: ‘Mr Barschak, have you forgotten? Wednesday is Pesach. Wednesday night is the first Seder. I could fly you out, but you will never get back in. Never. Never. Your wife and children will be alone.’ I said: ‘I see. Well I must think what to do.’ And I went in and I remember I went to the bar, funnily enough - I don’t normally drink - and I had a small whisky. And suddenly the assistant manager a man called **Descalo** – he’s not any more alive - he said: ‘Barschak you have problems?’ So I said ‘she katuw a lapanim [Hebrew], its written on the face,’ So I told him the story. He said ‘Barschak listen to me.’ It’s very funny. In Israel – I don’t know where else - people address you without Mr, without Monsieur;

it's simply your surname. 'Barschak, I have noticed from time to time that you have a little mazel.' I said: 'How can you get through life without it?' He said, 'You have it today. Look over there in the coffee bar – not the restaurant – the coffee bar. There is sitting' – he used the expression – 'a buletchke of a man, a round little man and he's talking to his mother-in-law and he would dearly love to talk to somebody else.' 'I can see that.' 'Maybe he would like to talk to you.' I said: 'Why should I talk to him?' 'Because he is the General Manager of El Al. He can do what the President and Prime Minister cannot do. He can put you on a plane and they will bring you back. Go and tell him the story.' His name is Ben-Ari. He got New Year cards from me for many years. He listened to a quarter of the story. He said; 'Stop. Thirty-seven years is quite enough.' What was the word he said? 'Can you get there by yourself?' I said 'Yes, they will fly me out.' 'You go. Take some money with you. My man will meet you at the airport. I will bring you back either in the First Class or in the luggage compartment, but I will bring you back.' Shavua Tov. Goodbye. And I went. There was an extraordinary reunion and she...they were waiting for me. She, her son who was my friend in Vienna, her (his?) three children. One boy - they were about sixteen, seventeen, eighteen or something like that - he became a doctor. They became something else, I don't know. The whole family group came. And of course there then started a sort of coming and going. She came to my son's Bar Mitzvah – that was in '79, but this was '75 and there was a very close relationship built up very quickly. And of course she could tell me all the stories about my father and the life before he met my mother. She was very much...she was his cashier for seven years before she got married in 1925, and the story of how she got out to Switzerland was quite incredible, principally because the man she married, a Polish Jew, refused to take Austrian citizenship. In 1925, when my father said I could get you Austrian citizenship, he said: 'I don't want it.' I don't trust Poland that much, but I trust Austria even less.' And that was it.

Tape 2: 14 minutes 27 seconds

BL: So how was Regina related to you?

FB: She was my father's niece. She was my first cousin.

BL: So your father's brother..?

FB: My father's half-sister's daughter. Her name was Teitelbaum. And she knew everything. She was treated like another daughter so she knew everything about the tragedy and about what happened.

BL: But this was the half sister whom your father visited who was in the...who was not so well?

FB: That was my father's daughter. That way my half sister.

BL: Sorry... I see...his half-sister.

FB: His half sister's daughter, who was his niece, so therefore she was my first cousin. She said: 'I remember when you were born. I remember everything.' And she told me everything. We used to go for long walks and I remember one thing which

has become suddenly relevant. One day, walking in...do you know Zurich at all? It's a very nice little city. It's very nice, very orderly and well, just a nice small city. And effectively it's not the technical capital of Switzerland, which is Berne, but it is certainly the de-facto capital, and its principal activity is banking. To understand this story you will remember that my father adopted his mother's name, Barschak. His real name was Öl. One day, walking in the little park which goes on the side of Lake Zurich, she said to me, 'Fred, was ist passiert mit dem Geld?' 'What happened to the money?' I said, well, the hotel and I told her what happened. Do you want me to speak about what happened to the hotel?

BL: Well, we have a problem with the chronology. We have to go back to Austria...

Tape 2: 17 minutes 3 seconds

FB: Yes, just a minute...O.K. So she said, and I started speaking about the hotel and she said: 'Fred, und du bist der Geschäftsmensch?' 'And you are the businessman?', which is a very nice way of telling me that I'm a fool. 'The hotel was his capital. I speak about the income, money.' Something about which I knew nothing. She said: 'Look, when I left him in 1925, he did treat me as if I were a daughter and he said: 'You don't have to worry.' and he used the expression: 'Wir haben schon versteckt.' 'We have already' – it means hidden – 'and it's no longer in the country, 600,000 Austrian Shillings'. That means £30,000 in 1925. And he had at least five or six more good years. 1929 – 1930, that's when the bad years started and then it began to recover. She said: 'If that money was put in the bank at the smallest rate of interest it would have grown to quite a sum. Anyhow, we'll catch up with that part of the story very soon. It became highly relevant. What has the Swiss bank done with our money?'

BL: Let's go back to Austria – 1930s. What other memories are important to you before the Anschluss?

FB: Before the Anschluss. They're composed of lots of little things, such as going to the country. I was taken to the country quite frequently and we always used to leave from the Südbahnhof. In Austria the railways are raised higher than the streets. You walk up the steps and I remember, particularly, I remember the smell of the steam from the steam engine, like in Britain. I don't know where I was going. Perhaps we were going to Semmering. But I do know one thing - these were short journeys because I was accompanied by my nanny, an Austrian, who was deeply attached to us. And what else do I remember?

BL: So you had a nanny living in the hotel?

FB: Yes. And I remember the shops. The shops looked at their best at Christmas. The chocolate shops, the array of colours – they always attracted me. What else?

Tape 2: 20 minutes 13 seconds

BL: How orthodox was your household? Do you remember the holidays? How orthodox was your household? Your parents' household.

FB: It was kosher and you know Shabbat was Shabbat and that was it. There wasn't any special emphasis on...Orthodox meant that there were certain things you did do and there were certain things you didn't do and, within those parameters, you could more or less do what you liked.

BL: So what didn't you do? Or what wasn't one supposed to do?

FB: Ride on Shabbat, which is ironic considering that once in my life in Vienna I did ride on Shabbat and that was the Kindertransport. What didn't you do? You didn't go to the cinema on Saturday afternoon. Or, you didn't even go to...you could go for walks but you couldn't go on rides in the Prater. What didn't you do? There was a lot you didn't do. What did you do? Twice a year, instead of going to bed at seven or eight o'clock at night, I and my brother were put to bed at two o'clock in order to get up at six, or seven, or eight because we were going to have a late night and those were the two Seder nights. There were things... there was a lifestyle if you like. Yes this is something very important. My father had a very close friend. His name was Narzissenfeld. He was a lovely man and he always wore a waistcoat and a watch chain. He was a small man and of all things he was a farmer. He was an orthodox Jew who was a farmer and he had a farm probably about twenty-five miles outside Vienna. He was constantly in the hotel. I'm sure that his social life revolved around the hotel. I notice that he is buried in the central Friedhof, in the cemetery in Vienna, which means, thank God, he avoided deportation. He must have been seventy something when I said goodbye to him on that day, the day before actually, on the Friday. And once he took me to his farm and it's the first time I came into contact with the smells of a farm. And for me it was fascinating. It was a world I hadn't even begun to imagine. I'm trying to think what other things I remember. I remember the birth of my brother of course.

BL: Yes, tell us about that.

Tape 2: 23 minutes 16 seconds

FB: Well, suddenly there was a noise. I knew perfectly well that he was going to be born. My mother was rather larger than usual. At the same time, I knew exactly when he was born and of course I demanded to see him. And I know that the parents, in retrospect, took extra special care to show me affection and in fact somehow I never was jealous. There was nothing to be jealous about! And that's another thing which I've never thought of before. My family unit was rather small when you think about it. Mother, father, mother's sister and aunt, brother. I came to a family in Hull and all families were gigantic. He, Phil Levy, was one of eight. She was one of nine - seven brothers and two sisters. And this was not so unusual. Four or five was perfectly normal and I realised in retrospect what a small... Of course this, for me, this was a fantastic thing. All these uncles and aunts suddenly. And I must say I was treated just like another nephew.

BL: How much younger was your brother?

FB: My brother in Vienna?

BL: Yes.

FB: Wait a minute. I was five and he was born. He was five years younger. Five is not a lot at the age of twenty-five, but at the age of five and nil – that's quite a gap. But the only thing I will say is this: I was appointed, as it were, guardian for my brother. So wherever I schlepped, he schlepped, if he could, and of course...you asked for a memory, my God, how could I forget this? I mean I hadn't forgotten it a month ago but I forgot it now. I lost him.

Tape 2: 25 minutes 43 seconds

I completely lost him. And I learnt a bitter lesson. I took him to the K Park [?] because I wanted to play football. I was playing and he was there. And I was playing and he was there. Gewalt! And I was playing and suddenly he wasn't there. I ran here, I ran there, I ran there, I ran here. And then the nanny came because...she said: 'Learn one thing. When two of you lose each other - and we've adopted this as family policy again and again and it's saved us - one of you stand still, and you decide which of you stands still, and one of you searches. If you both search you'll miss each other. Concentric circles. But if one stands still sooner or later somebody will find you. And that I didn't do. That's the time I lost him. Quite a frightening experience. Because I was thinking: 'What do I do when I get home and there's no Kurt?' Anyhow that is...

BL: You found him? He found you?

FB: No, she found both of us. That's the truth.

BL: In the '30s were you...?

FB: I remember going to the circus and to the cinema - occasionally. And the circus I liked very much.

BL: And you were very young, but were you aware of what was going on in Germany? Was it talked about? Do you remember?

Tape 2: 27 minutes 28 seconds

FB: I couldn't not be aware, for one reason. My father had a half brother Peter Öl. I never met him. He lived in Berlin and he died in Berlin in 1937, early '37, either late '36 or '37. And, of course, when my father went to the Shiva and came back the talk was about nothing but what is life like for Jews in Nazi Germany. That was what the conversation was endlessly about, and so I was perfectly aware. Another thing was in a sense, it sort of was the epitome of this awareness - the visit of 1937, a year before the Anschluss, of the Graf Zeppelin, that huge airship which was moored over the Donaukanal, which was 150 yards up the street from our hotel. So I went there and suddenly there was this huge thing, this cigar floating in the air. And, well it had the swastika on the tailpiece. And I was suddenly perfectly well aware. It's as if you know in retrospect. I wouldn't have thought that thought then – the idea of the domination of the swastika over Austria. But that's the effect they wanted.

BL: Did your father?

FB: Wait a minute...was it the Graf Zeppelin? No I think it was the Hindenburg, the one that went to New York and burst into flames about which a film has been made. I think it might have been the Hindenburg and not the Graf Zeppelin. Anyhow, there we are.

BL: Did your father make preparations? Did he think of emigrating at all?

FB: He must have thought it because he went twice...He was one of the heads of the Mizrachi in Vienna, apart from everything else. He was in many associations and he went twice to what was then Palestine and it was obvious that he was trying...I know for a fact my mother was trying to persuade him to move. I think if he had been forty and not sixty he might... He went in 1931 and again in 1936, and I know that he bought some land there, though we never found it. A very familiar story. And I think there was at one time some talk of a move to Antwerp where there were the sort of Jews who would have been delighted to eat his food. But largely it was a question of going to a place and establishing himself and earning a living because what could a sixty or fifty-eight-year-old man expect to do if he couldn't earn a living? On the other hand, he could have taken out his money - before. Before the Anschluss.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 11 seconds

BL: Tell us about the Anschluss. Do you remember anything?

FB: I remember everything. Everything that I came into contact with. The day before I certainly had no knowledge of some of the things that had gone on before, in the three weeks before. But I became perfectly well aware – you couldn't not - that the streets had signs saying: 'Vote for Schuschnigg. Vote for Schuschnigg,' who was the Austrian Chancellor. Austria was not a democracy; it was an authoritarian state, but not as authoritarian as, for example, Mussolini's Italy. But it was. I knew nothing about this. The day before was a peculiar day. There were not the same number of people in the streets – that was immediately noticeable. And in fact one of your other interviewees – Joe - makes a point of that. That's true. All I know is that in the late afternoon one was told to expect a broadcast and I think, but I'm not sure, that the Austrian national anthem, the Kaiser Hymn of Haydn, was played. Now, the Austrian way of playing it was very different to the German way. The German was a very bombastic, military... and the Austrian was like chamber music. Schuschnigg came on, said that everything everyone had said about Austria at that time were lies. If there were disturbances, they were disturbances engineered from outside. And he virtually said something which later on I read but I didn't understand it at the time. That he was not going to ask the Austrians to open fire on Germans. And, in the end, he was dragged away from the microphone.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 52 seconds

You wouldn't know that, but some very strange sounds erupted. And then nobody was sure what was happening. In fact, it was almost as if there were a vacuum. I think the word I would use is interregnum. No one knew who was in charge or if anybody was in charge. But very, very soon, shortly afterwards, there began to be – maybe it was an hour afterwards - lorries were coming with Nazis shouting, screaming. There was a lot of noise. Windows were being smashed. That was the Friday night. Of

course, on Saturday there was a completely different scene. Some say it was not till Sunday but I believe it was Saturday when one saw the very familiar sight of elderly Jews scrubbing the pavements... And marvellous shouts of: 'At last, Hitler's found work for the Jews!' Und so weiter. You saw that, but one thing I do remember and when I wrote the foreword for the Anschluss exhibition I mentioned it. It isn't true that there was absolutely no resistance whatsoever. Three examples came to my attention. One was a group of Austrian children on the night of Kristallnacht as the Nazi hordes came towards the blocks of flats where the Jews lived. And they were shouting: 'No Jews here! No Jews here!' They didn't have to shout that. The head chef of our restaurant on that Friday night – and this much I saw, I didn't hear about it - went into the street with a bull whip - you know what a bull whip is? - ready to confront them if they came near the hotel. They were coming down the street. I think he had one more person with him, I think he was Jewish, but he wasn't Jewish. His name was Albert. Albert, the man who used to give me either chopped liver or sweet onions with chicken fat on Shabbat morning. Yes, a marvellous man. And there we are.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 48 seconds

But the sad truth about Austria, the ugly truth is very simple. After the war there was an Austrian philosopher called Erika Weinzierl and she wrote a book about this experience and she entitled it 'Zu wenig Gerechte' – 'Too Few Righteous'. Not that there were none, but too few to make a difference. And you compare that to... People are constantly saying: 'the French are terribly anti-Semitic'. But I once wrote an article in the *Guardian* in which I pointed out that if those survival figures don't prove everything they must at least prove something. Out of 330,000 Jews alive in France, December 1st 1939, there were 250,000 alive when the Germans evacuated from France completely. The highest number of survivors of any country in Europe other than Denmark, little Denmark, which managed to ship its 6,000. So, you know, other countries had gone up this road. The truth is, it is not true that everybody in Austria was a Nazi. The first 70,000 to be arrested were the supporters either of Schuschnigg or the monarch. They were put straight away into concentration camps. It wasn't Jews that were arrested at the beginning. Their turn came from March to November, during the eight months from the Anschluss to the time of Kristallnacht and during Kristallnacht. But, and one cannot tell when you look at this huge crowd that is welcoming the Fuhrer in the Heldenplatz - there might have been half a million there, 600,000 there. But you cannot tell if there were not half a million sitting in their home and regretting the passing of Austria. There might well have been. We don't know.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 5 seconds

BL: How did your life change after the Anschluss?

