

IMPORTANT

This transcript is copyright Association of Jewish Refugees

Access to this interview and transcript is for private research only. Please refer to the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it. Should you find any errors please inform

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	124

Interviewee Surname:	Jonas
Forename:	Fred
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	26 March 1916
Interviewee POB:	Leipzig, Germany

Date of Interview:	22 June 2006
Location of Interview:	Macclesfield
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	5 hours

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

INTERVIEW: 124

NAME: FRED JONAS

DATE: 22 JUNE 2006

LOCATION: MACCLESFIELD

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: I'm interviewing Fred Jonas and today's date is the 22nd June 2006 and the interview is taking place in Macclesfield and I am Rosalyn Livshin. What is your name?

FJ: My name is Fred Jonas.

RL: Your full first name?

FJ: The full first name is Alfred Abraham.

RL: Were you named after anyone?

FJ: Yes, I think one of my grandfathers was an Abraham too.

RL: And where were you born?

FJ: In Osnabrück, Germany.

RL: And when?

FJ: The grandfather? I wouldn't know he...

RL: No you, when were you born?

FJ: I was born on the 26th March 1916, I am not sure whether it was 26th or 25th, it was midnight...

RL: And the place?

FJ: The place was Leipzig.

RL: Right, so first of all starting with your parents, where were they from?

FJ: Well, my mother came from Germany, originally Poland, most likely, as it was known then, and my father was born in Osnabrück again.

RL: And what can you tell me first of all about your father's family, about his parents and his siblings?

FJ: Well, his father was the chair of the Jewish congregation in Osnabrück, but I know very little about him. I've never known him but I did know my grandmother and the first thing I do remember -although I didn't know what it actually meant- when we visited her with my father, my parents, rather, we were children of about six-seven and she put her hands on my head and prayed. Now this to me was sanctimonial and it was very, very exciting, I would say, and apart from that I didn't really know much why this was done. I accepted it in good faith. It must have had a very good personal reason. And that goes back to the fact that the whole family was liberal Jewish minded, very much so.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 12 seconds

RL: And were your grandparents ... Was your grandmother also...?

FJ: No, she wasn't at all. In fact although she was sent from the place where they lived first, little town Borna, near Leipzig, she was sent once a week, by train, to visit a school of Hebrew and religion, but she didn't get very far because when she got to the other end of the station where she had to get off for it, she didn't actually go there. Instead, she went to a restaurant and had a good meal. That was the story behind it. So she was very non-religious, except that she fell in fully with my father's background eventually, and that reflected on the whole family. His influence.

RL: What brothers and sisters did your father have?

FJ: He had eight of them altogether, as it was common in those days. Three sisters and four brothers, one of them was never known about but the two brothers, the older one and him, my father, they emigrated to South Africa at a very early age, when they were about eighteen or nineteen, as I did eventually.

RL: So your father emigrated?

FJ: Well, emigrated to call in those days, he was sent there by the family because there were other members of the family in South Africa before them in 1890's round about that period.

RL: And do you know what your father did in South Africa?

FJ: Yes, very much so. He was somehow joined to the British Army during the Boer War and he was always telling us that he had to ride on horseback -there were no motorcars known in those days- between two little towns in the Cape, probably as some kind of courier. I wouldn't know very much more about it except his own stories about it, but that part is all I know. Is that what you're asking?

RL: How long was he in South Africa?

FJ: He? He left again in 1905 when he then became a British subject.

RL: And where did he go?

FJ: Eh, he first went presumably to his hometown, but from there as a younger man he went to a place called Bremerhaven, which is a German port, and finally to Leipzig, where he met my mother.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 19 seconds

RL: Do you know what kind of education he had?

FJ: Well, he emigrated to South Africa at the age of eighteen, or went to South Africa - we didn't call it emigration in those days. He was helping in the leather ware business, with his older brother in Osnabrück. From where he went into the shoe business and finally he set up his own wholesale shoe business in Leipzig.

RL: What kind of schooling did he have?

FJ: I'm afraid I do not know that (laughs) but he must have had a fair education you know in those families they did send their children to what was then known as high school.

RL: Do you know what his father had done for a living?

FJ: No, I don't know what his actual business was, if he ever was in business, but he owned in very early days a whole building in Osnabrück, which was the middle of the city and it has become a well known area ever since. In fact it's still known by its original name and one of the older brothers, my father's eldest brother, he owned a leather ware shop in that building as well. It was a three storey building, which was replaced after the war, obviously, but it occupied the centre of the city at that time, known as Nicolaiort. That I do remember because we went to see it.

RL: And what about your mother's background?

FJ: Well, background...let us say they were fairly simple people, the mother and the father, particularly the father, he was a very simple, very kind, nice, little man, while the grandmother obviously wore the pants and she was very well liked by the whole family and she admired me in particular for the art work that I did in my earliest days. No end. In fact she sat down for hours with me, helping, you know, as much as she knew about art.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 25 seconds

RL: Do you know what your mother's father did for a living?

FJ: Ehm, they had originally, the two of them, her father and mother, they had a haberdashery shop in this town of, what I mentioned earlier, Borna, near Leipzig and it so happened that I went there to see the town, which has been transformed completely. As I remember it, there were two streets and one shop. That was theirs [laughs]. And then it has become this little city, fifty or sixty years later, when we went to visit, because I wanted to trace there in the registrar office some of the records about my mother, which we found.

RL: Right. What brothers and sisters did your mother have?

FJ: I'm sorry?

RL: What siblings did your mother have?

FJ: She had two sisters.

RL: And where were they? Where did they live?

FJ: Oh yes, the first one lived in Hamburg, the other one in Leipzig and then Berlin but of course both of them carried on from there. The one that lived in Hamburg went to America, Philadelphia and the other one did not survive, was taken away.

RL: What kind of education did your mother have?

FJ: My mother? Well, she had no specific occupation, you know, as I said, in the early days, before marriage, she was in that porcelain factory working, well known maker of porcelain, Meißen it was called. It is probably known in England to the same as ... say as Stoke-on Trent or whatever it is called.

RL: What did she do there?

FJ: She helped designing and painting on actual porcelain, which was then, the original, which was then used for mass-production.

RL: And after that?

FJ: Well, after that she went back to Leipzig. She worked in a hat factory and I don't think she did very much more than that. Then she met my father. There was no more need for her to work.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 27 seconds

RL: Do you know how they met?

FJ: Yes, that is quite an interesting story because as far as I was told, I do remember that they met in a very fashionable café, in the city, and they had music going there in that café, a little orchestra, as was fashionable in those days, and proudly that is where they first sat eyes on one another, which led to their marriage.

RL: When did they marry?

FJ: Eh, I think it was in 1911 but I am afraid don't know the date.

RL: And where did they go to live?

FJ: Yes, they lived in a, first in the city of Bremerhaven where my father had some reason to go to for his trade or business, but very soon moved back to where my mother came from, Leipzig.

RL: And who was the oldest child?

FJ: The oldest child's name was Horst. He had a Jewish name as well, which I can't remember, unfortunately. I have written it down somewhere but I can't remember.

RL: When was he born?

FJ: On the 14th of ..., no, I'm afraid I can't give you the exact date now. I remember the 14th but I can't give you the actual date but in 1914.

RL: And who came next?

FJ: That was myself, 1916.

RL: And then?

FJ: And then the youngest was born on the 5th July 1917.

RL: What was the name?

FJ: Werner.

RL: And what happened to your father? Did anything happen to him during the First World War?

FJ: Yes, very much so, because although he had this British nationality, unfortunately he never worried about it because in those days there was no real reason. So since he was born in Germany, he was enlisted and he was sent to the French border, [...], where he had to join the forces. But he came back very quickly apparently, like many Jewish people; they knew how to get in and out, and he got out very quickly and came back, when my older brother was born, which must have been the reason for him coming back [laughs].

Tape 1: 15 minutes 45 seconds

RL: And then what?

FJ: And then next was myself and that's a very interesting part of a story, because I was actually a very ugly baby, I had my hair standing up, and my mother didn't think so, she took my older brother in her arms and very proudly went to the cod, and said 'well, come and see the new little newcomer', you know, so exciting, and she pointed into the cod, and he repeated, also pointing down 'wauwau'. I was a wauwau. Well, that was myself, but as I said, that was midnight 25th, 26th, very strange thing. On that day many other events were very important, for instance Beethoven I believe either died on that day, not in 1916 but on the 26th of March. And by strange coincidence, later on in South Africa I had polio. That is beside the point, but when I came out of hospital three months later, it was announced that Dr. ... Serk was his name, invented the first vaccine against polio. So I just came out too late, just at the same time...it was a really, very strange coincidence.

RL: So just coming back to your father, so once he'd come out of the army...

FJ: Yes.

RL: ...that was it, he didn't have to serve again?

FJ: No, I suppose then they went on with their normal, usual life, which accounted for the fact that my younger brother was born and he sat up in business very soon again. Leather trade finally, shoe trade, and after that wholesale shoes.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 13 seconds

RL: What are your earliest memories as a child?

FJ: Oh yes my very earliest was of course the preschool years which was to me very, very satisfactory, particularly in the sense that when the class or the school-time was about -or was that about lunchtime?- there was a sweet shop opposite, and that was my first visit I did, daily right across the road to the sweet shop. But then came the disappointment. It was during winter when the snow was 12 inches deep. I had my first nasty experience of bullying. When these young little children took hands full of snow and tried to bury my face in it. They half succeeded but I fought back. That is a very early memory. There are many, many, many, many others. The very beautiful smell of the cleaning material they used in those days in the school on the stone steps is something that reminds me every time of the school, of that particular school. Whenever I get a similar smell somewhere else in kinds of perfumes, my wife used. There's quite a long story about that school. For example I remember one particular incident, my father was in the shoe business and the teacher was very kind so that he would look after me because I was taken out of school very, very quickly with a year of jaundice when I was six. I had to go back only when I was seven again. Incidentally I was born with juvenile jaundice, which then accounts for the fact that my older brother called me a wauwau. But for the school itself, that experience was ... I remember one strange incident when the teacher gave me the size of his shoes and I had no idea why, but my father very quickly. They must have had some kind of contract between them before. I had to carry a pair of shoes to him, free of course, which must have accounted for looking after me a little more than others, which I only realised later in my life when I was told the story behind the background story.

Tape 1: 21minutes 19 seconds

RL: Was this a state school?

FJ: It was, yes, a state run school.

RJ: How did you get on with the children in that school?

FJ: Well, actually quite well. Yes, we did not think much of one another. What we would do, how we would respond to one another. And it was sort of normal childhood experience.

RL: What are your memories of home life?

FJ: It is a very, very long story. Particular memories that stand out more than anything were that we had a grandfather clock there and the husband of my aunt -she got married very late in her life- he was already divorced; he had a child, but he came round once a year to wind up that clock. I never forget it. I pulled down the weights of that clock, you know the brass weights, and turned the hands, the big and the small hand of the clock. I see it all the time in front of me, never forget. I can't see what was so exciting about it. The next thing was of course that we had a very good friend there, or my parents had, in that same house. There were two floors. We were on the ground floor. And the other thing I remember so well was

when the three of us were left alone by the parents, they went out. In those days it was very safe for children of that age to be left alone, there were no burglars known. A burglar was known, yes, one that we experienced ourselves. But it was safe enough for them to leave the children at home when they went out at night. Although, we had a nanny, but she did not live in, in that particular place. Elsewhere where we moved we had a nanny to have a room. But for some reason rather the three of us were quite naughty. We opened a window of our bedroom and standing on the ledge, stark naked, and invited by-passers who were very few: 'Come and see our tummies, Come and see our tummies'. That is an experience I will never forget. There are many other memories similar but they are really very lengthy, because we lived there for some eight to ten years, until I was about nine or ten years of age, something like that.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 15 seconds

RL: Whereabouts in Leipzig was the building where you lived?

FJ: Yes, there was an area known as the Jewish area. Of course it was not all Jewish people left there, but it was particular known as the -what is called in the books that I have about it- as Nordviertel, the Northern quarter of Leipzig. I mean, anyone who came from that city would know that because it was a very large area, widespread, where most of our Jewish friends lived and others as well.

RL: What was the street?

FJ: The name of the street? Oh dear. It was named after a poet. And his name was Kleist. Kleiststraße, yes.

RL: Can you describe your home, the building and your home?

FJ: I'm sorry, that was?

RL: Describe your home.

FJ: Describe the home itself. Yes it was about four rooms, a lounge and so on. And there was the kitchen, obviously bathroom, and two bedrooms, where the three of us had to share. The house itself was not very large. It was a corner house in that road. And on the third floor we had a family who became very friendly with us. And one of the boys, their son, he was older than the three of us, was the oldest, and we were very fond of him and he was of us. So we played a lot together in the road. In the street they had ... our parents bought some kind of equipment for us. In those days it was something you, similar to, what is now known as a little child's motorcar or scooter. But of course a different type all together. And we were rolling up and down that road. There was no traffic in that road, right up to the next building, which was a much nicer one than ours. And there again were some of our good friends and children who we played with all day. We invited them one day to come and see our little garden, and the greatest pleasure we had was ... because it was ... neighbours had a fence, which was part of it on their side and on our side, and they grew strawberries; there was enough space under the fence for us to reach through and pick their strawberries. This is one of those experiences one never forgets. As simple as it may be.

Tape 1: 27 minutes 37 seconds

RL: How many floors did this building have?

FJ: Two floors and the ground floor as I said. Three floors all together.

RL: At which floors were you on?

FJ: We were on the ground floor.

RL: And on the first floor?

FJ: There was another family that we were fairly friendly with but not so much the top floor. Although with the young, witty one boy from the top floor's family there we were friendly with.

RL: Were they Jewish families?

FJ: The one in the middle was, but not the one at the top. Incidentally there were on each floor two families, left and right of the building. I don't remember the others.

RL: Did your father belong to any organisations at all?

FJ: I don't think so. Not that I remember. It's quite possible.

RL: Did he belong to a synagogue?

FJ: Yes he did.

RL: Do you remember which one?

FJ: Oh yes, it was known as the Great Synagogue in Leipzig in the centre. And that was a very special event for me the Great Synagogue. Apart from the fact that all three of us were Bar Mitzvah'd there. But it's got long history and it eventually was burned down by the Nazis to the ground. In those days, the early days, the whole Jewish background was simply accepted by us without any knowledge. While my father was very knowledgeable, with Hebrew and all the rest of it, we were not, the three children. My mother certainly wasn't. As I said earlier, she preferred to go to a café instead of to the Shul there.

Tape 1: 29 minutes 56 seconds

RL: How often would you attend the Great Synagogue?

FJ: How often?

RL: Yes.

FJ: Once a week. And that was very significant because obviously it was a Friday evening and it so happened that we were the two of us, not my younger brother, the older one and myself were members, or joined a Jewish Scouts boy movement, which was known as Kameraden or Comrades, not Comrades in the Soviet sense, it was called Kameraden with a K. And it contributed a lot to both my older brother, myself in future life, in a positive sense very much.

RL: In what way?

FJ: His positive direction was completely different to mine but both were. Mine was more in a sense of cooperation and looking at life in more general terms while his was very confined to the political scene. He very soon realised that the Jewish Scouts boy movement is not the end of the line for him. He very soon discovered that there was also a social element with it that he took great interest in. Now as I always said in later life, religion to me is a primitive form of socialism, which it is really. I come to that much later. And he joined a few friends who also left the Scouts movement, for when he went to school already, he joined the -what they called- a socialist schoolboys movement, or something. I can't remember the full name of that. Incidentally, finally he ended up as the mayor of a city, after the release, after the discharge ... the liberation from the concentration camp. He went through a very long period of development from that date onwards, to the highest level, being recognised finally. It does not quite fit in to the sequence of this story now, but I have to mention it to understand the background to it. He joined while he was still at school, what they used to call the student socialist movement of some kind, or some name or other. And from there onwards he joined what they called the Young Communist League in Leipzig. And he finally became a sort of figurehead within that movement. I was inspired but didn't join it, although in later life I became very interested in the socialist doctrine and so on, which to me was very inspiring. Apart from the political sense of it or meaning for the social side of it, which was very, very satisfactory. You know coming from the Jewish Scouts movement, you've already had that spirit in you, developed in you. He then ... I don't know if I should go on with that because that goes into the next few stages of life, my life, you know, right up to even forty years ago.

Tape 1: 34 minutes 20 seconds

RL: While we're talking about him, we'll just get a bit more of his story.

FJ: His story from then onwards was ... After the ... during, or before Hitler came to power he was very, very active as the head of that Socialist movement or the young communist league, as it was known by then. And finally in 1932 when it was already known that the Nazis would come to power eventually, he had terrible arguments with my father, who -like many Jewish people in Leipzig- said 'oh no, it will never happen'. Which was a very great mistake they made, and for that I have masses of examples. They hung on to the last minute, sort of thing, in fear of losing their businesses and income and their whole wealth. Although my parents weren't wealthy, but they were in that sort of range of people, you know, to have similar views, similar ideas they must wait until the last ... It was my own involvement that I managed to get them out. That was the time when they came back to South Africa. Or back for my father to say come back. My mother has never been there. The thing is, to go on with the older brother, that's a very long story which I'll try to touch on now in brief. Finally, when they had to go underground -as it was called- to continue their work, and this is the time I remember being involved with it, partly involuntary, and partly by the inspiration about him -I always looked up to my older brother- that, not knowing what I was really doing, he said I should take my bicycle and go round with these notifications about our meetings underground and deliver them to all the members. So, I did. I went round on the bike a long way. I must say the kind of people I met there, the young people of course, my age, they were completely different to what we'd known before, you know, not overpowering, very nice, sort of middle class but they had a sort of a common background socially, and partly intellectually. And that inspired me, so I did not think any more about it until finally my brother was ... when the Nazis finally came to power ...

Tape 1: 37 minutes 34 seconds

I was coming back to Leipzig from the place where I was sent to eventually for quite different reasons - we'll talk about it later when I talk about myself. But about him, the brother, he was eventually arrested. We were living in another place in the city, a very large building, on the corner of two streets and a square in front... I'm sorry I made a mistake, we moved to another house from there again which is a very interesting place. But it was three o'clock in the morning when the Gestapo came to take him. It was in those days that I designed a lot of the literature for him, already in those days, book covers and so on. So, that was before that. I had to very often accompany him to the police station because he was told to report to the police there once a week. So he said I should come along in case he does not come out. But he did come out and went home again, and as I said, then came the Gestapo to take him.

Tape 1: 39 minutes 13 seconds

RL: When did they take him?

FJ: That was in 1935. Early '35. My parents were up in arms, we were all. We did not really know what was going on. He was searched, stripped and said he should dress now and they are taking him away. But it was from there when I lived in another city -also because I had to leave the department store where I was working- when all the Jews were lined up there in the courtyard and said you must go now. We had to leave instantly...

RL: You know, I'm just thinking, it's so intertwined with your story...

FJ: It is, very, very much...

RL: ...that I think ... I can see now that it's probably best to work through, because we're getting part of your story as well, which I want to do...you know, in the right order as well, so shall we just go back and we can do your brother as and when it connects with you. I think so, because otherwise we get bits of yours and then...

FJ: Absolutely.

RL: Yeah, I thought we're just going to get a very potted version of what happened to him but I think it's too intertwined with yourself, so...

FJ: It is very difficult to differentiate and to put...

RL: That's right. So we'll touch upon it I think as we go on. So bringing you just back to memories of your childhood, and I had asked you about memories of your home life, if you can give me some idea of, you know, a typical day as a child?

FJ: Yes. You want to go back to that?

RL: I want to go back to that. We're going to work through.

FJ: Yes. So, where we stopped was, I think, when I came out of that school. I think I left off there where my father handed me a pair of shoes to take to the teacher, I think that's where we...

RL: Yes, I just want memories of you at home, family life.

FJ: Yes, oh yes. Now, family life was partly interrupted with my condition, I had terrible nightmares during the day when I wasn't actually asleep. And I couldn't really register properly. My parents had to take me to the bedroom and the doctor came -a very good friend of my parents- to tell them what was wrong. You know, he said 'you must do nothing; leave him alone.' And that happened. In actual fact, on the medical side, what went on was everything that went on. Even them walking into the room appeared to be 10 times at speed. Everything around me was speeding up enormously. Well, that was a kind of condition that I had in the early days, it didn't last very long. For the rest of the childhood experience -I don't know where I left off- it was when I left school...the earlier time of school, four years pre-school...

Tape 1: 42 minutes 47 seconds

RL: Can I just ask you, you know we were talking also about the synagogue, and you said you used to go on a Friday night?

FJ: That was much later actually, after we moved. I must have been about 10 years of age but there wasn't very much difference between seven and ten so I can go on to that but I mean childhood life between those three years was also very, very memorable in the sense that -to give you a little example- the two of us -my younger brother and I- suddenly decided that we should pack our luggage and go to the nearest train station, which we did. The suitcase was full of toys, packed up very nicely, and we walked off to the station. When the stationmaster said 'well, what are you doing, where are you going?' that frightened us so much, you know, to look at this man in the uniform there and we went straight home again. The other experience of course was during the inflation, in 1921, they printed these enormous large notes of 2,000 or 10,000 Deutsche Mark, or whatever it was, and my mother had a habit of hiding them in a linen cupboard, under pillows or under sheets. But my younger brother and I, we were very naughty. When she wasn't looking, we went under the sheets. We pulled out those notes, you know, and he was much cleverer than I -my younger brother- because he pulled out the smaller notes, which were very much more valuable than the larger ones, and I pulled out the larger ones, thinking they were much more valuable. Anyway, that was one of the experiences you were asking. There are many more memories like that.

RL: Where did you move to from the first house that you described, where was the next place?

Tape 1: 44 minutes 58 seconds

FJ: That was a place, if I tell you the name of it, I'll spell it in a moment, it was Hallische Straße. We took over a ground floor place, which belonged originally to a child specialist doctor, who was very close friends with the parents, a Dr. Lewinstein. They moved to Israel eventually. And his wife organised these Jewish holiday celebrations, mainly for children. Now, that is one thing I do remember very well that in that house where we lived in the Hallische Straße, there was a Jewish couple on the second floor, and on the third floor was the owner, also a Jewish couple, they were called Abraham by the surname. They were all in this particular house and one memory I have was that finally, when things became very difficult for my father, he had already given up his shoe business and started a smaller one where he hired a shop across the road, to carry on that childhood period was to me very, very important. Firstly, we made friends with the three boys of that family on the top floor, who owned the building, the parents did. And there was a young girl, who came from America, a friend of the

family who lived with the family on the first floor. And that must have been my first experience with the opposite sex. That we had a bicycle there and a big yard, so she had never rode a bicycle before and I put her on the bike and pushed her along as she tried to paddle herself. Now this was very, very exciting for me that here I should be having a girlfriend. No, it wasn't at all; it was just the experience of it. Well, that was one of the experiences one doesn't forget so easily. We had a burglar there at one point, I think because my father stored a lot of shoes within one of the rooms in the house...

