

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Sondheimer
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Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	8 September 1923
Interviewee POB:	Stuttgart, Germany

Date of Interview:	7 December 2005
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Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
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**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 112

NAME: ERNST HELMUT SONDHEIMER

DATE: 7 DECEMBER 2005

LOCATION: LONDON

INTERVIEWER: BEA LEWKOWICZ

TAPE 1

BL: Today is the 7th of December 2005. We are conducting an interview with Ernst Sondheimer, the location is London, Highgate, and my name is Bea Lewkowicz. Can you please tell me your name?

ES: Ernst Sondheimer.

BL: Have you got any other names?

ES: Well, I have a second forename – Helmut – which I don't use, really, except in my initials. E.H. I like to use.

BL: When were you born please?

ES: On the 8th of September 1923

BL: And where were you born?

ES: In Stuttgart in Württemberg.

BL: Mr. Sondheimer, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed, hm, can you please tell me something about your family background?

ES: Okay, my father Max Sondheimer was born in 1896 in a small place, small village, Oberdorf, on the border of Württemberg and Bavaria where his family had '...' on his mother's side, the Weils, had owned a kind of chemical factory making glues and adhesives, which was founded in the early 19th century by an ancestor called Veidt-Weil. My father grew up there, served in the First World War, on the German side of course, on the Western Front in the Vauge, and then settled in Stuttgart, joined the family business. But being a rather strong personality, he soon was at odds with the, I think with the other partners in the business and set up on his own, in Stuttgart, until he emigrated in 1937. My mother was born an Oppenheimer, was born in a small town, Wertheim am Main, very picturesque of which I have very happy memories when me and my brother visited my grandparents there in Wertheim where my mother's father, my grandfather, Adolf Oppenheimer, ran the local bank. He was the local banker, but he moved to Stuttgart soon after the Nazis came to power, when

life became quite intolerable I gather, for Jewish people in a small town where everybody knew everybody.

Tape 1: 3 minutes 45 seconds

A very picturesque town, it's at the end of what's called the Romantische Straße, where the Tauber, river Tauber joins the river Main. We were of course officially Jewish, but not very observant, didn't eat kosher food or anything like that. But I did have my Bar Mitzvah just before I came to England in 1936.

BL: What are your first childhood memories, what do you remember of growing up in Stuttgart?

ES: Well, I remember going to school of course, for a few months I went to a school called the Wagenburgschule, and then we moved to the other side of town and I was entered for a school called the Falkert Versuchsschule, which I suppose really meant that it was – by the standards of those days – a rather modern Versuchsschule, experimental school. We had a wonderful teacher, Herr Volpert, whom I remember with great affection, and I was a child that, for what it is worth, learned very easily and usually came top of the class (Laughs), and I think was quite happy there. I went to school every day and I had a very good friend, Günther. We are both over eighty now and we are still in close touch, we have been, ever, ever since then except for the war years. At the appropriate time, at the age of ten or so, I passed the exam to enter the Gymnasium and then went to the, what was called a Reformrealgymnasium, not the most prestigious school in Stuttgart, but again a relatively modern school, when we started with French, rather than Latin, and I had really no trouble as a Jewish boy in that school. The teachers were, seemed all very decent; the school went so far in 1935 as to award me a price, which was, I should think quite unusual.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 34 seconds

BL: What sort of price?

ES: Pardon?

BL: What sort of price did you get?

ES: Well, a sort of form price, I've still got the school report, the Zeugnis, which just says, 'erhält einen Preis'. The only possibly unpleasant, well it was an unpleasant thing that happened as a result was that the notorious paper, Julius Schleicher's paper 'Der Stürmer' carried a little notice amongst the short notices, which said more or less, 'Wir können nicht verstehen, wie das Reformrealgymnasium in Stuttgart dazu kommt, dem Judenbuben Sondheimer einen Preis zu verleihen'. There must have been a little Nazi in the class who reported this. I haven't kept the cutting unfortunately, and it had no further consequences I am glad to say. My German school friends with whom I am still in touch now assure me that the class, a large majority were not taken in by the Nazis at all. My friend says, he can't quite understand why they, with all the things they said, they didn't end up in a concentration camp. So, Germans weren't all Nazis, by any means.

BL: Were there any other Jewish children in the school?

ES: There were some and there were some in my class, I can't really remember their names or how many there were, there must have been about four or five in a class of I think over forty. And we were not, as I have already indicated, not discriminated against in any way. I suppose we had to stand up and say 'Heil Hitler' and all those things the whole class had to do.

BL: What sort of circles did your parents mix in?

ES: Well, there were other fairly well-to-do Jewish people in Stuttgart, I think they mainly mixed with Jewish friends and relations. My father's brother who later emigrated to the United States was a medical, a GP in Stuttgart. My mother's brother, younger brother, was a lawyer, *Rechtsanwalt*, he didn't live in Stuttgart, he lived in Mannheim I believe, also got out in time to England, and I don't remember all the others because I was quite young then.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 18 seconds

BL: Did you belong to any youth clubs or any...?

ES: There was a Jewish youth club, I forget what it was called. It wasn't the Bund, was it which was, I think of course rather conservative, or shall we say old-fashioned liberal German Jews. They had sort of organisations which were rather on the lines of the German patriotic organisations. There was the ZEV, the *Zentralverein Deutscher Bürger jüdischen Glaubens*, which was very, very conservative, and I belonged to something, an organisation, I can't remember its name, which had sort of meetings and camps. I didn't like it and I don't think I stayed in it for very long (Laughs). If you are interested in anecdotes, and to illustrate my father's family's attitude: I remember once coming home from school, wearing the emblem, the badge of the Social Democrats the three arrows, *drei Pfeile*. When my father saw this, he was furious and said, 'Take that away at once, throw it away, how dare you wear this'. I think he voted for what was...the liberal party, the *Deutsche Demokratische Partei*, which became rather insignificant during the Weimar Republic, as far as I remember.