FB: The first thing, that I saw what I saw. We were thrown out of school. I think it was about a month and a half later and went to these...to some other schools organised by the Kultusgemeinde where you learnt English or French or Hebrew, depending on where you thought you were going to. But the majority of classes taught English. How did my life change? Let me see...

BL: What about the nanny, did she stay with you?

FB: Yes, she stayed with me. She stayed right until the end, until I left. And, by that time, my father was thrown out of the hotel. It was aryanised. But he was still in the hotel until about March or April 1939. I only found out in the last year how he survived between then and deportation. It's very simple and I have the Gestapo files so I can rely on them. It appears that the Jewish community approached him and virtually said to him: 'Look, there is an old age home with four hundred elderly Jews. There is no one left to run it. No one. The only people who can run it are you and your wife. Are you prepared to give it a go?' Until Kristallnacht we know that he wouldn't go because he had a daughter in the hospital and you couldn't take her with you, and he wasn't prepared to abandon her - that much we knew. But of course he didn't have that reason for not going after Kristallnacht - it's not one day, Kristallnacht was about six days - because she was murdered along with many other mental patients. In fact, my cousin, my cousin that I discovered in Zurich was there when it happened. My father was called to Gestapo headquarters, which was in that infamous place, the Hotel Metropol, which the Austrians out of shame's sake blew up after war and just simply put a plaque there. And it was very perfunctory. 'Sign here.' 'What am I signing for?' 'A box.' 'What does the box contain?' 'The ashes of your daughter; she died during the night. Take them away.' That's all. He went in. He went out. And there we are...

Tape 2: 42 minutes 36 seconds

BL: When was that?

FB: That would have been in November 1938.

BL: So just right after Kristallnacht? Or around Kristallnacht?

FB: It was during Kristallnacht. In those six days. On Kristallnacht you asked me what I saw. We haven't come to Kristallnacht.

BL: No.

FB: So how did my life change?

BL: Were you scared? Was there a feeling of fear?

FB: Yes, to some extent, yes. But perhaps less with the very young because we knew too little. The older boys there was much more fear. But, if you were as young as I was, I was not yet aware of the extent of the dangers we were in. Either of what they could do and what they were doing, I didn't know that. I knew it all on Kristallnacht. I saw with my own eyes.

BL: What did you see?

FB: I saw Mr Rakower, married to my father's niece, came back from Dachau with one eye down here, not up there. He was beaten black and blue. I saw other things. Yes, I was scared when Gestapo came and ordered an immediate inspection, especially of our suites, to see what jewellery, what pictures, took careful note of

everything that was in it. But, again, there was one time when I should have been scared and, had I known, I would have been scared. But the thing was so bizarre that...you know what I mean by 'it was a surreal experience?' I certainly didn't know that word then.

Tape 2: 44 minutes 35 seconds

But it was completely crazy. I was standing with my father. I think I told you this. And we still had the hotel in June, July and we still functioned. There was still kosher food. Kosher food vanished after September – October. I didn't know that. I found it out later. My father was a very adaptable person, so he said: right, we will make schnitzel and carp. And we'll make vegetable soup, and we'll make this, we'll make that – everything managed without meat. Can I speak about we managed without meat? At that time...no let me go back further because it connects to that. Some time in June the swing doors opened – went round - and the only thing that really did scare me because a friend of mine who was older than me warned me about them – the SS. Not the SA, the SS. Shall I tell you? Well it was about a week or week and a half after the Anschluss, so it would have been March, March sometime. And up till that point Jewish boys could still play in the parks. There weren't any 'Juden Streng Verboten' or 'Juden Unerwünscht' and I was playing ball in the park and... just that. And in the park there were loads of SA. There were the brown shirts and there were SS - black shirts or rather black uniforms. Very smart. I call them demonic. And suddenly the ball...suddenly somebody threw the ball to me – it went right past me and rolled up at the feet of one of the SS men. So I went to get the ball. The SS man didn't do anything. The SA were much rougher than the SS. The SS preserved their cruelties for much more important things. And I came back and this older boy whose name was Felsenberg - his brother's still alive in Temple Fortune – Akiva I think it was. He got hold of me and he said: 'Listen, don't worry about the brown shirts - they may only beat you. But be careful of the black shirts. They can kill you.'

Tape 2: 48 minutes 5 seconds

Anyhow, with that in mind there suddenly appeared through the swing doors, two months later, two SS men. I was standing by my father and all he did - he was a large man - he said 'Steh still' 'Stand still', meaning, 'don't panic'. Nothing to panic about. 'Good morning, can I help you?' And then one of them, and I remember what he looked like: he had a narrow waist a somewhat elongated face and I think he wore glasses, and he said something crazy. He simply said: 'We've heard that you serve an excellent chopped liver here and we'd like to try some.' 'Wir haben gehört, Sie haben eine ausgezeichnete gahackte Leber hier. Wir möchten es probieren. And all my father said was: 'Nehmen sie Platz bitte', pointing to the restaurant. The restaurant was to the...If the doors were here, the restaurant was over there. Over here was a smoking room and bar and something else, and behind were the kitchens. It was a rather large establishment and then he said to me: 'Run upstairs' and he added something, which I didn't understand at the time: 'They're not here just for the chopped liver.' I'm quite convinced because there's a book and on page 200 and 202 there's a full account of the visit of Eichmann to four hotels, one of them was ours. He wanted to take them over because he was decanting all the Jews from the provinces – from Linz, from Salzburg, from Klagenfurt, Gmunden into Vienna, preparatory for stripping them of all their goods and then making sure that they

emigrated. The policy then was emigration, not extermination - that came later. And, I can't prove it, but I just have the feeling because it said that he always inspected the hotels personally. I believe that was Eichmann, Eichmann asking for chopped liver.

BL: Kristallnacht. You said you saw the synagogue burn from your room. Can you just describe that please?

Tape 2: 50 minutes 56 seconds

FB: Well, imagine a building in flames, but more to the point I actually saw them bring out the scrolls –Sifrei Torah - and naturally dance on them and, in one case, urinate on them. That certainly concentrated my mind. We left the hotel that night and we stayed...obviously they must have known some families in the Socialist district in Floridsdorf, and we must have stayed there for four or five nights. And it was on one of those nights – 4th or 5th night - that Eva's father, Rachover – I forget his first name because... came back from Dachau with part of his face re-arranged. You must understand that during the whole of these five, six, seven months I was living in a place... I might not have heard this in an ordinary household, but this was a place where people came somehow to be together. It was the sort of centre for Polish Jewry, for example and the Landsmannschaft, and the sort of conversation you heard is not what a normal eight year old is hearing. 'And, by the way you know Feuchtwanger – he's got visas for Argentina. So and so has this. And then, in a hushed voice I'm not supposed to hear: 'Sie nicht mehr leben' – they've committed suicide, and there were 650 suicides in this period. The Jewish population in Vienna was about 192-193,000 at the time... so you were hearing all this. So you knew perhaps a little more about what was going on than you would expect to. At the same time, somehow the children, especially children, were carrying on living normal lives.

Tape 2: 53 minutes 38 seconds

You went to school. You had games. You had jokes. You were not all the time thinking about... but you were suddenly confronted with another world. I tell you one thing which was a very, very great change for me. I started playing the violin at the age of five. I didn't realise that Mrs Rakower, whom I knew to the end of her days, she came in with their son, George, and she was instrumental when my mother wanted a good violin teacher. She said: 'Well you can have the best!' The best was a woman called – she was Jewish – I... Hertzmann – Professor I... Hertzmann. And she was the principal assistant of the leading exponent of the Sevcik [Otakar] technique, the Viennese school as opposed to the Russian school. And an offshoot of the Viennese school was Carl Flesch, who came to England and produced the Amadeus and five other Weltkünstlers. Anyhow, she had access to this woman. She was a famous teacher of children. Her best pupil had already played the Mendelssohn on Austrian state radio in 1931 – he was 8 years older than me. And we were introduced and I was very bad at practising. I constantly, as soon as nobody was there, I would stop. You know, I would waste time. And one day my mother had had enough of this. She said: 'I'm sorry, I've got to do this. It's only 20 minutes. I'm going to tie your leg to the chair. You won't run away and now you might as well practise because you'll be standing up anyhow.'

Tape 2: 56 minutes 12 seconds

Anyhow, this nonsense went on for about... And then it stopped because it was a stroke of genius. The teacher said: 'Look, you will have to pay him a very modest sum, but my best pupil' – what was his name? Gerhard something - 'he will come one hour every week making sure that he does practice and he knows my methods and he will be a sort of an alter-ego.' And that's what happened to the extent that on March the 7th – no, March 9th - 1938, some two and a quarter years after I'd started – no, actually, only two years (I'd started at the age of five cause she wouldn't take people under the age of five) - three of us stood on our hind legs, each for three quarters of an hour, and gave a concert of fourteen kleine Stücke. I must have played Schubert's Ave Maria. Do you play piano at all? Nothing, so this is double Dutch to you. And what do you call it? The other Ave Maria – Gounod's, and fourteen small pieces. But you had to know them and you had to play them competently, shall we say, and I did that. And then, when I came to England, the first thing they did - they put me on in Hull, the City Hall, to raise money for refugees. I didn't even know what the purpose of it was, to play the same concert again. And there were some other people and kids who did something. But I had to play my portion as it were.

BL: Mr Barschak we have to stop here we need to change tapes.

FB: Ok.

Tape 2: 58 minutes 47 seconds

End of Tape Two

TAPE 3

Tape 3: 0 minute 9 seconds

BL: This is Tape Three. We are conducting an interview with Mr Fred Barschak. You were telling us about the concert which you still did in Vienna. When...?

FB: First in Vienna.

BL: When was it performed, the first concert?

FB: March the 9th, a Wednesday night, 1938, two days before the Anschluss. In fact, many, many years later, when I was being interviewed for the BBC – actually I don't have it, it's a radio interview, not television – and he said: 'So, why did you actually stop playing within two or three years?' To which I answered: 'Well you see my musical education was somewhat interrupted by the arrival of another Austrian called Adolf Hitler.' 'Ah yes, I'm sorry. I forgot.' Was hat der gewusst? So I did that and, in fact, I then gave the second one in Hull, in Yorkshire. Then I stopped. I did not stop playing the violin. What did happen was this. Die Pflegeeltern – the foster parents, if you like, although they never assumed that - they said: 'Look, you will always keep your name.' In fact, they had actually talked twice while I was there, to my parents on the telephone. So...

BL: Can we just...because we're not there. Can we just...about the leaving...how?

FB: Let me finish. So OK. I'll come to the violin when I get to Hull. There has just been published a book by Martin Gilbert called Kristallnacht, which includes the

Kindertransport cause they're intimately interconnected; the one led to the other. But, what he omitted, he said: 'Look,' he said to me, 'Fred, I think we've done Hamlet without the prince.' A woman, who was not Jewish, part of the committee but a leading member of it, the wife of a Dutch banker called Vera Weissmuller – no connection to the swimmer - decided to confront Eichmann in Vienna and went down to Vienna, was taken to Gestapo headquarters in the Hotel Metropol, was then conducted - was then subjected - to a very, very thorough personal search by Gestapo women and Eichmann made the ridic...It all appears in a huge email from the *Jerusalem Post* twenty years ago, which I have, which he didn't have.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 29 seconds

And he made the ridiculous sick joke: 'Well at least you're not circumcised.' Next thing was she was held for several hours in the Gestapo jail. And then, finally, came the interview. She said: 'I've come to take six hundred children out of Vienna.' 'When do you want to take them?' She said: 'Tomorrow if I can.' 'Now, do the children know that this scheme exists?' 'Certainly they know. The Kultusgemeinde knows; they know. It is all pre-arranged. They are all ready.' 'Right. You will take them on Saturday.' It was ...no wait a minute – it wasn't the same week. I think it was a week before so there was more time. 'You will take them on Saturday.' And that became evidence at his trial in 1961 when he always said: 'I was a mere cog in the wheel, a mere cog in the wheel. I was like a transport clerk.' No, no, no. The choice of inflicting pain on orthodox parents that the children should travel on Saturday – dafke [on purpose]- was something very, very Eichmann-y. And the joke is he didn't know, and I wonder what he would have done if he had known, that there is a very clear rule: For the saving of life, the rules of Shabbat are set aside – 'Pikuah nefesch tochei Shabbat', This he didn't know, thank God. Anyhow, O.K, Saturday. I knew nothing except that suddenly a whole load of new clothes appeared, clothes I'd never seen: suit, trousers, new underwear, shirts, everything. And everything not from the cleaner. It was all new. And there we are. And, suddenly, I knew that I was going. I remember, but I do not remember who handed them to me.

Tape 3: 6 minutes 18 seconds

I remember being given, and I still have them, but they're falling to bits and I'm about to have them re-bound, five chumashes - the Five Books. They were either handed to me by my father or by Mr Narzissenfeld, the farmer, who was there helping my mother to get me ready and one thing and another. The actual morning... Oh yes, I remember this because there was a reference to it...I happened to be a member of the advanced class of Nitzza Spiro's Hebrew class. We were reading a book by David Grossman and on one page there is someone, I think it is a mother, telling a son, a daughter, what's the word? 'Look, I've written the addresses. I've put the addresses on envelopes, so there's no excuse for you not to write.' In my case, she put in my hand it must have been 250 envelopes with the name and address and I'm not even sure if they didn't have stamps on – no, they couldn't have had stamps because the stamps would have been no good in England. They didn't have stamps. But they certainly were inscribed and I also had reams of writing paper. And I got a very clear lecture about the need to write, once a week if possible. And, in fact, I remember my mother saying: 'You'll have so much to write about, a new country a new life. And, you know, and then we shall write back.' Letters came from them, meticulously, at

least once a week and then sometimes twice, including: ‘Why haven’t you written in the last week or so?’ Busy, busy, busy – anyhow, certainly there was that.