Tape 1: 48 minutes 15 seconds

RL: You say your father had work problems...?

FJ: Yes, well, when things became very tight in those days -it was before the inflation- he went bankrupt. His shoe business went bankrupt. He had my aunt as a secretary there right up to period but then she had to leave as well and went from Leipzig to Berlin. But my experiences in younger years following that ... I am not putting it in the right sequence there, originally ... You know, before you came I had notes written down in the right order with dates, even though I was very strictly against a diary, but maybe it would be better to do that in date order. Or, years at least. And as for childhood in those days, that was after we moved to that house, rather. There were very many experiences that I remember that are not of great importance. But I remember a dairy across the road, where there was such a wonderful smell of butter and cheese and so on and what inspired me so much was the sales girl behind the counter. She had strong, red cheeks and she looked like a picture of health, I will never forget that. Now that is an unimportant experience, but a much more important ones, when we had to go the groceries across the road to buy this, that and the other. And the other one is, my mother and my grandmother, they were very fond of baking and apart from baking, bagels weren't known to them in those days but they baked other things. And one of them was very common in Germany, that half of the Jewish people also were baking every Christmas time, what has become known here now as Stollen. The Stollen is a kind of Christmas cake like a bread but it was like bread pudding but very firm and it got lots of spices and raisins in it and so on. Now half of the Jewish families baked their own Stollen. They got the dough ready and everything and my mother and my grandmother and we all had to help. It was done on a massive scale and was finally taken to the bakery for them to bake it, because we couldn't bake the quantity at home, nor that size, nor that they have proper baking ovens. And very, very many families, Jewish families, did the same thing.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 45 seconds

RL: And that was around Christmas time?

FJ: Yes, between Christmas and New Year, like a lot of Jewish-German, particularly German families, did. They had the Menorah under their Christmas tree. That was also very exciting for us. You know, not only that we had in the next place that we moved to, we had a grand piano, where again that comes into later life of my youth, where my father, after he gave up his business, thought it was of more interest to him to spend every afternoon in a café. It was a kind of bohemian style café where a lot of artists and ex-wholesalers met and it so happened that a young boy who was told to come into that café, by someone else, came from South Africa. And when my father heard that, he said 'What, you come here from South Africa? What are you doing here?' and then he quickly joined up their background stories, my father's background in the Cape and he from Johannesburg. He came from Latvia, Riga, where he eventually has taken up piano lessons and finally he was sent to the Leipzig Conservatory to

continue his musical education. Now he played a very, very big role in my life right to this day. And I will tell you that story later, but back to my own story of that time. It's not been in proper date order of what I've been saying right now, nor what follows, but when finally he was invited by my father to come to our house where we lived and he played the grand piano there, it was an extraordinary story. My older brother, when he was still within halfway between a socialist movement and on the other side the Jewish movement, they had a literary evening, a reading. In one corner of the room, it was a very large room, of course -a grand piano has to fit into a large room- and on the one side were desks and lamps and chairs, and on the other side was a settee, all leather in those days as well. And the three of them sat there reading, and Bruno, Bruno was his name, Bruno Reiken, he joined them for a moment but couldn't speak German very well or not at all. But while they were reading, he sat at the piano and played the kind of music that would go with that reading.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 15 seconds

It was a great talented act that he sort of freestyle got just the right sort of tone that goes with it. And unfortunately my bedroom was next door and I wasn't allowed to join, I was too young. I was only about ten or eleven, but there was a keyhole, and I sat at that keyhole to watch it all. Now Bruno then ... this came in later life but it relates to that period ... but I should mention that now...

RL: Right...

FJ: ... and that is, it was fifteen years later, when I was going to a theatre in Johannesburg, where they had a big orchestra and they performed some music by the Johannesburg symphony orchestra who was playing in that cinema theatre, big stage. And I got a programme ... and I read ... the name ... [cries] Bruno Reiken. When the concert was finished I went behind the stage and I said 'Are you the Bruno who played on that grand piano?' You can imagine what happened. [cries] I'm sorry. And we became very, very friendly after that again, or for the first time. I wasn't such a good friend of him, I wasn't even allowed to see him, except through the keyhole. And ... that's a very long story that goes right through my whole life like a red line to this day, because he died about two years ago in London, in Golders Green, where we went to the funeral. But the story between that is a very, very long one, in Johannesburg.

RL: Hmmm. This film is about to end so we'll just stop there.

Tape 1: 58 minutes 13 seconds

TAPE 2

RL: This is the interview with Fred Jonas and it's tape two. You were speaking about having a Christmas tree and a Menorah. Now, I am quite interested in how the family sort of blended the two cultures and what sort of religious upbringing or otherwise you had or otherwise and what kind of Jewish content there was or non-Jewish content. So, if you could speak a bit about that?

FJ: Yes, as far as I am concerned, personally, there were the children, not my father so much. My mother was not really, had no religious background as such, except that she very quickly fell in with my father's practice of the Jewish ceremonies. She took great pride in it in fact. The most important part for the Jewish women in those days was how they dress when they

go to the High Festivals in the Synagogue. And of course she did likewise. And she made sure that the three of us always had new outfits for the High Festivals so we had to spend a lot of time getting dressed and fitted ... you know. But then the synagogue wasn't, although it was a Great Synagogue, it had an enormous lot of seats. There was an overflow and they had to hire a theatre hall in Leipzig where my father also went and the cantor there, his family...they became members of that Jewish movement, the Scouts boy movement. There were two brothers and a girl, a daughter. Now, one of the brothers, the younger one, his name was Felix, he became very, very friendly with my brother during his political career and also with me personally when I was at art school. Now, we met every other day, the two of us, going boating or cycling or some other activity, and it so happened -that leads into a long, long period later on- that the two of us became very, very friendly and every Friday night I had to go to his mother's place because he insisted that I taste her baking for Friday evening.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 16 seconds

Now, he had very little religious sort of feelings about his father's role as cantor of that Jewish congregation, but during these High Festivals, when the three of us, we were young boys -that was before our Bar Mitzvahs- we had to sit through a whole day for the Rosh Hashanah services, and they had these strange cinema seats on the one side and the aisle in the middle where all the men sit and the women upstairs, on the gallery. And the three boys were on the left of that where the row was against the wall. But each seat had the old fashioned studs, you know, to hold the upholstery in place. It was all leather but the little upholstery studs, we had the greatest pleasure in pulling them out and were told during Yom Kippur or fasting, I don't know when that was, that we had to fast that day, the three boys of us, but we couldn't, so half way through the service, we obviously went out and we went across the road to buy our wonderful buns and bread and sandwiches and what not and sweets and we came back to pull out more studs from the seats. [Laughs]. But my father was totally unaware, you know, in his big, white Talis and praying all day, you know, his Hebrew was very fluent and that was the end of the day, you know, after having this experience, which was every year obviously. What happened at the same time more or less, during that period, was my first experience at the private school where again I met one young boy. We became very, very close friends, but that particular school was again one of those very important stages of my life, you know, I wouldn't say the formative life of a child was earlier but it made a great impact on me that school in many, many different ways. It's quite a long story.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 3 seconds

But one of the things that stands out was - down on the ground floor they had a store, a sort of circular store where they sold, it was then known as Dr. Oetker, jellies and custards, and they were selling that over the counter. They owned that little store and around half way down we had to have it. But there were nasty experiences at that school, certainly for me. Because the teachers were the forerunners of the -as I didn't realise in those days of course- of what became the future Nazis. They were that type. Not all of them. One was a particularly nice type, but I could see him ... In retrospect I can see that the kind of teachers we had there, were certainly turning into the worst type of Nazis the way... -I can explain that if you like-their particular methods of treating the young pupils, the young boys...

RL: What kind of things?

FJ: When one of them didn't do his homework, he was told to come along with the teacher to another room and the rest of the class was told to sit still, not move, not talk. And strange enough, that really happened: there was total silence and fear, that we all sat down and waiting, a good five to ten minutes until this little boy came back. He had a good hiding with

the cane in another room. He was still full of tears before he was able to sit down again. Now that, as I say, one lived without much thought, you know, except that it upset us no end, but no further thought – why, how can teachers behave like that. That kind of teachers, and that wasn't the only one. There were about five or six of them and they all more or less fell in the same group. Others, simply by abusing them straight down in class.

RL: Did they single out the Jewish pupils in any way?

FJ: No, not at all, not at all. But the way they did it was really ... in our own instance my father said that I shouldn't take part in the religious lessons, you know, Christian religion. So during that time when they had their religious lessons, we were sitting in another room somewhere along the corridor where the attendant -some sort of a school service attendant- was sitting, having his sandwiches. And we were joining there for that one hour, three-quarter of an hour or whatever it was during that time.

Tape 2: 9 minutes 42 seconds

RL: You had been at the primary school, and from the primary school, where did you go?

FJ: That was that particular ... No, then I went to a high school where the subjects were mainly history and Latin. Now, history I failed completely, Latin a little bit but I was weak enough and bad enough in my performance that my mother went to see the teacher one day and his remark I will never forget. He said 'why don't you wrap him in cotton wool?' You know, this sort of remark because I couldn't get on with it. So they took me out of that school and that is when I joined the other one that I was just talking about, the private high school.

RL: And did this have a name?

FJ: The first one had a name, yes, Schiller Gymnasium, the poet.

RL: And the private school?

FJ: It was called Teichmannsche Private Realschule, which meant something like gymnasium, a German name for high school.

RL: Did you have any Hebrew lessons, any religious education?

FJ: Oh yes, very much so. Before our Bar Mitzvah we had to, apart from the fact that Friday evenings, when we were much younger, we had to read a little bit of Hebrew which we found very difficult. But then we had to join a once-a-week Jewish class where all the Jewish boys from that north area in Leipzig, were about twenty-twenty-five of them, the Chazan -it was called- of the synagogue, he was giving the lessons there. In other words, the Jewish congregation hired a classroom in that primary school, a government-run primary school.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 7 seconds

My younger brother and I sat in the very back of the seats because we weren't really inspired by learning Hebrew. And we had to buy these Hebrew books from which to learn and read. My father insisted on that, he bought them actually, but on the way from home to that school once a week to learn Hebrew, my younger brother and I had to cross a bridge that was actually a road and on each side of the road there was the river under it, and there was a balustrade there on each side of the pavement and we'd find it very exciting to put our books

on top of that rail and my younger brother said 'I'll balance it, you can see, it will not fall down'. But our greatest pleasure was that it did, and so these two books landed in the river [laughs]. That's an experience one can't forget so easily.

RL: How was your Bar Mitzvah celebrated?

FJ: Mine or...?

RL: Yours.

FJ: Because all three of us had Bar Mitzvahs ... mine was celebrated in a special way, yes. My first excitement about it was, apart from the fact that in the synagogue I managed to read the 'Parashot' -not that I knew what it meant- but on the way home, there was of course a fantastic celebration. You know, when I came into the room the greatest excitement was leaning against the grand piano -closed by that time- a bicycle. A brand new bicycle. You know, and the fact that there were already in those days chromium parts on it and a lamp in front, I mean it is something like when you buy a new motorcar here now, although that doesn't create half the inspiration that the bicycle did. And incidentally all three of us were presented with bicycles and I think that was a very common cause for Bar Mitzvahs in Germany, that the boys at thirteen must get a bicycle. There were many members of the family present and so on... Well, that was more or less the end of the Bar Mitzvah.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 4 seconds

RL: How were the festivals celebrated at home?

FJ: The festivals. Yes. Now, at home, my father obviously was in his usual outfit and we all had to wear caps and hats and one. And he was conducting the Friday evening Kiddush, the performance and all the rest of it. My grandfather was sitting at one end of the table, my mother's father and the three of us at the other end and while he was reading my father was praying and reading. My mother sat there of course all with it and saying he did not understand a word. The three of us were quite amused and my father, grandfather started laughing in the middle of it all. We couldn't help following, you know. And, so that was one of the incidents but on the whole it was fairly level, you know, with the fact that in those days we still had this huge lamp over the table. It was something about three foot wide, shade, with silk shade and with ornaments hanging down the edge and of course the bell hanging there that you ring for the servants. That was an experience we had during that time Friday evenings. But, we were always fighting who was going to ring that bell, you know, the three of us. These are little experiences that one does not forget either.

Tape 2: 16 minutes 48 seconds

RL: Did your mother do any Jewish cooking? Did you have Jewish dishes?

FJ: Well, because of my father's influence to some extent but we did not bother about kosher, strictly kosher, some of it. My father insisted that he would not eat meat and cheese at the same time. But further than that it did not go any much further, no.

RL: What about Passover?

FJ: Passover, well very much the same performance. It was always celebrated jointly with Easter, you know. Like Pesach and Easter. But Passover ... no, no great exception to that rule, you know, of our behaviour and his involvement, my father's role he played, nor my mother's reaction. That was very much the same throughout all festivals.

RL: Coming on, we got you to school; you belong to the Scouts club. Did you belong to anything else at that age?

FJ: Not at that age, no. It was my first experience of belonging anyway to any kind of group, the Scouts movement.

RL: Did you experience any anti-Semitism at that age, that sort of in the 20's really?

FJ: Yes, and I'll give you one particular instance. It was that the Jewish Scouts movement set up a camp in the countryside somewhere, for we stayed over night, two nights, to sort of bring back the idea of the Scouts movement more closely into perspective. And there we had all kinds of very great entertainment. But my older brother was already known, each was given the name, a Jewish name, I don't know why. But I can't remember my name, nor his. But the point is, it was one night, there was a similar Christian Scouts movement not far away from that camp where we set up. We were all living, staying over night, in tents and one night these tents were overrun and attacked by the followers of the ... I would say probably of the future Nazi movement, youth movement, what they called the Hitler Youth, you know, they gave it a name, the Hitler Youth group. We were attacked. And the one thing that stands in my mind, each of our groups had a kind of leader. One was a very tall chap; his name was Österreicher, the Jewish bloke. He was in charge of our camp. But what I could not get over, it was, although they were sort of orientated to go for the Jewish Scouts movement and attack them, which they did actually but nothing great happened -in the sense that we were injured or anything like that- but they pulled down our tents, we were lying in the open then. When this Scouts leader went over the next morning to that camp where the Christian was, he was a real soldier type himself, very impressive person, tall and quite a powerful built man, and talked to the leader of that camp, you know gave him hell. And of course they accepted that all in good faith and so did he. When he came back we put up our tents again and everything went on for another day and night quite peacefully. That was the first experience of anti-Semitism.

Tape 2: 21 minutes 27seconds

RL: And after that?

FJ: I mean, I had that kind of experience in many little other instances as well but this was an outstanding one.

RL: And after that?

FJ: Well after that it goes a long way forward, from - that was in 1929, 1930, you know, that experience. But after that came the next experience of Nazism and that was of course ... When I was working in the department store as an apprentice for this display art section - which was a very special place for display art; in fact it was so well known that the display in the windows there was more important than the goods they displayed; you know, very many instances they won medals for it; photographs were taken of the shop windows, yes, they celebrated it- Then, after we were told to leave the place and so was the Jewish director too ... Although we had one experience which I must just mention here by the way -it's not fitting in

quite well into position now- that this Jewish director of that big store came along to a meeting organised by the trade union who already was half Nazi organised, and in order to retain his position as director he gave the Hitler salute, you know, with his arm up. And one of the trade union members went over to him and pushed his arm down. And that inspired me a lot too, you know, that I saw here for the first time how people could really react you know, those who were not Jewish and were not affected by it, but they were of course not the opposite of the Nazi movement, you know, they were trade union leaders. The point is here, I don't know where I left off now ... The next experience of the fascist area was when I was then transferred to another store.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 8 seconds

It so happened that the judicial services in Germany weren't, haven't had quite the influence of the Nazi movement as yet. The courts were still half-half. Working according to the old imperial system and half they had to fall into the Nazi rules. But there was enough space left for my father to come with me to the court that was a High Court for Germany, which happened to be in Leipzig. And there they decided, 'Oh no, he cannot just be dismissed from that department store like that, and he must be given another position somewhere else, similar' but it wasn't anything similar, obviously it was a department store that was also in Jewish hands still, up to a certain point and stage, but enough for me to be accepted there in their display department.

RL: When was this?

FJ: That must have been in 1934. '33, we were at the end of '33, we were told to leave that first store and all line up in the courtyard there and go home. We were unemployed. Didn't know what was going to happen next.

RL: Why did that happen?

FJ: Pardon?

RL: Why did that happen?

FJ: Because the Nazis were already taking charge of that department store. They took over the management, they took over practically everything there, but there were still remnants left here and there including the Jewish director and some Jewish members. Now when they were all lined up in the courtyard, I couldn't believe it, because some of them I did not know that they were Jewish, they looked like everybody else. And the Jewish people looked likewise else, like none Jewish a lot of them, but a lot were married already, Jewish boys, men married the non-Jewish assistants and vice a versa. The Jewish department manageress married a younger non-Jewish member of the staff. But when I was transferred to the other store finally, in the display department I had my first experience of the types of window dressers -they were called in those days- who finally became Nazis. And he was the first one to be in uniform. He was one of the very few in that Jewish department store, that he came to work in a Nazi uniform.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 18 seconds

And during his instruction to me - what I should hand to him next, you know this part of the display article or that one or the material - he hit me. I thought that is strange, why does he hit me? No one did that before in this department nor did you yourself. But he was already

inspired by that kind of spirit of the Nazi atrocities. To that extent it was the beginning of it. And that was my first direct experience of Nazism. I was given a very, very long ... When I finally moved to another town, which was a section of that department store -it belonged to three brothers, Uri they were called, a Jewish movement, eh, a Jewish family; and they were very rich people; their son was also a member of the Jewish Scouts movement, we became friendly with- when I was finally moved to another branch in another town, again this was a smaller, a very small department store near the Czech border it was, it happened to be in Germany. Now that experience of one year there was very exciting for me, and very inspiring because when I was away from the centres of Nazism activity, which was in the bigger cities, it soon turned to that town as well.

RL: What town was it?

FJ: Oh, that was called Bautzen. Bautzen that was a place just close to the Czech border. After a year, the parents were already in such dire financial state, that my father came over on that little bit of money that I earned to see the Jewish congregation there, a very small section, and asked them if they could arrange a loan which I had to repay out of my small salary there. Well I did. Until a long letter came from the ... what were they called now... it was an association of display artists, and that was a very long letter. I was already a member of that display artists association long before the Nazis came to power in another, in the first store.

Tape 2: 30 minutes 35 seconds

But it was taken over by the Nazis in the name of ... their own name. I mean they retained that name plus of course adding the Nazi emblem to it, on the certificate and all the rest of it. Where ... this is a very long letter I received from them, which was sent to all the Jewish display artists and it would be very interesting to read. I translated it into English. In German it said that the Jewish people, the simple outline of it in three words, that Jewish people cannot be qualified for any kind of art work from the highest level to the lowest. They do not conform to the Arian interpretation of art. So there you had it, you have to therefore discontinue your work as display artist or window dresser as I was known by then in a smaller store. But it was very satisfactory for me during that time, because the Jewish couple that owned it was a very kind people and they were admiring my art work no end because that was never known to them from this department store where it was at the highest level to theirs at the lowest.

RL: What year was this?

FJ: That was in 1935 to '36.

RL: How had you qualified as a display artist?

FJ: How?

RL: Yes.

FJ: Well, that is again a long story. When I left art school because my father could no longer pay the fees there. He was quite friendly through his business contacts in Leipzig with the various managers of the department stores, particularly the shoe department, obviously. And also with the ... staff manager, and he managed to get me into that department store but the head of the display artist studio that comprised several basements, because in those days the approach to the windows was not from the back wall but from the ground, from the floor of

each window. They were huge windows, half the size of this room here. And there was a lid, with a lift, tiny lift and stairs into the window.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 32 seconds

That was very common for the big department stores. And of course that what was in the basement of that, was enormous display art studio with carpentry workshop with painters, and even glass blowers were employed there, you know to contribute to all the display art finishing touches. There's a very long story, one that I will never forget was what they did with every apprentice who came in to that store. The window dressers were highly qualified people. They weren't called window dressers, they were called display artists. And in another part of the building they had the print studio or the ticket writers and the postal writers and all that. Now.... I lost my thread for a moment.

RL: I'd asked you how you had qualified later from your apprenticeship.

FJ: That's right. And so when my father managed to talk to the head of the display artist department, he insisted that they must have some aptitude that can be proved or that they got to come from an art school. So I did. And he got me in there.

RL: Which art school had you attended?

FJ: It was the School of Applied Art, attached to an academy of art. So we had to spend part of the time in one and part of the other in a different part of the city.

RL: How did you get on at that school?

FJ: Very well indeed. I was most inspired because the first year that art school comprised of all departments. After your first year, you had to decide which particular section of that you got most aptitude for and you would join eventually. That was from sculpture to poster writing or enamel work or it was, you know, art objects, or it was batik, the studio for... there were big departments. There were not just teachers there, they had an enormous number of equipment and also one department was for designing. There was a painter, his name was Max Schwimmer. Now he was my teacher, one of my teachers. And Max Schwimmer was very much celebrated; he published quite a lot of books of his artwork, sketches and so on. He had a bit of a lisp and that was always imitated by the students in the art school. That we all talk to one another in that lisp. We had quite pleasure in that.

RL: Where there other Jewish students at that art school?

Tape 2: 36 minutes 54 seconds

FJ: Oh yes, there were quite a few, yes. Because it was typical of Jewish...because this art school happened to be in an area right opposite the Scouts synagogue and round it they were many Jewish families and they were ... obviously therefore joined the... well not everybody joined, not every family was inclined artistically but there were quite a few, yes quite a good percentage of Jewish students there.

RL: How long were you there?

FJ: About eighteen months. Because that was the time when, after when the recession was already well on its way, that they couldn't afford the fees anymore and I had to leave. And that was the beginning of when my father had that influence in the department store.

RL: What was the department store called?

FJ: Oh yes, it was the successor of ... it was actually a store that they got stores in all the cities in Germany, it was called Karstadt. But in those days it was called Althoff. It was very well known for the highest quality, you know, similar to what we would today call Harrods. But incidentally I was working for Harrods, at one time. That was part of that influence of the art school and my father's contacts.

RL: You say that in 1935-6 you had to eventually leave the other, the smaller...?

FJ: That's right and joined firstly the other small department store that wasn't very well known for display art and then finally there, when the Nazis came in there and I had to go to that place called Bautzen near the Czech border where I had charge of the whole little store, for they had ten windows there. And again this family has not seen display art like that and they were taken up and the family took very much to me, I took to them. I was living, staying there with a Czech Jewish woman and her name was, strangely enough, Frau Sabata, but she was a very inspiring woman for me, very motherly, really motherly type, and she did what ever she could for me ... I never forget her. Well, as I said, that followed ... after that and during that time, that really would take up hours to describe really. It was ... it was part of my whole life really. I can't say I lived just for fifty, or eighty or ninety years now for a sort of levelled simple lifestyle, like we would have had if it wasn't for that period of the war and all the rest of it. But each period was such a very full of experiences and life and incidents and all kinds of tragic and happy times, that it's all very difficult to really separate or talk about in one separate. They all fall into the same pot.