BL: But he wasn't, was he, politically involved at all, your father?

ES: Not active politically, no, no. And of course, like so many, at first he hoped that this Nazi nonsense would not last very long.

BL: You said your grandparents moved shortly after 1933 to Stuttgart also. Do you remember that?

ES: Well, my grandparents, my father's father, Julius Sondheimer, he had died about 1931 and, who I suppose was in the family glue business. My father's mother, she came to England, and she died soon after the war, Lina Weil. And my mother's parents, the banker in Wertheim and his wife, my grandmother Sophie whom I loved dearly, Sophie, my grandmother Sophie was ill, when my parents emigrated in 1937 and died a few months later in Germany. I think she had breast cancer or I heard that later. But her husband, my grandfather Adolf, he was brought to England and lived until the 1950's.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 39 seconds

The only member of the closer family who was really directly affected by the Holocaust was my father's. My father, he had two brothers, well one, Martin, the doctor who I have already mentioned, the youngest one was a woman, that's my aunt Hilde, she was a rather liberated

woman by the standards of those days and had a succession of boyfriends and was regarded rather as the black sheep and she was very pretty. She stayed behind, and I believe she was incarcerated in Theresienstadt, or Auschwitz, but I think Theresienstadt, survived, but was obviously damaged and after the war we were in contact, were trying to bring her to England, but she committed suicide about two years after the end of the war. She was somewhere in Czechoslovakia, what was then Czechoslovakia, she married a Czech and I have been trying to trace her grave ever since, without success so far.

BL: So she was your aunt?

ES: This was my aunt, my aunt Hilde. And now I have mentioned two brothers, one I have already mentioned and there was another one, Hans, Giovanni, he was in business of some kind in Italy before the war. He married in Stuttgart my aunt Grete, who died about three or four year ago, over ninety, very lively man, and he did all right, didn't he. He lived in Florence I think at the time but then, of course in the late 30's Mussolini enacted anti-Jewish laws and they had to get away and came to England and were in England during the war, I think having a fairly hard time of it and went back soon after the end of the war, and continued in Italy. But Hans, Giovanni, I think he had some war injuries, not quite sure what it was, but he died fairly young in the 1950's. But his widow Grete carried on and lived in Turin. There was something else I wanted to say about them...

Tape 1: 15 minutes 40 seconds

Oh yes, Grete, she. she was a librarian and started work I think already in the late 1920's in Hamburg at the Warburg Institute, helped in the library, and when they were here in London, she, I think she was in the library or perhaps even the librarian of the Warburg Institute here in London. So, that gives us a rough picture of the family....

BL: So, most of the family came to England?

ES: Yes., as I have indicated...

BL: Yes. Can you tell me, do you remember, when was the first time emigration was discussed in the family?

ES: Well, that's a very difficult question to answer, and I don't really know what exactly made my father emigrate. You see, there were two big waves of emigration from Nazi Germany: the first one in 1933, when the civil servants and the University Professors, and all the State employees lost their jobs or were forced into retirement. Then, there was a sort of period of relative stability really, and then the next big wave was of course later, after Kristallnacht, when people more or less had to flee if they wanted ... And our emigration was in-between. What exactly - as I said, my father was a good patriotic German and couldn't believe that this nonsense wouldn't pass - what exactly made him decide that he must go, I really don't know and I am not sure that he would have told me. There was one episode I remember, not terribly clearly: it must have been what, 1935 when two gentlemen in civil clothes came and took my parents away and I was told nothing about it and they came back a day or two later and didn't really talk about it But I gathered that that was the Gestapo and they wanted to interview my parents, not because of anything that my father himself had done but somebody in his business who'd had some trouble with currency transactions. That's what I believe has happened and I think that may have been a red light that it was time to go, I believe.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 48 seconds

BL: But it wasn't sort of discussed. I mean, you were so young.

ES: It wasn't really discussed. My father then visited the United States and Italy and England and looked at schools in Switzerland for me. I remember him just looking around, before he decided that England was the best opportunity for him. Whether he ever really intended to return I don't know, I'm damn sure he didn't know himself. And of course we didn't, nobody knew what terrible things were going to happen to the Jews during the war. So it's difficult to answer. My mother (Laughs), she was an interesting lady, and fact and fancy were rather mixed in the tales she used to tell. She maintained that it wasn't the Nazis at all that made them emigrate but that some book she read about the way the Bolsheviks after the Russian Revolution treated bourgeois families made her decide that we must get away. Whether that's true or whether she made it up, I don't really know (Laughs).

BL: Did they decide together that they should emigrate or was it just your father who...?

ES: Well, I think my father rather tended to take the decisions in the family. My mother was, although she lived to be over ninety always a bit of a semi-invalid. Whether it was true or simulated, I don't quite know, but she tended to sort of visit sanatoria from time to time. Her great disappointment in life was— so she liked to say and I am sure it was like this too - that her father again with old-fashioned views... You know she was an intelligent girl, went to Gymnasium but wasn't allowed to go to University. That's why her sons had to go to University and win all the prizes and she used to boast about this, which annoyed my father (Laughs) who was a bit, sort of down to earth and regarded as the practical businessman. And he did well in business, I mean he always maintained like many business people that he didn't have a penny to his name but when he died, he left more than a penny (Laughs).