Tape 3: 8 minutes 58 seconds

And then suddenly there’s the day. And I’m being taken. We’ve all got these cards around us and cardboard with string. I’m sure your other interviewees have given you descriptions about this. And we are assembled in the one remaining shul after the Kristallnacht. In Kristallnacht, in Vienna alone, they destroyed twenty-three major shuls and about sixty stieblach, prayer halls, and one they couldn’t touch, and that was the Seitenstätten Temple in the Seitenstättengasse because it is... Have you been to Marble Arch? So, it isn’t a detached building; it forms part of other buildings. You can only burn that down if you burn the whole street down. And that they certainly didn’t want to do. Yes, I remember Kristallnacht. It just comes back to me, walking, being taken for a walk, and seeing many shops with broken windows. Kristall! But that is not my principal memory. My principal memory is the burning of the shul of which we were not members, but we used to go there Friday night ‘cause it was so close. And the man there was Hazzan Braun, I remember that. Anyhow, we were taken to Seitenstätten Temple, which was completely damaged, vandalised, everything in it is broken, but the building stands. And I have this very, very clear memory of hundreds of children and with adults trying to assemble them in some way, each being given their particular - what do you call it? - card with the string around their neck. The parents have delivered us there, but they’re not coming with us. There is a dispute. Some people say they were not allowed to come to the station which, by the way, was the Westbahnhof.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 21 seconds

By the way, the principal reason why the Leopoldstadt – the Zweite Bezirk and the 20th Bezirk - had at least fifty percent of Vienna’s 190,000 Jews was simple: it was the closest to the station that brought them from Galicia – Nordwestbahnhof. So we were taken to the Westbahnhof and I am absolutely certain not only that it left about mid-day, but equally certain – some time midday or 1 o’clock I don’t know - that the parents did come and say goodbye. Of that I’m quite certain until somebody proves to me that it didn’t happen. But I am quite certain of it. I think the parents made their arrangements, probably through bribery.

BL: What about your brother? Did he come with you?

FB: No, I don’t remember that, no. No.

BL: No, what I meant was: it was decided that you should go, not your brother?

FB: I later found out my mother felt he was far too young. He was, after all, wait a minute, he was two and a quarter years old and she felt he would forget who he is and...She may have been right but we will never know. But he always attached a message to each letter. We were very close. It left me...

BL: So from the synagogue do you remember being taken to the station?

FB: Yes, I don't know how, by bus, I think.

BL: Did you know any of the other children on the train?

Tape 3: 13 minutes 32 seconds

FB: No. Or, if I did, I can't remember that I knew. And, in fact, the people who came to Hull with me... I don't remember them on the train either. But I remember one thing. I remember the SS getting on at Frankfurt - it was either Frankfurt or Nuremberg, I'm not sure which - and searching everything. In my case I had a case and a violin case. What else? On that journey there is not much that I can remember. I know it went on interminably. And I remember it was rather slow. Anyhow, we had a night on the train and the next day, in the late afternoon, we got to the Hook of Holland. I remember also crossing...The minute the train crossed into neutral Holland there was a huge change of atmosphere, a sort of a cheering. And one remembers the refreshments. I can't remember...it's funny that I, with such a good culinary memory, cannot remember that I had tea, coffee, milk, chocolate - weiss ich nicht was - but I know I got something. And I remember the women, the Dutch women, very kind faces. And then came the business of the sea journey. We were embarked on this ship. I don't know how many people. It must have taken six hundred children from Vienna and probably another thousand from Germany. It picked them up en route, you know - Frankfurt, Nuremberg, und so weiter...And it was a large ship. And I know this: the sailors had given up their hammocks for the children. I slept on a hammock. You know what a hammock is. And I'm not such a bad sailor but I was sick as a dog. The sea was rough. It was huge. It tossed the ship about like that.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 28 seconds

And I wasn't the only one. I talk to people who were on that boat that I met since; we all had the same experience: sea sickness. Finally, in the morning we got to Harwich, and then we were taken to Dover Court, which is only about four miles, I think. I don't know if we walked there or we were driven there, I don't know. I remember one thing about Dover Court, and here my culinary memory is accurate. The worst thing I have ever tasted in my life was what was - later in my life I learned to make and love French onion soup - Soup a l'ognion. What we got was dishwater in which a few onions were floating about. It was a terrible smell and a terrible taste. That's all I can say.

BL: Do you remember what your first impressions were when you came to England, when you came from the boat?

FB: It was freezing cold. It was cold. I was not a stranger to cold, but the Viennese cold was something different to here. It was very cold indeed. You literally froze and I thank God I had gloves. I had everything. And I remember pulling on an extra pullover. It was very cold indeed. On the other hand, there were lovely things. For example, we all had to learn new songs, and the person teaching us I later met with at the exhibition. She was there. She was the wife of...She and her husband were German Jews. She'd been here since 1934 and already she, you know, she was acclimatised. She could come down to Dover Court to teach us English songs. (Sings melody)

And we all had to learn these songs every day. Und so weiter.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 50 seconds

BL: What was her name?

FB: I've forgotten. I knew it. I've got notes. I'm no good at names any more. In fact, I never was very good at names. And I devised a way of dealing with this in business. 'Fred, how are you?' 'Quite well!' and then at some point you say: 'Tell me, I just want to make a note...How do you spell your second name?' And this works unless you come to this, when he said to me: 'Well how would you spell Smith?' Then he said: 'You forgot. You forgot didn't you?'

BL: So Dover Court, what else do you remember? How many children were there?

FB: Oh, a lot. It was not the only camp. Monty Richardson was at one of the camps, but not at Dover Court. He and a group of friends of his from Cambridge University came down to help to deal with the children. So I remember the onion soup. I remember the concerts.

BL: There were concerts?

FB: Yes, they organised little concerts. And I remember the cold. It was one of the worst of those English holiday camps. Nothing like Butlins. The English operator had stopped using it already.

BL: Was it an atmosphere of slight excitement or...?

FB: It was so exciting that you almost forgot the world you had left. But, every now and then, you did think about it, but then you switched off and said: 'No, no I must think about now.' And then came the day, der Tag, when some of us were going in one direction, another direction. And we were taken to Harwich station waiting for what is quite a long time, for a train.

Tape 3: 22 minutes 17 seconds

And there is a photograph of us, a famous photograph, which the Daily Telegraph has. I've been trying to get it back from them. I think it was six months. I haven't got it yet. But the Jewish Museum has that photograph as well. Several people have it. Sixteen of us waiting for a train with all the names underneath, and you can quite clearly see me because I'm the one who has the violin case waiting for a train to Hull. We didn't even know it was Hull. We didn't even know what it was called. And there were three people, adults. One was himself a Jewish German refugee. One was the mother of a man who became a famous solicitor in Hull. And one was a man called Phil Bloom, who organised the whole thing, the head of the Refugee Committee in Hull without whom very little would have happened. And he arranged putting in touch the parents with the new guardian parents. He arranged everything. He had a big shop in Hull devoted to furs. In those days people bought furs. It's a different world. Phil Bloom. He and his brother were partners and he organised this whole business. And there were similar people in other towns. Proportionately more children

– as you probably know by now - went to the provinces than stayed in London. You know why? Because the Home Office made a request to the Refugee Committee: get them out of London, otherwise there will be too much anti-Semitism. As if the arrival for nine months of nine thousand children should be the cause of anti-Semitism. On the other hand, there were many...What shall I say? Out of 29,000...no it wasn't that – 29,000 Austrian and 31,000 German. No, it wasn't that – 70,000 less nine is sixty-one, so about 60,000 adults from Germany and Austria were coming into this country. Some, maybe half, were already here and half were coming. And in some towns they would have been noticed. But the idea, this ridiculous idea, because 9,000 children...Half the children stayed in London and half were distributed in Manchester, Leeds, Hull, Nottingham, Leicester and so on.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 28 seconds

BL: Do you remember arriving in Hull? What happened?

FB: Exactly. Finally, we arrived in Hull. The relationship between this girl who died four years ago – I don't think you interviewed her, cause she would have told me. My fingers were very, very good when it came to the fiddle or writing, but were completely clumsy in every other respect and they still are by the way. I drop things. I just can't function with them. And I remember coming out of a toilet and I had to fasten these enormous long-johns which fastened at the back, and I couldn't fasten them at the back or something or maybe the lederhosen, I don't know. I could not function and I was going mad, and suddenly a girl said: 'Why don't you stand still and let me try and do it? Stand still.' She was exactly the same age as me except she was six weeks older than me. As we used to laugh together, she said, in her last year of life, she said – she wasn't that ill at the time – she said: 'You know Fred not only was I six weeks older when I met you, but actually I'm about the same now!' Yes, her birthday was in January; mine is in March. Anyhow there we are. She managed to help me to function by fastening the buttons at the back and she and I were to stay in contact because standing waiting for us were two gentlemen – I've got the picture of one of them here. No, I've got a picture of him when he was a young man, not when he was...Wait a minute, he was thirty-four when I came into contact with him, although he seemed much older. These two brothers were waiting because each one was going to take a child.

Tape 3: 26 minutes 56 seconds

Their sister had already taken someone in from Germany and the 3rd brother – there were four living in Hull, four stayed in Manchester; they were a Manchester family - he finally took a girl from Germany. And there we are. One of them – well, she wasn't a Kindertransport – Rose Brahms, you didn't interview her in Hull. Because she was already seventeen years old when she came to Hull. She came as an au pair, not as Kindertransport. So there we are. I remember the arrival. And what excited me immensely was, he had a car! The other one, his brother, who was a little older, didn't yet have a car. So he took Bertha Baszellos – Hungarian name – Baszellos or *Baszellis*.. They went by taxi, and we by car. I sat of course in the front seat. No seatbelt was needed in those days. And I was fascinated with the gears. I was always fascinated with cars. And I was always fascinated with aeroplanes. Don't ask me why. But there we are. And of course got there. It was a very small house. They were by no

means wealthy. And I entered a new world. And very, very shortly after that found myself being, as it were, inspected by other members of the family, of his siblings. We were invited for tea, or whatever.

BL: Were there other children of the family?

FB: One. And that was the boy - I'll show you in a minute.

BL: What was his name?

FB: Ronnie. Their name was Levy.

BL: And what did they do professionally?

FB: Nothing. They were in business. They were drapers. Clothing. Two of the brothers had either two or three shops at the time and he had a different business. It was called a Tally business, where you sell goods on credit and the purchaser pays for the goods he has, over 20 weeks. And they actually go and collect the money from the houses. There were dozens of these people. It was a major, major business at the time. These people couldn't get credit in the normal way. They couldn't get credit from the bank. There were no credit cards, nothing.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 12 seconds

BL: How did you communicate with the family?

FB: Now, that is very different. She spoke Yiddish. I spoke German. I knew hardly any Yiddish. Some words obviously I knew. And sometimes they are so close: 'Wos is dos?' 'Was ist das?' 'Wie heisst das?' Wie heisst das – it's the same thing. And a lot of the child's conversations are questions when you're dealing in a foreign language...'Wo findet man...?' I'd look at the bathroom. Badezimmer.' Er will sich baden. 'You want to take a bath?' Don't worry, I will bath you'. I am seven years nine months, don't forget. 'Ich habe Durst.' Yes, I'm thirsty. Very simple things we could cope with. But, by that time, my thought processes were a little more sophisticated, and those things I was very frustrated I could not say. But there was one experience I will never forget. The English newspapers were not short of descriptions of what had happened on Kristallnacht or, for that matter, in the beginning of the Anschluss as well. Because, one must remember, there were only three occasions when Hitler gave the Germans and the Austrians what is called 'The Freedom of the Streets' – the freedom to conduct whatever bestiality they wanted without any interference by any organ of law. The first one was within three weeks of when he came into power in Germany. The second was – and that applied only to Austria – the four weeks of the Anschluss. And the third was Kristallnacht. Apart from that, they never had any permission, if you like, to conduct any overt acts. It was conducted for them. But that is the simple truth.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 55 seconds

BL: So were you happy in that family? Did you feel very strange? What was it different?

FB: Yes, everything was different. For a start, I was in a place and you could have got – I can't tell you – you could have got sixteen of these houses or fifteen into Restaurant and Hotel Barschak. Suddenly, having had the run of this huge place, or it seemed to me to be huge, I was in a normal, a small house. In fact the whole house, on two floors, was certainly not as big as this flat, which is certainly 120m square. It was not. I doubt if it was that. I think it was maybe eighty per cent of that.

BL: Did you have your own room or did you have to share a room?

FB: No, I had my own room.

BL: And what motivated these people to take you in? Do you know?

Tape 3: 34 minutes 7 seconds

FB: Yes, the three brothers, they decided as a family that they wanted...they had a certain Zionist commitment even then. But maybe, more particularly, they'd been brought up with a very strong sense of – can I call it 'Jewish People-hood?' whatever that was. And the stories that had emanated, the desperate attempt to get the children out, that must have touched a nerve. And of course the other thing is: I'm sure he thought: 'Well it'll be company for the boy who's already... I was nearly eight; he was nearly eleven. We had birthdays on almost the same...His was 14th of March, mine was 2nd of March. So we were very close. We didn't always get on at the beginning - far from it. And, one day, his father came in. He'd had enough. He came in and he moved the furniture away and his brother-in-law was staying – visiting - and his wife said: 'what the hell are you doing? What is going on?' And this was in the dining room. 'We're going to have a little entertainment. Now boys. You like fighting, don't you? I've bought boxing gloves. You are now going to fight in this ring until one of you drops or we have to take one of you to hospital. You will fight until I say stop. And I am not going to say stop. You fight until you've had enough.' And, sure enough, we started. And it went on: End of Round One. End of Round Two. End of Round Three. 'What's the matter?' – to his own son. 'Are you getting a little tired?' 'Come on Fred. Get up!' - and he was going to teach us the lesson of our lives. In the end, after about six or seven rounds, we literally were collapsing on the floor. He said: 'You've now had enough. You will never fight again.' And we didn't. That was it. Never did. It was a very good lesson. Anyhow...

Tape 3: 36 minutes 55 seconds

BL: Were they religious, the family?

FB: No, traditional. She'd been brought up in a religious family. (interruption)

BL: Yes I was asking how religious the family was, the foster family.

FB: Look, she had certainly come from a religious family, but they certainly were not religious. They were traditional but they were not religious in the sense that...First of all, he was in a business where he couldn't have kept Shabbat even if he'd tried. But what he did do and not just because I'd arrived on the scene; he was doing this before.

It was part of his lifestyle that, on Friday night, as early as he could get home, which sometimes in the Winter was not even before seven or eight o'clock, long after Shabbat had started, he'd come home, get washed and changed, and then he would make Kaddish, and then we would sit down and eat. So the structure of Friday night was Friday night. On Shabbat he was away the whole day unless there was something very special – perhaps there was a Bar Mitzvah or something - and he arranged for someone else to do his round. And the kitchen was kosher – that certainly. It was that sort of typically Anglo-Jewish compromise which by now you are fully au fait with. What else? Yes there's something very important. By that time he, like most of the Jews in Hull, were living at least three quarters of an hour's walk from the shul – at least, some more. People were coming to shul - some were walking, some were not. There was no doubt that, as far as he was concerned, his wife and his son were certainly not walking. But, from the moment that I arrived – and I found this out later - he sort of laid down the law in this respect. He said: 'Look. You and my son can ride on Shabbat, not on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur but on Shabbat...' [Interruption] What he virtually said to her, I found out later, was: 'You and my son can ride but this boy cannot. This boy comes from a house, and we know it, where riding on Shabbat is out of the question. Therefore, I'm sorry, you and my son will walk with him and that's it. I can find no other solution.' And that's it. and that is what they did. And from then till nine months later, at the outbreak of the war when I was evacuated, that's what happened. And similarly it carried on during the war.