Tape 2: 41 minutes 34seconds

RL: When you had to leave that small department store, what did you do?

FJ: Yes, that's when this letter followed from the association that was taken over by the Nazis in their name and they came out with this notorious letter, which is quite unbelievable, but the short ... the long and short of it, I did mention before. This friend of mine, the son of that cantor in the synagogue, we were so friendly that finally we went to a Jewish organisation in Leipzig that organised emigration for those who were able to leave in those days and they helped us to get it all planned for us, the departure, and they had to make sure that where we were going to South Africa, that we had a sort of safe haven there. Which meant that we must have other family there, or we must have the funds there, we must have friends that can put us up for the time ... until we could get settled there.

RL: Why did you pick South Africa?

FJ: Firstly, members of the family lived in South Africa since the 1950's. My father and his brother went there together, they were sent by their parents from Osnabrück in, must have been around the 1990's or so.

RL: 1890's?

FJ: Yes, I'm sorry, the 1890's. I had to show that my uncle was well, well up financially. He was a grain merchant. My father was already left, long before that. But they remained there, his family, the brother. My father's brother, in other words my uncle's family, remained there. You know, they were all hoping to find gold in the streets there. But he managed to become fairly rich man and that was my incentive for the authorities in Leipzig that I was able to go to a place where I would be looked after. But it was a very strange incident about arriving there. My uncle was, and his wife, my aunt, they were the joint chairman of the Jewish Refugee Organisation in Johannesburg, where they received all the Jewish immigrants who chose Johannesburg as there aboard. Now, it so happened that they also provided funds to start off new life there. Now, Felix my friend, he had no close relatives in Johannesburg and therefore he could go to that association that they were, my uncle and aunt were joint chairman to apply for funds for his first survival period in Johannesburg. I couldn't go there because my uncle said I should not have to rely on that because that would have embarrassed him. That the other members, the non-members of the Jewish people of Johannesburg would have said: "What, how can you allow this, you're rich man. How can you allow this boy to rely on funds, you know, from this organisation? You've got enough money to support him." So therefore I was in a worse condition than my friend because I had to rely on what he was ... what he thought was enough for me, while my friend was given enough support to survive better than I.

Tape 2: 46 minutes 28 seconds

You know such a contradiction. But that is what actually happened. Anyway we both managed to scramble through very well and we joined a room, joined in a room that was let for immigrants. Very narrow room with two beds and a table. My first endeavour was to start writing posters for little shops and window displays for some of them. And this led to a very long period of some real success. But it started very poorly.

RL: Can I, before we move on to the South Africa experience here, can I just ask you a little bit more about Germany? You know you were saying ... because we left off with your brother being arrested in 1935, what had happened at that point because I had stopped you there because the story was very intertwined?

FJ: Oh yes, I got it a bit muddled up there. What happened then is, first he was taken to a police station there to sort out his crimes, you know, and there they decided that he should be tried in court in Dresden. It was so... I was already in the other place, Bautzen, which was very near Dresden.

Tape 2: 48 minutes 24 seconds

My mother was coming from Leipzig for the hearing of that court case. There were ten others of his so-called comrades, all tried en masse, you know, together. So we sat at the gallery to listen through the crimes and sentences that were read out to these people ... [cries]. My mother was in tears and I was controlling myself. In those days I wasn't fully aware of what was going to happen until the sentences were pronounced. The nine members of his comrades were given more or less all around the same: three years of imprisonment. But my brother, being the leader of that group was given four years and three months, in a hard labour prison. I just sidetrack for a moment, when the four years and three months were up, it happened to be on the 3rd September 1939, but when the war broke out two days later, he wasn't released from that prison but he was sent straight to concentration camp. That's a very long story that followed from there onwards, another period. But you asked me about...

RL: Yes, just up to that point.

FJ: Yes.

RL: And you were saying how you helped him with his activities?

FJ: Before imprisonment obviously.

RL: Yes.

FJ: Yes, when it was still moving ... underground they called it. But not being fully aware of what was happening, except that what I said earlier, distributing notices to outlying districts where his comrades were and I did it willingly, in fact for me it was great excitement on a bicycle.

Tape 2: 51 minutes 5 seconds

RL: But you were never apprehended?

FJ: No, no, I pinned some needles that it would happen any day, but it didn't. While the other friend of mine, Felix, when he joined the socialist group, while it was a socialist group -before my brother joined the Communist League, which he didn't- that friend of mine was also arrested but he was very quickly... that was only the police station where he was arrested, he wasn't sentenced or anything, not to concentration camp, in fact he was released fairly quickly. And then he joined me, you know, for the departure eventually.

RL: You said your brother had to report to the police for a week, you know, for a while and you used to go with him.

FJ: Yes.

R: What was the purpose of that?

FJ: Yes, he said 'you better wait outside, in case I don't come out again'. And that happened for about two-three weeks in succession. It was a sort of ... I don't know what it's called now, when they make the first enquiries at police stations, you know, police level, before it goes to the courts.

RL: So what made you decide, in 1936, to emigrate?

FJ: Decide? Well, the first incentive was of course the letter that I received 'you are no longer allowed to be active in your trade or profession or activity', you know. And then half the Jewish population in Germany and in Leipzig thought of emigrating and, well, one thing led to another, and my father was an old South African, but he wasn't aware of, you know, he was never aware of it. He never bothered, because he could have saved my two brothers if we registered as we were entitled to, at birth, as British subjects. We would have all been saved, as he was himself, and even my mother, who was never to South Africa before. She became British subject by marriage and so the children would have ... But the point is, there was no other choice, you know, either face the worst, or emigrate. And that was decided by the Jewish congregation there and this helping committee, while it was still functioning. It was in a very tall building, some twelve stories, which was very unusual for Germany in those days. Twelve stories, that was build by a Jewish member in Leipzig. He was a fur trader. Now the

fur trade was Leipzig, half of the Jewish people were fur traders. And they became very rich people and so he built that twelve-storey building. It became a landmark in Leipzig, before it changed the whole picture of it, of which we've got a long record. What it was now, what it was in the middle what it was now there before...

Tape 2: 55 minutes 10 seconds

RL: Had, besides the fact that you had to sort of keep changing your jobs and then eventually leave your job, did the rise of the Nazis to power affect you in other ways?

FJ: Only in the way I received reports while I was already living in South Africa to that extent.

RL: I was thinking more when you were in Germany, how did it affect your life?

FJ: Oh, well then it was only a very short period, from 1933-1936. The three years was just the rise of Nazism to power, really, although in 1933 they were handed over power by the then Social Democrats Party who lost grip on the economic disaster which every so-called capitalist country had to go through, you know the boom and the...

RL: Did their rise to power impinge on your life whilst you were there?

FJ: Well I wasn't fully aware of that because when the Nazis came to power, nobody was fully aware of the fact that they would actually succeed to what they turned to, eventually or what they made of it. In fact, Jewish people, including my father, argued with my brother, my older brother, for hours on end, when my brother warned him and said "the system you have now, the Social Democratic system, must inevitably lead to fascism and Nazism, because they got no other way out. They can't hand over power to the left, they have to hand power over to the right." And my father insisted, like 9/10 of the Jewish people did, it would never happen to them. But he was right.

RL: This film is about to end so...

FJ: My brother was right.

Tape 2: 58 minutes 17 seconds

TAPE 3

RL: This is the interview with Fred Jonas and it's tape three. What were you able to take with you to South Africa? What kind of things did you pack and was your packing supervised in any way?

FJ: No, supervision didn't come into it at that stage anywhere but what I did pack was my immediate belongings, some matters that were of great concern to me; literature or papers and documents, letters, but not very much more than that. The only exception was that my father sent me to a place in Dresden where I had a cousin there and his married sister lived in Dresden and they knew that cousin, of course, or perhaps she was a daughter of that couple, I can't remember. They had a gents outfitter shop. Clothing in those days was not of highest quality anymore and my father said I should go to that shop and he will instruct him to fit me out, which they did. How he paid for it I don't know to this day but they fitted me out, not

very much of my liking. For instance a hat, I had never worn a hat in my life and I don't know why I should; but I soon gave it up. I took the hat but I didn't wear it. Well, that was the only outfit and the only items I took with me. Apart from a camera, which was, Roy would remember that much better than I, a box camera called a Leica. That's all I took with me.

RL: Can you describe the day of departure?

FJ: It must have been the end of October, because I arrived in Cape Town before the end of October. That reminds me, yes; it must have been the 15th October because the boat trip took sixteen days in that time.

RL: And how did you feel leaving Germany?

FJ: Leaving? I wasn't fully conscious or aware of it until I saw the whole family at the station saying goodbye to me but until then leaving Germany was to me almost like a holiday. I didn't know that I wasn't coming back again, although the only way one felt about a person was, I'm going in for a new experience. Not realising that this was the beginning of a very different area or stage in my life that lasted very much longer.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 31 seconds

RL: If you can describe the journey?

FJ: First of all, when the train left, we had to stop somewhere to change trains where my friend Felix stopped off at a town about sixty-eighty miles from Leipzig and he met distant members of his family who had also a little department store there and his daughters were of particular interest to him. I did never chance myself, but the point is, then we boarded the train the next day and went off to Munich or rather to Genoa, Italy, but it stopped at Munich. We got off there for a day and a night because Munich was to me a well-known place since my aunt lived there before they emigrated to America and that in itself was a great experience, the time in Munich. But not when we got off there with my friend, because we went to see all the old places again that I knew so well as a child of ten, or eleven, or even younger, nine, when my mother travelled there with me frequently. Now the journey continued from Munich to Marseilles. Now, Marseilles was another experience for me, because there I have seen in the first time of my life a coffee bar. You know, the real equipment that they have for coffee there is quite different to anything I had known before, and I wasn't a coffee drinker, but ... The journey then, from there onwards ... from Marseilles we went off to Genoa, where the shipping company that was booked in Leipzig had already all our details ready for boarding the Italian ship. It was called Giulio Cesari, an Italian ship. Now that journey was a life experience in itself.

Tape 3: 6 minutes 5 seconds

In the sense that we obviously had a cabin together, the two of us. They were very small the cabins and the ship wasn't fitted out like anything nowadays but it was still comfortable enough and it boarded at several places en route and every time before it reached the harbour a band played on that ship, just before they got there. Now why, I don't know. And the tune was so lovely and so was also the gong when it called for meals. But there is one other incident that stands out a lot: there was one German non-Jew amongst the crowd of Jewish emigrants, and for some reasons some of the Jewish members thought that he was a spy and he was followed, every step of him. And I felt quite daft about it to put it simply because what can that one man do and I am sure he wasn't guilty of anything but they had this notion, that

idea that he must be a spy. One knew very little about the whole movement and whatever it entailed on either side. So that was a very interesting voyage. Particularly when it came to the equator, because it had the huge celebration of which I got a big certificate, the big equator celebration. You had to jump into the water and I was dead scared because I couldn't swim. But he could, and he insisted I jump in. And it had taken everything out of me that night but I survived. And we went back to the cabin and it wasn't until another six days on that boat from the equator to reach the first lights of Cape Town. What an experience! And on the way we saw the moon setting. Now I have not seen anything in my life before and I didn't think it was real. The moon appeared the size of this room on the horizon. So apparently it's near the equator, that's where it sets in that way, you see, that you can see the moon in that size. I couldn't believe my eyes. But that passed over until we reached to Cape. Now the lights of Cape Town against the background of the mountains there was a great experience and we finally disembarked and there came a long stage of life. In Cape Town itself we stayed there for a day, because he had family there. Felix, my friend, had distant members of the family. He stayed with them and we were given by the... what is it called, an Association in Leipzig, who organised the whole tour, even the arrival procedure, which was of course handed out to the passengers beforehand, the arrival procedure, in three languages because we didn't know much of English, certainly not Italian, but it was enough for us to follow that. In Cape Town I collected... my train ticket was already on board, sent from Leipzig.

Tape 3: 10 minutes 14 seconds

I took a train to Johannesburg, that was the end of the journey then, but the train to Johannesburg in those days took eighteen hours. After all it's one thousand miles between the two cities. It wasn't a great event, the train journey. It was a slow train, they still had those narrow gates, you know, that they haven't got in Europe, the train lines, but it was comfortable all the same. Second-class obviously. When I arrived ... shall I carry on from there?

RL: Yes.

FJ: When I arrived in Johannesburg, it's called Park Station Johannesburg, at the railway station there, there was my uncle and he helped me to get this car, which was driven by a black chauffeur with white gloves. To me this was unheard of. I have never seen anything like it, I have never seen a chauffeur in my life, nor a black one in particular, and nor one with white gloves, except for royalty was received like that, but for them it was common course. They had a car, what was it, I think a Studebaker was it. In those days an American car, well known. The point is he took me to his house in an area, which was known to Jewish people in Johannesburg and everywhere called Lower Houghton; fashionable place for the rich. They had a beautiful house and there for the first time I met my cousin. Now, my parents had to rely a lot on his financial support at one time, even though my father was actually entitled to the proceeds of that house in Osnabrück. But because he had to borrow money to survive, not like my uncle in Johannesburg who had no such need, it was debited towards his entitlement of his share. And he never got over that until I employed a solicitor in Johannesburg. He was actually a barrister and he set out a whole case for us, but I didn't go very far with it. Though, again, the journey ended at Johannesburg, so from there onwards life changed. He put me up in a very nice guest-house, where for the first time -I couldn't believe my eyes- outside my room there was three bottles of Sun Crush and, you know, cold drinks [laughs], and I thought 'well, what a place South Africa is, you get free cold drinks outside your door!' It was an advertising stand but the point is, I enjoyed it. And that was also the very first time, well, I couldn't speak a word of English, and it so happened that one or two emigrants were there before me and ... this is a very, very long story, if I should carry on with it or ... I also had the

first taste of grapefruit there, I didn't even know what a grapefruit looked like and this taste of grapefruit stays with me to this day. The moment I open a grapefruit, I am back there. Tastes do that, and smells, and so on.

RL: So how did you learn the language?

FJ: Well, when we were still in Leipzig I went to the Berlitz School that was a worldwide known school of languages. Unfortunately they were in a building, four storeys high in Leipzig that had these strange lifts you don't get anymore. They used to call them Paternoster, you know. A Paternoster means forever, it goes on forever. It's cages, beautifully wooden cages built that move so slow that you got enough time where the opening is, to jump in and to jump out.

Tape 3: 15 minutes 29 seconds

Instead of taking my English lessons seriously, I was running up and down the lift this Paternoster. But it helped me a little bit, the English preparation school I would call it, for the language. And coming to Johannesburg, the first date with another emigrant family from Germany, they came from another city but they would often help us with English translations as much as they knew. And it didn't take very long to pick up the language. In fact Felix and me, we threw in German and English here and there and we were competing with one another since. So, it took a few years but some people still ... when I used to go back to South Africa at one time and visited my old acquaintances and friends, and one of them said 'Oh, I do remember your lovely German accent'. But it wasn't so lovely at all.

RL: So, did you continue to stay at the boarding house?

FJ: No, as I said that's the time I mentioned before when my friend and I took a room somewhere to let. From there onwards my journey continued, when my aunt's brother happened to be in the dress fashion trade. He introduced me to a big department store in Johannesburg where again my lack of language and the qualification they didn't need. Their display art was very different in style and character on a different level, so they didn't need me for that, they had enough 'window-dressers' they used to call them, not display artists. Well, I was a window dresser in that sense but it came under the heading of display artist. When I realised that I had great difficulty language-wise and emigrants were badly treated or rather the window dressers were badly treated by those who exploited them. Now I tell you what they did, it was very strange. There were several department stores, little ones, and little shops and a drugstore concern that had different stores in every city, and they said 'we can get free window displays and all we do is we ask these six or seven window dressers we know by now to do a trial window for us.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 38 seconds

So they had for two months going beautiful display art which was never seen before because all they used to do in the past was put the goods in and the price ticket on. Now that was window dressing. Now, taking on a completely different character, strangely enough, a lot of companies exploited that. Eventually, when we realised that we were being exploited that way because we didn't get paid for it, trial window was ... you are not good enough, although they were highly successful. But they got away with it free of charge. I thought to myself 'no, this is no good' I'll start off on my own and that is where the very serious struggle started in Johannesburg. Now that story is interesting, because I went to a smaller town near

Johannesburg, it was called Germiston. We used to call it Reef Town. These towns were spread on the east and west of Johannesburg, several towns, about ten on each side and I went to the nearest on one side, Germiston. What I did there was, I knew I could do sign writing and I saw a lot of shops that had very little inferior boards in their windows to show their name and I approached one of them and said 'would you like...' as much as I could tell him in my words 'a proper sign board?' 'Oh, yes' he said, 'I'll have it'. So I had to buy a brush and some paint and some metal and I started at night in that street -it was one street that had all these shops next to one another- to set up a kind of pedestal table, and I started writing a signboard there. I had fortunately the lights from the window, the electric lights from the window. But soon the lights went off in the night, about ten o'clock there, in that particular window. I had to move to the next one. It had still the lights on that went off at eleven, so I went along that road doing signboards and finishing one of them off. I had to borrow leather somewhere, staple it together and fix the sign to one of them. Couldn't speak the language, but an African, you could approach any African there to give me a hand help and pay six pence for it. And I, oh yes, six pence were worth it. Went up the ladder, and I needed a kind ... a pliers for it to pull out old nails. Very strange coincidence, incident. When he could not understand what I meant, pliers, so they did not know the English word either, so he said in Afrikaans because some of these Africans only speak Afrikaans, not English. They said tong, tong. I said yes, it sounds like the German word, Zange. Zange is the German word for pliers. And he understood, tong, the Afrikaans word. I said oh yes, that's what it is. I'm sure you mean that and he passed it. I pulled the nail out and put up the other sign. Now that was leading to a very highly successful stage, from there onwards, but at a cost. I had no meals until midnight: A man came up when I was still writing another poster, or sign up outside a shop, and he said 'what are you doing here?' He'd never seen someone being so daft to work at twelve o'clock at night on the sand board. He said 'You come with me. I take you to Johannesburg now'. He gave me a meal and dropped me where I was staying and that was the beginning, well the end of that period but the beginning of a new one. Because I thought to myself, there seems to be a need in that town for a lot of display work, a lot of signs and posters. I'll go back there.

Tape 3: 24 minutes 8 seconds

Again I had only two brushes in my hand, a little paint pot. Material I got there, I picked up somewhere, can't remember where. And this sort of developed slowly, gradually, to the stage when someone suggested to me there is an opening at a shop there with ten windows or twelve windows that want a window dresser. I took on that job quickly. It was the time when it was either King George the Seventh who was then taking to the throne; I think it was that one yes. The whole town was decorated for the occasion, the commemoration and all that. And there I came in to my being. I put it up on the roof, the shop windows, and everywhere around the windows. There'd never seen anything like it. That was the beginning of much a different period again; it took a year or two. Until I really got seriously into window dressing there for all these shops, mainly outfitters. And a load of them, that half the street was outfitters that came from Russia, Russian Jews set up there. Some had music store, others had a big timber yard, timber building and paints and tools. That was my survival, the beginning of my survival there. And it's a very separate stage, I mean, if you want me to carry on with that.

RL: Yes, yes....

FJ: I go into details, yes

RL: Well, you touch upon it if not too much otherwise because we have to keep moving on but it's very good...

FJ: Well, it goes on. That finally I reached a stage when it was almost too much for me, you know to cope with so many windows somewhere else. I left that store and started on my own, to look around for individual customers which I found very quickly. Because once I did one display work, the neighbour shop said 'can you do something for me?' and so it went down the whole road. I had full command of that road, on both sides of the road about twenty shops, not all twenty, but here and there and a lot of them. And it came to this stage of fairly high change of mood on the part of these shop owners. That they realised that display work and window dressing was very important for them. I hired or rented a room in a building that had only office rooms and music studios and all that, and set up my own little workshop there. I soon had enough money, but prior to that before I got to that stage I sometimes went without meals, I did not have enough money to buy a meal.

Tape 3: 27 minutes 52 seconds

RL: Where were you living?

FJ: That was in that town.

RL: And you were living there by then? You were living in that town?

FJ: Yes.

RL: You'd moved from Johannesburg?

FJ: Yes, to that town when I'd set up permanently there. It was quite successful until a German Jewish company found out about one of their shops that was one of their branches - they had branches all along these reef towns. All together about ten twenty of them, both sides of Johannesburg. They had these shops, not only them, but they had friends who ran these shops and this was a wholesaler that supplied them all, in Johannesburg. Incidentally, the name of that company was, a German name, Weil and Ascheim. Now one of the Jewish immigrants quickly translated it. Weil was W-E-I-L and Asch A-S-C-H. He translated it, Weil, he translated it into Will, and Ascheim ... he translated it into a different word, I won't come out with it. Wait a minute. But all together, the two names together then read Will and Toresausen. Now ... Toreshausen. But this ending Hausen is a typical Jewish German ending of a name. So he called it Will and Toreshausen. This was very amusing, really. They were two twin brothers that came out with it. Very talented comedian sort of style. Brothers, anyway, that is a long story about them. But finally when I had this studio myself, it did not take long until one of these chain stores -on both sides of Johannesburg reef towns- had an old car. He was doing so well and he needed a new one and he said -I came by train to all these towns- 'why don't you get this car, I've got a car for you'. Well how much is it? He said 15 pounds. Well I did not have fifteen pounds, that's quite a lot of money. He said: 'Well you can do window dressing for me for a while'. That would be set off against the cost of that car. So I had a car, first time in my life, a car. My god, what an experience.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 29 seconds

It was not long after that that I got a call from my parents. 1938, just before the Kristallnacht. Then they had to leave; otherwise they would have also ended up in the concentration camp. But my father, he remembered his British nationality. Only then, you know, when he could

have saved his sons. I went to Pretoria, the main seat of the government, the South African government at the time. I did a search for them, for his old document, of naturalisation, to become a British South African citizen. I got that certificate 40 years on. So I wrote a quick letter to him, to Leipzig, to say that he had to go to Hamburg, to the South African consulate there and get his passport. He did. My mother was immediately given, put her name on the same passport. So they arrived in 1938. I obviously received them in my car. They could not believe it. They could not believe it. See I took them all the way to Germiston where I've already set up heir flat, for them and myself, in new building on the ground floor. I hardly had enough money to get back for petrol, but we managed just about to scrape through to get there. My mother was so proud of me and the car. You know that we had hardly any money to buy anything, so can you imagine how the scene ... My mother steps out of the car to go to the grocery to buy half a pound of sugar. Like a lady you know.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 32 seconds

Oh god. That sort of experience goes right through the time they were there with me. But things improved a lot in stages over the period. My father had only one suit when he came out and hardly anything to wear so he had to have a suit made. It all came out of my earnings but he helped a bit, he collected the money at the end of the day, he went right to these shops where I worked and he was the money collector. And on that we lived, three of us including the rent for flat and having it fitted out by the carpenter, just temporarily.