Tape 1: 21 minutes 25 seconds

BL: When did your parents get married?

ES: When? Early in 1922.

BL: And how did they, do you know how they met?

ES: Well, I think it was a case of, no, not exactly, no, but it was a case of... It wasn't exactly arranged but it was, an introduction was arranged, exactly through whom, my dad...I don't know, I have forgotten. Another little tale that my father kept on repeating, when I was born in September 1923, there was the height of the great German Hyperinflation and the feel of inflation really dominated my father's life, which is understandable, and he kept saying, 'When you were born, I looked at you and I said, "If he only knew that today the Dollar is worth a hundred thousand million Marks"' or whatever (Laughs) I don't remember that of course.

BL: How was your father's business affected, or was it affected at all?

ES: Well, I don't know really...

BL: I mean in the '30's.

ES: He didn't have his own business then. I can't remember us being really poverty-stricken in the 1920's, I think we lived a pretty good bourgeois life with holidays and a children's nanny and so on. I think people in business didn't, perhaps didn't do so badly, some people profited of course from the inflation, if they borrowed money which they could repay in worthless money, they did well out of it, I'm not suggesting that that happened in his case, but not everybody suffered.

BL: No, I meant also later in the 30's. How was his business before you emigrated?

ES: Yes, again, I don't really know. He carried on with his business, he'd established a clientele, I think he was very good at talking to people and doing business that way, and visiting them, and listening to them and so on. And he obviously...What sort of difficulties he had, they probably must have increased but I think he got out just in time. Later on all Jewish businesses were what they said of course 'Aryanized', which means taken over for tiny sums. But that hadn't happened. We even, and that might be of some interest, when he got out he even was able to take furniture with him. If you would like to look at that (points behind him), that is a 1920's walnut sideboard from Germany. They don't make those anymore, which we have now inherited.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 24 seconds

I do remember, it may have been on the same occasion, I am not sure that I've mentioned earlier, when the Gestapo came, they did pay a visit to his ..He had a eh business near where we lived in Stuttgart, an office and they interviewed him and his secretaries, and one, Fräulein Schreiber, was very devoted to him. And they were rather nasty and said when she said how much she cared for him and loved him, they said, 'We are sure that you're having an affair with this Jew', or something like that, which upset her greatly. And another one, I think she was also working in his office, she actually came to England before the war, must have been with us for about a year, a year and a half as a household help. But then she returned to Germany, just before war broke out. And the reason, why he managed the emigration perhaps a bit more successfully than many was because, as far as I know, he had a little branch office business here in London. So in 1937 he just sort of packed up, came to England and said, 'I'm going to carry on in London'.

BL: But you left earlier, can you tell us what...?

ES: I was sent one year earlier, in 1936 when I was thirteen, just after my Bar Mitzvah.

BL: So maybe you can tell us about the Bar Mitzvah? Tell us first, what can you remember from your Bar Mitzvah?

ES: (Laughs). Mixed, mixed feelings. I was of course, quite pleased to have a Bar Mitzvah because you get a lot of presents. Some of the books are on the shelf behind me. Hamann Geschichte der Kunst, terrible book, I've never read it. And Burckhardt Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. I was given, I think I was also given a bicycle, which pleased me more, and I used to get up very early in the morning and ride it about the town, there was no traffic of course in those days. Other aspects of course didn't please me so much. I had to attend classes in preparation and then I had to sing in the synagogue and I couldn't sing in tune at all, so I was a bit terrified of that but it went off alright. And then I suppose we had a party but I don't remember the party itself.

Tape 1: 27 minutes 20 seconds

BL: In which synagogue, where was it?

ES: Well, I am not quite sure, the liberal Jewish services took place in a house, which was rented for the purpose as far as I remember. But I think this was in the in the old synagogue itself in Stuttgart, I really don't clearly remember, and I'm afraid as far as the Jewish aspect is concerned, it didn't mean a lot to me. I had to go to Hebrew classes, but done in a very sort of unimaginative way in learning by rote and it wasn't taught to us in a meaningful way. And then, once I was in England I when was able to go to Cambridge, I rather reacted against all that. Eventually I married an English girl, who is Church-going Anglican, which my parents found a bit hard to take, even my mother with her ostensibly liberal views. I think I called her bluff a bit too much. So, there were problems there.

BL: So basically the last year before you emigrated, you had these religious instructions?

ES: Yes, yes. Just coming back if I may to my Grundschule, the primary school and the lovely teacher we had, Herr Volpert, he was quite friendly with my mother in a, I am sure in a perfectly innocent way. But he used to visit us. I once broke my leg, skating - as far as I remember the school was really only in the mornings, and in the afternoons we sort of went swimming in the summer, and skating in the winter - I broke my leg and was in bed for several weeks. He used to come and help and teach me at our house. And he was, I think my mother knew that he was politically very much on the left wing. He belonged to some party, to the left of the Social Democrats; I forgot what it was called. And I got to know about this. And once, when we were in a school-camp with the school I, being young and naïve and innocent, told the other fellows in the class about this, and he got to know about it. This was after the Nazis had come to power, and I was summoned to see him and he was very terribly upset for obvious reasons and I was ticked off very thoroughly for doing anything so very stupid. I don't know whether it had any direct consequences for him. He actually died soon after; I think he was suffering from TB. So that's one memory I have. And he was quite right of course and I was just young and foolish.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 49 seconds

BL: Anything else about the school years before we move on to your emigration, anything else?