Tape 3: 40 minutes 27 seconds

I don't know...then he was called up into the Air Force in October 1942 and she ran the business on her own and ran the house on her own. Yes, she had a cleaner but that's about it. And, from the age of fourteen, his son had to leave school to help run the business. Either fourteen or fifteen – no, he was fourteen. I helped out as much as I could. And that's that. But, if you ask me about religious observance, I think by the time I was fifteen I was riding on the bus – on Shabbat.

BL: Tell me about your first Shabbat in the house.

FB: It was fascinating. First of all, on that Shabbat the table was laid. I'd only been in the house for two days. The table was laid with everything milchig [milky] , no meat whatever. And, suddenly, I saw many familiar things . But suddenly I saw one thing which I couldn't understand what it was doing on the table at all, because it looked like schnitzel. And I looked at it... and having tried her gefilte fish, which all right wasn't the same as the gefilte fish in Vienna, but it was adequate. I looked, tried other things and the challah was very nice. But I looked at this and I could not understand what it was doing there. And she said in her Yiddish: 'Would you like to try this?' To which I said: 'Well what is it?' She said, 'Well, it's fish.' 'Fish?' 'What did you think it was?' I said: 'Well, I was a bit embarrassed.' She said: 'You don't think I would put meat on this table? It is fish! It is fried fish.' And then she said: 'It's a different fish; it's North Sea fish.' I didn't even know what she was talking about, but I took her word that it was fish and it tasted very nice. It was actually fried plaice. That was the first time I came into contact with this habit – only of English Jews – nowhere else in the world. In America you find it only where English Jews have emigrated, and that's cold fried fish on Shabbat, which is actually a Sephardi dish.

Tape 3: 43 minutes 23 seconds

So that was my first Shabbat. When I went to shul on the first Shabbat I found that many of the things were the same. I was very interested in the music. That was rather different, some of it, but by no means all. There's nothing else that I can tell you. Obviously, I hardly understood five words of what the rabbi's sermon was about. But he later became a teacher of mine and he was a fabulously good teacher when he taught Classical Hebrew – Bremmer.

BL: Did you say you had correspondence with your parents?

FB: Yes.

BL: What advice - can you remember what advice your parents gave you before you left or while you were there?

FB: To write letters. That I do most certainly remember. And to that end my mother had pre-addressed about two or three hundred envelopes, so I should have no excuse for not posting the envelopes.

BL: And did you write?

FB: Yes I wrote but not as often as she wanted. She expected a letter once a week and more often than not I got a sort of mild telling off: 'Why don't I write once a week?' And their letters came once a week without fail.

BL: And what did they say about their lives?

FB: Nothing unpleasant. There wasn't anything unpleasant in those letters, amazingly. Parents were trying to shield their children from very bad news. There was not a word about something that I found out. I found it out by the man who owns the building – the Spiro Institute functions in Endsleigh Street, you know? And he said - and I had no knowledge of this - he said: 'Three months after you left, and my mother told me this and my late father, some SA thugs...' cause my father was refusing to leave the hotel. He had a beating to within an inch of his life to persuade him. And then he was persuaded. She said: 'I saw it from my bedroom window. We could see what was going on in the courtyard.' I never knew that, even in the last visit. I found that out in the 90s. So there we are.

BL: You said your half sister was killed. Was that before you left?...

FB: Kristallnacht...

BL: Kristallnacht...did you know about this?

Tape 3: 46 minutes 17 seconds

FB: No, no I didn't. I had no idea – they wouldn't have told me.

BL: So did you find out how she was killed?

FB: Injection, we presume. We presume because that's how they did it in the hospitals. And, by the way, they were killing people in hospitals and not only Jews, anybody with the slightest mental illness. So what else? Yes. There's something else that was important. My guardians... I never looked upon them as guardians. It was like a sort of a pseudo-family. It was a family. I'm still in touch with them. In fact I'm very much in touch. I visit the eldest son of the eldest brother. He's in a sheltered housing place, a very luxurious place in Stanmore. It costs real money there. Anyhow, and we often... I refresh my memory of those days. He's much older than me; he's eighty-five, nearly ten years older than me. He has a good memory of what was going on there at that time. They took me to the best violin teacher in Hull, who listened to me, looked at the music I brought from Vienna, a whole pile of it, and said: 'Look, you're wasting your time with me. I can't teach him anything. He needs the teacher in Leeds. That's the teacher he needs.' And of course they discussed it and I later found out it was impossible. It would have cost – the Hull teacher, a very good man – five shillings, which was a lot of money. A bank manager was earning six-seven pounds. So, but it was not the 10 shillings. A two-and-a-half hour train ride to Leeds, two-and-a-half-hours back, and food. It would have cost a grand total of... It probably would have cost one pound fifty and it didn't occur to them to do it for less than once a week.

Tape 3: 49 minutes 23 seconds

You couldn't have a lesson less than once a week, not at that age. Later on you could, when you were sixteen, seventeen. So in fact nothing was done. So what I did was to practise what I knew, what I had. But slowly I moved away from it. I moved away from it and discovered in the most miraculous way a thing called the piano accordion, which I play also. And play quite well! And am about to play for Purim. So, yes, a shortened end to the violin story. In 1970, a four-year-old boy called me into the hall of our then flat – we lived in a flat in the West End - and pointed up at a cupboard there and said: 'Daddy, why do you never open that box? You never take it down. It's a different colour to the other cases. It's black.' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Well, what is it?' I said: 'It's called a violin.' 'How does it go? Bring it down.' I brought it down. 'Show me how it works.' By this time everything was wrong. The hold of the hand was wrong; the fingers moved but indifferently. I hadn't touched it for... I was now thirty-nine-years-old and I hadn't touched it since I was about fourteen or fifteen or sixteen, something like that. 'Why don't you play it?' But something he said must have triggered something, and the next day I went to see somebody where I used to buy my records. Joe [Horowitz] knows who that is – well, she's not alive any longer. She ran a business, which still exists, called 'The Chimes'. It supplied all the music to all the music schools – The Royal College and The Trinity College of Music in Marylebone High Street. And I told her the story. She says: 'Well there's one man who will tell you whether there's any hope, Professor Frederick Grinke of the Royal Academy.' I said: 'How do I get him?' She said: 'I'll phone him. He'll see you. He's a very good friend of mine.' And I knew her very well. So I went to see him. He said: 'What is it you want to know?' I said: 'Well, look, there are three possibilities it seems to me: Either I've either got a severe flu of the fingers, or I've got double pneumonia of the fingers, or I've got cancer of the fingers. I would like to know which of these illnesses I have.' He said: 'Play a scale in the key of G.' He said 'You've got much more than the flu, but you haven't got cancer. You've probably got

double pneumonia, but this we can cure with a famous antibiotic.' I said: 'What is its name?' He said: 'Professor Frederick Grinke of the Royal Academy! I can do it!'

BL: Mr Barschak we need to stop, this tape is running out.

FB: What?! are these tapes so short now?

Tape 3: 53 minutes 2 seconds

End of Tape Three

TAPE 4

Tape 4: 0 minute 9 seconds

BL: Today is the 7th of March, 2007. We are continuing the interview with Mr Fred Barschak and this is Tape Four.

BL: When we finished the interview last time you told us about picking up the violin again at a later stage. Can you please continue the story?

FB: Yes, well I started with Frederick Grinke. I don't know when, it was 1970 and went on for about six months. The going was very, very difficult because we were starting from scratch. Masses of technical mistakes had appeared over those - I don't know - nearly thirty years. And I found the going very, very difficult. And then something quite extraordinary happened. There's a Hebrew saying, and it exists in Yiddish as well, 'be shaah tova, 'auf eine gute shue'. Things happen when perhaps they're meant to happen - when you're ready for them to happen. I think I mentioned that we had, and always had had, in this country friends of my family, the only ones who absolutely kept in touch with me all the time - Mr and Mrs Holtzer, who came here with their son, who finished up somewhere in Sheffield. Anyhow, that's not important. What is important is their connection with the world of the violin. Once I was married and we lived somewhere they became regular visitors at various times - two or three times a year. And, on this particular occasion...it must have been..., perhaps it was Rosh Hashanah 1970. Every time they had come before that Mrs Holtzer had said to me, she always said it, 'Right, What's with the violin?' Was macht die...?' and I used to say: 'Nothing, nothing at all.'

Tape 4: 2 minutes 53 seconds

And, on this occasion, she said also: 'Anything doing with the violin?' And I said: 'Well actually for the first time I have some news for you. Yes...' and I told her the story of how I'd started. And she looked - she wasn't astonished at all - and said very casually a momentous sentence, she said: 'Well, I think you should certainly let your old teacher know.' And I looked. I said: 'Old teacher? What old teacher?' 'Well, Fred, you didn't learn..., the techniques didn't drop from the sky, you know. Somebody had to teach you.' I said 'Yes... Well, who are you talking about?' She said: 'Your teacher from Vienna'. 'She's alive?' She's very much alive.' 'And she survived the war?' 'Yes.' 'So where is she? Is she in America?' 'No. She is where she's always been. Although she is now retired, she was teaching in Devon and Cornwall because she didn't want to go to the Academy. She wanted to carry on teaching children which was her main field. And she has a flat, and always has had a flat in Mapesbury Court

in Willesden, in Mapesbury Road.’ And I think I came as close to committing murder as I ever did. I don’t normally have the inclination to murder anybody. I said: ‘All these years you have known this. Why didn’t tell you me this before?’ She said, ‘Well, you weren’t interested in the violin. I could see no point.’ Just like that. I said ‘Can you give me...?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Details?’ ‘Yes.’ And in fact that very – I don’t know, it must have been the same day certainly - I rang. I asked if she remembered me. She said: ‘Of course I remember you.’ She said...and I told her a little about myself - ‘So when are you coming round?’ I said: ‘Now.’ I said: ‘I don’t live a million miles away. I can be there in 20 minutes.’ I was there in 20 minutes.

Tape 4: 5 minutes 22 seconds

She then showed me details of the concert I gave in Vienna, pictures of myself. And, in the course of catching up with each other, she then said these – to me momentous words – she said: ‘Well, now, shall we start where we left off?’ I looked at her as if she was insane. I said: ‘Do you know...? You know this is thirty-seven years. From 1938 to 1970 is quite a time! Do you know where we left off?’ She said: ‘Of course.’ And, like a rabbi going to bring down one of the volumes of the Talmud, she brought down one of the famous books of exercises by Sevcik and she said: ‘I think we were there but we would have been there.’ Quite incredible. I then informed Professor Grinke that I would not be continuing, thanked him very much for his efforts on my behalf. And I remember the first...She was a regular visitor to us on a Saturday afternoon and then I used to see her on Sunday. And I remember these words. By then she was eighty and this woman had played for Brahms’s friend, Joachim, when she was about seven years old and she was Sevcik’s principal assistant in Vienna. She said: I’ve thought about it. If we do what we should be doing and do all these exercises you will be 130 before we play any piece at all. I don’t think we should go up that road. I tell you what: we’ll have to do something – some scales and one or two of the exercises. But, by and large, I think this is what we should do. We should play every piece – because I know you want to play pieces – as if it were an exercise. And we should play every exercise as if it were a concerto. And that’s what we shall do.’

Tape 4: 7 minutes 51 seconds

And of course I went on. She died seven years later. She made careful arrangements for me to have a teacher, a member of the First Violins of the London Philharmonic. Joe knows this story. All I can tell you is that in 1987 a very good friend of mine - she died in 1977, so that was 10 years later - came over and listened to me with another amateur pianist, although I usually play with professionals. You know, if you want to learn chess don’t play with people of your own standard, play with people who know a lot more. But, in this case, I was playing with an amateur, a good amateur pianist. And this friend of mine from France was virtually...well, he was a famous pianist in his own right. He was the head of a very big conservatoire in the east of Paris, Montreuil. And from there they choose seven of the people who will go on to the Conservatory. He said: ‘Look, why don’t you and your pianist come over and enter this Concours – this competition?’ I said: ‘You must be mad. Against professionals, what would be the point?’ He said ‘No, no. We allow two amateurs per year to come. There’s seven finalists in the end – there’s five professionals and two amateurs. Because in France it’s very different; they’ve got 6,200 music schools in France. Here we’re lucky if we have ten. And I said: ‘What are we supposed to play?’ He said ‘It’s

no good playing Beethoven. You'd better play something French or something. Play? I don't know – play the Cesar Franck.' I said: 'You are absolutely mad; that would be impossible.' He said: 'Well you've got six months to get it ready.' And in fact, well, I had about six different copies of, versions of the Cesar Franck sonata and I chose one of them by Shlomo Minz and I listened to it fifty-nine times. And we got a 2nd prize. So there we are. It wasn't all for nothing. And that's the story of the violin.

Tape 4: 10 minutes 33 seconds

BL: Could we please go back to your time in Hull?

FB: Yes, now where were we in Hull?

BL: You've told us a little bit about the family, but maybe tell us just a little bit about the family again.

FB: Yes, well I may be repeating myself.

BL: Doesn't matter...

FB: The family, they were originally, as far as he was concerned, a Manchester family of eight siblings and four of them had settled in Hull – three brothers and a sister. And what made them a little unusual is that each of these four - three brothers and sister, all married - each took a child from either Austria or Germany, in one case. And, in fact, I stayed in touch with one person from Vienna whom I met on the train - I think I discussed that before or something - virtually until the end of her life, which was four years ago. She was six weeks older than me. And what shall I say? I think we were lucky to be taken in by this family, in fact I know we were. We were certainly treated as if we were normal members of the family. We were made to feel at home. And, above all, we were made to feel a natural part of the family. On the other hand, I received some very wise words from him. I called him uncle because that's what he suggested I should do. He said: 'Look,' he said, 'you must not change your name and you shouldn't even change the spelling of your name because one day, you never know when or where, somebody may discover you in a telephone book. And this way you might possibly find relatives that otherwise you wouldn't find at all.'

Tape 4: 13 minutes 4 seconds

And that advice stood me in good stead because, in 1961, I suddenly got a call from a man who said: 'Are you Barschak, the son of Barschak?' This is twenty-three years after I had arrived in this country. I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Look...' I mean I could hear from his accent that he was from... we used to call it across the water, über das Wasser. And he said: 'My father, who lives in Brussels, is your mother's first cousin and that makes you and myself second cousins. And you have relatives on your mother's side in Israel, in America, in everywhere.' And, suddenly in one afternoon, I discovered a whole...all the living relatives of my mother about whom I hadn't had a clue before. And that was the case until in 1975 I discovered the closest relatives on my father's side.

BL: You told us about that.