RL: So when in 1938 did they arrive?

FJ: I think it was in November '38. I'm not quite, no wait, when did the war broke out, it was in September. So they arrived just...

RL: '39. War was '39.

FJ: '39. Yes September '39.

RL: So did they come in '38 or '39?

FJ: No '39, they arrived in '38.

RL: They arrived in '38, when in '38?

FJ: It must have been August, September.

RJ: Before Kristallnacht?

FJ: Oh yes, they just managed to get out just before Kristallnacht. That's right that was the reason why they decided.

RL: What about your younger brother?

FJ: He kept saying all the time through, from the time the older one was imprisoned, that he would never leave the country until he, Horst, was going to be released. He was released but he was not. He paid a high price for that, the ultimate price. Before that came a letter from him, I can't talk about it, I can't talk about it. [cries]

RL: Had he been working in Germany? What was his job?

FJ: Yes, he was learning the trade in that same department store where I worked last, the big one in Leipzig where I was sent eventually from the first one. And he was in the department of electrical items, electrical appliances and so on. Only an apprentice; he was in his first year of apprenticeship. Until, as I say, the Nazis walked in there. I had a lovely friend, a girlfriend in the same department store. We became very, very close and friendly. Her name was Brotsky. They were originally a family from the Ukraine, the whole family. I became very, very close to her. But when I had to leave for that other place, Bautzen, that was the time, the time when he had to take over that girlfriend of mine. And he sends that pathetic letters -you know, that was my money, the little bit of money I earned there, that was a little bit more than in my apprenticeship period- I should send a little bit of money, because she wants to buy a bag for her hand bag. It was the first hand bag that was made with a strap over it, over the shoulder, which was so fashionable, that he couldn't resist it. But the long story about that is, if I should still talk about that, is that, eventually, he got married to her. That was after my parents left already; until then he'd stayed with my parents in Leipzig. Then came a pathetic letter from him to us, to the parents and myself. And he said you must get me out immediately, get me out immediately, you know, and so it was a matter of money. And again not having only to support myself and the parents I had to now raise a loan to pay, to send money to a refugee committee in Holland, that was the only last possibility. That money was confiscated when the Nazis walked in there.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 19 seconds

RL: So was he in Holland by then?

FJ: No, no.

RL: He was in Germany?

FJ: He was in Germany, this committee was in Holland. You know that was the only source, financial source, a bank that was able to receive money from outside for refugees from Germany that wanted to leave the country. But it did not work. The Nazis came in before and confiscated everything including the money. So that was gone. Then of course we heard only one more report from him and then suddenly it stopped. There was no more news from him for five, six, seven years. And it was then that my mother or my father or both, my parents, started enquiring at the Red Cross of what records they have and so on. And it finally turned out that he and his wife -her name was Liesl, she's on the photograph there behind us- were both taken to Riga concentration camp there, and from there they were separated, he was sent to Auschwitz. [Cries]

RL: Did they have any children?

FJ: According to a member of the Jewish congregation in Leipzig, one of the members there happened to meet him and her in a flat where the Nazis ordered them to live, they had to give up their previous residence and they were confined to a so called ghetto in Leipzig. You know one street where all the Jewish people had to live and share rooms and flats and so on. And he had a bit of news about him. I don't know what you asked now.

RL: I said, did they have any children?

FJ: Well that was, he reported that there might have been a child on the way. But she already had TB at the time they were collected there, because of the poor living conditions they had in these flats, shared places.

RL: Coming back to South Africa and to your story in South Africa. So, your parents are now with you and your father is helping you and war breaks out. So, it's 1939, did that affect you in any way?

Tape 3: 42 minutes 15 seconds

FJ: Oh and how. I became very interested in theatre work that was stage design for some reason. And I went to a place in Johannesburg. At first I lived with my parents in Johannesburg in a very small flat where they had a curtain, one room divided by a curtain, where they had their two beds and I had mine in front. That was for a very short period when my father was still trying to earn money here and there. And that was a tragic story about him. But when I -became interested during that time in stage design- I discovered a left club, it was called Left Club. Brilliantly orientated. And they had theatrical performances there. And I was so taken up with it; it was a play they put on. It was about a resistance movement in Vienna, a place near Vienna called Floridsdorf. So they called that play, they gave that name Floridsdorf. And I first met a girl there, who appealed to me and for some reason I must have appealed to her. We became very friendly during that performance and stage work and all that, you see. But she was very left inclined; she was a member of the communist party of South Africa. They were mainly engaged in the problem of apartheid and working partly for the blacks and for the few poor whites who were also exploited by the state. They were so called poor whites, was a whole group of Afrikaners that originated from the Dutch, Holland, you know, time. And they were called the Boers. But some of them were not strictly Boers, they were more British and English and South African orientated, and they also became members of that party, communist party. And when she heard about my background, all of which I described about my brother and myself and so on, she said she's a member; she wants to introduce me to the secretary there so we went up to his office.

Tape 3: 45 minutes 18 seconds

I became a member. And what would happen, obviously, I immediately joined within the party the propaganda group -it was called, propaganda- where they needed banners, signs, show cards, placards and all the rest of it. So then I came into my own being, not fully aware of Marxism or anything, you know. But I learned a bit during the process. So they, there was a Dr Dadoo, an Indian member, who was, he had a very great influence on the party there, he was a good speaker, a very good speaker. Amongst several others, there was also a South African Jewish girl who came also from Poland, I think, or Lithuania, and she married another one who was a Jewish member of the party, and so it became more of a social club than anything else to me. But I took part, you know, as much as I could. And this Dr Dadoo had his own practice in somewhere outside the town centre and opposite he had this big hall where he set up for me and someone else a studio to produce all these banners, show cast, posters, all on a massive scale. Well that I did besides my commercial work, you know, where I was engaged in doing display artwork for shops and windows and other firms in Johannesburg.

RL: Yes, and if you continue on with the ...

FJ: Oh yes, that continues, again that's a story within itself really. The time in Johannesburg, my parents moved to another flat with me, a little bit bigger, and so on, and I had a room with them until ... There was an ex-serviceman's league in Johannesburg. They were all what we used to call the boys from up north, because the South African army sent a lot of soldiers and air force men to North Africa.

Tape 3: 48 minutes 13 seconds

And when they came back, some were very good people I knew and Ann knew. It was a time Ann came from Cape Town to Johannesburg for some reason. You know, she had family there in Johannesburg and she got, she was more inclined to go to Johannesburg. And when I moved out of the flat that I shared with my parents, I joined another young man who came from Belgium, a Jewish member who was interested in theatre work. And when he heard of my talents, he thought 'well he had a room in his flat, would I like to have it?' So I jumped at it. I moved from my parents flat to take that room. And pulled out all the old fashion picture rails and set up a modern style room, all in ... I don't know if you've ever heard of that word Bauhaus. Now Bauhaus is a particular architectural method that originated in Leipzig and was celebrated everywhere, including by the architect who built the Jewish Museum, and here in England he designed and built the Imperial War Museum in Trafford, somewhere there. Have you ever been there?

RL: Yes

FJ: I'm sure. No, that was his design and he followed the Bauhaus style, which was originated in a place called Dessau in Leipzig, near Leipzig. The point is that I followed that style immediately for that room. Now, while furniture in the olden days were built with a straight vertical line, they were according to Bauhaus at an angle, going from high to low at an angle, which was very attractive. I followed that style and furnished that whole room in modern design and colour. And one day, my friend, this Jack [...] - was his name, who introduced me to the theatre work, he became a very close friend of both of us in the sense that Ann, when she came from Cape Town -she was in the army; she was a nurse in the army, the South African army at first in Cape Town; she was transferred to Johannesburg and that made her come to Johannesburg incidentally.

Tape 3: 51 minutes 24 seconds

And she met one of the patients, she became very very close to, friendly, but he died. Once, one day I came to my flat that I shared with this Belgian chappy and I saw Ann and a friend who was also a member, it was called the Springbok Legion, these were ex-army legion that came from up north back to South Africa. And there were many soldiers amongst them that were our type, you know, sort of thing. They were very progressive in their outlook, and some political but not members of any party or anything like that. But Ann was working as secretary there and this friend of mine Jack Prout was very close to a young girl who also worked at the Springbok Legion as typist, everywhere, this sort of typist. One day when I came home to my room, I saw my friend and these two girls there sitting in my room. You know enjoying themselves and chatting away and I discovered Ann, or she discovered me, I don't know. So that went on endlessly of course. She had her own flat. My mother came over usually to the flat that I shared with that bloke to make up my bed every night. You can imagine, she said how come you have not been to bed, you know the bed is still made. For three days it went on, so you know of course Ann had her own flat. And so it went on and on and on. And finally I was very proud of being able to walk with that young girl who was of

quite a stature and she was very attractive down Elive Street - it was called. It was the central street in Johannesburg, like, let's say like Oxford Street you see. And it had a special character this Elive Street. It was romantic; it was lots of cafes, department stores and lots of entertainment. But it was of course only for the whites. Blacks weren't allowed in that street, they would have been pushed of the pavement if they dare tried. And it was for me a great experience now, I had a girlfriend, I could walk with her, I could show off and so on. Put two and two together and you know what happened.

Tape 3: 54 minutes 30 seconds

RL: What was her family background?

FJ: Lithuanian. Basically they all lived in Lithuania. Not Ann. Her sisters were, two of them, brother and sister, there were eight of them, also came from Lithuania with their parents but three of them were born in South Africa, Cape Town. Ann was the youngest of eight.

RL: Where did you marry?

FJ: In Johannesburg. My parents still had that flat from where I moved out to the other. And we had a rabbi who lived in the other flat where I was to come and do the ceremony for us. My parents insisted, my father insisted. So we got married there and after that we went to the registry office to officially, because he wasn't, that rabbi was not permitted to register your names as in a marriage register, so we had to go to the registry office as well.

RL: What was the date?

FJ: I often say, I remember the day but I don't know why. Now that was the first of September '46, 1946.

RL: So the war had ended by then.

FJ: By then yes, we had a lot of experience together about that war. Because every night, every Sunday night, the party, communist party, and the socialist party and another left wing one and another one, all joined on the ... what was called the city halls steps, it was known as. Now the city hall was in the centre of Johannesburg, a big place, and they had steps leading up to it and there all the speeches were held, and some very brilliant people amongst them, on the one side. But on the other side of that steps, was what was used to be known as Ossewa Brandwag which was the nationalist movement, the forerunner of the apartheid system supporters, really fascist if you want to know. And there was terrible fights that took place eventually.

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

Tape 3: 57 minutes 40 seconds

TAPE 4

RL: This is the interview with Fred Jonas and it's tape 4. I just wanted to ask, you know you just been talking about your marriage, did you belong to any synagogue or any Jewish organisation?

FJ: In Johannesburg? When we got married? No.

RL: Right, did you have any connection with the Jewish community as such?

FJ: Well, definitely yes for the simply reason that in Johannesburg, the Jewish population amongst the whites was about 20% of the whole population there, the whites. Much more than Cape Town. That has changed completely.

RL: And after you married, where did you live?

FJ: Where did I live after the marriage? Well, that is where first of all the Montessori school comes into play in Johannesburg. That is a very long story, including the film we have taken, but when we gave up the school and Ann has never been abroad and I wanted to see my brother again after those twenty-two years...

RL: Well, can you just...on the film we don't know anything about the school at all, so you need to tell me. You got married. Just touch upon what happened after your marriage.

FJ: What happened?

RL: Yes. Where you were working, where you were living, what you were doing?

FJ: I was still in that flat that I mentioned that I shared with my friend, the one who was theatrically minded. And what I did after that is what you want to know now. I still carried on with a lot of my display work for very many shops and so on. I set up a larger studio, a very large studio in fact in a part of Johannesburg where I first discovered that there is a lot in silk-screen printing. Now the silk-screen process is one that substitutes for litho printing a lot. You know where you can do smaller quantities. For litho printing you need a block to set up and that only pays for a thousand upwards. When someone wants two hundred or five hundred, silk-screen process comes into play. Now with my background of artwork, I was very inspired by silk screen-printing and I needed a larger studio for that.

Tape 4: 3 minutes 9 seconds

That was when during the war; the war was already going on, there was a shortage of metal, obviously because all the metal had to be used for other purposes. And I went round to scrap yards to find sheets of metal, small ones. And I was the first one to print Pepsi Cola signboards, signs, you know that were put up in all the shops and stores. So I printed, I've got a whole lot there, Pepsi Cola signs. Finally, apart from many other companies that wanted posters and show cards printed on that scale, you know not ten thousand but up to a thousand or five hundred, that quantity for which screen-printing was the answer. So that went on very well in that big studio. And I also discovered that there was an annual agricultural show in Johannesburg called the Rand Easter Show. Now Rand is the name, the Afrikaans name for reef, and reef means of course the towns around Johannesburg. So it included all that, because the agriculture came from around Johannesburg, not in the city. But the point is that I very quickly got into that business of exhibition work. Now, I have to explain this, what exhibition works really means in a different sense to what is known in England. It's very important because that reflects on the kind of work I did there. In England you get for exhibition stalls, usually a ten-foot by ten-foot square space and a table and something and they all look alike. You know, sit out like a long train, like coaches, you know, one stall next to another. While exhibition work in Europe and in South Africa followed a totally different style. Where, first of all, they were not limited in height so there I got fully engaged with the demand for

exhibition work, design, construction and finally, display. It was highly successful, but a lot of work, working hours for the night at times. In a very large area where they had stalls and lots of space for exhibition, exhibits of all kinds from agriculture to industrial. In that time it was known, British Airways was known for their overseas service, BOAC, it was British Overseas Airways Company.

Tape 4: 6 minutes 29 seconds

They wanted a stall and many others of well-known name, Electrolux and all those that I've still got photographs of, masses of it. And I designed practically half of the stalls that were there, required. And amongst the display artists and exhibition construction companies they had these rewards at the end, you know, who was the best, you know. I got a gold medal for one of the stalls. But it was hard work, very hard work. Sometimes I worked right through the night and Ann helped with it. At that time she was pregnant with Gerald and I had a request from a battery manufacturer who booked a ten foot ten foot stall. He said: 'That is too small for me': I said: 'Well, you've got the height haven't you, a thirty foot high hall'. It was called the Empire Hall. And I said: 'We'll make use of that'. So I've got photographs of that. So I built a tower that looked like a skyscraper. So of course, tapered at the top to give the impression of perspective, you know it's going high, tall. So, although it was only thirty feet it looked like a hundred. So he was very happy with that, very pleased. This one example, and there's about ten different stalls with the same sort of background experience that I can show you, one for Czechoslovakia. Again, strangely enough that for Czechoslovakia, they had an outdoor stall, not in a hall. And it was only a level ground. Well, I thought 'this is most unimpressive, to put a few tables in there and serve your Czech beer, you know, to customers and we must do something else'. So again I used the height, you know, the sky was very high. So I said to them: 'What I can do for you is we put up your name Czechoslovakia'. So you can see from almost every part of the grounds with huge flags and on each flag was a letter C, H, Czechoslovakia reading, you know. It was twenty feet high. I had to borrow or hire a ladder to get to each one of them. I was scared but I managed to fix them, all eighteen letters, Czechoslovakia. After that, someone needed another stall, also outside, only six foot high, and I fell off that ladder. I was taken to hospital with concussion. Johannesburg hospital was a very efficient place for the whites of course.

Tape 4: 9 minutes 52 seconds

RL: Were you still active in the League, the Socialist Group?

FJ: No, I don't think I was active any more because it was very close to the change of government then already and ultimately the party dismantled altogether by itself you see. They knew what was coming and a lot were arrested and a lot were, and I thought to myself 'better get out again'. And I carried on full scale with the exhibition work, display art and silk-screen printing, which wasn't confined just to print on metal for Pepsi Cola but several other well known companies were used then. A man came from England, Peter [...]. I don't know how I met him. He was looking around for business, set up some kind of business in Johannesburg. Apparently he had money. And I don't know how I met him, but he came to the studio and he saw an opportunity. I worked practically without money, only a little bit of income that I had from that work, hard work, although I had some African helpers there, you know they worked the guillotine cutting machine and all that. But he saw the way the land was like and he said: 'Well, I'll invest a bit and we'll start this on a different scale'. Well I was taken very quickly; I was taken up with that. It didn't take long until he said to my foremen 'let's get out of here, we'll start on our own'. He took the foremen away, set up a

new studio somewhere else and left me, but he'd packed up before me. It didn't work, because it wasn't just money or a foreman but he needed ideas, incentive, background. I carried on.

Tape 4: 12 minutes 15 seconds

RL: So did you have people working for you?

FJ: Until that happened I had two Africans working. And this foreman, Afrikaans bloke, he was very, very good. In those days, instead of photographic stencils, we had to do hand cut stencils and with my knowledge of lettering that was quite easy for me. So, a lot was done, not by photographic process as now, screen process. Screens are made by photographic process. And it's not the same quality anymore. In those days it was done by, with, a stencil. Now, you had to cut out every little bit if you want to see that another time. Masses of display art, of show cards, I've got examples of it. They are quite interesting. What was the next?

RL: I was just asking if you employed people but in the meantime what was Ann doing?

FJ: While she was working at a dress factory as secretary and finally she was working, because of her nursing experience, as a dental nurse.

RL: And when were the children born?

FJ: Shortly after that, after we got married. A year later the first child was there, Gerald.

RL: And then?

FJ: Pardon.

RL: And then, the next child?

FJ: Oh yes, the next was when we moved from one place where we had on a very small scale, the Montessori school with only six children. And I said to Ann this is ridiculous 'you've got experience, I can do the display art, I can do all the toys, and tables and chairs and all the rest, produce it all myself', which I did with another helper. Why should we go on, the six of us, with our experience wiping six kiddies' bottoms, you know. We could set up a proper school.

RL: How did this Montessori school begin, how did all that start?

FJ: Yes, I said when we were looking for a nursery school for the first child Gerald in Johannesburg; we were both very disappointed, you know, because once you come with the knowledge of Montessori and you see for a children's toilet only a potty hanging on the wall, or no chairs to sit on properly, or any rest, you know, stretchers for children to rest on. She said 'they sleep on my husband's bed', you know, crosswise six on the bed, so we said 'no, no, that's not for us, not for our son', you know.

Tape 4: 15 minutes 25 seconds

And then we realised that Ann's knowledge of being trained at a Montessori school in Cape Town and my experience with Montessori direct, joined the two in no time. And we started our nursery school in that smaller house that we rented first. And soon there was such a

demand for it that I thought 'no, we've got to look for another place'. Ann was against it. She doesn't like going all out for things, you know, and I did. So I looked around and we found a very beautiful large house and large grounds that belonged to a British, English, woman actually. She gave it up for some reason. We rented it. And then I had to make the lockers for each, and more chairs and tables and all the Montessori equipment, toys, that occasional toy, and that is how it led to it. It grew. It was growing and growing and growing. You know, I did my own poster set up display in shops to advertise the school and in garages and in filling stations and so on. And we had suddenly, the demand was so overpowering, that we had to buy a little, what was known then Willie's station wagon. That was the old American make, Willie's station wagon. They were basically used during the war and later converted into proper passenger vehicles. We bought one and I put benches in them, took everything out, inside seats, and long benches you know, one on each side and one in the middle for the children. They needed, they only had six-inch bottoms, you know to put four in a row or eight in a row. And that was enough then for a while. But as the demand was growing for it, I had to get a trailer; a trailer is a lot used for carrying passengers you know. But it was specially built for that purpose and we got permission, it was specially fitted out with brakes that were operated from the towing vehicle and so on, and even intercommunication bell, you know, where I was driving the front car with twenty-four children and that Willie's station wagon. We put up a sign on the outside: Montessori Day Nursery. So a man stopped me and he misunderstood nursery and he said 'can you deliver some flowers to us?' I said 'no, we don't deliver flowers and plants, we've got a different kind of plants'. Anyway, that's a side issue. And I soon had to work out; there was great demand from the city.

Tape 4: 18 minutes 46 seconds

We were outside the city. From working parents. And I had to work out a whole route to get from the nursery school to the city, which was a terminal, what we call a bus service, you know for the children, and along the route were either the mothers, ten stops, through all the various parts until we got to the centre. Sometimes the nannies that they employed stopped there with the children so we had to work out a timetable and a route plan and I had to stop here and there and backwards and forwards to pick them up. Morning and evening to bring them back, to take them back, with the final stop in the city for many other mothers to. That's all in that film incidentally. ... So eventually ... I had to extend every part within the rooms and then we had a lounge, a lovely big lounge and a big bedroom and another room for the children, we had to actually use all the rooms for the five different groups, different ages, which is shown in the film. The two to three year olds, the four year olds, the five to six and the six year olds and so on. And so we had to employ teachers, nursery school teachers and Ann was in charge of that part. I was in charge of the office with the secretary and it became a business. A proper large-scale school business.

RL: Did you give up your designing?

FJ: All that I did myself, the lot.

RL: But did you give up doing for other people?

Tape 4: 20 minutes 58 seconds

FJ: Oh no, no, because I was so busy that there was not enough time for anything else. And I had not only work on the Montessori material, which was very extensive. I can explain it in some detail, which is shown in the film again. And the chairs and tables and the locks and

everything else. And the kitchen had to be controlled with an African chef and the food had to be bought once a week at the market. It was a real undertaking the whole thing.

RL: What experience had you had with the Montessori system before that?

FJ: Only when she displayed her goods and her designs, which appealed to me coming from a design section you know, her toys and explained in lectures at this department store, her method, which incidentally is a very interesting method, the books about her, a massive lots of books about the formative years and the way she picked up children in the street and put them in what they called in Italy, a children's house. And she very quickly realised that there's such a potential in these children that are just wasted in the gutters there. So she picked them up and showed them her method of material, it developed into real signs like there were many others like her but not as well known as Montessori. There was one known Pestalozzi, there was one known Froebel, and there was a Russian one Makarenko. And all these are in the same category of tied education.

RL: How big did the school become?

FJ: Well on the register we had about a hundred-ten but attending was for some reason or another - one was on holiday there, another was ill, the next one was delayed for some reason. There were always, attendance was only about between eighty and eighty five, roundabout that in five groups, age groups.

RL: And how long did you run this school for?

FJ: There were two stages. At the highest stage, I got polio. It's normally a child's disease you know, but no children were affected, it was an epidemic around South Africa and it went as far as you know the towns, not fifty miles apart but some were three hundred miles apart. They came from that far, although it was an epidemic, from that far distance between them and Johannesburg was affected with about four or five cases amongst the Europeans.