ES: Well, Nothing much else comes to mind, no. I used to travel to school, again with my good friend Günther on the Stuttgart tram, number seven, going down from where we lived. We were rather up on the side of the hill and travelled down into the centre, where we could...., wonderful place there the 'Eissalon Venedig' where you could get really good icecream. So we always managed to buy an ice-cream before getting on the other tram, which took us to the school, the Reformrealgymnasium. The other speciality, one of the other specialities in Stuttgart is the Laugenbrezel, which cost exactly four Pfennig in those days, which you can still buy now, but it costs a lot more. I don't think I have immediately any other memories.

BL: So you stayed friends with Günther...

ES: Yes.

BL: Who was not Jewish?

ES: Yeah, that's right. And I believe his, Günther's father...I think my father said that Günther's father said that when he heard that I was going to England, he said, 'I wish I could send my son to England, too.' Günther survived the war. I think he managed to stay out of the German army, stayed in Stuttgart for some medical reasons and of course I wasn't in touch with him then. But I do remember soon after Janet and I married we visited Stuttgart and I looked him up in the telephone directory and found his name and dialled the number...I'll never forget it, heard the familiar voice and said to him, 'Erinnerst Du Dich an den Ernst Sondheimer? Derjenige bin ich'. [Do you remember Ernst Sondheimer? I am the one.] It has become a ,geflügeltes Wort' [set phrase] in the family (Laughs). And we have been in touch ever since.

Tape 1: 33 minutes 34 seconds

BL: So, can you tell us about your emigration, what do you remember of leaving Stuttgart?

ES: Well, as I said, I don't really know how my father got in touch with this Mrs Franklin Cohn, but she got me a place at this school in Bournemouth. And there must have been some financial arrangement. I know that the son of the headmaster of that school came over. I entered the school in September '36, I came back home for Christmas and the son of the headmaster came with me as a holiday and that must have been part of the financial arrangements, I presume. I didn't care for him at all you see, he was rather older and tended to rather bully me. We had a lovely stay in rather deep snow near Baden-Baden, I do remember that. There was something I wanted to say... Anyway, yes, my mother and I ..., my mother took me to England by train in those days of course, a train to Hoek van Holland and then the boat to Harwich. My mother was very sea sick and (Laughs) I wondered how I would cope with her but it was alright, and I was placed in this school.

BL: What was the name of that school?

ES: Pardon?

BL: What was the name of the school, please?

ES: Hayley, it was called the Hayley School, a small preparatory school. Of course I'd had some English lessons but I couldn't really speak English and I didn't understand anything - you probably know all about that. I was placed in this school, I was very miserable at first; I hadn't been properly prepared of what life in a small English boarding school would be like. I mean in Stuttgart we had no problems from anti-Semitism, life was..., the afternoons were free, we went... And in this school you were allowed out for two hours on Saturday afternoons, and so... I am sure they were all very kind, really and of course I learned to speak English pretty quickly, you do under those circumstances. I had to learn a lot of new subjects, things like Algebra, Latin, British History, all new to me but as I have already said, I was a quick learner and I managed to adapt.

Tape 1: 36 minutes 17 seconds

Very, very homesick at first and at the end of that year I went home again. We all went for a holiday in the Dolomites and then it was announced that the family, that none of the family

were returning to Germany. My mother was taking my brother and me - my brother had stayed behind - to Zürich, and we got on a little plane, my first aeroplane journey, to Croydon Airport as it was then in London. That was '37 and before then I'd been entered for the entrance scholarship exam for the University College School and managed to get a minor scholarship. And then, when my parents were first in London, they lived in a small flat in St. John's Wood and I was boarded out with a man, Dr. Lehmann who I think he was, yes, he was a chemist who was helping in my father's, or employed in my father's business who lived in Golders Green. Very orthodox Jewish, very kind man I'm sure but I didn't care for all the Jewish rituals to be honest. And then, ha, my mother was very keen on modern architecture, all her life. Stuttgart had the famous Weissenhof Siedlung, in which all the, in the 20's, in which all the famous architects of that time, Gropius and Le Corbusier and who else, Mies van der Rohe, each built a house and she always dragged us off there whenever she could to visit some friends who lived there. So when she came to London, she was determined to find a house with a flat roof and I've got a photo there of us, of my father and me playing table tennis on the flat roof, and she found it in the end, about a mile from here, in Highgate, still there. And they moved in there in the beginning of 1938 and then of course I moved back in with them and went to school in Hampstead from there, on the 210 bus, which is still running now.

BL: So you had a year on your own first in that school...

ES: Yes, I had a year on my own, and...

BL: Were there any other..., were you the only German-Jewish boy there in that school?

ES: At UCS?

BL: In Bournemouth, in Bournemouth.

Tape 1: 39 minutes 2 seconds

ES: I don't think so, I am not sure... I doubt it because I know I used to (Laughs)... One duty was to go and have tea with Mrs. Franklin Cohn, which was a bit - I am sure she was very kind really - but it was a bit terrifying. I behaved really well by English standards.

BL: So, do you know, what did she actually do, you don't know anything about that actual scheme?

ES: No, I really don't know anything about that scheme exactly. ...

BL: But she sort of facilitated to bring over...

ES: She must have done, yes.

BL: Boys and girls, or boys...

ES: I really don't know, eh, and I have not been able to find out. I mean I have read one or two books about people helping the refugee effort, but I have not seen her mentioned and Erik Kaufmann tells the story - this is how I got to know him - how I think his mother, went to see Mrs. Cohn in 1933 just after the Nazi's had come to power, and he had English connections because he was born in England, to warn Mrs. Cohn about the Nazi danger and so on, and that

is presumably how she got involved. But he couldn't really tell me anymore exactly what her involvement amounted to. I doubt if it was very much more than making introductions and finding schools and so on, but I am only guessing now.