FB: That I told you about. So, as far as the family in Hull were concerned, I lived a very, very normal life. We lived about, I would say, in one case twenty miles and in another case thirty miles from the sea, seaside resorts. And it was the custom of the whole family to go every Sunday, taking all the children to the seaside – in summer obviously. I don't know, April right through till August or September. Did I tell you something about my education in Hull?

BL: No, that's what I wanted to ask you. Tell us about your schooling.

FB: Yes, well I was lucky in another sense that all the children from either Austria or Germany went to the Jewish school – there was a Jewish school - which taught all the normal subjects plus some that ordinary schools didn't teach. And I can remember that it was run by a Miss Scheinrock, who lasted long enough to talk to my wife about what I was like as a youngster. This was an enormous....this made the transition much easier than it would have been had I gone straight into an English school.

Tape 4: 16 minutes 2 seconds

And that school lasted until after the war. And it became particularly important, because, on September the 1st, 1939, all children – all over Great Britain - were evacuated from major towns. And, suddenly, I found myself being plonked down in a non-Jewish family - I can't even remember their name – in a completely English environment. So, if you like, the Jewish aspects of my life were, in so far as the school had evacuated to this place, well, but for the rest it was a totally strange world and a very difficult world as far as I was concerned.

BL: So was that more of a shock than actually coming to Hull?

FB: Much more. Much more because the rhythm of life, the lifestyle was one that was perfectly familiar to me. Shabbat was Shabbat, not quite the same as Shabbat in Vienna. He was traditional but not orthodox as were the rest of his brothers, so that you had this peculiar, peculiarly English if you like, solution. He went to business on Saturday and he did on Friday, but when he came home on Friday he would get changed, even though it might have been two hours after the onset of Shabbat, and he made Kiddush. And so, if you like, the parameters of my life hadn't changed that much. The food was kosher...

BL: What about in terms of language? You said she spoke a bit of Yiddish...?

FB: She spoke Yiddish. There's no question about it. The point is I, who thought I knew a little Yiddish, realised that I didn't know Yiddish. What I knew was German with one or two Yiddish words, perfectly obvious words, that I also knew. Nevertheless, we managed to communicate - her Yiddish and my German - and I think I described already the first Friday night.

BL: Yes, you did. You did. How difficult was it to cope with English? How good was your English?

FB: The headmistress of the Jewish school told my wife that I was speaking English fairly fluently within six weeks, as quickly as I was forgetting German. In fact, letters from my mother told me how many mistakes I was making in German. And I realised that there was something psychological going on with me. About four or five years later, I was approached by the senior language master at that time because most of the teachers had gone into the forces by then.

Tape 4: 19 minutes 21 seconds

I'm talking now about...it would be 1944 or something like that, 1945 or something like that. I must have been about fourteen when the senior French teacher, who also taught German, got hold of me one day and said: 'Look, I think it would be very, very easy for you with your background to do...what was the equivalent of O-Level? It was called School Certificate or Matriculation. 'Here's a book. Go and see if it makes any sense to you at all because you could do this in a year. You could probably do it in less than a year. It wouldn't be very much for you and it would just give you an extra subject in your School Certificate.' I said: 'Yes, all right. I'll have a look at it.' And I looked at it. And two things occurred in my mind. The one was: The words were actually strange, strange. Not all of them. I could always read German without understanding more than every third word, but something even stranger. On the 3rd or the 4th page of this book, which I understand is still being used, *Deutsches Leben*. Teil Eins. It was the conjugation of the definite article: Der, die, das die; den, die, das, die and so on. This might as well have been Greek to me. But, at the same time, that part of my intelligent mind said: 'Look this is crazy because you must have been speaking this naturally for the first seven years nine months of your life.' And I realised that there must have been a conscious forgetting of something I didn't want to know. And I told him. I said: 'Look, the amount of effort I shall make, it's much more than... I've got enough to do with the nine or ten subjects I'm doing.' I said: 'I don't think it's going to work out.' And I explained this to him. And he actually understood it. He said: 'Yes, if you've got a psychological dislike of the language there's not much point.' Later on, I was very sorry after I discovered part of my mother's family, especially the ones in Brussels, who certainly spoke German and Yiddish but no English. And, by that time, I made a conscious effort to learn some German. And now my German is indifferent, but I can understand quite a lot of it and I speak some.

Tape 4: 22 minutes 23 seconds

BL: So how long after you arrived was this incident that you couldn't... with the book?

FB: Oh that was...well, I arrived in December 1938 and this would have been some time in 1944 or '45. So we're talking about seven years later. Nevertheless, what worried me was the feeling actually of strangeness, of something that I had once known and spoken quite naturally. Then you asked me about the family. I had a very, at first difficult, but later a very good relationship with my foster brother. In fact we became rather close later on. Some of it I told you I think already. I had a difficult time not in the ordinary primary school, but when I went to this public school. I won a scholarship to a public school and there I certainly did have problems. Because it became known - there are no secrets for very long - it became known very, very quickly that my original name was Fritz and not Fred. It also became known that -

well, the fact that I was Jewish was known to everybody – but the fact that I came from something which now belonged to what was called Grossdeutschland at a time, 1942, it certainly gave me some problems in the school.

BL: Before we speak about that, tell us more about the evacuation, because that would have happened slightly earlier...

FB: The evacuation was in September 1939.

BL: Exactly, because you said it was a shock...So tell us about the family and where was it?

FB: It was a place called Swanland, which was about eight miles outside Hull, and is now very, very upmarket. Only the best people go buy a house in Swanland and the prices are astonishing, totally astonishing. But, what was strange was that I was living in a sort of a working class family and it might as well have been for me as if I'd been moved to Mars, let alone the food. O.K there were certain things I refused to eat. But other things I couldn't avoid eating. And I was not alone in this. There were about, I think, something like...probably about a hundred children that were evacuated at this time. And I only know that matters reached a crescendo when, in 1940, just before Pesach, I managed to persuade the foster parents that, since nothing was going on in the war - it was known as the Phoney War later on - it might be a very good idea to bring me back to Hull because I don't think I could have stood it much longer. They decided in any case that there was no reason to go on with the evacuation. So, in fact – I don't know whether it was March or April – but, anyhow, about a fortnight before Pesach, I was brought back to Hull. And it now assumed the characteristic of a heaven!

Tape 4: 26 minutes 29 seconds

BL: But the whole school was evacuated, so it wasn't that you were on your own. But the school was taking place.

FB: The school carried on there and to an ordinary primary school. I went to actually three because, shortly after that, about a year later, came the Blitz to Hull. In fact Hull was the third worst bombed town in England. And this played a very considerable part in my life. In fact, I tried to work out that we must have slept in the shelter for a few hundred nights.

BL: Tell us about your memories of the Blitz.

FB: Well, it was very severe. Between a third and a half of the centre of the town was totally destroyed in a matter of three nights, two or three nights. I think it was mainly on the 8th or 9th or 7th and 8th and not the house where we lived, no. The other two brothers had in any case decided to evacuate their whole families. His two brothers and sister all were evacuated. One bought a house thirty miles away in a town where he had a business anyhow. One went to Leeds and used to commute Monday to Saturday. One went to Bradford. So our family – call it our family - was the only one left because he absolutely refused to do this and, in any case, his business was so

much involved with Hull that it would have been impractical for him to remove himself and in fact he didn't do it.

Tape 4: 28 minutes 44 seconds

BL: Were you scared of the bombs?

FB: I must have been, but I can't actually remember. I think the sound of it more than anything was scary. Don't forget, we lived about, let's see...about four miles from the centre of town. So bombs did fall not far but not too many. The Luftwaffe was not that inaccurate. They knew what they were going for which were the docks, the centre of town, and so, you know, we were about 3 ½ to four miles away from where there was massive destruction. And I don't think I can remember more than the news that I was getting the next day, which parts of town were destroyed. His brother's shop in Hull was completely flattened. He had to get another shop somewhere around, not far away. I remember something fascinating. I once gave an interview to the BBC - I think I told you - where I was asked: 'How is it that you can remember so much of the period from March '38 to when you left in December '38?' I remember replying, I said: 'Well if you lived in Hitler's or Eichmann's Vienna, you became politically educated at the age of eight. That political education didn't stop just because we got to England.' In fact, I remember seeing maps of Mercator's projection and I looked at all the countries coloured in red, which was the British Empire of course, and green was the French Empire, and I couldn't exactly persuade myself that those two countries could possibly lose the war, because all I saw was masses of red and green, you see. It hadn't occurred to me that you don't win wars by painting colours on maps.

Tape 4: 31 minutes 51 seconds

But I remember very, very clearly a Manchester relative of Phil Levy, the man who was bringing me up, in fact two of them came to Hull and were in Hull round about August I think it must have been, August the 22nd 1939, the famous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Both of these relatives - one had been a member of the Communist party and the other had been...can one say a 'nachschepper'? He wasn't a member of the party but he had, as many people had at the time, fought the great anti-fascist crusade and so on. And I remember the violence of the arguments on those two days between the one who said: 'Ah, you don't understand. Stalin is being very clever. It's all a plan etc, etc...' And the other one said: 'That for me is the end.' Of course the arguments on both sides... suddenly, I was listening to arguments which in another time and another place you wouldn't have expected anybody of eight years nine months to hear, let alone to understand. But there was a great deal of confronting history in that time. It wasn't confined to me. A lot of youngsters were suddenly hearing things and having things explained to them, which normally they wouldn't have come across until much later in life. So I do remember that. I became interested in business, his business, quite early on. The idea was I wanted to sort of pull my weight. And...oh, there's something important I've just remembered.

Tape 4: 34 minutes 6 seconds

There was a magic time. I was very interested in this. His father was still alive, the father of these eight siblings. He wasn't in good health but he wasn't so bad. I think

he died in '51, so '41. He died when he was 73... 'sixty-three he must have been, perhaps sixty, when I was first introduced to him. Although he had left school at the age of thirteen and had any number of jobs, I was fascinated because he brought me in touch with the world. He was a self-educated man, a trained Baal Koreh. Seemed to know Shakespeare by heart, let alone sections of Chumash and Gemora [Gemara] and, above all, he had had a variety of trade before he went into business. He was quite a successful businessman in his day. He opened a series of cycle shops. But, more to the point, he was some sort of... I attributed to him being a genius with his hands. He was a trained cabinet maker and I think it was I who persuaded his sons. I said: 'Look. Wouldn't it be possible to equip... There's a spare garden shed there with enough things to do with what he knows and then he could teach your son and me.' 'Yes, it would give him something to do. Marvellous idea.' And, of course, I don't know when it was; it could have been a Sunday. I got... for which I was hopeless, absolutely hopeless. My fingers could do certain things to do with music but they were hopeless in just about everything else. Nevertheless, I learnt some things and this provided... and, above all, I was able to communicate with him on a level that I couldn't actually communicate with anybody else in that house. Anyhow, there we are.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 37 seconds

BL: So this was a strong connection?

FB: It was a very strong connection in a way and this went on almost to the end of his life.

BL: So you finished primary school?

FB: Finished primary school. Managed to win this scholarship. They awarded two scholarships a year this school and the... I got this scholarship, much to my astonishment, and many, many years later, standing on the steps of Queens College, Oxford, I suddenly got a big... how old was I then? Twenty or something like that. I got a big bang on my back and a voice that I thought I'd said goodbye to forever, the headmaster, this Victorian head master. Whatever else he was, a strict disciplinarian, but very fair, absolutely very fair. And I thought I'd said goodbye to him forever. He was suddenly standing there and he pointed to me. He said: 'Right, you will... the Old Hymerians Dinner, you're going to organise it this year.' And he used to come down to Oxford because he had a double first in French, one from Oxford University and one from London University, and he was the best French teacher I ever came across. And he played a very, very large... he loomed large in my life.

BL: What was his name?

FB: His name was Major Cavill, MC First World War. Major Cavill MC. I remember, I think I told you about one of the children with whom I'm rather closely involved at the moment. Except we're no longer children either of us. His name is Bob Rosner and he lectures at the... what is it called that Holocaust institute in Nottingham?

BL: Bet Shalom.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 0 second

FB: Bet Shalom. He does that on a voluntary basis. He's very much involved in that. And he was taken in by a man called Alderman Leo Schultz who, apart from having been the sheriff, later on became the Mayor of Hull, a keen Socialist and he practiced what he preached. And he was also a governor of the school where I won the scholarship.

BL: Were you the only refugee boy in the school? And/or the only Jewish boy?

FB: I can't remember. No, certainly not. No, there must have been about twenty-five or thirty Jewish boys in the school. I can't remember if I was the only refugee boy. We had a reunion not long ago and I can't remember if there was anybody else. I don't think there was anybody else. But, what I wanted to say is: when we had this dinner...the latter part of the dinner he was answering questions and I think I said to him - not in the hearing of the other boys - I said: 'Look this Alderman Schultz...' By the way, he was the accountant to all the Levy brothers in Hull...I said: 'Tell me something. Did he have anything to do with my getting that Governors' Scholarship?' at the age of eleven or whatever it was. And I'll never forget his answer. He said: 'Of course not. And, even if he had, do you think I would tell you about it?' Put me, squashed me right down. Said, 'Don't you dare ask me such questions.' Fair enough. But I actually believe he didn't. But there we are. How will I ever know?

BL: So what happened when they found out that your name used to be Fritz?

Tape 4: 41 minutes 26 seconds

FB: Well, we used to have unofficial boxing. I can only call it boxing tournaments. Every other afternoon I must have had seven, eight, nine different fights. But, finally, I managed - more by luck than judgment - to hit somebody who was taller than me where it hurt and from that moment on...As a matter of fact, we got on well together after that. It's the usual story. Except that, on one occasion, I do remember, very early on, when they literally were chasing me. It so happened, quite by accident, that Ronnie Levy, the foster brother, saw me cycling for my life with three boys behind. He said to me: 'Stop the bike!' And he started to lay into them and he was smaller than me and that quite impressed me. Anyhow, yes. But these were things... after about the first year those things had vanished. But of course naturally the school played a considerable part in my life and also the... at that time there were four synagogues in Hull. There's one that can just about... There were 2,000 Jewish people living in Hull. I think there are now...I doubt if there's five hundred.

Tape 4: 43 minutes 21 seconds

BL: So were you a boarder at the school?

FB: No, no, no it was a day school

BL: It was a day school. So you stayed with your...