Tape 4: 24 minutes 15 seconds

We had to call a doctor when I landed on the floor and I had terrible pains in my knees. And he after lots of examinations and prescribing tablets over the telephone before he managed to come out to the place from the city, Doctor Ore was his name. He misdiagnosed and he said 'it's appendicitis'. He had connection to a private hospital in Johannesburg. He said 'I'll see you there in the morning'. I must take a taxi in tonight. And I arrived there. I don't know how it came about, I somehow in that state, didn't trust it. I said 'it's a private hospital, I think I'd like to go over there, it's a general hospital'. I couldn't get out of it, I insisted, I don't know what it was, sheer sense of ... not reasoning, the opposite of it, but I ended up in that hospital, general hospital. And because of his wrong diagnosis, if he would have operated the next morning, god, I might not have been there to tell the story. The next morning, because of all this wrong information they had accepted there at the hospital, it all took a bit of time until they took, what I call a lab or spinal injection to find out if they do a laboratory. I was already in such a state that I could not see anything or anymore because of all the medication and tablets that were wrongly prescribed, you know. I was in a terrible state. But I was quickly removed from that emergency ward to isolation hospital. Unfortunately, the ward where I was supposed to go back to after the twenty-one days incubation period had either missals or something like that there, you know, so I could not go back. And my twenty-one days were up

at, so they said I had to stay another twenty-one days and that was a terrible time, a terrible time.

Tape 4: 27 minutes 36 seconds

RL: So were you able to work when you finally came out?

FJ: No, I actually wanted, I asked for early discharge at my own responsibility, which was only about a couple of weeks prior to that and he searched and he said 'well, we have to agree, you can go home'. But he gave me ... I had to wear a splint for the right arm. I walked through the town with that splint for weeks. In the meantime I managed to get a driver for the bus, we had by then already a little bus and the trailer was hitched onto the bus to transport all these children. And this driver, a very good man, he managed to find a route, I don't know how, you know, but it was on the sketch, on the plan, and the times that we fixed there, different times for each stop. So when I asked for this early discharge, I made a mistake with that school. And I thought, now that we've lost so much now, during that time, I'm going all out for it to recover it. And that was probably a mistake. Because that was the time between the time when we had between sixty and seventy children on the register and it grew to around one hundred-ten. That was a big mistake. Because there comes a stage in business where you can go to a certain level and when you go beyond that, you have a completely different set up to organise. I missed that, I thought we could do it on our own and it didn't work, so we quietly, very soon, that was a stage when I said, you know, first of all, there were three reasons why we gave it up. That was one of them. The business went downwards, went down. But we sold the school to a Jewish woman we met, and she joined a German sister, hospital sister to run the place. They didn't succeed and they quickly gave it up, altogether.

Tape 4: 30 minutes 24 seconds

And we took that opportunity to take the little bit of money that we got from the sale and I said to Ann 'well, you've never been out of the country, I have to see my brother, it's so long ago, and I go back to the place where I was born and I got to see that and so on. We went, we had a bit of a hard time because with the two children we went first to Cape Town from where the boat, Unicastle it was, where we had to embark, and Ann said goodbye to her whole family there. We stayed with them for a night or two before that. And then we went aboard.

RL: When was this?

FJ: This must have been in 1957. Now, the boat was a very different experience to the one that I came on, very different. It was an English company, the Unicastle line, it was well known. It was practically the only one that existed to go all that way from actually Southampton to Cape Town. The experience on that boat is a story in itself. Now we've never experienced anything, you know, the South Africans had this attitude of a black waiter must come and help, 'just do this', and he comes, he runs. A lot of South Africans who left at the same time tried to do that. The English waiter just waiting there, they took no notice of them. You know we realised that we were no longer in South Africa. What an experience. But they were very nice waiters and stewards and finally they realised we were not made of Afrikaners' style, type. They were taken up with the two children, very much so.

Tape 4: 33 minutes 5 seconds

RL: Which was the second child?

FJ: Vicky.

RL: When was she born?

FJ: On the 24th of December 1949.

RL: Right, so you arrived back, where did you land?

FJ: From Southampton we went to London and we went to a small guesthouse in Russell Square, where...

RL: Did you not go back to Germany at that stage?

FJ: Not at that particular stage but I had to make my way to Germany because the purpose of going to Europe, overseas we used to call it, was A, for Ann to see the country, B, for me to see my brother and check on the younger one, which I could still not accept that he was no longer there.

RL: You landed in England?

FJ: Yes.

RL: So this was the first time in England?

FJ: Yes.

RL: So where did you land?

FJ: On the ship you mean, that was Southampton that was the route you see Southampton-Cape Town.

RL: And you went then to London?

FJ: Yes.

RL: And where did you stay?

FJ: At a very small guesthouse in Russell Square. And they had for the first time a television set in the basement. I'd never seen a television set before. Because all the cinemas in Johannesburg belonged to a Greek big investor, you know he had full command of all the cinemas there and television was already known of course. In fact, I experienced when I was a very young boy in Leipzig the first television broadcast between two places, over a large square, one was a post office and the other was a café, no, the other was a university building. And they introduced for the first time the technology of television. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was very primitive; the screen was flickering and very primitive. But I was told at the other end there was a man sitting playing the guitar and that you could see him at the university. I thought there's something not quite right there, you know, but that was the beginning of television on a very low scale, you know. It was amazing that I was lucky enough to experience that, great experience that was for me. Anyway, that does not come in to the story now. At that guesthouse that was, when I saw television in a very different way, you know, it was at a different level then, but I've never experienced programs on that television, the first

one I saw was an experiment, and this was a real program. With this actor, what's his name again, the Russian actor, he became so famous in some of these films that we saw twenty years ago, they still show them now, oh dear, I've forgotten.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 50 seconds

Roy (Cameraman): Ustinov?

RL: Ustinov?

FJ: That's him, Ustinov. That's quite right, Ustinov. What was his first name?

Roy (Cameraman): Peter

FJ: Peter Ustinov, that's right. Now, he was the first one, when he was a young man he was an announcer at that time. When I went to the basement to see television.

RL: So where did you go from the guesthouse?

FJ: Yes, now that was when we had to find a way of how do I get to the German Democratic Republic, the GDR, because we had no idea what was the difference between what they used to call the BDR, Bundesdeutsche Republik, you know and GDR, German Democratic Republic, which was a combination of the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party joined together into one after the war. In opposition to West Germany, when the whole country was divided, that was long before the Wall was put up. But we of course had the advantage that we could move, there was strict control, you couldn't go from one to the other without a pass or something special pass. But we could move because of the South African passports from one to the other freely. So we did, we often went to West Berlin. But when I met my brother there ...

RL: But first of all how did you get from England over?

FJ: Yes, that is a long route. Because you could not go direct to the East German places, you know, there was no, there were border control everywhere, but we did not know that it should have affected us. But we did not know that until we got there. So we went around about way and this is it. When first from London, we took a train to Hamburg; from Hamburg we took a flight to Berlin. They only had one airport then, it was called Tempelhof, that was the only one in Berlin, now they got three, or four they got now.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 18 seconds

The point is, when we got there we had to find the roundabout way, how do we get across the border into East Germany before we knew that we could just go freely. So we took a very long roundabout tour that my brother suggested. In other words, we should take a taxi to the border control point that was known as Checkpoint Charlie, American and GDR, East Germany. And finally we took, I think, yes it was taxi, I think, or two trains -I can't remember that exactly- there was a tube train that was operated separately east and west, although it was all one before but they closed all the borders underground as well. And I think we took a tube train there and arrived at a place opposite a place called the Presse Club, that was a club for the publishers of newspapers, newspaper publishers. Now he, my brother, was already engaged as journalist, and I think he was appointed head of that publishing firm in a small

place in the north-east of Germany and he had free access to that club where the publishers met and he said 'we'll meet you there'. So, there he was, standing outside for the first time we saw one another again.

Tape 4: 41 minutes 31 seconds

RL: How had he survived?

FJ: He? Very long story. Because ... right, I'll try. He learned his lesson in the hard labour prison and he learned to know the prison warders, how to behave, how to flatter them, how to survive, as he did. And when he landed at concentration camp, he applied the same method. And because he was not arrested only as Jewish inmate but as a communist, he was very quickly polished for doing certain work, and I think it had to do with electrical installations that he knew nothing about but he managed and he also knew how to deal with the camp wardens, you know the real Nazi types, because he learned his lesson in prison. And that is how he somehow survived. He organised resistance movement within the camp but he saw a lot of our very best friends being shot, gassed or given their last rite, you know.

RL: Which camp was this?

FJ: He first was sent to Sachsenhausen and then he went through four other camps, moved.

RL: And where was he when he was liberated?

FJ: Oh, the last concentration camp was somewhere in ... it wasn't very far from the women's camp Ravensbrück, but there was another one, Buchenwald I think it was. There he met on the discharge a Czechoslovakian girl who was also released at that time by the Russians. That was the Russian side, where they liberated the concentration camps. And first it was the American, but when the Russians moved in and said 'you go to the west, we stay' and they took over that whole section of the GDR. Then he was employed by the Russians as, when he was liberated, as looking after the anti-fascist section there, which the Russians very quickly set up again, that was already existing long before the war in Germany, the anti-fascist movement, and finally he was appointed as police chief in that part of the Russian sector.

Tape 4: 45 minutes 6 seconds

One part of it. That part was called Thuringia. Or the German word Thüringen. Now there he became police chief because he was well experienced in all sorts of qualifications, you know, that qualified from what he learned in the past. So he was given certain privileges, obviously and he ultimately looked after the entertainment part of a factory that produced chemicals, a well known, very big company. Unfortunately he got a bit fresh with one of the employees there and he was soon discharged [laughs], and he joined a newspaper producer in a little town and that was the very first time where he accommodated us in a very expensive guesthouse, run by the Russian authorities under East German supervision, and Ann and I were treated as princes and princesses there, you know, because coming from South Africa to a condition like this, we have to be specially cared for. We were in clover.

RL: How did it feel?

FJ. That was the very funny thing about that. He was given a very nice flat, too, but we didn't stay with him because it wasn't big enough, he had two children. You know, fruit was very

scarce in that part of the country in those days for a very long time, imported fruit, and for apples you had to queue up somewhere, but oranges was a very unknown, you know, for a long time, during the war, before it was but at the end of the war there were no oranges or anything like it, bananas were not known, but there was one particular orange that came from South Africa, it was called Outspan. That was a particular product name for the oranges from South Africa, so because he was in that privileged position, he was one of the few who was allowed to buy apples, bananas and oranges and so on. And when we came to his flat, very surprised because we knew they had nothing like that, but he had a plate full of apples, bananas and oranges.

Tape 4: 48 minutes 37 seconds

And I said ‘where do you get oranges from?’ he read the name ‘Outspan’ on it. He said ‘they come out of Spain?’ and I said ‘no, we know them, they come from South Africa’. Such little experiences, we had such a lot of and a lot of fun with, you know. It was quite extraordinary what we were faced with and what we had to accept and there were massive examples like that that I can go into detail.

RL: How did it feel being back in Germany?

FJ: Well, first of all we didn’t feel like Germans, you know, we were still fully recognised and felt ourselves as South Africans. But Germany to Ann was a completely strange world, to me it was completely changed somehow a different world. For one thing in particular, that we have never seen snow in South Africa, we had arrived in the middle of winter in Hamburg and we had never seen, I can’t remember such a sight there, were motorcars parked all around the road and they were loaded with snow higher than the car itself. That I will never forget. Such a sight I haven’t seen for twenty-two years, completely outgrown of it.

RL: How did you feel towards the Germans?

FJ: Nothing at all. For one thing to me, West Germans and East Germans were Germans, you know, I didn’t know a difference, I didn’t see a difference, in fact I didn’t even know what was the basic difference between the two, that they have any borders or border control or something like this, we never bothered about or thinking about that. We just went to Germany to see my brother that was the main object and so on and Ann wanted to see the rest of the world. We went to other countries; we went there on our way to Italy and so on, before we actually settled there.

Tape 4: 51 minutes 12 seconds

We settled in Germany at the invitation of my brother for two years. That is when I went back to the department store where I was thrown out. It was then run by the East German state. It became a totally different kind of store, but still retained some of the character that inspired me in the first place. Now, when the wall came down and the West took over the whole lot, there were two very significant items of buildings that were taken over: the one was the main station of Leipzig, which was the central point for the whole of Europe. So, therefore it was a terminal station and they went East-West and centre, the trains, you know, with twenty-two platforms. It was a construction of a station that was more of a monument, it was enormous, quite enormous. Now that’s a very long story in itself because when the West took over and there was such an enormous space, you know, first it went downstairs and then it went up several stairs, stone stairs, beautiful stone-stairs, all monumental, the whole building, the whole construction there, on three levels, basement which was basically for consignment of parcels, packages and so on, and then it was the first part that had all the restaurants and so on

and then was the platforms itself. I show it to you later. It was really like a monument the whole place, very large. And when the West came in, they took the three levels, the basement, the ground floor and the upper one and they built an extra one to make it three. And it's become a centre for all the shops and cafes and restaurant that you can imagine. Each had a very large area for it. Very lively place. Crowded, with lifts and escalators in it, it was unbelievable what they made of it. To build a whole new level into such a building was quite an undertaking because it was miles long, deep and wide.

Tape 4: 54 minutes 8 seconds

RL: Now you were telling me how you went back to the department store...

FJ: Oh my god, yes. I had to work, I had to find work somewhere, you know, because Sonia was on the way, pregnant, and my brother immediately sorted that we get the best place for it, you know, first of all a place to stay and live and secondly for the confinement. So he sent Ann first to a nursing home, which was basically the privilege of the GDR high command and the Russians and so on. And the service and the equipment and everything was first class, like you never found in England or South Africa or anywhere, because it was basically for what you could call in Eastern German terms, or Russian at that time of the occupation forces as 'elite'. So they made a lot of fuss about her and that was the first time they introduced the Pavlo method of birth, where they had to do certain exercises, which are now known of course, the Russian method. And she was given all the privileges you can imagine, including, milk was short in those days, and they were given a special ration of milk, that was actually only for Russian high-command soldiers. They made such a fuss of when Sonia was born, you can't believe it.

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

Tape 4: 56 minutes 9 seconds

Tape 5

RL: This is the interview with Fred Jonas and it's tape 5. So what work did you do in Germany whilst you were living there?

FJ: Well, first I did quite a bit of ... no, wait a minute, I went to ... with my brother Horst around several places where they did screen printing and they weren't very helpful. And the reason for it was very similar to the same reason that I experienced in the place of work that I've finally joined and I felt no better than to go to that store where I was dismissed under the Nazi regime or when they came to power. It was a department store of course, because I thought it would be interesting to see again what they have of it. And what they have made of it was quite surprising really. First of all, they had a very poor selection of consumer goods and so on, but at the same time it was enough to cater for what they classed as necessities, you see, no luxuries, no different products of the same item, different names ... theirs was much more rational – so was every other section of the whole store, particularly when it came to display works. It was all concentrating on propaganda and banners and so on. But it gave me a bit of an opportunity. First of all, I thought I'd go back to the display department where I lost my opportunities in the first place. Well, that wasn't possible; it was already well taken care of by those who came before me, who never left with us, to newcomers, since during that time -after all it was such a long period- but one of them that I admired such a lot when I was an apprentice there so many years before that, was still there,

and he was quite an interesting chap. He was very highly artistically-minded, he did a lot of work at home and he realised that I was one of those coming back, but he saw a bit of competition there, you know, what could I come up with. And finally instead of display art work, where he was in charge of that department then, which was earlier controlled by a chief display artist with his secretary and so many other staff and all the window dressers they called them, and each window dresser had an apprentice assigned to them, they had a big factory like carpentry workshop, all needed for display art. I did say that before, and now they realised I got the qualities of a silk-screen printer.

Tape 5: 3 minutes 40 seconds

But they didn't have silk-screen printing ever before in that store or anywhere around, they had no facilities for it, so they showed me the poster writers department in another building, and I went in there and I saw six men, ticket writers, writing the same show card for six different floors, you know, they had six floors. I thought that is silly, six men working and they don't ... and this whole new system depends on rationality and on quick turnover at the lowest cost? So, instead of six men doing ten posters a day, I can do sixty posters alone, one man, by silk-screen process. So they, the management, the people in charge, realised that much to the disgust of those six people doing poster work by hand, and that created an immediate friction there for me and for them. It grew to such an extent, although I had started a whole department of screen printing, and he gave me some assistance there, the display artist in charge, he couldn't resist it this sort of thing, but he didn't want to fall out with the ticket writers either. So I saw the whole problem there. There was so much opposition to the whole system that they had no hope of coping with it. On a small scale, like in that department store, right up to the highest level of the economy, you know, when they had these huge banners, you know, every building had a banner there 'we overtake the west with our socialist system and we will overtake them per capita, per person'. In other words three times over, but obviously such things didn't work, because for one thing, you can't ... there is nowhere on the Marxist theory 'establish socialism in one country!' It's like the capitalist world works together. They set it up the whole western world, you know, they cooperate, and that was also the Russian failure, you know, to think that they can have such a system in one part of the world. But that's beside the point now.

Tape 5: 6 minutes 29 seconds

So I sat up the studio for silk-screen printing and in no time that grew to quite a size. I printed on their delivery vans their names, and outside companies wanted to give me orders, for example the city council wanted town plans that they could display along the main roads of the inner city showing streets and name plates, and that was all produced by silk-screen process in no time. They had very limited means for the production of it because while I had a studio with all the facilities way back in South Africa, then I had to use a basement somewhere to clean the screens with a hosepipe, which was to me not known at all, instead of equipment to use for it. But it worked, and finally I became an enemy there – competition to the others. And we were so much at loggerheads between the two departments that I thought 'no, this is not for me, now I can see the whole thing through', you know, the fallacy of such a policy. And it also happened at the time that some of the authorities, particularly those in charge of the commemorative meetings of the concentration camps when they reopened them for foreigners to visit and so on, that they needed interpreters. They sent me a letter said 'well, you can speak German, you can speak English, we need interpreters'. So, I left that store, screen printing was dropped. They carried on with six men doing one poster at a time, and I joined this force of interpreters. We had a number of English interpreters as well, and French,

Italian, Russian ... now the first meeting I had to do interpreting for was when the chief of an African country, his name was Lumumba, was murdered, and in commemoration of that, he was freedom fighter, the GDR organised a very big event to commemorate the event and there was a French interpreter and he said 'you can speak English, would you like to sit in this cabin there and ...' and I said 'What? I have never done it in my life before!' 'Come on now' she said, she put the earphones on me, I saw the speaker and all of a sudden it worked. You know, broken German, not correct English translation of it either, but it worked.

Tape 5: 9 minutes 44 seconds

It was good enough for them, you know, there was at least one English-speaking interpreter. Marvellous. And that grew into size because I was suddenly approached from all sides, you know, when this spread, this idea, finally, it ended up with taking a whole English delegation of twenty-one visitors to the re-opening for one of the concentration camps. A commemorative meeting when they reopened. And there was Paul Robeson's wife and another one, all in that group, and I do all the interpreting for them [cries] Halfway through, I broke down ... at this concentration camp I couldn't do it ... But it worked for a while for not only that purpose, in concentration camps -I went to two-three of them, including this Ravensbrück one, the women's concentration camp and several others- but soon I was also asked to do interpreting for congress, for exhibitors in a commercial field, and that worked. And someone, a publisher, realised, that we had quite a lot of knowledge of South African conditions and they were of course interested in the freedom fighters, you know, so we were welcome guests there. Ann was teaching English and a little bit of history of the South African liberation movements at the University in Leipzig for a while, and we have a wonderful letter from the principal professor there, inviting her to a party and all that, and we were in [...].

Tape 5: 12 minutes 22 seconds

And therefore we were entitled to a flat that was normally not given to ordinary citizens there, while we first stayed at a place that a woman sublet two rooms for. Now, Ann has never seen, we had a cold fireplace in Johannesburg, you know, when it was really cold, but in the old days, and right up to that period, coal was still delivered by men with a whole big sack on their shoulders and they dropped in the basement, but when Ann saw the room they had, these tiled fireplaces in the wall, built-in, you know, unmovable, and the first thing she said was she would like that moved to the middle rather [laughs] and they realised that she is not from here. And the men came with the bag of coal and wanted to drop it in the basement, but Ann said 'no, you can drop it here' [laughs]. That woman had a parquet floor, and they dropped it on the parquet floor. She was up in arms, that woman, you know. We didn't realise what was going on. So, this was one of the experiences we had there and there are dozens of those similar incidents and experiences.

RL: How long were you in Germany?

FJ: That was two and a half years.

RL: Did Ann work while she was there?

FJ: What did she do? ... I don't think she did actually, she was with the child always, she had Gerard and Jolly and the youngest, Vicky was born there. She was at a nursery school just across the road where we had this flat, nice place. She was doing something, I can't remember

what it was actually, no, I can't remember anymore, she did something. But not much, she had the three children, obviously.

RL: You know, as I asked before, how did you feel towards the Germans that you were living with? How did you sort of view them, you know, in terms of what had gone on in the war?

Tape 5: 15 minutes 13 seconds

FJ: Well, since I knew, and I was grown up there, before, when I was up to eighteen, well, I mean I didn't experience eighteen years, because you had to be three years old to remember, so let's say fifteen years I remember. I didn't find much change in them, because after all it was long passed the Hitler period, and particularly the opposition to it that I met in the first place until I met the West Germans. But as I said before, to me Germans were Germans. You could take all the West Germans into East Germany and they'd pray Stalin, or you could take all the East Germans into West Germany and they would pray the head of the state there, I don't know his name, what was. There was no difference. Now as far as the whole lot is concerned how I felt towards them, you know, I still could not have much feelings for or against, because after all, to me, there were still the same people. Because I did not see them during the war, I did not see them during the time when the country was divided into two, it was already divided. And as I said, to me there was no difference. One naturally had feelings there all the time, but I must say, more so before we got there than when we got there. It sort of left no impression. You were conscious of what was going on but more by direct means than by thinking about it when you are not there.

RL: Did you have any connection with the Jewish community in Germany?

FJ: When we went back there?

RL: Yes.

FJ: Oh, definitely yes.

RL: In what way?

FJ: Now in Leipzig, one of my calls was there to go to the Jewish congregation offices. It so happened that one of the assistants there, or rather helpers, happened to know my younger brother, because he lived in the same flat that was given to him afterwards. But when he became a member of the Jewish congregation, he was moving out to some other place. But not being deeply religious at all ourselves, we had no other interests really. And our interests were divided between the best we could get out of it, which we did actually, in so many ways.

Tape 5: 18 minutes 9 seconds

Thinking about the very fact that we were regarded as foreigners, which we were in a way, you see. But other than that, when we went to West Berlin, there was a very different side to it. For one thing, my parents wanted to see my brother as well. So, when they lived in South Africa, they lived there for twenty years as well, coming back a second time, my father. Incidentally he said, when he came back after forty years, he says nothing has changed since his time. But a lot has changed, because I remember him telling us lots of stories from his younger days there, to what he found then. For instance he was riding on horseback and I was riding a motorcar, you know.

RL: So did you parents revisit Germany?