BL: I mean, presumably your father was able to fund you in that year?

ES: Yes, to finance you mean?

BL: Yes.

ES: I assume so, yes, I mean he never really liked to talk about money but I assume that he, as I say, he paid at least half of the fees I'd imagine. And then there was this, this arrangement with the school, but I can't really say more about that.

BL: Yes. But at that point you didn't really feel that it was a relief to be out of Germany, it was more a sort of challenge to be here?

ES: (Laughs). Difficult to recall exactly one's feelings. As I said, I was extremely miserable and homesick at first but then I think I settled down after a while, once I managed to speak English and the other boys I think on the... There was just one master at school who I imagine who didn't like me and so I suspect that he was anti-Semitic. Just one, but I do remember that, he used to have it in for me. The others were very kind, the boys were very nice, we played Monopoly, which was a new game in those days and I got on quite well with that...

Tape 1: 42 minutes 11 seconds

BL: Well, you said...why was he anti-Semitic, what do you remember?

ES: I don't...

BL: That master, you said.

ES: That is difficult to answer, that is difficult to answer. I am only guessing. I may have been a rather unpleasant child anyway. I don't think I was actually, I was fairly obedient.

BL: And you said that you went for holidays and then your parents came and that they managed to bring out furniture. They had a crate sent, or how did they...?

ES: I think it was probably my uncle, my mother's brother who came out about six months or a year later, some time during 1938, I think he arranged it, probably had a crate sent, yes, most of it. Some of it we've got rid off but, there is that piece and a wonderful desk, which is in our hall. So yes, it must have been sent after their arrival in England.

BL: Did he close the business in Germany or did he sell it?

ES: Well, I don't really know what happened to the business in Germany. That I just don't know at all.

BL: Did he re-establish this new business immediately?

ES: Well, as I think I mentioned, I think there was already this side branch of the business, Reiningwill (?), with a representative in London. I think that had already been going for some years so he just carried on with that.

BL: And what did he call it, what was it called, please?

ES: Pardon? What did he...?

BL: What was his business called in England?

ES: Well, as I showed you on that photo, it is Sondal Glues but I don't know whether he called it that from the beginning or whether that was a later invention. Might have been just Max Sondheimer. I'm not sure.

BL: And how difficult was it for your parents to sort of settle in?

ES: Well, it was certainly a bit more difficult than for me as a young boy who had major education in England, of course it was easier for me to adapt to English ways. I think they did their best. He had his own friends among other émigrés but I don't think they ever really properly settled in England. I think as far as the business is concerned, the war may have been a good thing for him. He didn't talk much about it, but I think he was able to supply glue - I'm really guessing but he didn't really talk about it - for the Mosquito aircraft, which was made of plywood for which you needed glue and I think he supplied that. So I think he probably didn't do too badly in business during the war.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 30 seconds

BL: So your parents sort of mixed within refugee circles?

ES: Yes, oh well, how their experience during the war was, would you like to hear about that?

BL: Yes, please.

ES: Well, when war broke out September 1939, a lot of people moved out of London, because of the fear of air raids. My father, who always liked to do his own thing said, 'We are staying here', so we stayed in the house in Highgate and at first, in the so-called phoney war, very little happened. Then, there was the Battle of Britain, so-called in 1940, what the English call the Blitz, air raids started on London and my father's business associate was killed, unfortunately. He lived in Tottenham and his house was hit and he was killed. And then of course, there was panic. And before then, I'm sorry, I must just backtrack a little, when the Blitz started, we didn't immediately move out of London, we moved out of our house and we moved into a block of flats quite nearby on Hornsey Lane, where we slept in the corridors. That was regarded as safe, a lot of people of course slept in the underground. We slept in the corridors of this block of flats and then I think my father's business partner was killed and then there was panic and we had to move out of London. But by then it was very difficult to find any accommodation anywhere. We moved to Letchworth, a place on the way to Cambridge, a very boring place and we all lived more or less in one room as far as I remember, and from there I travelled into London to go to school. I travelled in on the workmen's trains. You could get a cheap ticket which left Letchworth at 6.33 in the morning and arrived at King's Cross at 7.58, and then to University College School. I had taken my what corresponded to O-level what's called the school certificate in 1939 so I was in the Sixth

Form, preparing for what's now called A-level, which was the highest school certificate in those days. I also was in rowing for the school, we went two or three times a week, we went down to Richmond to row on the Thames. I didn't get back to Letchworth until about 10 at night and then up again at half past 5 in the morning to go to school. I must have done most of my school work on the train.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 37 seconds

BL: What about your brother?

ES: Ah, yes, now he had an interesting career. Shall I tell you about him?

BL: Yes please.

ES: All right. With great ups and downs. He was always regarded as the naughty boy, he was much more independent-minded than me really, and did his own thing. Didn't do very well at school, didn't go to Cambridge. I don't know, I am not sure whether he didn't want to or whether my father couldn't afford two of us. He went to Imperial College to do a degree in Chemistry.

BL: What school did he go to before that?

ES: He went to Highgate School, here in Highgate, part of which had stayed in London, part of which was evacuated. He stayed in the bit that stayed in London.

BL: Can you just uncross your arms because it affects the microphone?

ES: Pardon? Ah, yes. Sorry.

BL: That's better.