FB: Yes, it was a day school. And I just grew up in a...I'll tell you what wasn't normal. He went into the Air Force in 1942 and then she was alone. She was running the business and running the house and that must have been very, very difficult for her. Yes, there were things that I remember. For example, she couldn't drive the car. By 1944 the car was laid up on bricks and it became an obsession of our lives to get that car moving even though he was not even in the country. He was with the Second British Army in Belgium at that time in 1944. So what we did, we knew of a... in fact he was a client of his firm. We knew of a very good driving instructor, so we managed to get the car back on the road and he would give her driving lessons which... she could just about drive the car. She wouldn't last ten minutes today but, in fact, in the end we persuaded her that she could drive. She did the steering wheel, he did the gears. My foster brother and I sat in the back shouting instructions. That is how the car was driven. But, nevertheless, anything is better than no car, something to travel about. Anyhow that was that. But then there came a letter which sent a shudder down...He had been in the forces from 1942 till VE day 1945. And then came a letter... by the way, letter writing was an enormously important part of family life in those days. He wrote every week a letter to his wife, a letter to his son and a letter to me. And we were expected to reply. In fact, he once sent a letter to one of his older brothers, who had been together with another elder brother in the First World War. So they were too old to go into the Second World War. And he was very annoyed that he wasn't getting anything like the moral support - no letters. So he wrote a letter which became famous. The name of that brother was Harry, his name was Phil. And the letter went like this, I'll always remember it: 'Dear Harry, I'm all right. I hope you're all right. And if that's the case, that's all right. Your loving brother, Phil.' He then got letters. That was his indication that he was somewhat displeased, and that was actually the nature of the man.

Tape 4: 47 minutes 14 seconds

Yes, I do remember this. In 1945 round about...well, May 8th was so called VE day, well it was VE day. We got a letter. And the letter was very...it wasn't censored and what it said, which was so uncharacteristic of him. He said: 'Well now that the war in Europe is coming to a close I think we shall'...what's the word?...we shall be looking forward to getting rid of the Japanese as well.' That's all it said and to us that was a very clear indication that his Air Force unit was about to be sent to Malaya or wherever. Don't forget, nobody had any knowledge of the atom bomb. This could have gone on for years. And we knew that this was a very clear indication to us to start doing something. By that time, I was fourteen, the foster brother was seventeen, and we quickly put our heads together and we sent a ... I said: 'It's best that you send the letter and I'll write something else.' Now, normally, he addressed his father as 'Dad'. For him to write 'Dear Father' is so unusual it would have been noticed. The recipient of that letter would have known that this was nonsense. 'Dear Father, I and Fred are now beginning to be very, very worried about some of the actions of... ', he called her Auntie Rae cause she was his step-mother. I explained that before and I also called her Auntie Rae. 'She is doing things that we can't understand.' And we hinted that she was going crazy. He showed it to his commanding officer and immediately got compassionate leave, fourteen days to come home and sort it out. As a matter of fact he not only came home, he stayed home.

Tape 4: 50 minutes 10 seconds

As a matter of fact it was bizarre. This was a fiction but what followed was fact. When he was home he was driving in the car and he suddenly said to his wife, Rae: 'The tax disc is out of date.' And she looked at him. She said: 'Tax disc?' And then he asked: 'Tell me something, have you got insurance?' She said: 'I don't know.' 'You would know if you had it.' A license she had. You didn't need an MOT in those days. So no tax on the car, no insurance. He at once communicated with his unit to say that in fact the report about her bizarre behaviour, which was a stage she genuinely had forgotten, but she knew about insurance and tax disc. It was our fault; we should have known. But, anyhow, he just meant to reinforce and of course he stayed home and that was the end of that.

BL: Did he understand when you sent the letter that?

FB: Yes of course.

BL: He understood...

FB: To get a letter saying 'Dear Father' - that was enough. I think in Yiddish we say 'Eine ungestalte Meisse'. Anyhow, be that as it may...go ahead.

BL: How did...?

FB: He was home for my Bar Mitzvah, I remember that, in 1943 in March. His unit, although it being the Air Force, it was still in England because the invasion of Europe had not started until June 6th 1944.

BL: Tell us about your Bar Mitzvah.

Tape 4: 52 minutes 56 seconds

FB: In Hull. It was a very quiet affair – well, quiet. It was held in the shul hall. You know, things were very limited in those days. The only connection with Vienna at that time was a silver Becher of Mr and Mrs Holtzer, which we still have. It was sent; they couldn't come from London. And all the rest were the adoptive family. And it went very well. I got what I call the 'statutory presents' – fountain pens and what have you. But the most interesting present I got was from one of his elder brothers, which was a huge tome in which...There are books like it now, only now. It was years ahead of its time....which was 'The History of the World'. You know, according to date, with what was going on in Europe, in England, in Asia Minor and so on and so forth. And since History was my main preoccupation at the time, cause I finished up getting a scholarship in history to Oxford – so, you know, it was appreciated.

BL: Did you feel at your Bar Mitzvah, was there a sense that your parents are not there?

FB: Of course. It went without saying. In fact, it went without saying, but one man did mention it. I can't remember who. Of course it was mentioned.

BL: Did you have any ideas at that point what had happened to your parents?

FB: Yes. I was not in the slightest doubt that it would require a miracle for survival to take place. Because all that nonsense about 'If only we had known'. The *Jewish Chronicle* published week in and week out, very often on the back page, articles like 'The Ghetto in Bialystock'. I remember this clearly: 'The Ghetto in Bialystock has been liquidated'. Now 'liquidated' can only mean – it hasn't been removed – 'liquidated' meant what it said. When the House of Commons stood, in a very English way, for two minutes of silence, 4 million Jews were already dead! And that was common knowledge! All this nonsense about 'We didn't know' and 'If only we had known' is rubbish! Complete rubbish!

BL: So you had no hope to be reunited with your parents?

Tape 4: 55 minutes 24 seconds

FB: No, I had a hope. Everybody had a hope. Do you remember the boy whose name I gave you last time? Bob Rosner? Well, his hopes were realised. I told you how his family finished up being hidden in the provinces by a student of his who was a veterinary surgeon. So there were cases. But they were very few and far between. Ninety percent or ninety-five percent, I think it was, of the Kindertransport did not manage to be reunited. Five percent were, but...

BL: When did you find out what had happened to your parents?

FB: I think it was 1946 when the...They got the information from Arolsen, the Red Cross in Arolsen had... They got the wrong information. In fact, it's only in the last few years that the truth of the matter came out. It said: 'Probably finished up in Sobibor or Belzec because they were transported to Lublin. That particular transport was shot in ditches and fields not a million miles from Lublin. I can remember this...In 1947, I think, we got the information in '46 – could be '47, I don't know. I said the family were not frum, that they were traditional. But they were very traditional in one thing. They meticulously were in shul for Yiskor. Not only then - for other reasons as well. And, on this particular occasion, and I remember this very well - Yom Kippur. The custom was for people with parents living to go out at Yiskor. I and the girl who had been taken in by my foster...my guardian's brother - her name was Berthe Baszellos, Hungarian name - we used to go out with all the children whose parents were living. And on this occasion - I think it was '47 - one of the elder brothers came to Phil Levy, the one who brought me up. In shul he said: 'Look I think he and his'... call it "foster daughter" - 'must now stay in shul for Yiskor.' And, from that time, I took it for granted that there was a reason for me to be in shul for Yiskor. So it was either '46 or '47.

BL: Mr Barschak we have to change tapes.

FB: OK.

Tape 4: 59 minutes 0 second
End of Tape Four

TAPE 5

Tape 5: 0 minute 7 seconds

BL: This is tape five and we are conducting an interview with Mr Fred Barschak. You were telling us about Yiskor. How did it affect you as such a young person to find out that your parents and your brother hadn't survived?

FB: I had been almost expecting it for about two to three years. In fact, no, I didn't know, couldn't know, what part the Austrians had played in this... in these events. But I'd seen enough to know or to suspect. I even was constructing in my mind what I could do, or what I wouldn't do, or what I could do, had they survived. What moves I could make towards getting them out of there? Don't forget that these thoughts were rummaging through my brain from about the age of – let's see, 1945 – about the age of twelve because there was not a shortage of information. The *Jewish Chronicle*, which we got, published again and again, week in and week out, *some* of the events, you know, of what was going on in Europe. I knew there was - on the balance of probability - there was a likelihood that they wouldn't survive. That's all I could say. There was a possibility that they would. And so I couldn't know this until finally, I think it was 1946 or possibly 47, information. I remember the visit of the accountant, Alderman Leo Schultz, who himself had taken in a boy from Vienna. And I overheard the fact that his parents had been found alive and, although I didn't hear the exact words, there was at least the presumption that mine hadn't. And the, if you like, the – I don't know how to put this - the definitive moment as far as I was concerned was when the family decided that both for me and the other girl who came from Vienna who was in this family, Bertha, that we should remain in shul for the recitation of Yiskor, which was either '46 or '47, which told us everything we needed to know, but not the greatest details. In fact it led to something quite bizarre.

Tape 5: 3 minutes 39 seconds

I could just about assimilate in my own mind that the parents had perished. I couldn't assimilate in my own mind that a six-and-a-half-year-old boy had perished, my brother. And, in fact, when I read again and again that children were in the last moment given away, I began to construct a fantasy that there was a possibility, who knows, that perhaps he was alive and so on and so forth. And it was not till 1970 or 71 that, on a visit to the Yad Vashem, I went to see a man who'd written a huge book. You may know of it - 'Verfolgung und Widerstand der Österreichischen Juden 1938-1945', Persecution and resistance. There wasn't that much resistance. How could there be? And I told him that I had never completely swallowed the idea that my brother had perished with the parents. And he said: 'Look, you realise that this may be a fantasy.' I said: 'Yes I realise it. But I can't help what I feel.' He said: 'Well, I'll now tell you something no one is ever meant to know. And if it came out, what I'm about to tell you...so you do me the courtesy of keeping it to yourself. We have the microfilm of everything that the Red Cross has in Arolsen. Everybody's instructed to write to Arolsen. If people here knew that we have the records here there would be a queue all the way around Jerusalem immediately. Please, but I will do one thing for you. Come back this afternoon at 2.30 and we will run the microfilm in relation to your family,' which he did. He was as good as his word. And there it was quite clear. The only difference was it said... it gave the exact date of deportation from Vienna, which was April 9th 1942, a considerable deport...2,300 people. And then deportation to Lublin, and then deportation from Lublin. And it said either to Belzec or Sobibor,

which was not the case because we now know - we got the information in the last few years - that they went to a place called Ibicza, where they were actually machine gunned. There were no gas chambers there. So that was that. I think I'd better tell you something...what else...? Yes, I think I'd better tell you something about the years... unless you think... Have we finished now with Hull?

Tape 5: 7 minutes 36 seconds

BL: I think so.

FB: I think so. I think I should tell you something about the years 1986 to '95.

BL: No, just tell us a bit about...

FB: About the Yad Vashem?

BL: No - when you finished school. What did you do and where did you go? Summarise the years leading up...

FB: Very quickly. I went into the Air Force, became a Sergeant in the Education Corps of the Air Force and later I think they gave me Flight Sergeant, which is one grade up, acting unpaid in the last three months. They were short of...Anyhow...

BL: When did you join the Air Force?

FB: Beginning of January 1950, and I stayed until September when the term was starting at Oxford. Supposed to be in for two years and got early release three months. My career in the Air Force was extremely funny at times. I don't want to go into it now. It's not all that relevant. Is there anything else you need to know?

BL: Oxford. Just tell us - what did you study?

FB: Well, I was going to read history and then, half way through, I decided that I ought to do law and not history. In fact, the end my professional life was that I didn't do history or law. I went into the property business where I still am. But I read law. I remember - I'm still in touch with some of the...many of the people at Oxford. I didn't lose my love of history. I used to occasionally creep - 'cause I wasn't a member of...I wasn't doing it - into the lectures of a young lecturer who was beginning to make his name. He wrote the first definitive biography of Adolf Hitler. And his name was Alan Bullock, Lord Bullock. And I used to occasionally creep into a lecture of his, which stood me in good stead some years later. But I'll tell you about that in a minute.

BL: So when you were at Oxford you were still going back to Hull to your family?

Tape 5: 10 minutes 14 seconds

FB: Oh yes. I not only went back to Hull then, I go back to Hull now about twice a year. I keep in touch. Quite a bit of the family is down here now in London or near London. And there are actually very few of the family and the next two generations

that are up there, which is the story in England of the vanishing of the provincial communities. But I am in touch with the family – certainly. And they keep in touch with me.

BL: Did they continue to support you when you were in Oxford or were you completely independent?

FB: Yes, well, to the extent that I needed the support, yes. Yes. But when I came down, 1955, I had the problem of course of trying to get back the hotel. This process went on for six years. And the offers of the – you know this term the Ariseurs [the benefactors of the aryanised properties], die Arisierten und die Ariseurs became more and more derisory. I'd finished up with...Mind you, it didn't help that it was in the Russian zone of occupation. But in fact, by that time, I was desperately short of money and, how shall I put it? The process of trying to get it back had started in 1946, '47. It might have been better had we used whatever means were at my disposal then. But, in 1953, '54, when nobody had yet seen the indication when the Russians had withdrawn from anywhere which they'd occupied, I was confronted with something which the Austrians are only now taking on board which is...How can I explain this?

Tape 5: 12 minutes 59 seconds

In English and American law, if somebody steals your car, and after six months – I'm not now talking about criminal liability – after six months the car is recovered. Supposing that the thief is worth powder and shot, you would be quite within your rights, in addition to any punishment that's criminal...effect that it has on him, you would be quite within your rights to bring an action for the rental value of the car for the six months that he had it. And suppose, you know, £25 a day, £175 a week - you would have a claim for say £4,500. Now, supposing the thief tried to erect a counter claim saying: 'Well it's true I owe you £4,500, but while I had the car in those six months I put in a new set of brakes, I repaired your clutch, I did this and that. And here is a bill for £1,500 to reduce your claim.' This would be laughed out of court in common law, in English and American law. But for those countries that derive their legal systems from Roman law that claim is admitted: Improvement. And the joke is, the sick joke is that Austria allowed that claim – by the way Germany did the same – allowed that claim to be used to defeat the claim for restoration of the one whose property has been aryanised against the Nazi who had taken it. With the result that I was confronted by claims that they had installed central heating, this, that and all sorts of improvements totalling in English money £3,250.

Tape 5:15 minutes 12 seconds

My lawyers, who had been working for nothing for years, said: 'Mr Barschak, do you even have even £1,000 so that we could say: 'No, we will pay you something?' I said 'No, I don't even have it.' 'Can we borrow anything on it?' 'No.' This was forty-two bedrooms upstairs and seating capacity for eighty people downstairs in the restaurant. In the end, having started off offering me derisory sums such as £200, £400, £800 they finally came up with £1,175, which, mind you, you multiplied - in those days the shilling was seventy-two to the pound after the war. And I needed money. I couldn't see how I was going to get through life without it. I refused to take any more money from the family and, as a matter of fact, I finally agreed to do it. And, by the time I

got the money back here, there was £900, which was not enough to live on, and not enough to starve on. It lasted me for about a year and a half. And then, finally, I decided that I'm going to have to give up the law and do something else because I didn't want to become a solicitor. And in those days there were five barristers chasing every good case. I decided that I would do something else and, finally, more by accident than... I stumbled into property. I knew a little bit about property law and that became my business, my profession. And, actually, I wasn't too bad at it. Anyhow, I am actually...there are proceedings taking place at the moment not only by myself but by others who were confronted by this, this legal cheating if you like. The Austrians are beginning to think about making a payment. They're only thinking about it. They haven't yet decided. You know, we have a saying in Yiddish – 'Messiach wird fruher kommen' [the messiah will come first] But there is some chance that this is going on, I've been told.