FJ: They revisited Germany to stay with my older brother again. He invited them actually like he invited us. He was in that position that he could afford it, you see.

RL: But did they just come on a visit as opposed to coming back to live?

FJ: No, on a visit. But there was another side to it. When we went to what was known as the GDR. What made them come? Oh yes, they did not know how long we were going to stay, you see. They didn't know that we would eventually leave again, come to England. But they didn't know that, they thought because of the invitation of my older brother we would stay there for a very long period, which we had no intention. In fact they wanted us to take on the GDR German nationality. There was nothing doing you know. Give back the German nationality and then we would have become a German national. And we said no, nothing doing. We left. But the point is, when the parents didn't know it, they came over to stay in West Berlin, they took a flat there. But my father became so ill during that time, he had, what I had recently, a stroke. And then he could not survive there. Eventually he was taken to hospital there, and there he died. So my mother couldn't move any more. She had to remain in that flat in West Berlin. She eventually had to go to a Jewish old aged home, in West Berlin again.

Tape 5: 21 minutes 11 seconds

RL: She never returned to South Africa?

FJ: No she didn't, she didn't. But we set up then a school of English for foreign students in West Berlin, Ann and I. It was an opportunity. And the three children were with us. Now, the school was very successful. It's a story in itself; it covers several volumes, very, very successful. Again it grew into quite a size because it filled the gap between the large-scale schools like Berlitz School and those private tutors. So we filled that gap which had a tremendous demand for it, and in no time we made it. We earned a lot of money there.

RL: Did it have a name?

FJ: Yes, GB English. As opposed to American English, GB English. It became a household name there. Now the thing is, we also, in addition to teaching there, we had three teachers and I, the secretary there, and I organised the whole thing, with the proper layout and all the rest. Then I realised that these students we had, some were Russians, but most of them German, amongst them professionals, teachers and all the rest of it, that they wanted to do a finishing course to get the oxford certificate. So, I organised flights to England for finishing courses. And I stayed back in London again. Ann was staying with the secretary in Berlin to carry on. And that school was feeding some of the students who were coming to England. We had to book flights and everything. And I had to take them round to other schools for finishing courses. I had to take them on excursion and outings. I had to organise their meals. And all the money went into other pockets, you know, that I organised. I thought that we can do all that ourselves under one roof. So we started a ... How did that work? Let me think back ... That was, I'm mixing it up with South Africa and Montessori now. Getting it mixed up. We bought with the money we made in Berlin; we bought a house near Reading, a place called Mortimer. And that was, I show you a picture of that later when it's appropriate, that house was used by the council. A very big place, a country house with two and a half acres. And we bought it for

a fairly low price because it was empty for three years. During the war, that house was occupied by Queen Wilhelmina, the Dutch Queen, while her country was occupied by someone else.

Tape 5: 25 minutes 10 seconds

So, we thought this was an ideal place for accommodation. It had a dormitory with sixteen rooms, for the students there, the nursery school. No, not for the students, for nursery school staff and children. And there were nine bedrooms upstairs and about six rooms, reception and lounge. And everything was great, fantastic. It was in such a bad state of repair because it was empty for three years after the council, after Queen Wilhelmina went back to her country and the council took it over for a nursery school, which did not succeed. It was too expensive. They had fifteen staff there, in a house that joined the same grounds and they gave it up. They closed that nursery school. And so it was advertised for 65,000 pounds. Now 65,000 pounds is worth several millions now on that place, that particular place. So we stayed there and we had all the students coming from Berlin and finally I took a lot of overflow from another school nearby who came for summer courses, like language courses. And it filled up in no time.

RL: So you moved back to England or you moved to England I should say?

FJ: Yes, yes.

RL: When did that happen?

FJ: After that time in Berlin, when we gave up that school all together. I can't remember the year now. I can if I refer to my notes, but better not. I get entangled in that. It must have about ... if Ann was present she could tell us the exact year but I can't, I can't.

RL: How old was your youngest child?

FJ: When we moved to England she was only two. And now we can work it out. She was born in '49, so it must have been '51, '52.

RL: Your youngest was born later; your youngest was born in Germany.

FJ: She was born in '58, 1958. Oh sorry, going all wrong, '58.

RL: So two years later, 1960.

FJ: Yes, that's more or less right.

Tape 5: 27 minutes 48 seconds

RL: Right.

FJ: 1960. We worked that out in very great detail months ago, you know before we knew that you were coming on the scene as well. Help us. But can't go by that now. When we went back and started this, used that house, we had it for about, not for very long, about five, six years, or maybe longer, I can't remember now. The thing is, we had several developers after it and they offered all sorts of sums for it but they didn't have the council, the town planning

permission to remodel the house. Finally, another developer came in and he was given only part permission to put up another building somewhere in the grounds. And that one sold it again to another developer who finally bribed the town planning and he got away with murder. In the mean time we were waiting a whole year for that and that developer paid us a thousand pounds a month to keep it going until he gets permission. So you can imagine what the grounds and the building was worth. It was worth it to them. We bought it for 65,000 pounds, which was today of course very much more. But it was a low price in those days for houses. Now the next thing that happened is that developer got through with murder. He got permission to pull a whole house down. Whenever I cried over a material item, that was the time. I couldn't believe it, we had such a happy time there.

Tape 5: 30 minutes 10 seconds

RL: How many staff did you have working for you? How many staff worked in the school?

FJ: No, there was only about at the beginning, six or seven students who came over from Europe. That we managed with a lady who came in to give lessons, and myself. But it was growing eventually that we could not do it anymore. And we thought, you know why should we work? I realised that we are sitting on a gold mine. At first the developer made an offer, I thought 'what are we doing here?', rather sell it, we can make a fortune out of it and eventually did. They paid us quite a sum for it but what they made of it, they pulled down a whole house down and put twenty two little linked houses on the whole grounds. For which no one was given permission before. So, obviously there was something not kosher. The point is that gave us the opportunity to sell and our daughter, the youngest daughter was in digs you know, she was studying and she was practically ready for qualifying. We thought she needs another place, you know. We bought a flat for her in London, which cost the same, a two room flat, as the whole house here, for 75,000 pounds. Well, that's where the money went. We bought a car and we went on holiday and we had stopped work. Stopped working. Not in the true sense of the word because I can't stop working.

RL: Can I just ask you, what was your impression of England? What was your impression when you came here and lived here?

FJ: Well, my impression was, obviously new, you know but not entirely because South Africa had a lot of English influence as you would realise. And we knew a lot of English people, and we spoke only English there, we did not speak Afrikaans. And there was, I had some good Afrikaans friends, before I met Ann, and even after, very nice people. They had a certain charm about them, certain class there.

Tape 5: 33 minutes 0 seconds

The impression that we had of England when we came back here the second time wasn't new to us. First of all because of the English influence in South Africa itself and secondly here of course the impression that everything is much more organised and some of it a bit stiff for our likings. Because South Africans are very free and their expressions in their movements and ordering round staff and people you know. But when we saw a woman on her knees outside her shop to clean the floor, that was entirely new to us. That was done by Africans not by a European person. We accepted that finally and then as we, we had to run around to look for this place for others to stay, so we rented a house in Cheadle Hume. And that was my headquarters sort of, Cheadle Hume, to run around and look around the country to find out where we are going to buy a house. And I was so tired of it eventually. We went all the way

up to Glossop, and to Eras and the Peak and everywhere and around London, and Ulster. We got very tired of it. And then an agent offered us a house in a settlement over there, you know, where one house looks the same as the other. So did the people living in there. So we thought, 'no, we don't like that'. So he showed us this at the end.

RL: Did you not live in London for a time?

FJ: Of course we did, before that, yes.

RL: Where did you go from selling that property? Where did you go from there?

FJ: From there, London was before that. But where we went from that place, the place we sold near Reading, we went to ... we didn't know where else we should go. We weren't tired of London as Johnson said, you know when you are tired of London you are tired of life. We did not fall into that category, but we had enough of London and we thought I had no connection anywhere except a cousin here. The Jonas family in Manchester. We thought, well, we've had enough of London, now let's see Manchester. We couldn't find anything. We did not want to be in the city either, or near it and she suggested, look around Cheshire. Lovely place, the Peak district and all the rest of it. We did.

Tape 5: 36 minutes 4 seconds

RL: When did you live in London?

FJ: The year? The year? When, did you ask when?

RL: When?

FJ: When? Oh dear, I can't remember the year.

RL: But at what point in your life ...

FJ: We lived there for fifteen years, so before that we lived ...

RL: At what stage in your life did you live in London?

FJ: It was when we came from East Germany and West Germany, by then it was the same for us. We moved back to London. That was in '58, that was in 1962, round about then.

RL: We thought about 1960, didn't we? So you came to London first. So how long were you there?

FJ: About two years. Two or three years.

RL: Right, so what were you doing in London at that point?

FJ: Ann was working as secretary for a company, Foster Wheeler, I don't know what they were, kind of a big business, you know. It was near Edgware Road somewhere. And I joined a sign writers display art studio. I got paid thirteen pounds a week, off which the whole family lived. We took a very small flat in ... I don't know where it was, very small flat, terrible place. Then moved to another one, which was a bit better, a bit bigger. And Sonia was

attending a nursery school, not Sonia, yes Sonia. There was a very small ... she was only about three of four, attended a nursery school there. Big Angela stayed with us. And I joined a group in London during that time. It was called CND. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. And a friend of mine was the secretary there, we became very friendly. And he said: 'you can drive'. I said 'yes'. He's got a group of thirty-five youngsters who want to see Eastern Europe. I told him we drove a school bus in Johannesburg, so it did not take him long to say: 'You can drive that bus around Eastern Europe. We want all these young students to visit Eastern Europe. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Austria.' The co-driver I had, I was the co-driver, he was the main driver, bought an old London Leyland Bus.

Tape 5: 39 minutes 27 seconds

A coach, a single-storied in those days. It was going very well but it did not stop very well. So, he got it ready for this long tour. On one I took Gerard along and another one, a second time, I took Sonia along, uh, Vicky along. Ann was staying back and still working at Foster Wheeler, that secretary's job. When I came back ... Now that tour in itself is another story, which is enormous, quite fantastic. But unfortunately I fractured a foot and had to stay in one of the countries while the driver had to go back with that group on his own. Normally we changed driving throughout that tour. But when I recovered from that, and I gave up long ago before that that Johnson studio shop, or ... I went back I think to them, and they had a contract with Harrods for ticket writing and for poster work, display art, and he said to me, the chief of that studio, you can go and work for me at Harrods. So I worked at Harrods, in their display department. Now this is an interesting part because they had ... Harrods building originally had a tube station underneath. It was probably by then the next-door one, what was it called, on the corner ... can't remember. And apparently that tube station was closed when Harrods put up the building there. So they had three floors under the ground floor, huge, always-arched constructions, and one of them was a display art studio for all the shop. And it was ... what we had to produce there with six other people was enormous, they even had in one of these spaces there -the old tube station, but it was converted a bit, you know, refurbished- they had a factory for coffins; you know, very fashionable coffins you know, fantastic timber wood, and gold ornamental parts to it.

Tape 5: 42 minutes 32 seconds

And this was the first place that I saw in my life the coffins transported from the ground upwards instead of down. Because the trucks, the vans they used, had to take these coffins, first of all, by lift up to the top, ground floor to move them. What an experience. Oh god. Altogether, Harrods was an experience in itself. You know they had that Central Hall; it was called, in Harrods, which was a very large area where they had performances and they obviously had a furniture department and music department with pianos and grand pianos and all the rest of it. So they cleared the whole lot for display of six different pianos, six players and they performed something: I think it was introduced by Czerny, one of the composers. I took Sonia there, She was taking lessons there with that man I mentioned very earlier, Bruno Reiken, pianist who studied in Leipzig. And he, when we met in London again, he then ... when we went to London, Sonia took lessons with him. But she was so interested in piano music, Sonia. She already had it in Leipzig, she had piano lessons. I went to listen to that concert at Harrods; it was an experience, fantastic, never forget it. To hear those six pianos, pianists play the same, all at the same time. It was advertising obviously Harrods pianos.

RL: Where did the children go to school?

FJ: In England you mean, in London? Well it wasn't the very best schools. Sonia already was at a college, to prepare for her future career. And Gerald and Vicky went to an ordinary school in that area. One was in Harrow Road; no they were both in Harrow Road, but in different parts of it. It wasn't the very best of schools at all. But we couldn't afford very much at that time.

Tape 5: 45 minutes 14 seconds

RL: And what made you eventually move away from there?

FJ: That was the time when my mother was still living in Berlin; my father was in a very poor state, and she phoned me while we were living there to say I have to come over now, it's coming to the end. I went there and it was the beginning of that school of English ... It took quite a long time before he departed, before he died, and I was waiting by his bedside with my mother there when finally he died. But we had to stay. I had to do something, you know, my mother had no ... find some money, I had to have some income. Then I went to Berlitz School and they paid five pounds an hour. So I said oh no that is not for me. And Ann came over to join me and my mother. And we stayed there. That's how it started with the GB English School, eventually, I think it was that time; I can't quite work out the periods anymore, the dates that I've got down here ... Let me think for a moment. I lost my point for a bit.

Tape 5: 47 minutes 0 seconds

RL: I'm just trying to sort of work out the chronology really. So are you saying that you went from East Germany to London?

FJ: Yes.

RL: And then from London to West Germany because of your parents?

FJ: That's correct. That was the procedure, more or less.

RL: So why did you decide to leave East Germany for London? How did that come about?

FJ: Well, when I realised that there was, that it didn't appeal to us anymore, that there was too much competition for me in my old job and work, which I quickly gave up in favour of interpreting for the various organisations and commercial outlets. They wanted me to do that. Then I also felt ... When they asked us, should we not acquire East German nationality? We said no, we said that is the time we have to go. And we did, we packed up, loaded a car that I hired in London, an old Ford Cortina, and put a roof rack on it and packed up in Leipzig, Germany, where we were given all these wonderful facilities. But it wasn't good enough; we'd rather live poorly in England than rich in East Germany. That was the basic issue. And Ann agreed of course. So we all, the whole lot, the roof packed, roof rack packed to the top and another African family moved in to that flat. It was specially designed for, you know, refugees or people who came back to East Germany. They took over and we travelled all the way to London. We had no problem at the border control, obviously, when others weren't even aloud without luggage to cross. So we landed in London, but in that very poor place that I was telling you earlier about. It was Westbourne Terrace it was called. Westbourne Terrace, what a place.

RL: So how long were you in London?

FJ: How long? From there we never moved.

RL: Well you went then to West Germany.

FJ: Oh yes, that was when we started that school because it lingered on with my father and I had to have some income. So I started something there and teaching English in a very small modern flat. And it was the first time, while we were in England, that my claim matters, restitution claim matters, came to light. So we were weekly given a capital sum, and a monthly pension. That capital sum was enough for me to buy a car and afford a holiday. Now, we went to Romania, the Black Sea, we had a wonderful time there with the three children. From London, but obviously came back again to London, from there. That's a long story in itself, Romania and the way to get there. Oh my god.

Tape 5: 51 minutes 0 second

RL: So then you went to West Germany because of your father. Did the whole family move again to West Germany, did they all move with you or was it just you?

FJ: No, first it was only myself, you see. But when I realised it would take such a long time, I could not leave Ann alone in that place with three children, that she came over. And she took over from me, what I was doing, teaching English there to a small group. Ultimately she took over and I started selling Encyclopaedia Britannica. That was such an enormous experience once again, because you had to conform to, and read and then present it by heart without the notes to customers. What an effort. And until one bloke said to me, the one in charge, 'Oh well, Fred, he broke the ice', in other words had succeeded to get a customer. I got actually three customers in the end for Encyclopaedia Britannica. That did not last very long because I got so tired of it, you know, having to live on that. While I was there, I had to get another job, and the British army, occupation force, had an outlet for their commercial goods for mainly soldiers, ex soldiers, and the not ex-soldiers. They were soldiers, you know, they were the occupation force. They had huge buildings there and a whole area for themselves and the commanders, the British commanders. They occupied the most fantastic villas there, you know, houses. And I don't know how it came about, but I joined the foreign office of the British army there, the representatives. They put me eventually in a bit of book keeping, which was completely against my past and also I had to attend to the bar. They had a wine shop there for the big shots. I had no idea about drinks but enough from South Africa to qualify me for that. They found out ... I was called by a security chief to come to their office. And I thought: 'What on earth?' And they found out about my past in South Africa, and that I had a brother in East Germany. And without a word they said 'I'll accompany you to the door, to the gate'. That was the end of that, but this matter started eventually ... No, wait a minute, GB English, yes all that came before we started the school and all that. I don't know in what sequence this all came about but it was an experience one does not forget either. They had a special name for that, this area where they had the shopping centre for all the British army staff and big shots. Can't remember.

Tape 5: 54 minutes 48 seconds

RL: So then you started the school and then eventually you come over to England and bought that ... How did you manage to afford to buy that property?

FJ: Well two ways. First of all, in the GB English set up we made enough money. Well Ann was keeping most of the money under the mattress. I thought 'oh no, you can earn money with that; we'll take it to the bank and earn an interest'. So we did. It amounted up to quite a bit. But it wasn't enough to buy the house in England, where we first saw this property, Laneswood it was called. Former Wilhelmina house, residence. We went to a bank there and they substituted it a bit to support. Because the manager came out to see that house with me and he was so impressed that he was quite ready to advance 40,000 pounds. Which we repaid, repaid up to, almost up to the end, but not quite. It came off the sale of the property, part of it, eventually to go to the bank. But it was plenty for us to set up the flat in England for Sonia, for this house.

RL: Right. So I think we have to stop here because this is the end now of this tape.

Tape 5: 56 minutes 30 seconds

TAPE 6

RL: This is a continuation of the interview with Alfred Jonas and today's date is the 9th November 2006. The interview is taking place in Macclesfield and I am Rosalyn Livshin. And this is going to be tape 6 in the interview. So the end of the last tape, we were talking about your sale of Laneswood and buying a house in Cheadle Hume. So if you can sort of take me forward with the story at this point?

FJ: Right, now the finding of the accommodation I would call it, not a house, it was a semi-detached, has got a long history as well, but I won't go into that. The fact is that we were looking for somewhere to stay, while we were, that we could rent, a house or part of a house that we could rent, which we then found in Cheadle Hume after a long search. But the idea was to set up there to give us a chance to look around the Manchester area for permanent accommodation and buy a house somewhere else, which ultimately led to this one here. Now, it took about a year or two, almost two years, while I was travelling around the whole of Cheshire and further right into Derbyshire including Glossop to find a place which was all very attractive but which was out of the way for us. And one reason to come to the Manchester area was particularly because we weren't tired of London as Johnson used to say but we had enough of that whole area. It was too congested all around, so we were looking for an area like Cheshire, which appealed to us very much, and a further reason that influenced my decision was that I have a cousin in Didsbury, so we were fairly near. When I first came to Manchester, just to see the outskirts of it was very disappointing.

Tape 6: 2 minutes 59 seconds

But that very soon changed after we came here a second time to view accommodation, alternative investment, so to speak, because when we sold Laneswood, it was a very large country house, there was a fair amount of capital available for it, which we used for setting up our daughter, who had just finished her university studies in London and she lived in digs. So that led us to invest for her in a little flat, which she thanked us no end. And we were still looking around this area, all the way from Wilmslow to Macclesfield up to Presbury and finally, we were so tired of it that we jumped in the next best offer. We were first shown an area in Macclesfield, which was known as Tytherington, a sort of development area. Every house looks the same and almost all the people in it look the same. So we decided on this one here, which was more select and unique in the architecture and the layout and the whole finish

of the house. Well, that made us sign the contract and move into what we classify, or rather called, Lanes Field. Well, that's got a little history as well, should I mention it? That is, we had the big house, which was called Laneswood and that was a large house that the council sold when it was empty for three years after Queen Wilhelmina moved out, the Dutch Queen occupied that house while her country was occupied by someone else and ... the investment as I said was mainly here but enough for Sonia and there was a very little bit left over. When I came to Macclesfield and looked around this town, which was then very different compared to my first impression of it, which incidentally is worthwhile mentioning because we did a good bet in retrospect, because now the town is going to be completely remodelled, and although they have all the superstores and all the other shops, it will be very much enlarged by about a year's time. One of the significant buildings is the medical centre here, the hospital was always there, where unfortunately I had to go several times during that period, but to cut that long story short, I was also looking for the nearest congregation that we could find which was the Menorah in Cheadle.

Tape 6: 6 minutes 40 seconds

Or rather Gatley it was. And during that period I also went into a travel agent and I saw a man who looked to me familiar in terms of that he would fit into this Menorah environment very well. I approached him and it happened to be Mr. Cohen. He lived just around the corner from us now and we become very best friends ever since, including his wife and then of course it entailed a lot of extra work in this house here, refurbishing and getting all our furniture and belongings moved from where they were in storage. Well, that is about the reason we came here and that is also how we came here, that made us choose.

RL: Were you working at all of this point in time?

FJ: It depends on what we call working. I've been working since I was twelve years old ever since. I have never stopped and I hope I never will, because that's my therapy for all sorts of conditions. One of them during this time here was very, very serious. But there is an overriding fact that ought to be mentioned because that's part of my life-story and that is since we've been here for the last eighteen years. During the last ten or fifteen years what has come much more to light than ever before was the Holocaust, the memories and what happened in all finest detail. As I call it, or agree with someone else calling it, almost an industry. So much was published and so much was seen that I had never seen before to that extent.

Tape 6: 9 minutes 9 seconds

I mean I knew from my older brother, who we saw for the first time after twenty-two years when we lived in South Africa he invited us to where he lived at the time which was called the GDR, the German Democratic Republic, the opposite to the west when it was divided. Now, he really looked after us to the extent that he was able to. Just a small little incident about that very well fit into this story...

RL: I think you might have told us about that period already, I think we have touched upon that.

FJ: Oh, I have, ok.

RL: If I could just bring you back just for a moment to Macclesfield and what work you were doing here, what work were you doing?

FJ: Ah yes, I wasn't actually doing anything more professionally or in trade but everything became a sideline or a freelance work and one of my first interest coming here, because at one time I was chairman for a local group of the schizophrenic society of Great Britain and when the council here, or the medical society organised a two-day event -it was called 'mental awareness week'- I offered my services based on my experiences as display artist, sign artist and so on, exhibition design. So, I really designed the whole lot, the whole caboodle as I can call it, which was indoor advertising and display stands and outdoor, and the whole vehicle of a bus, of which I've got a photograph, was converted also as an outdoor exhibit and I was travelling around the town, so I had other work that way, but actual work, professionally otherwise I had given up quite some time before that.

RL: But when did you own the vegetarian restaurant?

FJ: Ah, when we lived in Macclesfield for the first two years I was always inspired by the vegetarian idea, which was then in its infant stages as far as England is concerned. And that is the beginning and also the downfall of the vegetarian restaurant that local people weren't ready for it. It was still heavily into meat eaters, I wouldn't say cannibals but it always reminded me to take a more direct interest in vegetarian living which originally was a little bit inspired by our daughter Sonia and the other one as well.