ES: Okay, then he went to Imperial College and, and started doing very well in Chemistry. He and I had a year together in the United States, which I remember, which was rather very interesting. This was from 1949-1950. I had an appointment for a visiting professorship at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and he was at Harvard, working with a very distinguished chemist called Woodward and as the two Universities are quite close together we shared an apartment some way in-between. And he was beginning to do very well, he then got a job in Mexico City, I think it was Mexico City, with a firm called Syntex, founded by Central European refugees, the best known among them is Carl Djerassi who is still in the news nowadays, he nowadays writes novels and plays. He didn't get on with Djerassi but Syntex became very big, they were the first firm to manufacture the birth-control pill and Djerassi is supposed to have invented the pill or is one of the inventors. And Franz did very well there, he made a lot of money. I remember visiting him in Mexico and as soon as I arrived he said now you're coming up in my little aeroplane. That was sort of typical of him. He then was offered a job in Israel as Head of Chemistry at the Weizmann Institute and there he did the work that made him famous. I don't want to get into too many technical details, but he was the first man to synthetically make aromatic rings, ring molecules, like benzene but much larger ones now called annulenes. This was a classic problem and hit the headlines,.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 18 seconds

That was in Israel. He also married an American –Jewish girl there and that was a very difficult marriage. He was then offered two jobs, one in America, in Chicago and a Royal Society Research Professorship here in England. This was a job - several such professorships were created at that time - which allowed the holder just to do research in a laboratory that would offer him a home with no other duties. And he went to Cambridge, where he... His wife never settled there, she hated the place so he didn't stay there very long. I'm afraid it's a downhill story from then onwards so I'll keep it short. He moved to London, University College but couldn't... Gradually got into a very depressed state and just didn't seem able to adapt to a period when money was short and he carried on with his research on these annulenes after a fashion and eventually he got so depressed that he took his own life while he was in America in 1981. So that was Franz Sondheimer. Okay.

BL: So you had quite different experiences, I mean early experiences even, of schooling.

ES: Yes. But he was on form and he was brilliant and he was an FRS and there you are.

BL: So coming back to your own experiences at University College now, maybe before Cambridge...

ES: University College School, yes.

BL: Yes. What do you remember of that time?

Tape 1: 54 minutes 23 seconds

ES: Well, I loved the school. It was traditionally a very liberal school, University College itself of course had been founded in a liberal spirit and to be free from all the religious restrictions and so on, which had existed at that time. It had, we had a rather charismatic headmaster, Cecil Walton, and I loved it. Again I did well, and for whatever reason was determined to specialise on the scientific side, so when I got into Sixth Form I did the usual Maths, Physics and Chemistry in London in 1939. Yes, I was very keen on Chemistry. We had a very lovely Chemistry teacher who inspired us, then I was put in, I entered a scholarship exam for Cambridge in December 1941, I remember exactly when it happened because in the middle of our exams in Cambridge, the news of the attack on Pearl Harbour and the entry of the United States into the war happened, so it was early December 1941. I got my scholarship (Laughs) and I did very well in Physics. The reason for that is that we had a rather bad, very nice man but not a very good physics teacher so I spend all the summer beforehand studying my physics on my own and did obviously very well in the physics paper. When I went up to Cambridge, my director of studies, a man called Norman Feather, was one of Rutherford's bright lads, he was my director of studies, and to begin with, in Natural Sciences you do several subjects in Cambridge. So I did Maths and Physics and Chemistry, but he wanted to know, Feather, what I really wanted to specialise in and I said, 'Well, I really like Chemistry.' And he said 'No, no, no, the country needs physicists and you did a very good physics paper, I think you'd better do Physics'. So I did Physics. But what's interesting is that we were not promised that we were allowed to finish the course. It was wartime of course, we might be called up before the end, by then there must have been about 10 or 12 of us. The Natural Science's time in normal time, in peace time, was to do two years, for part one, and then in the third year you specialised in one subject for part two. But we were told that if we did well

at the end of the first year, we could skip part one and go straight, because time was pressing, to part two.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 28 seconds

So that's what happened in my case, I did well in the so-called prelim-exams in the summer of '42, went down to part two, Physics, straight away. Most of the other fellow students were in fact called up, probably during that summer. I didn't really know what they were sent to do, I learned afterwards that most of them, or perhaps all of them were sent to Canada, there was a project connected with the Atomic bomb on uranium isotope separation in Canada. Now, I was not a British national, so I didn't qualify for this top-secret work, which was in a way good for me. I was then interviewed, no, yes, I was allowed to stay on, and there was one other fellow student who managed to hang on, he was British, so I don't quite know why, and we were given an extra term because we'd been rushed forward so we had our part two exam in December 1943, in December, and I managed to get a First in that. And then I was interviewed, or I had already been interviewed, for a wartime job after that. I was interviewed by a team consisting of C.P. Snow, the novelist and William Cooper, who was also a novelist and was told I could stay in Cambridge to do some, what was called work of national importance. Perhaps I'll come back to that a little bit later...

BL: Sir, we have to stop here because we need to change tapes.

ES: Yes. So do we have a pause? I must tell you about the internment business, too. That was...

Tape 1: 59 minutes 36 seconds

TAPE 2

BL: We are conducting an interview with Ernst Sondheimer. We were talking about the war and I want to ask about internment, how it affected your family?