Tape 5: 17 minutes 53 seconds

BL: When did you go back to Vienna, first after the war?

FB: The first time was in 1965. We had got married. My wife and I went for the first time in 1963 to that part of the world. We had friends in Italy. She was born in Istria, which is a small part of what used to be Yugoslavia, and then finally, in 1965, she persuaded me. She said: 'Fred, we both have got to go and confront our ghosts.' Her history wasn't that much better than mine. And so, in fact, we went to Vienna for the first time, which was quite traumatic, in 1965, and the cousin of my mother, who was the last to see them at least up to the outbreak of the war because they then managed to run away somewhere else. So I had a reason for going to Vienna. And in fact we did go to Vienna. We stayed for three or four days. And I left comparatively quickly and I remember my reason. I took the decision when I was sitting having a lovely coffee with schlag, which in German is Schlagsahne – it's not the only difference but there is a difference - in the Café Mozart behind the Opera. And I said to Miriam: 'I'd like to leave tomorrow.'

Tape 5: 19 minutes 44 seconds

I had a reason because the person I ostensibly came to see was herself having a holiday in Jeselo, not far from Venice. So I'd a reason for going back there. But I said, in any case: 'I want to leave and the principal reason is this. I'm being served coffee by a waiter who's a superb waiter. He's about 60-odd I don't know what, and he's much better than the equivalent that we have in London.' There's a famous continental coffee bar – in those days it was called The Boulevard in Wigmore Street – which was almost like my sub-office 'cause my office was just around the corner. But I did more business in the coffee house than in my own office - typical continental style. And I said to myself: 'Look, you're a marvellous waiter. The coffee is superb; everything is good. But I can sit in a coffee house in Paris, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, New York, South of France, anywhere you like and never once do I have to ask myself the question: 'You are a very gemütlich waiter here, but who exactly were you twenty-seven years ago in 1938, and did you have an arm bandeau with a swastika?' To me, I don't need these things when I'm on holiday. I decided to leave. But she was right. It was right that I went and it broke the ice. And then we went back in 19...let me see...1986 when the children themselves said: 'We want to see

something about the hotel.' So I took them. We haven't been back since, but my daughter wants to go with her camera. She calls it: 'Voyage round my grandfather'. And we probably will go later this year. So we went in 1986, which was in the middle of the Waldheim election and then once more for the Anschluss exhibition. I had to go and gather material in 1987. Three times I've been.

Tape 5: 22 minutes 14 seconds

BL: You mentioned your wife and your children. Can you tell us just briefly where you met your wife and where you got married?

FB: Yes, she walked into my office one day looking for a flat and what have you, and there's nothing more to tell - except for one thing. I mentioned that the family seems to have a...shall I say a penchant for languages, and I asked her to stay where she was. I asked my secretary to look after her and she was with a friend. And I dashed out and she said she'd come years before from Yugoslavia. And I dashed into a...There was a bookshop around the corner from me and I don't know if it's still there, in that part of...near Selfridges. And I bought a phrase book because there was one particular phrase. And I took one look at it and it told me how to pronounce it. It was double Dutch to me. And it said in perfect Serbo-Croat: 'By the way, would you do me the honour of having dinner with me tonight?' And that was it. There's no more to tell. We have a son and a daughter. None of them are exactly in my business except when they need to be. And more and more they are beginning to take some of the strain of the business off me. But they've each got their own thing going for them and...

BL: And where did you settle? In which part of London?

FB: Well, we started off in a place called Hyde Park Mansions, which is that part sandwiched between Edgware Road and the Marylebone Road - big blocks of mansion flats. Until, eventually, I bought my first house in Froggnal Lane - not small - in 1971. The builder was in it for nearly eighteen months remodelling it and we moved in on Pesach 1973. I then decided to sell it in 1982 because I'd got hold of another house in what is now called South Hampstead, in fact it's West Hampstead, behind what do you call it...?

BL: Waitrose.

Tape 5:25 minutes 0 second

FB: Waitrose yes - Greencroft Gardens. The last unconverted house in Greencroft Gardens almost. And we stayed there for many, many years until 1998 and we sold that one and now we live in Queen's Park. What can I tell you? Yes...so...

BL: Tell us about your involvement in keeping the memory alive of Austrian Jews, of the Holocaust.

FB: Well, it started in a very peculiar way. In 1984, or was it 1985? I can't remember. In previous years, I had a very close friend of mine - we're still friends and we've been in business together and were still friends - we used to go to the Yom haShoah

commemoration, which was usually held in a theatre in Soho. You used to get 1,000 or 1,500 people coming there. And, on this occasion, it was announced that there was to be a new venue, a stone memorial in Hyde Park. So we went to that and found that apart from sixty members of the Board of Deputies and the Yad Vashem Committee there was no one else there, maybe six people. All together maybe 60 people and I remember an Israeli couple came and, as they walked by me, they said: 'This is how you commemorate your Yom ha-Shoah, which I thought was quite....The fact that they were all going on to the usual venue afterwards...I thought the comment was perfectly justified and I wrote a letter to the Jewish Chronicle. And I remember the terms of it very, very well. It said that: 'in 1905, at the so-called Massacre of Kishnev, at which 60 Jews lost their lives, 10,000 Jews demonstrated in the East End of London, 100,000 in Times Square, New York. The American government broke off diplomatic relations with Tsarist Russia. And even Kaiser Wilhelm II, not the world's greatest philo-Semite, sent a note to his cousin, Tsar Nicholas II, saying: 'This is no way for a civilised country to behave.' Yesterday, we commemorated the murder of 6 million- plus Jews in the Holocaust and sixty people turned up. Bravo Anglo-Jewry.'

Tape 5: 27 minutes 59 seconds

The next thing, I was persuaded by a chap called Bill Helfgott to come onto this committee; although I explained that I'm not much of a committee man. In 1987 it was decided to commemorate two things: one was the 50th anniversary of the Anschluss, which I undertook to do, and the other was the 50th anniversary of the Kristallnacht. I had a short committee. I had to go to Vienna to gather a lot of the material. I had a lot of help from an awful lot of people because it was a...well, it was a big exhibition – 42 A1 boards - done at the Wiener Library and then it moves around to universities and so on and so forth. Then, in 1993, I was coming home and I saw a large poster drawing my attention to an article in the *Times Literary Supplement*. I looked at that. It was by Alan Bullock whom I got to know a little at Oxford, and it was a fantastic article called 'The Evil Dream'. Holocaust scholars were at that time quite clearly divided into those like Lucy Davidowicz and others who said – they were called the Intentionalists - they said: 'It was Hitler's plan and purpose to do it from the beginning.' And others said: 'No it grew up. It went by stages. It went in a pragmatic way.' And what Bullock showed is there was a perfectly sensible synthesis between these two views. You couldn't plan the murder of Poland's Jews unless you owned and controlled Poland. You couldn't actually plan it in 1923, or 2 or 4 or 5.

Tape 5: 30 minutes 19 seconds

At the same time, he pointed out Hitler always had, from the very beginning, his involvement with his two obsessions: the destruction of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the Jews. They went hand in hand. Anyhow, I looked at this remarkable article and I then rang, on my own behalf, Bullock, and I said this: 'Look, if you will give us one lecture, just one, I will guarantee...' He said: 'Well, who is doing the guaranteeing?' I said: 'I am personally. I will guarantee to have 20,000 copies of this article published and sent to every 6th form, English-speaking 6th form college and university in the world.' He said: 'Well that is an offer no one could refuse.' He said: 'I'll give you one promise,' he said, 'I promise you won't be on National Insurance.'

He then gave a phenomenal lecture, which was actually printed later on, called 'Hitler and the Holocaust', charting Hitler's personal knowledge and responsibility. The reason for all this was that there was a chap coming out of the woodwork, very powerful in those days, called David Irving. Holocaust denial was in full flood. And I thought this would be a reasonable way, and so did Bullock, of squashing it. And he was partially successful.

BL: Where was the lecture held?

FB: At the Logan Hall in London University. We had 1,000 people.

BL: It was part of Holocaust Memorial Day?

FB: There wasn't such a thing.

BL: No, but of the Yom ha-Shoah – what was it part of?

FB: No, it was simply called 'Hitler and the Holocaust'. It was extensively advertised. I got financial help from him for the adverts, the rest of it I funded. And yes, this is important, at least I think it's important. In the vote of thanks to him I think I pointed this out.

Tape 5: 32 minutes 57 seconds

I had rung previous to this Macmillan, who were David Irving's publishers. I spoke to a senior director and the conversation went like this: 'Tell me, what would you do and say if you got a thesis for a book showing that the American Civil War had never actually taken place. It was a figment of imagination. There was no battle of Bull Run. At Gettysburg only about 2,000 people lost their lives. The whole thing was a concoction by the two leading generals on either side, General Robert E Lee and General Ulysses S Grant, the better to secure their pensions. What would you do and say?' He said: 'Well, I would obviously consider the writer to be raving mad and I would throw this into the dustbin.' I said: 'Good. On the matter that I'm ringing you about, I can produce to you at the moment – today – I'll give you the names and addresses of 500 eye-witnesses to the events that are supposed never to have happened. Give me a little money and I will fill the Albert Hall.' He said he would think about it. And I said: 'Doubtless he is still thinking about it.' However, they stopped publishing Irving's books. To that extent, the lecture was the first nail in the coffin of David Irving. It led, however, to something which I couldn't possibly have foreseen.

Tape 5: 35 minutes 6 seconds

Sitting in the audience when Bullock described some of the latest advances in Holocaust studies, especially in the revelations in Russia which had the Auschwitz archive, was sitting a little girl called Isabel Rosa – not Jewish, half French, half English. She was a producer for Horizon, which was actually a scientific magazine on BBC 2. She was so taken with some of this stuff she persuaded her masters to be allowed to make a film. They made a film called...oh it's travelled round, been translated into seventy-six countries. It was called 'The Blueprint of Genocide'.

Because what this showed was the actual contents of the Auschwitz archive, which had been locked away by then. Well, it was then in the Soviet Union for fifty years and hadn't been allowed to be studied, only in the late 80s and early 90s by the KGB. And it was now in the public domain. And this led me to the thing called 'The 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz' when I managed to persuade the last of the living four colonels, who was by then a retired general of the then Russia, to speak again in the Logan Hall. We had 1,500 people. We had at least five or seven hundred who couldn't get in. And, well, that was quite an event.

BL: Why is it so important to you to keep the memory of the Holocaust...of the history of your life?

FB: The first thing, let's be very clear. There is much less emphasis at the moment on Holocaust denial than there was in the 80s and 90s. But that was beginning to be a major problem. Even to ask the question: 'Did it happen?' And then there was the favourite position of what were called the Relativists who said: 'You know, eyewitness testimony is not the most reliable.' It sometimes isn't. The idea that none of it is reliable is absurd. In no other field of scholarship is an eyewitness so completely pushed aside as in Holocaust studies. And that was the first thing. The second thing is that I think it's not a matter for me, it's a matter for everybody that an event as powerful and as – what can I say – as relevant to the situation of Jews as it is now must not be brushed aside. It's also very important for my family.

Tape 5: 38 minutes 19 seconds

BL: It affected your life very significantly.

FB: Very much. It has in fact - and this is well known - it has affected the second generation and sometimes even the third. It has affected survivor's children to some extent.

BL: What effect did it have to be a refugee on your lives and maybe on the lives of your children?

FB: Let me tell you at once. It made me highly receptive to considering very carefully refugees other than Jewish ones. It is extraordinary that, in some cases, quite the reverse is the case. But as far as I'm concerned, how can I put this? Well, I'll put it in the words of my son. He invented this. He said: 'If January 27th is Holocaust Memorial Day, what are the other 364 days supposed to be? They should be Holocaust Prevention Day.' That says it all. Doesn't need any comment.

BL: Was the past something you talked about to your children?

FB: Yes, when they were old enough to understand. After all, they had no grandparents whatever. They didn't have any uncles - on my side. It is hardly surprising that they grew up with, if you like, the burden of this event somehow. And it reflects in some of the books that my daughter has knocking around the place. I think it's important that the story be seen in some sort of perspective. And it's particularly important. We always tend to think in terms of the perpetrators and the victims. But there's a third group and a very powerful group, who sometimes do

nothing, or less than nothing – the bystanders, the others, who are neither victims nor perpetrators, and I don't think I have anything more to say about that.

BL: You came to Britain when you were very young. How would you describe yourself in terms of your identity today?

Tape 5: 41 minutes 20 seconds

FB: Identity. Patently I'm Jewish. That means more than just a religion. It's some sort of peoplehood. It's belonging to a people. Yes, there are an awful lot of my thought processes that are English that are derived from school, from University. After all, I remember the very first thing...My tutor, who later became the very Regius Professor of Civil Law...The very first thing, he stopped me – in Latin we say in *medius res*, in full flood. I'd used the expression, which you hear all the time on the box, again and again you hear it, 'in actual fact'. And he said: 'Fred, what is a non-actual fact? Have you ever met one? I never have and I'm not against padding. We all desperately need padding to think of what we're next going to say. And it's almost a reflex action. But let's choose sensible padding. We can say "actually" or we can say "in fact" but not "in actual fact".' And that nonsense emanated ad infinitum from the box, apart from 'you know', 'you know', 'you know'. So there we are. So, some of the thought processes are English. But there is something in me that is patently not English that harks back not even to Vienna. It probably harks back to Galicia and I don't know what. And it's something absolutely rock bottom. It has to do with food of course. In my case, I think I once confessed to somebody: 'If everything else failed there's always culinary Judaism!' of which I suppose my family and I are prime examples. So it's many things. It's Vienna; it's before Vienna. And it's England and I think also the concept of Israel. I spent two wars by choice in Israel – '67 and '73. In one case I happened to be there when it started; in another case I was flown out on day two or day three of it.

Tape 5: 44 minutes 11 seconds

In fact, can I discuss this once in a small room? I was a notorious opponent of Ariel Sharon in this country. And I once met him in this country, just after I'd spoken against him at the Oxford Union. And he sent one of his minions to speak to me. He said: 'Look he wants to talk to you.' And there's a little room in the Oxford Union called The Dressing Room, which in the days when they had to put on a dinner jacket or evening dress was used to dress and undress. And the whole room, I don't think, is even as big as this room. And an interesting conversation took place in that quarter of an hour. I promised I would never reveal it. But, now he is where he is, I don't see any reason why...so I can tell the fact that we spoke. His opening gambit to me was: 'What exactly do you want of me?' To which I replied, in Hebrew: 'You've already entered the history books twice. Once in the crossing of the canal which to my certain knowledge is an event studied in every staff college in the world. And the other is the *meisse* [Yiddish for story] that we have just been discussing in the Hall - Sabra and Shatila – and I don't even want to go near that subject again. You have your views and I have mine, I said, 'but a third function still awaits you'. This was two years ago – no, what am I talking about? Two years ago? It was more than eight years ago. He wasn't in power. He was nowhere near power. I think it was 1996 or '97. He'd been invited by the Oxford Union. His words were: 'May I know what it is?' I said, 'Yes,

it's very simple. You have to play the role of De Gaulle – that De Gaulle played for France. You have to get us out of our Algeria.' And he said: 'Is that all that you want?' And then he came out with this, which is ridiculous, but it's what he said. He said: 'Well, if that's all you want, if you can fulfil one condition then I will start work tonight and in two months there will be no Jews left in Gaza and not all that many in the West Bank.'