Tape 6: 12 minutes 52 seconds

Now, I started that restaurant on a more than average level in the way of furnishing, which again was a reflection of my history as display artist. All the pictures on the wall were drawn from an artist who copied samples of all the various herbs and seedlings that is used in vegetarian food and that was a display explaining what the herbs stand for, what they are used for and all the rest. Now, this was quite successful at the beginning, but I am afraid my wife Ann had to be neglected a bit, and I think it worried her a lot, not only that she was neglected but that she thought this was too much for me. Perhaps justified because I had to get up at six in the morning, that's a very long story, not only for myself, but there is a whole lot of photographs that is quite interesting. I had to apply for a liquor license, which was granted and I had to attend a course at the vegetarian society which was also successful and I must say it helped me a lot in the future now so I still do my own cooking, all of it.

RL: Had you ever cooked before this?

FJ: Oh yes, I have when we had this Laneswood house we had lots of guests and there were something like forty students that came over every now and then and we had and overflow from another school for their summer courses and we had to accommodate them and that house was big enough for it. It had an extension dormitory for students it had sixteen rooms and upstairs in my house we had eight rooms so you can imagine there was enough room for need for cooking. Fortunately we had this wonderful Aga stove, which was taken over from when we moved in. It's a time I will never forget.

Tape 6: 15 minutes 26 seconds

RL: Where about was the vegetarian restaurant and did it have a name?

FJ: Yes, of course, a whole album I have got for it, with something like thirty, forty pictures of it, it became quite a landmark. It was opposite a double storey car park and therefore fairly

accessible, but unfortunately still too far away from the town centre and eventually I had great difficulty in keeping it going. As I said, there were three reasons: one was that it wasn't in the right area, the second reason was that I had real difficulty with the landlord, and the third one was Ann herself. She couldn't take it anymore and it even let her to a very serious physical condition physically, a pathological problem.

RL: What was the restaurant called?

FJ: Oh yes, the name was Jordan Gate vegetarian restaurant. It happened to be in Jordan Gate, one of the main roads leading to the town centre.

RL: Did you have staff to help you?

FJ: Oh yes, we had to have staff, we had a chef and we had to have one helper for him and of course the waitresses.

RL: So how long was it open?

FJ: It was going for about two years. And perhaps the unfortunate part was that it had to fall down because it was fortunate, it was successful. Because, as I said, it was too much for me, too much for Ann, so we had to give it up eventually. But it was in great shape.

RL: So how have you settled in to life in Macclesfield, how did you find it?

FJ: Very well, except that we do miss a lot of friends we had in the past, particularly in South Africa we had lots of friends, and a wide circle of more interesting parties, like I said it wasn't the best choice for that, but there is an overriding fact, I don't know whether I should mention that now at this stage, which really controlled part of my whole life while we lived in Macclesfield, why we are still living here and that has to do with the Holocaust.

Tape 6: 18 minutes 31 seconds

When in fact so much came to light, which I must admit we did take it very serious but it led to me realising what really happened, and of course my thoughts were immediately going to the closest members of the family, in particular my younger brother who vowed that he would never leave Germany until my older brother was released. And neither of them were ... and they both perished. But ... no the older brother actually survived, I'm sorry, only the younger one perished. But the older one survived and he died later of an illness. Now, since I had seen all these films and so many publications about it all, I could never come to terms with it, with my younger brother's fate. It has been overriding everything else of my interests, I'm afraid, that I can't go to sleep without the reliving his life, the last stages of his life, myself. It's an unfortunate condition that I have heard many times from other, similar survivors. I can't really call myself a survivor because I never experienced any of that sort, leaving Germany long before that, when I emigrated to South Africa.

RL: So have you become involved in any Holocaust organisations?

FJ: Well, I mean on the occasion of going to visit Israel where quite a few number of my family lived, still live, we obviously went to Yad Vashem and we had contact there with all sorts of people and one of my interests there, which is a reflection of the background that I

have, the political side of it, was of course to also become a bit involved with the other side of that part of the country, the Palestinian side.

Tape 6: 21 minutes 19 seconds

So I visited their offices, the representatives of medical aid for Palestinians, but of course we weren't very well informed about the whole international political involvement, which only came to my mind much later.

RL: So you are saying really, that the realisation of the Holocaust has left its mark on you today?

FJ: Very seriously, it will never... [Cries]

RL: How do you cope with that?

FJ: It will never go away ... Well that's the answer to it: it will never go away.

RL: Have you been involved with anything in this country with regard to Holocaust education or refugee groups?

FJ: Well, my first contact was of course at the Menorah synagogue and their various departments, you see, where they have lots of talks and lectures and discussions about it and of course my acquaintance with Mark and Miriam Cohen supported that quite a lot as well. But directly involved I can't say I was, because my interest from that respect, looking at it from a political angle as well, not just as religious angle because of course I will never deny my Jewish background, I have become an atheist, a Jewish atheist to give it that name. Because my whole conviction and way of thinking doesn't stop at what has happened but it goes into the reasons for it and what worried me very much more, where I got a bit involved with the other side of it as well was that I came to the conclusion, like so many others, that it was avoidable – to a great extent by this country.

Tape 6: 24 minutes 0 second

Where we live now. Of course we are not South Africans anymore, we are British subjects now, but the thing is that it led to my, I wouldn't say disinterest but my mixed feelings about the whole background to the Holocaust. That is the political side of it, which I think one cannot go into in great length because it would require several hours to really deal with it and describe it in all that one knows about it.

RL: Were you involved in any political organisations in the Macclesfield area?

FJ: Not at all, no, it's entirely my own conclusion. I was influenced by one person called Bruno Reiken, I think I told you about that in the first part, and he was likewise a Jewish Atheist. When I heard the combination for the first time, I thought about it 'there is something in that combination', because why should you deny your Jewish background, why should you deny your beliefs in the more mundane part of history and the political side of it.

RL: So have you kept up a connection with the Menorah synagogue?

FJ: Oh, yes we are fairly strong tied, yes, not only supporting the new building but in lectures particularly. I must admit we don't attend services, apart from the fact that they are too expensive.

RL: So, after giving up the vegetarian restaurant, what did you go on to do after that? How did you occupy yourself?

FJ: Oh, nothing at all, because what took most of my time was not any work anymore for income reasons, because we had our pensions, but I became involved in so many other matters, mainly family wise, as you can imagine my children growing up and one of them having a late marriage and the other one living in another part of the world, two of them, and we did do a fair amount of travels, mainly to health resorts. And that's why we chose one of them as well, a place called Pymont, in Germany because there the health services, particularly in the spa resorts, are incomparable to what you can get here. What they call here a spa resort is pathetic by comparison. So that was a good reason for me to see again the offspring of my family, of my brother's family, we had very little contact with them though and it's all half lost now.

Tape 6: 27 minutes 43 seconds

After that, during this time in Macclesfield is what we are talking about now, is three major problems that come about now, one of course about a year ago, today actually, to this day a year ago, the stroke when I had that. It was fortunately the, what they call the TIA, the milder form of it, otherwise I don't think I would be sitting here now, and the other was of course the wedding of, the late event, of my daughter, waiting ... that is the youngest daughter, who was waiting for it for some ten years, not giving up, so he had to eventually give up his ... and get through with his divorce.

RL: Maybe if you can tell me a little bit about your children, you know, what they went on to do after school and who they married and what families they've got? If you could maybe take me through each of your children?

FJ: Well, should I start with the eldest or the youngest?

RL: The eldest.

FJ: The eldest, my brother, as I said earlier, when he was still at school he became already in the socialist student movement and therefore he lost his attendance at school. You can imagine they were, what can I call it, they were the forerunners of Nazi inspired Germans and they didn't like the idea at all that he became involved at, and he left school. Now for his background that is a very, very long story because going through the various parties of interest that he joined from the young communist league it was at one time called, it led to a very significant change in his life and one of them was, it was three o'clock in the morning, when the Gestapo knocked on our door and he was arrested.

RL: Ah, you're talking about your brother there.

FJ: Ah, I thought you asked about my brothers.

RL: No, your children.

FJ: Their children?

RL: No, your children.

Tape 6: 30 minutes 34 seconds

FJ: Ah, my children? I'm sorry. So let's go back to Gerald, the eldest, he was the first-born. Now he was born in Johannesburg and he had a very fortunate beginning. But the very early life as a baby was the worst. Now, that was only for a very short period obviously, because when he was about a year old, we had to look for a nursery school, and that was atrocious what we found. But I think I did mention that before, how I met Ann and what led to that school...

RL: Yes. It's really just to bring me up to date what they were doing, what work they went into and what they are doing now. You know, I want to sort of bring them up to date.

FJ: Yes, now the eldest, he was originally studying furniture design but he had given it up very, very, quickly when he married a young girl who was of Chinese origin, or rather a mixed marriage she came from herself, a Hong Kong family. We were totally opposed to that but we couldn't do anything more about it. He got married when he was still under twenty-one years old. So he had to go to Gretna Green, where he got his certificate, but it didn't last long because Gerald very quickly became a drug addict and tobacco misuse, involved with the wrong people. And he went right down, but it was already diagnosed before that he had signs of schizophrenia. This is when I joined a schizophrenic society and that helped in some way even him, he benefited from that part, but not enough to go all the way down. He recovered from that, about 9/10 of it because the 1/10 that was a heart condition very quickly became the much more important problem for him, he had two bypasses and this happened to be in Berlin.

Tape 6: 33 minutes 28 seconds

Now, since it happened there he was taken to a specialist hospital there, a heart specialist hospital for special cases, and that was quite successful, but after that he had to remain there, in Berlin because we had to support him from this end to some extent, because he soon applied for social services, which was granted, he was quite lucky. And he lived there ever since, still now. He is coming once or twice a year for a visit. A, to see his ex-family and to see us.

RL: Did he have children?

FJ: He had two children, yes, and they are lovely children, two daughters, really lovely types, they came along, he invited them, not I, to my ninetieth birthday, so the rest of the family here and friends they were also very taken up with those two girls and their offspring.

RL: So what are the girls called?

FJ: Eh, one is called Tania and the other one is Dominique.

RL: And they are both married now?

FJ: They are both married now and they have their own children, so he is a grandfather. In fact one of their children had already married and also had a child so he is a great-grandfather at the age of fifty-five or whatever.

RL: So you are a great-great-grandfather?

FJ: Oh yes, I am a great-great-grandfather in a sense, because I really can't, that part of the family is really not part of us anymore. We are very closely associated in spirit perhaps more than in any other way. No, they live a different life, they live in the London area, so we have little contact. Only he established the contact and he is a bit guilty about it in a way.

Tape 6: 36 minutes 20 seconds

RL: Did he ever re-marry?

FJ: No, no he didn't. I don't think he would be able to find the right sort of partner for marriage anymore.

RL: Right. So if we go on to your next child?

FJ: The youngest one, Sonja, now while we were still in Cheadle Hume, she was studying at Southwark University...

RL: Was Vicky not the next one?

FJ: Oh, of course, I got to think in terms of three.

RL: Yes.

FJ: Vicky was the next one, of course. Vicky also had early problems, psychologically, while we were all living in Berlin. We moved to Berlin from South Africa, but that soon petered out and she got involved with a young man whom she first met in a summer holiday camp in France, in the Loire area. And I sent her there from London, while she was staying with me in London, I sent her there to that holiday place, and there I thought at her age she may come back with a nice looking Frenchman, but she came back with what – a Berliner to my greatest disappointment. Not because of that, but because I soon realised that he wasn't our type at all, he still isn't. She was very, very upset about all that, Vicky, but in the meantime now after forty years, she has come more or less to the same conclusion, but she wouldn't admit it, obviously, that it wasn't the right choice. Because he knew that we were objecting to all of that, I mean we didn't really fancy him much, he moved her away as far as possible from us. He was quite successful with that and found a place in the Canary Islands, one of the islands. And that's where they lived ever since. They had a lovely flat in Berlin, which they bought and then they gave it over to their daughter, Natalie.

RL: So what children do they have?

FJ: Only one, and her name is Natalie. Also a lovely child but of course now she is all grown up, she is a junior psychologist at some hospital there in Berlin but it's sad for Vicky because she is not really happy.

RL: What island is she on?

FJ: It's called Fuerteventura.

Tape 6: 39 minutes 44 seconds

And I can tell you that this is occupied by more than fifty percent of Germans, and that made him choose that island. And now she got involved with quite a lot of different directions to his ...

RL: What has Vicky been doing? Has she been working?

FJ: No, they are both not working, they both live on retirement pensions since they left Berlin to go there to settle in Fuerteventura. They still got their flat in Berlin, which they gave to their daughter.

RL: What were they doing in Berlin, what work did she do there?

FJ: Oh yes, she followed the parents' pattern and started a nursery school education and she chose instead of Montessori or Pestalozzi, she chose the, what is known as Froebel institute, and he was looking after neglected school girls who were roaming the streets of Berlin for which they had a special institution, but for a very short period because he soon thought ... this is not the right solution for Vicky, his wife, and nor for him, so they decided to go on early retirement pension and moved away, as I say for several reasons – far away.

RL: What's his name?

FJ: His name is Jörg.

RL: And his surname?

Tape 6: 42 minutes 0 second

FJ: His surname? Oh goodness me, now you're asking ... just a minute ... I can't remember. He didn't have a family at all, he had no parents because this was after the war and apparently they didn't survive the war either when he was still very, very young.

RL: Is he Jewish?

FJ: No, he is not and this is one of the serious considerations we were faced with all the time up to this day. Not that he is not Jewish, but he has very, very little in common with Jewish people, even though he had all the opportunities. When it was Sonia's Bat Mitzvah, he wouldn't attend. Well then we knew how the land lies with him.

RL: So coming on to Sonia, if you could take me through to Sonia's...?

FJ: Yes, now Sonia comes into the picture. She has a completely different background to the other two. First of all, she was born in a Dominican sisters' nurses hospital and it was recommended by a doctor who looked after us, Ann and myself, while we lived in Berlin. When we started the Montessori school, unfortunately he made a very big mistake with me when he diagnosed me completely wrong but he recommended this nursing home where Sonia was born and she was looked after no end there. For some reason rather, even in the

nursing home, they made such a fuss of her like they made with no other children because for them, coming from Cape Town and Johannesburg, it was a sensation for them. Now, that's a long story again that part of her very early life because it was a mix between East and West, fortunately we were ... you know when East and West were still divided, which before we went back there, I went back there, didn't mean a thing to me, to me they were all Germans. And one followed Soviet pattern, the other the Western-American pattern, so if you would have mixed the two together, you wouldn't have known the difference.

Tape 6: 45 minutes 16 seconds

RL: What did Sonia do after school?

FJ: Sonia went to several schools. Sonia's first school was called the Kennedy school, named after the President, it was an American school actually, they had no British school there as such but that was a bilingual school and she was very happy there, made lots of friends, including the few Jewish friends that were still there in her class and then she joined another school when she was a bit older. It was on an island in Berlin, on a lake, a bit far away from the city but a very progressive school where they had plays. I had to take part in, one of the plays that the director produced, he was quite a character himself, and then after that, when she finished that school she went to another school but I can't remember which that was or why, but soon after she became interested in academic studies. Biology appealed to her most. So there was an institution in Berlin, which was very well known. She became interested in that, took us there several times, and finally, after we moved back to England, she went to South Bank (?) University, and that was a terrible struggle to find a university for her because although she had her eleventh class qualification, or equivalent to it, they wouldn't recognise it in England, so she had to go to another college before that for another year before she joined South Bank (?) University.

RL: What did she study?

FJ: Biology.

RL: And after University, what did she go on to do?

FJ: Now, then she joined in London, she came back to London to find herself a little place to live in where she made lots of friends and one of them was the Doctor in charge of the Homeopathic hospital again in London ... it wasn't the hospital, no, a similar place. And he claimed to be, I think he was right, he was the homeopath for the Queen.

Tape 6: 48 minutes 18 seconds

So she joined him and became very involved in homeopathy when she first recommended it to us as well, but I knew homeopathy long before that. It was well known in Leipzig where I was born, they had a clinic there and a special homeopathic chemist shop there and all the rest of it. So when she finished there and she met this young man she got very involved with him, she had already the flat we bought for her, incidentally she paid every penny of it because it was really a very great act to remember and a lovely letter she sent us with it to thank us and all. But her then partner, this Dr. Davis, that was his name from the homeopathic hospital, he helped her to attain her PhD, and that in turn made her come to Norwich, I have forgotten the name ... near Reading, a hospital there and ... I can't quite remember the sequence of all this now but she finally got herself another position in London at ... oh, I forgot the name of that

very large hospital, it was fairly newly built in those days, I can't remember. It was near Fulham Road and where she met for the first time ... she had her own laboratory there and she studied that subject and she had a bit of a breakdown there, while she was working. And one of the doctors there happened to see her pass, helped her to regain her sort of normality, which eventually led to him becoming rather interested in her.

Tape 6: 51 minutes 5 seconds

And she in him. Now they didn't fit one order of height together, she was pretty short and he was particularly tall. But the two of them became so involved that he visited her very, very often, lived with her and stayed with her in the little flat we bought her in London and finally when he had to move to this area, she followed and got herself another job. Unfortunately she couldn't find one near enough, while he was lucky enough to find a position because he was more sought after, as a surgeon, he was in demand, and now he is a consultant at Leyton Hospital and she, Sonia, had to travel to Liverpool. Well, she still does, daily, a hospital there, where she does mainly research. She started on research but now she interested in, I think it is getting involved in the industrial side of medications. And they have taken out a pattern for one of them and she had to sell them to the various hospitals, you know, but I mean they came to her, you know, they advertised and then she gets phone calls and if necessary she goes to see them. So that is her career.

RL: Where are they living?

FJ: Well, after London they lived in a village very near here but I have forgotten the name, unfortunately and they moved to another one in Shavington, another village, which was a very nice house, very big grounds, but since he was transferred more than once, David is his name, they moved from Shavington to where they are now, which is called Coddington, which is on the Cheshire main road to [...] actually. And there they bought a huge house, I don't know how they managed. She has to manage the whole lot practically, when she comes back at six o'clock, she fetched the two children from the nursery and one from school, then she's got to look after the dog and then she has to do all her domestic work and get dinner ready, the children ready for the night, one of them has grown up of course in the meantime, eleven, he looks after himself.

Tape 6: 54 minutes 15 seconds

RL: What children does she have?

FJ: Well, she has a boy, you can see him on the picture there behind you on the top, he has just turned eleven now, his name is Joseph and the younger one is born ten years after is Sam, Samuel.

RL: What's their surname?

FJ: Well, I mean she still trades in the name of Jonas and he is ... Cawless. Mr. Cawless he is now, and so she hopefully acquired or taken over what we thought was more appropriate since she wasn't married with him for ten years. Only partners. But she retains her name because Joseph was known as Joseph Jonas all the time. So we said she should use a double-barrelled name: now it's Dr. Sonia Jonas-Cawless, or just Jonas-Cawless.

RL: And you said they married recently?

FJ: Very recently, yes, shortly after my ninetieth birthday, we had another big celebration in ... or it was another major event because he had such a lot of hospital friends and former friends and his family and part of our family, all together under one roof. It was quite an affair at this Mearcourt Hotel, where they celebrated. It was very, very well organised. Expensive but very well organised and that's where they had their wedding and lived now there ever since. For one year.

RL: What kind of Jewish identity did your children have, did they have a Jewish identity?

FJ: Well, starting with the youngest, she had her Bar Mitzvah in Berlin when we were there for that period, other than that, she joined the young Jewish movement where they organised all these camps. But since then, and got married to him, it didn't go very far. Her Jewish involvement was only that she then lost her interest but her active involvement was practically nil. We tried to take her with Joseph when he was much younger to the Menorah where they had a children's session there and it didn't appeal to her. Why? Because she was out of that sort of milieu altogether in her development.

RL: Now this film is about to end so we will just stop there.

Tape 6: 57 minutes 50 seconds

TAPE 7

RL: Now this is the interview with Fred Jonas and it's tape 7. So, I was going to ask you about visits back to Leipzig from this country and if you could tell me something about that?

FJ: Yes, when you say from this country, that was the second visit obviously because the first one was very much earlier when my older brother invited us to come and stay there for a year, which we did but it didn't very much agree with us and we went back to England. And the second visit then was the reunion one, where we were invited, well, I should say 'I' because Ann wasn't a Leipzig citizen before. They invited all the former Leipzig Jewish members who emigrated to relate their stories or also to commemorate and attend lectures and revisit to some of the sights in Leipzig, which to my surprise was a complete transformation because of course I recognised any old building and they fortunately retained some of the very important houses and buildings and frontages that were not affected by the war. Apart from that I of course visited all our old residences, where I was born but unfortunately the most impressive building of all, of which I got that picture there, was the last point where we lived. That's where the family broke apart by being arrested. I had received a decree from the National Socialist Association as I it was called then of display artists and other artists where they mentioned 'no Jew can possibly conform to German Art', which was the greatest insult I've ever had for several reasons, because they followed the courts then after the war had classified those trades and professions into three groups and unfortunately ...

Tape 7: 3 minutes 10 seconds

It's very unfortunate that although my father was classified in the highest group, that's the highest income, highest trade and there were two others, a middle one and a lower one. Now the court in my case decided on the middle one, which would have had quite a very good pension. But it was opposed by a higher court later because they found a very feeble excuse for classifying me in the lower one, that is a very, very long individual story, which I

described in so many words with a translation of the certificate from that association where they had the audacity to classify Jews as not ... suitable, classified as any kind of interpretation of art. Now, I went to an art school there where Jews and Christians had no idea of other's background and attended for years. That's a very long story of the art school of my first real professional education. It formed the background of a lot of other, which led to what I told you about exhibition work and my own studio in Johannesburg. Now, I lost the thread for a moment ...

RL: Now what about your trip back to Leipzig and the reunion that you attended?

FJ: Yes. Now when I went there of course we didn't hesitate much and didn't hesitate to accept the invitation. Now we had to travel there which was quite a bit of effort but we got there and the reunification was very, very impressive, apart from the fact that we had very good lectures there, one representing the Jewish Christian association, similar to the one that we have at the Menorah here and even one of the heads of the department invited us to come to their house personally, which we did eventually and then I was asked to give a little talk to class students who were at school there, all about something that they knew nothing about because in the GDR that wasn't made very highly public, all of the facts of the Holocaust and so on.

Tape 7: 6 minutes 7 seconds

RL: When was this?