ES: Okay, well that's in its way quite interesting. At the beginning of the war, all our so called enemy aliens had to be interviewed by a tribunal and there were three classifications. And we were all, my family, we were all placed in the category, I think it was category C, the so-called friendly enemy aliens. We were probably more anti-Hitler than the British had ever been, with no restrictions at all. But then things changed, as is well known, in the summer of 1940 when Hitler was overrunning the Low Countries and France and there was a press campaign here. This can only have been due, or helped by the so-called fifth column, spies, and Churchill, who was of course our great hero who had other things on his mind, notoriously said, 'Collar the lot!' He wanted all enemy aliens to be interned. Well, my dear father thought this was a very good time to be going to hospital to have that hernia operation that he had been thinking about, so he took himself to hospital. By the time he came out, the hospital never understood why he didn't want to go home, it was more or less all over. So he wasn't interned. I was just old enough, over sixteen, to qualify, but I wasn't interned, and I don't really know exactly why, I think school wrote me a very strong letter saying that I was about to take important exams and I was only forbidden to ride a bicycle. The only member of our family who was interned, I think the only one, was my dear grandfather, Adolf, who was taken off to Huyton camp near Liverpool. He came out after a few months and didn't talk much after he came out. I think he didn't mind too much, he played a lot of bridge with the

other internees. So we were again very fortunate compared with others, of course, especially those, who were shipped off to Canada and Australia. So that's internment.

Tape 2: 2 minutes 54 seconds

BL: But so you said...you weren't interned and you didn't have to do a military.. You were not drafted, obviously, because you are not British?

ES: No, no. Studying Physics, I was in a so-called reserved occupation and I just had to... Now, shall I come back now, to what happened...?

BL: Yes.

ES: After 1943. I was told I could stay in Cambridge to do some work connected with the war, a work in which I was no good at all. My supervisor was an interesting man, he was called John Randall. He had done some very distinguished work, he was the, one of the inventors of the Cavity Magnetron, which made high power microwave radiation possible and was crucial to the radar equipment of aeroplanes. He'd come from that to Cambridge, an episode in his life that nobody seems to know about, to supervise me. He wasn't at all interested in the work, we were supposed to make better transformer steels but he just let me get on with it and muttered he really wanted to do biophysics. I may just mention that soon after the war he finished at King's College in London, where he started a biophysical lab in which the famous Maurice Wilkins and Roselyn Franklin did their x-ray work which was connected with the DNA-structure, the double Helix. So that was John Randall. I didn't get anything out of him and I wanted to get out of this work as soon as possible. It was experimental work, I was sort of equipped with a soldering iron and I was no good at it. And, it showed me that my future did not lie in experimental physics. So I got hold of a theoretical physicist who had just left Cambridge to go into the industry, a man called Alan Wilson and he took me on as a research student and I managed to get released on the strength of that. It wasn't all that easy after the war to get released immediately, and I carried on as a research student under Alan Wilson's supervision. I managed to get on to a very interesting problem, I won't go into the technical details, but it had to do with the electrical properties of metals, the so-called anomalous skin effect, which I could see was very exciting. A physicist called Brian Pippard, who had a very distinguished career, now Sir Brian Pippard, was doing experimental work on this and told me about the problem. I developed an equation, which I couldn't solve. Then in a rather roundabout way, I won't go into the details, this equation found its way into the hands of a mathematician called Harry Reuter. Now he was quite an interesting man, he was the mathematician son of Ernst Reuter, the famous Oberbürgermeister of Berlin at the time of the Berlin blockade. Harry Reuter had been sent to England before the war, had been adopted by a couple in Cambridge, he was a mathematician, Charles Burkill and his wife called Greta Burkill, a very energetic Viennese lady who did a lot for refugees. Anyway, Harry Reuter said, he could solve my equation and that was probably the most important paper I wrote, the famous, quite famous 'Reuter-Sondheimer paper' on the anomalous skin effect.

Tape 2: 6 minutes 49 seconds

I never managed to do anything as good as that after that. Anyway, I got my PhD in Cambridge on the strength of that and some work I did under Wilson's guidance, I was very keen to get a research fellowship at Trinity, but before I succeeded in that I had a year in Bristol, under Neville Mott, who was a big man in solid-state physics. Then I had a year,

which I have already mentioned, in America, at MIT, then came back to get married in Cambridge, had a year in Cambridge with my research fellowship, living in a flat belonging to Trinity College my wife Janet had a job at Girton College, teaching there, so we were very keen to stay in Cambridge. I didn't manage to get a permanent job in Cambridge, I was offered a good lectureship at Imperial College in London, so in 1951 we moved to London and my academic career was then in the University of London. I got my promotion by successively becoming a bigger frog in a smaller puddle by getting more senior jobs in smaller colleges. I became reader in Applied Mathematics in Queen Mary College and then I was the first professor of Mathematics at Westfield College in Hampstead, small, it was at that time a women's college, soon after that started to take men and like all the other small colleges, has been absorbed by the big London Colleges. Well that's, more or less, my academic career. I was professor of Mathematics at Westfield for about twenty years and we built up, doing heady days of expansion after the Robbins report in the 60's, we built up a department, that was an interesting job, really, I did a lot of teaching and I rather gave up on research by then. Then, in the very early years of the Thatcher government when retrenchment and cuts were in the air, we were offered good terms to take early retirement and I took early retirement in, I think it must have been 1982, when I was just short of sixty. But the terms were very good and we were re-hired to do some teaching and I did like the teaching on the whole and I was offered an extra teaching job at another London college by a former student of ours, so I did a lot of teaching after that and was paid for it and had no more boring committees to attend, so I think I gained. Like Hitler, I think Mrs. Thatcher did me a good turn without knowing it. And then I devoted myself to other, other interests. Teaching came to an end after a few years.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 36 seconds

BL: Do you still see yourself mainly as a physicist or as a mathematician?