Tape 5: 46 minutes 45 seconds

So, like a fool, I said: 'Now what is the condition?' He said, 'Oh it's very simple. You have to give me what De Gaulle had, which is a Mediterranean sea between us and them. At the moment, I have the Jordan and I make Pippi over the Jordan every Monday and Thursday.' It was clever, clever and in fact I was totally flummoxed for about fifteen seconds, which is a long time. I said: 'Well, if I could fulfil that condition, I wouldn't need you. I could do it myself.' But it was all very light and it was not important. But, I often think to myself...in fact at the time of Gaza, just before he announced that he was going to withdraw from Gaza, I got hold of his private fax and I sent him a message: 'I and a number of like-minded people wonder what it is that we could do to help you in your new proclaimed policy and we believe the finest thing we could do for you is to come with bucket and spade and start digging to widen the Jordan.'

BL: Coming back to your life, do you feel at home in London?

FB: Yes. I feel at home in London. I feel at home in Israel. I wouldn't have any...I'm not sure about Israel. In one sense... I've got a lot of friends there and I've got a lot of family as well, second and third cousins. But, whether I could actually live there I don't really...even if I was 30 years younger. I don't really know if I could. On the other hand, I am very conscious of the fact that time and again I and my wife look at England or Britain and say: 'Is this really the country that I remember?' There is something that is absolutely nothing to do with the country. Because you have a sort of bird's eye vantage point, which means that you're not exactly born here but you see things, as it were, with a perspective of someone who is just a little bit an outsider and see developments which obviously are not pleasant. The answer is: I don't know. I like going to Israel. I'm not sure I could live there.

BL: When did you become naturalised?

FB: 1947. We were naturalised in droves, you know. Twenty of us or thirty of us went to a town called Leeds, took the Oath of Allegiance and that was that.

BL: Was that important?

FB: I didn't feel any different. Yes, I knew that it would mean that – what's the word? - notice that you didn't become English you became British. There's a world of difference. It didn't make me feel any different on that day. I knew that it would be helpful later on in life in all sorts of ways, especially foreign travel. I was warned against – and I wished I'd not listened – I was particularly warned not to go to Austria.

Tape 5: 50 minutes 38 seconds

Because if I went to Austria and went into the Russian Zone of occupation, if I was arrested for any reason whatever the British Government could not protect me. Outside, in the other parts of Vienna, I could, but not once I crossed the bridges and of course in my case it would have been absolutely imperative to cross those bridges – cross the bridge. In fact, I've just remembered a book was written about my story in Germany and Austria, published in Austria. They examined ten people who came, not all in the Kindertransport, though one was. 'Sie kamen durch'. Actually, I think it was... anyhow it was certainly about those who emigrated from Vienna in '38, '39, and it certainly included Sigmund Nissel, who is the survivor on the Amadeus.

BL: What to you is the most important part of your Viennese Jewish identity or heritage?

FB: The history of it, all of it. I can't distinguish any one part from any other; it hangs together. I think that that experience makes me look at the world in a certain way. And, without that experience, I'm not sure I would think this or think that. But I know that that formed part of the way I think.

BL: In which way?

Tape 5: 52 minutes 36 seconds

FB: Um, in which way, that's a very good question. In every way. I can only answer it that way. I can't distinguish between...Yes there are some I've already indicated...there are some parts of me... For example, on Israeli matters I am a little left of centre. I'm certainly not right of centre. Although I must say some of my best friends are right of centre, nevertheless I live with that. And there is not the slightest doubt in my mind. It's very strange, come to think of it. I know for a fact that my father - I know it from friends of his who survived – he went to Palestine as it then was twice, '31 and '36, to see if he could restructure his life. But I think part of the reason was when you're in your fifties already suddenly to uproot yourself – that's one thing. But he was on the right of Israeli politics. I sometimes wondered to myself how conversations would have taken place because we certainly didn't think the same thing. But I can't specifically say that this area or that has been more or less influenced. But I know that there is almost nothing in me that has not been influenced by those early years, to some extent.

BL: How different do you think would your life have been if you hadn't been forced to leave on the Kindertransport?

Tape 5: 54 minutes 51 seconds

FB: You mean if Hitler had never come to Austria? It would have been totally different. I've no idea whether I would have made it as a violinist, but I would have been pushed in that direction so I simply have no idea. I cannot imagine I would have contented myself with running a hotel and restaurant, but what I would have done in the end I've not the slightest idea. I haven't got the foggiest idea. I don't even know...because we imagine that emigration from Austria was confined to post-March

1938. There was quite a lot going on. Some people had left Austria before. So, you know, I can't say that it would have been different. Of course it would have been different. My education would have been different. In fact, that's very funny. The one thing I couldn't possibly claim on the bits and pieces, the dribs and drabs of compensation that Austria has since paid to all the ex-Austrians. You know, £2,000 here, £3,000 there, und so weiter. The one heading under which I could not claim anything was being deprived of educational opportunity. Once you've been to Oxford how can you say I was deprived of education? Some people were, but not in my case. I have claimed for being deprived of a musical education on advice. So, anyhow, we shall see. How many years have to pass before we deal with that?

BL: Have you got any message for anyone who might watch this film based on your experience?

Tape 5: 57 minutes 16 seconds

FB: I'm not a message giver. And have I any message? Yes, I have actually. I gave that message on the Shabbat before Purim in the small shul that I run. I didn't tell you that did I? Anyhow, it also plays a part in my life. And it's this: the part we read on what is known as Shabbat Zachor, and I only had three minutes because we were so late on that Shabbat for all sorts of reasons, that I had to do what's called 'a three-minute word' and what we read on that day, which has to do with Amalek, the arch-enemy of Israel. And in the part that we read, it says, "Timcha et zecher amalek" [Deuteronomy Chapter 25 verse 19] - 'You must wipe out the memory of Amalek - *You* must wipe it out, from your hearts and minds. In a different section of the five books it says - '*I* shall wipe out the memory of Amalek.' And the question is: is there a message contained in this difference? And the only message I can work out is this and I think I once asked the late Louis Jacobs. He said: 'A very good message.' On the one hand, this is as much as to say: 'Wipe out the memory of what Amalek did from your own mind. Don't repeat what he did. Don't do to others what was done and then, if you do that, then maybe I will wipe out the real Amalek for you.' That's one interpretation. The exact opposite is this: 'Do not hesitate to deal with Amalek when he's weak, before he becomes overpowering.' Hitler could have been dealt with long before he became overpowering. In 1931, in the Reichstag, he had I believe something like twelve members.

BL: Mr Barschak we need to change tapes.

FB: Haven't we finished yet?

Tape 5: 60 minutes 0 second
End of Tape Five

TAPE 6

Tape 6: 0 minute 8 seconds

BL: This is Tape Six. We are conducting an interview with Mr Fred Barschak. You were telling us about the two possible interpretations of this message of Amalek. So which message do you believe in?

FB: Both. Both. They are very, very important both of them. One: Don't make victims of others and Two: Don't be a victim yourself. Get out of the Victim business. So the answer is: if you take measures to deal with the dangers before they are impossible to deal with then perhaps help will come for you.

BL: We've discussed many different things. Is there anything else you'd like to add which I haven't asked you or anything we forgot to mention?

FB: I can't think of anything. Oh yes, it concerns music. In the period 1939 to 1942, when he went into the Air Force, Fred Levy turned his home into a meeting ground of what was then known as the ARP. The ARP, I forget what it stands for, but it means the civil defence organisation. People who used their cars as temporary ambulances, went around helping people who'd been bombed out, escaping from buildings on fire, all sorts of things. And every night three or four people, each with their cars, came to the house. This provided a sort of a backdrop to the lives of the children as well. Tea was constantly served. And of course I had to go to bed at 9 o'clock or I don't know...They were already there; they were coming on. I was allowed to stay up till 10 o'clock sometimes because, at 11 o'clock with extraordinary precision, the Luftwaffe would arrive. The sirens would go and we would go into the shelters. They were called Anderson shelters, attached to a wall of a house with two bunks and some chairs. Now, one of the people who came he was a barman. He was a man who thought he could play a piano. He had the most terrible idea of piano playing I had ever heard in my life. But he once brought a piano accordion.

Tape 6: 3 minutes 3 seconds

And immediately I became fascinated. It was a very small thing. It had only twelve basses on the left-hand side. But I fairly quickly saw how this thing worked and immediately I thought: 'This is fascinating!'. On the violin, to make, to play a chord of three notes you've got to know what you're doing. Here you play one button, you get four notes. Or you've got a piano keyboard here and somehow or other I learnt this quickly. I not only learnt this, I managed to teach the foster brother so he could accompany me on the violin. We used to go and play even in the public shelters from time to time to keep people's spirits up. That was our war work. I then drove everybody mad to get a piano accordion which was rather larger. And not until I was oh many, many years older did I get a full size one. But I learnt to play it, not quite professionally, but reasonably enough. I could do it. And that was that. And the more I gravitated toward that instrument the less I played the violin. Fair enough. Many, many years later when I discovered this cousin on my father's side, and when she came here, I went to Zurich. In one of our walks - we always used to go and walk around Lake Zurich, there's a park - she mentioned that in one of the last meetings together with my mother she was watching my mother wrapping up a parcel to send to me. It was in fact a piano accordion. And she asked me right away because it was a sort of afterthought, she said: 'Did you ever get that accordion?' And I remember my precise words. I said: 'Regina,' that was her name, I said: 'not exactly in the way you think, but I think I did get it.' And then I explained to her what happened.

Tape 6: 5 minutes 46 seconds

BL: So which accordion was it? Do you think the accordion was the one...?

FB: No, my mother sent an accordion that never got there. It was probably grabbed by the Gestapo; every parcel was inspected. But an accordion entered my life in a way that I couldn't explain. If that man hadn't brought that silly little accordion I wouldn't even know that the damn thing existed. It wouldn't even have been any part of my Weltanschauung but it did. So what I said to her when she said: 'Did you get your mother's accordion?' I said, not exactly in the way you mean, but I think eventually I did get it in a rather roundabout way.

BL: And that was one of the last parcels your mother sent?

FB: Yes. Well, I'm not sure because we got letters and I think we got one or two here because this would have been March. Because this particular cousin, she had married her husband who was a Polish Jew - a fellow called Rosner - who had the good saichel [brain] not to accept Austrian citizenship when my father said he could get it for him. And he stayed a Polish citizen and this saved their lives because, in March 1938, they began to consider how on earth they could get out. And, finally, because he was not well - he had a stomach ulcer - they managed to persuade the Swiss that they should be allowed to go to Switzerland for six months to take a cure in the mountains. They managed to persuade the Nazis that, as they couldn't afford a nurse, they should allow her to accompany him as a woman who could cook all the special foods he needed. And then, since there was no one who could look after their eleven year old son, they should be allowed to take him as well. And the date...they couldn't understand why the permission was so late coming through, you know, February became March, and suddenly they only got the - I remember the date - they only got the permission to leave and I think March 20th for six months.

Tape 6: 8 minutes 29 seconds

And when the permission - they were in Switzerland - and when permission expired, on September 20th, there was no more Poland. There was nothing they could...They couldn't go back anywhere. Austria was part of Grossdeutschland. They then lived in the forests for a couple of months and then, finally, their position was regularised by the Jewish community and they settled in Zurich, where she remained to the end of her life and where I discovered her.

BL: So the parcel was...must have been sent before March?

FB: Before March. Probably for my birthday. Never got there.

BL: Mr Barschak anything else you'd like to add or...?

FB: I can't think of anything. Doubtless there are a hundred things but they haven't occurred to my mind at the moment. I think you've got quite a lot.

BL: Mr Barschak, thank you very much for this interview.

FB: Ok.

Tape 6: 9 minutes 39 seconds

End of Interview Tape Six**Photographs****Tape 6: 10 minutes 0 second**

BL: Describe this photograph.

FB: Which one?

BL: This one - of your parents.

FB: That is their honeymoon photograph and that was in 1929. In fact I got that photograph in 19- I think it was in 1967. It was then in possession of my mother's first cousin living in Brussels. I remember when we got that photograph.

BL: Where was it taken?

FB: That I can tell you. That I think was taken in Istria. They were on holiday in Istria, not far from Rijeka, possibly there.

BL: Thank you.

FB: That's where they had their honeymoon.

BL: Ok.

FB: This is a photograph which is either of the Kultusgemeinde, which is the equivalent of the Board of Deputies in Vienna, or it is a picture of the Committee of the Mizrachi, which my father was on. In fact they went to what was then Palestine in 1931 to have a look at the situation.

BL: Yes, please can you describe this document?

FB: Well, that is the document supplied to me by the refugee organisation when we were leaving Vienna. And, in fact, although I don't have it at the moment, I don't know where it is, it matches those cardboard details that we had tied around our necks when we left on the Kindertransport. And on the basis of that document we entered this country. It would have been around - I don't know - December 1938. In fact it would have been around December the 10th. round about then, maybe a day or two before.

BL: Yes please can you describe this photo?

Tape 6: 12 minutes 54 seconds

FB: Well, this is a picture of my foster brother and myself. It must have been taken within a month of my arrival because very, very shortly afterwards my whole... the way I looked, my hairstyle began to change as witnessed in the next photograph.

BL: So when was it taken exactly?

FB: This would have been taken in, I don't know, perhaps January 1939.

BL: And where?

FB: In Hull.

BL: Can you describe this photo?

FB: Yes, well that's a picture of Philip Levy – must have been fourteen, fifteen years before I ever met him. He's probably around twenty years old. And I've no idea where that picture was taken. Well, if he was twenty it wasn't taken in Hull at all. They were a Manchester family and he only came to Hull in sort of 1936, 37, a couple of years before I arrived.

BL: And who was he?

FB: He was the man who brought me up in this country.

BL: Yes please?

FB: That is a picture of myself, Ronnie Levy and his cousin Shirley Jacks. I believe that that must have been taken, possibly it could either have been taken in 1940, perhaps May. I don't know. In the first part of 1940, April, May 1940. And I have no idea where it was taken. It might have been taken in Hull or it could have been taken at one of the seaside resorts close to Hull on the North Sea coast.

BL: Mr Barschak, thank you very much for the interview.

FB: Thank you.

Tape 6:15 minutes 22 seconds
End of Photographs Tape Six