FJ: That must have been about ten-fifteen years ago? We've lived here for eighteen years and that was during the first five years, so it was about ten years ago. And we met very many former Leipzig residents and at AJR meetings, where we sometimes go, we would still meet one or two. In fact one very interesting one who lived very near us and she knew about that building as well. It was a building that was under protection order because although it was bombed down for different reasons, very, very unfortunate. Now that second visit of course entailed that I had to see my brother's son who lived in Leipzig all the time and his family. Now, as I say, apart from the fact that I went round to see all these buildings that meant so much during my childhood, was a great experience, including particularly the transformation of the railway station, which by then wasn't developed to the extent I showed you in the photograph, because it was still GDR times. They only repaired the station, but they didn't convert it into a commercial centre as it is now. That we only saw a little later. One very important point of re-visiting Leipzig was where I used to work before finishing art school. In that display department, which was quite an outstanding section of the German or Leipzig trade or retail trade because the store was known for the finest display art in other towns they call it window-dressing but this had very little to do with window-dressing, it was more of a display art in each of the forty ... they had forty windows. I was an apprentice then. There is lots more to talk about that store because recently to much of my discontent, it was pulled down completely, except for the protective order of the outer walls. They weren't able to pull that down, so they had to put an enormous steel construction right around the building, four streets, to retain that wall, only that wall and then behind it they could do what they like, you know.

Tape 7: 9 minutes 23 seconds

Dig deep into another basement, which was not known, oh, mind you, the basement was known in those days for the display art and the window-dressing they call it, department that had everything in it. Huge carpentry shop, painters and all that what had to go into windows.

There was one lady who was sewing all day of materials that covered the walls in the windows. Incidentally, that's very interesting, the windows weren't accessible like now from the behind, the back wall, but the basement was used with a little lift up the top on the floor but you couldn't see it, because it was so beautifully finished when the window-dressers finished their job. They were awarded many, many ... lots of recognition by the display artists' publishers, there were lots of publications about display art and I picked up one of them. Now, there is not more about revisiting but I had to go and see that store where I used to work and very recently one of the ladies we met at the reunion time, she took that part of my story very seriously and when they finished pulling down, and I always told her about the enormous stair hall they had, all marble in those days, all the steps were marble, it was huge, monumental inside, so she managed to salvage a piece of that marble and sent it to me and here it is [laughs]. And this was such a fantastic act on her part that I will always remember it. I mean I have never forgotten it in the first place, you know, because it meant so much to me, that particular department store. Finally, when I went to Manchester I saw a specialist shop for soap: different shapes of soap and one of them looked like marble so obviously I bought it and sent it to her. As a thanks for this in exchange. She was quite amused. Well, all else from this reunion, there is a lot more to it that will fill a whole volume of books.

Tape 7: 12 minutes 35 seconds

RL: How do you feel towards the Germans?

FJ: It's a good question. I have obviously two minds about it. One goes to the past when fascism, Hitler was not known and the other was after that. So there are two distinct periods you know to answer the question what do I think about the Germans. I told you before to me Germans are Germans, because whether they lived in the East under Soviet rule as one of Soviet Union's satellites, East Germany, less like so many others and the other in the West, West Germany. Now, I didn't see any difference in the Germans themselves except those in the East took full advantage of the facilities that the liberation or the anti-fascist movement all provided for them. What they did before, I wouldn't like to know. And the same for the West Germans, who were all inclined, right-wing we call it, very much so, and I don't think you will ever eliminate that from the Germans anywhere, to my mind. That sort of right wing attitude, and what actually led them to support Hitler and his party. I don't think that will ever change. That's my impression of the Germans as a whole. There are great exceptions, wonderful exceptions, but are too little by comparison. I think that could sum it up.

RL: We have spoken about you returning to Germany what about trips to Israel?

FJ: No, none at all first of all we were not Germans, we were foreign and we had South African passports for the first time so there were no difficulties at all like crossing the point, what was it called ... Checkpoint Charlie. We had no problems there.

RL: No, I was asking if you visited Israel?

FJ: Yes.

RL: The land of Israel?

FJ: While we were here?

RL: Yes. Well, when did you first visit Israel?

FJ: Israel? Oh, that must be at least ten years ago or more.

Tape 7: 15 minutes 25 seconds

Shortly after we moved in here because I had family there and Ann has an even larger family there, they all, her family came over from Cape Town and my more from Johannesburg,

RL: And how did you feel going there?

FJ: I would say like everyone else, really. I had no specific feelings there except that some of the extreme Jewish element never appealed to me anywhere but there were such a great mixture of Jewish people from all over the world that one can't really say you feel this way or that way. The influences are so enormous that I really can't pinpoint feelings. Mixed in other words I call it, very mixed.

RL: In terms of your own identity how would you describe yourself?

FJ: Now?

RL: Yes.

FJ: Regarding the spiritual side, I said that before, I am a Jewish atheist. In addition to that I feel I am a socialist but a non-active one while in Johannesburg I was more than active there in the movement in the party until it became outlawed under the apartheid when the nationalists came in, the Boers. My identity of course regarding that goes back to my father's time when he was fighting with the British army in the Boer War, so there is quite a lot of a concoction of feelings about it, you know my own identity and now it is a very, very mixed one therefore which was described by Beatrice Altman was her name, a journalist for the Menorah, much to my disappointment because she got all the dates wrong, in that case if I take her dates that she described about me I should be a one hundred and ninety-six years old. She mixed up my father's dates and mine and the names. I have never forgiven her for that. That's my identity more or less.

Tape 7: 18 minutes 20 seconds

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

FJ: Nationality? I am an internationalist. Obviously. That's the short answer. I am not proud or ashamed of any, except of course when the Germans said 'you are no longer German now, you are a Jew therefore you are not a German'. I was born there, my parents were born there, my grandparents were born there for all I know my great-grandparents that I am searching for now were born there and I felt no difference, you know, between German and non-German. And I have no great feelings about that either, as I say, how can you have feelings about that, moving around, changing nationalities and the experience of a whole life on three continents.

RL: Did you take out British nationality?

FJ: We have, we've had that quite a long time now.

RL: And do you feel British in any way?

FJ: In many ways, yes. Yes. Because it's obvious you see in England you have the great advantage of more intellect and more general outlook on life than those who were limited to their own nationality and for that matter even particularly Israel, you know, who are to some extent fanatic. Now I am not only talking about the Chassidim, but all of them have got some kind of fanaticism about them, which doesn't appeal to me, you know, although it's not in comparison to the past where that went to the other extreme first, or the total extreme under the Nazi rise to power.

RL: So in what ways do you feel British?

FJ: Oh yes, that are a lot, there are several matters that I can describe in single words, one is the intellect, the other is the personal approach which is not quite the same as in South Africa which is much closer and less limited and here it ... what appeals to me here is that it is the same but with a little bit of reservation, that does appeal to me, that is the British and I am not talking about Jewish British people, they are different again, but the general feeling is the culture as far as they are able to maintain it. Unfortunately they are not because if you think of culture in the current sense or for the last ten, twenty years up to now, to me it has very little to do with culture. You can take the Tate Gallery as a real classical example. What they exhibit there any Tom, Dick and Harry can produce. Just put a few things together and put them up as an exhibit, not worth the transport there, and that has changed unfortunately. You see, I remember the good old days of England with [...] tea-room. That's the time which was my first impression of England, you see, as a whole and I really feel that there was so much attraction that way for me, because of the change there was a little bit of an intermediate period, which was South Africa, between Germany and England. That intermediate period sort of prepared me, or both of us, Ann and myself, for understanding more closely the British character and style of living, and one thing that didn't appeal to me at the beginning was where too much reservation was shown. Pride, sometimes unjustified, but as a whole, I think the British people, that's what I see first and foremost have got good reason to be more proud of themselves than many other nations, because they retain a certain style that they will never change, sometimes it's a very good trend. It can also be the opposite, and there is such a mixture here, because of this internationalist character altogether here that obviously I have very mixed feelings. That's how I feel about British. Otherwise, I am proud to be one of them.

Tape 7: 24 minutes 26 seconds

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

FJ: In what way? Well, that is obvious most likely, because of mixed background you know, first Germany then South Africa, and then come to England and then see Germany again in a different sort of environment, surrounding and totally different conditions and then of course ... I lost trace of the question now....

RL: That was how do you feel different to the British?

FJ: Different, different. I don't actually feel different, because what you have been brought up with as a child you will never loose. That's one of Montessori slogans I can take over. What appeals to me also relates to our time as Montessori. I did tell you that story before, there was one slogan, the child must have as much freedom as possible and the only limit is where it transgresses the freedom of others. Now, that is typical of England. Without full consciousness of that slogan, it's built in, and that does appeal to me.

RL: Going back to your socialist involvement, I know you mentioned that you were involved in CND in this country, but I don't think you had told me anything of that involvement, what you were actually doing and the trips that you made?

FJ: Yes. When this led to the CND movement and my interest in it, I must say there was very little really that I got involved with on the left-wing side, except that one day I saw an advert in one of their papers, one socialist issue of some kind, I have forgotten the name of that paper, that he, Keith Nicholson, he was the secretary of the CND of the time, invited drivers, bus drivers to come along and have a talk to him. Now, obviously that entailed very, very much more than bus driving. When I met him the first time and he invited me for one day at Cambridge where he was at University there, and we became quite close friends then from then onwards.

Tape 7: 27 minutes 36 seconds

And then of course I thought this is a good opportunity for me again to go to all these countries. I have not seen them before, but it also meant that I could see Leipzig on the way through to these Eastern block countries and this is what we were talking about, I said that was what made me involved there. Well, that was it, really. My former association was South Africa and the movement there obviously led to that. But I was not active in any way when we came to England.

RL: What were the trips that you went on? Where did you go?

FJ: Yes. Well, the aim was to go as far as Russia and on the way we had several nights at several other countries from, well first of all it was East Germany, we had to travel through there, and finally to Poland, Warsaw, we had to visit, and Czechoslovakia and from there it led through one other country I have forgotten now on the way to the Russian border. So, I think I mentioned what had happened on the way, driving that vehicle that it was going very well but it didn't stop very well. I think I mentioned that before. It was an old vehicle. And I was driving one night and half a day when we approached on the ... border with Austria. That was on the way through and I had a map, and I looked up while there was a very steep mountain called Würzen (?) Pass and we had to go with that old vehicle all the way up that terrific rise, twenty-eight degree rise, from ground level to the top level of the mountain. And when we got to the top, the border control in this really broad Austrian dialect said 'Now what made you come up all this way up here? There is a tunnel under that mountain!' I felt the biggest fool in my life and what happened on that mountain halfway is unbelievable. It is so unbelievable that eventually I had to spend two days with my foot in plaster in a place called Ljubljana that was then formally known as Yugoslavia it was known.

Tape 7: 30 minutes 55 seconds

RL: What was the object of the trip?

FJ: Oh yes, it was for the British students to see what the other side of the world, Eastern Europe, looked like. They have only heard it in stories up to that point and they were all young people of course, CND supporters.

RL: How many went?

FJ: Well, on each trip, there were two trips; one I only did half way because I was laid up in this hospital there with my foot in plaster. They each had something between thirty passengers in their coach.

RL: And what period are we talking about? When was this?

FJ: Oh that must have been, I can't really remember now, but it was about five years after we came to England. It must have been in the '60's. Some time in the '60's. That was a great experience all around and on one of them I took my son along and on the other one I took my daughter along. Now we had a very good time because it took me back to my very, very early days as a young boy to the Jewish Scouts movement in Leipzig, you know similar experiences on a different scale obviously, well that was more or less the background of that story, again it has got ... can go into great depth.

RL: Were you active politically in this country at all?

FJ: Not in this country at all, no, only that I have become a supporter, I mean a sort of a supporter with occasional donations to the party, the communist party. But further than that my involvement has come to an end long ago.

RL: So where were you active politically?

FJ: Mainly, first in Germany, for a very, very short period due to my father's influence there when I was still ... just before I left the country. But in South Africa I became very, very involved as a result of that of the past.

RL: What kind of things were you doing?

Tape 7: 33 minutes 55 seconds

FJ: Strangely enough I combined it with my experiences as sign and display artist and for the party there I had to produce all the banners and the show cards and the publicity material and that is what they needed. They have also not ever seen that before. So here my bit of background experience was combined with that sort of activity. I also attended very many meetings. Now one of them, they used to have a city hall obviously like every big city has, and they had, what they called city hall steps, that was a very long area in front of the city hall where this party and other parties had their Sunday evening meetings, talks and sort of involvement in everything and they had some very good speakers there.

RL: What was the party?

FJ: It was the communist party of South Africa. There was another one that was a Jewish communist party, which that party, the one we are talking about first disapproved of. They were too national minded. Not international, although the South African party itself had the same problem and none of them, even to this day, so many so-called left wing parties they don't realise that you cannot have socialism in one country alone. Like capitalism hasn't. Capitalism knows that they have it worldwide without any border control. Now they have border control in a different way but for trade and industry and war, they don't know borders while in South Africa the party was very, very single-minded there, and that until the right-wing government came into power, it had to dissolve, you see, because half of the members were already imprisoned in high-treason trials but I thought to myself 'sooner or later they

will get them all' and that made me also think of leaving the country and Ann has never been out of the country so that was the opportunity.

Tape 7: 36 minutes 52 seconds

We had to gradually give up the school, which we had at the time; the Montessori school and my parents were already there, they followed me two years later in 1938. They stayed there for another fifteen years after me. But when we went to visit my brother in East Germany they also followed there and finally they lived in West Berlin where we followed them again, so that's where we started the GB English, the school of English it was called but in a very small flat but soon afterwards when our daughter Vicky got married, she needed a bigger place, they also lived in a one-room flat there together, which wasn't enough place, which wasn't our cup of tea at all. So we gave them that flat but I will say they weren't entitled to it but I was because as a refugee there, I was still classified even in the West as refugee, that I was given the ... permit to have one of the newly built flats in the new building. In the meantime while they were building up that place, or it was still under construction, we joined a holiday with my son and the three children to the Black Sea, a sea resort, Miami it was called, similar to the American resort. We stayed there for three weeks. We had a very pleasant time, only on the way back, my car was overloaded with three children, the family, the luggage for three weeks, you can imagine, with the roof-rack that was higher than the car itself. But unfortunately I had to put my son off and say 'you better go by train now' because he did a terrible thing during that journey. You know I had to really drive very, very carefully first of all driving on the left side, on the wrong side of the road, and secondly driving with luggage on top and the children was no joke. He insisted on playing his radio, you couldn't stop him.

Tape 7: 39 minutes 43 seconds

And I said 'now that's too dangerous for me now, we either have to stop here all of us or you stop'. So we had to put him off near a railway station and I said 'you must get yourself a ticket for the train'. We gave him the money and he did. Of course he arrived where we lived at the time, the new building in Berlin. He arrived there before us, because we had a long trip, a very long trip going back. While we lived in Berlin for a time where Ann and I had this school of English one of the students, I often used to visit the students, give some of the lessons outside, at the factory or individuals or professionals, one of them was a young doctor and she was so taken with both of us, she had a wonderful, beautiful flat in Berlin, huge place and she had another house in the mountains, somewhere outside going more West in the East and she had another house in Spain, in a place called Estepona. So she invited us, free you know, to join her for three weeks tour to all these places. It was a fantastic experience. But she was single, or divorced but was speculating for the wrong object. She thought I would go along and join her for dancing and this and that but it didn't work out, so she decided she'll give it up. That was three weeks later. We had a wonderful time, wonderful time, all the first-class hotels and all that, you know, went to her house ... she gave it up. She packed up and she said 'I'll give you your ticket for the boat and you make your own way'. Well, I was only too pleased to make my own way, I've had enough of it. But I thought 'why shouldn't we take that opportunity, a holiday for free, with the whole family'.

Tape 7: 42 minutes 7 seconds

RL: Coming back to the present time here, you mentioned, have you any connection with AJR, with the Association of Jewish Refugees?

FJ: We had the connection with AJR before you were born. I dare say that, take it as a compliment because we just came to London when I was still pursuing part of my claim, which was such a disaster in the end. That ... we made our way to AJR and see whether they can deal with my particular case. They were still somewhere near Finchley Road, the road down, I can't remember where, very small offices, that was the first association. But since then we lost it altogether and very recently only we got a circular somewhere and they invited us to either rejoin or ... and yes, we did.

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about the claim that you were making? You said you were in touch with them over a claim?

FJ: It was actually a claim on the former trade and the social background was very much taken into account for assessing which category you fall into. That was three categories as I said before. I can't remember the German names but it was the lowest, the middle and the highest classification. And I did mention that before, but these are the classifications where the association comes into the picture, the display artist association. Since then we lost complete contact with AJR and it was very recently that it was taken up again, when your colleague, what was her name ... came here for some discussion and mentioned 'now why don't you get all your story recorded?'

RL: Barbara Dorrity?

FJ: Barbara. Yes.

RL: Have you had any other connection with any other organisation?

Tape 7: 44 minutes 58 seconds

FJ: Do you mean here in England?

RL: Yes.

FJ: Not really. No, I can't say that. Not at all.

RL: Have you ever experienced any anti-Semitism here?

FJ: Well, you know, to answer that question I have to go back to what anti-Semitism meant to me before and by comparison it's almost nil here. It's there, it's everywhere, it will always be, unfortunately but you know, the point is, you know, with my background and experience of anti-fascism and the disapproval of non-Jewish people towards Jews, some of them, I didn't experience anything.

RL: How well received do you feel you have been in England?

FJ: Oh, with open arms I can say. Yes, everywhere. I have no specific feelings about that, you know, where one can pinpoint to say here, feelings were shown in a rejecting or approving way, very, very average. It has to do with the fact that we, or I, in particular, and Ann too actually, are non-descript regarding religious or other feelings associated with religions, because my feelings are much more associated with science to the extent that are reasoned and experience that then any particular nationalist mind at all, limited way of looking at life. You know, to me religion, I have full respect for people who practice religion, the fullest, a

100% because I put it down to the way they see the world. Now, in that sense I forgive them because I can see the world as a whole and as far as I am concerned that includes, or in fact governs all my feelings, which is the science more than any belief. Now to me, if I put it very, very crudely now, religion to me has got a very sensible social aspect to it and I would call it primitive socialism. It's a long short of that description.

RL: Now I think we are sort of coming to the end of the interview, is there any message that you would like to give to conclude the interview?

FJ: Well, the first and foremost message that comes to my mind all the time, since I've met you and since we've been doing the recording, due to your very valuable support and that of Roy is very, very useful not only but equally appreciated no end. Because it has been my first opportunity for the two of you to provide this opportunity, which will, I am quite sure, will be the best foundation for my ultimate writing in more detail. And for that, no end to thanks.

RL: Okay, thank you very much, thank you.

FJ: Great pleasure.

Picture 1:

FJ: Right, now this is my father's father, his name Abraham Jonas, he was chairman of the Jewish congregation in Osnabrück, Germany and this was taken probably between 1910-1914.

Picture2:

FJ: This is my father's mother, her name Helene Jonas, maiden name Maier, it was also taken in Osnabrück, Germany, between 1910-1914 I guess.

Picture3:

FJ: Here again, this is my mother's mother, in other words my grandmother and her name was Ritzevolla and her first name Bianca. Her maiden name was Biram and it was taken most likely in Hamburg between 1910-1914 where she lived with my aunt for a while.

Picture 4:

FJ: Well, on the left of the picture is my mother's father, his name David Ritzevolla, next to my mother, Helene Jonas. That was taken in Leipzig in about 1926.

Tape 7: 51 minutes 31 seconds

Picture 5:

FJ: These are my parents; father's name Salomon and mother Helene Jonas, taken in about 1937 in Leipzig at their silver wedding.

Picture6:

FJ: A photograph taken of the eight brothers, my father included on the very left, is my father Salomon Jonas taken with his brothers about 1900 in Osnabrück. And his brother Moritz is the third from the left and one other is Andreas, I can't see who he is and the other names I do not know unfortunately.

Picture 7:

FJ: The three brothers from the left to right is myself, Freddie, with my brother in the middle Werner, the youngest and Horst, the eldest, taken all in about 1919 in Leipzig.

Picture 8:

FJ: Copy of a letter, sent by the Association of Display Artists and Associated Trades in the field of arts sent to me, Fred Jonas, in March, 10th of March 1936 in the city of Bautzen where I was sent incidentally after Leipzig by decree of Nazi law in Germany, telling me that I would no longer be a member of the Association because Jews cannot support the nationalist-socialist ideology and therefore cannot be active in any part of arts of any description. Now therefore I have to discontinue my work with immediate effect. [...] So this letter was signed by a person Herr Tiller and Herr Künzler in his absence from the Association of Display Artists.

Tape 7: 54 minutes 26 seconds

Picture 9:

FJ: Now, this window display is one that I helped with to make up the display with the senior display artist at Ury it was called, a department store in Leipzig. It was taken in 1934-35. It shows haberdashery items, which were on sale on the ground floor.

Picture 10:

FJ: A window display, which I had to design and do myself in a department store in Bautzen in 1935. The store was called Ceka and owned by a family Kohn. It showed hardware and household goods.

Picture 11:

FJ: The wedding photograph of my younger brother Werner Jonas and his bride Liesl Botzki, taken in 1939 in Leipzig. They were eventually both murdered during the Holocaust.

Picture 12:

FJ: And this is a wedding photograph of my older brother Horst Jonas and his bride Katja, taken in 1947 in a town in East Germany, Neu-Strelitz. My brother is dressed in the uniform of that time chief of the police in that area.

Picture 13:

FJ: This is the house in Leipzig where my family still lived altogether. We lived on the right hand side on the second floor, shown on the picture (points at the photograph). It was in Thomasiustraße, facing Nikisch Platz, the square. The building had ceramic sculptures along the façade, depicting fairy-tales. The fourth and fifth floor were occupied by a well-known artist in Leipzig.

Picture 14:

FJ: A copy of a letterhead from my father's shoe wholesale business in Leipzig around 1925. His name was S. Jonas, Salomon Jonas.

Tape 7: 57 minutes 28 seconds

Picture 15:

FJ: One of the pictures of myself, Fred Jonas, Probably taken in Bautzen, Germany taken in 1931 or '32.

Picture 16:

FJ: This is a small section of the Montessori School in Johannesburg, which my wife and I established in 1954. It shows Fred, me, showing the children the sound boxes, which they had to distinguish between two different sounds and sort them all filled with various items, sand, pebbles or rice etc.

Picture 17:

FJ: This is part of the GB school of English in Berlin, which I established with Ann in about 1964-65.

Picture 18:

FJ: A photograph of the brochure of Laneswood, the house where Ann and myself ran a school of English for students from Germany and other countries. This was taken in Hampshire in 1957.

Picture 19:

FJ: The coach, an old London transport coach, which I drove to Eastern Europe for CND. And this was taken outside a youth hostel in Warsaw in 1964.

Picture 20:

FJ: These are our children, from left to right Vicky, Sonia and Gerald Jonas, taken in 1963 in the city of Leipzig.

Picture 21:

FJ: This is a photograph of Ann and myself taken in December 2003 in Macclesfield.

Picture 22:

FJ: These are our grandchildren, Sam and Joseph, Sonia and David's children, taken in 2005 and 2006 in Coddington in Cheshire at their house.