ES: (Laughs). Well, among the physicists if I don't understand what they are saying I tend to say I am a mathematician. And among mathematicians I ditto say that I am a physicist. I'm in-between, a bit of both, really. Most of the problems, research problems, were really physics problems but I was rather good at doing the calculations required. I wasn't a very...no, I wasn't a very creative researcher, I don't think but I tended to pick up other people's problems and sort them out, which is I suppose worth doing. Well that's more or less the end of my academic career. I was asked to do a bit of teaching. Janet, my wife was much involved with the Girls' Day School Trust and one of her schools, South Hampstead High School asked me to help some of their brightest students with the preparations for their scholarship exams. That I enjoyed very much, that was after my retirement. That went on for a couple of years or so, but since then I have rather given up on mathematics. And I had other interests, I was quite a keen mountain-climber in a modest way and got very much interested in alpine flowers. I have devoted myself to them, I became a member of the Alpine Club and they asked me to edit the Alpine Journal, which is a yearbook that comes out, we like to say the most prestigious alpine journal in the world. Anyway, I edited that for five years from 1987 to 1991. I think it was about the most fickle job I ever did. But very, very interesting, I made a lot of friends that way.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 49 seconds

BL: When we just take it back a bit, how did the end of the war affect you? Or, affect your family?

ES: Well, my family of course, they went on living in Letchworth during the war, they found rather better accommodation after a while and I, of course, had gone to Cambridge, so I was only in those rather miserable lodgings in Letchworth for about a year. I think the family, I forget exactly when, but soon after the war they returned to London and lived in a variety of houses, first in Edgware and then in Friern Barnet. And my mother, I had already said that she was very keen on modern architecture and architecture of all kinds, she was very delighted when they got one of the flats overlooking Regent's Park, Cumberland Terrace, one of the Nash terraces. They had a flat there, rather inconvenient but it was very, very, very elegant. And then they moved to Hampstead, in their final years of their life into a flat. I, you asked me, well, I stayed on in Cambridge, I remember celebrating V-E-Day in Cambridge, stole some alcohol from the Chemistry lab and called it Vodka and drank that to celebrate. Fortunately, it didn't do us any harm as far as I remember, and yes, I forget exactly when, but I got released from my war work fairly soon after and stayed on at Trinity as a research student.

BL: When did you become naturalized?

ES: I think it was 1946. There was no naturalization during the war but as soon as one could apply again, I applied and my recollection is that it went through without any trouble. I gather, that especially from Louise London's recent book that it wasn't so straight forward and that there was talk of returning the refugees to Germany and so on but I knew nothing of that at the time and regarded myself as thoroughly English.

Tape 2 : 15 minutes 34 seconds

BL: By then, did you still speak German to your parents or English?

ES: (Laughs) Sort of the usual mixture of, family Kauderwelsch, which is a mixture of German and English. I was old enough when coming to England at thirteen that I kept the German language and I went on reading. I remember that some of the books I got as prizes during the war were books of German poems and so on, so I must have kept up my contact with German and German literature and so on. So, I think I gained a bit of both cultures, really, trying to get the best of both and

BL: Did you go back to Germany, or did your family go back to Germany after the war?

ES: Yes, I have already told the tale of when I took Janet to Stuttgart and phoned my friend Günther. I went back a few times after the war, can't remember exactly how many, then I rather gave up on Germany. Later on during my sort of mountain-climbing, mountain-walking days, I went much more to Switzerland, met two Swiss who became close friends and we had summers, a week in summer together over about twenty years, in different parts of the Swiss Alps and then now that I am too old for mountain-climbing, I have been going on botanical tracks to look at the alpine... And I was lucky enough to go three times to the Himalaya in the 1990's, to quite remote parts, once across Bhutan and twice to south-east Tibet where we were pretty well the first Western parties since the Communist take over to go there and those were really wonderful experiences. And now I try to grow some of these lovely things in my garden, with mixed success.

BL: The Alpine grower of Highgate.

ES: That's it. That's basically I think it, really.

Tape 2 : 18 minutes 24 seconds

BL: What was it like, do you remember, going to Stuttgart, what was it like going back to Stuttgart?

ES: Difficult again to recall one's feelings. Well, I have an attachment to the city, it's a beautiful city, the situation in a hollow, it's called the 'Großstadt zwischen Wald und Reben' and it's true, the vineyards going up the hill on each side and forest on top of the hill. The city had been, of course like other big German cities, very badly bombed in 1944, but the houses where we lived, where I was born on one side of .., they were up the hill on the side and then the one where I lived and where we lived later, they both survived and the streets there as I remember them before. So, I felt quite emotional. I've been back a few times and then two grandparents, my grandfather Julius, who died in 1931 and my grandmother Sophie who died in 1937 are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Stuttgart, so I go and visit their graves when I can when I'm in Stuttgart. So I like to go back from time to time, and what's perhaps interesting is that some time ago, must be about ten years ago or perhaps more, my dear German friend Günther said a number of them had somehow got together in the advancing years and, well, planning little excursions, holidays really, together and would Janet and I like to join them and we did that for a few years. And we had some very, very interesting and nice trips together in the Elsaß and the Black Forest and various other places. That's come to an end now because I think most of the members of the group are now too old and infirm to do it anymore (Laughs).

BL: Did you know any of the other people from the school days itself?

ES: Some I did and some who have claimed to have been in my class I couldn't remember at all because it was a class of over 40, I couldn't remember at all and I have really only got to know them well in recent years. But you probably know about the Germans and the Stammtisch, I mean a group of them had been meeting every month really, since the 1940's and still do, those who are still around. And they have a big Weihnachtssessen [Christmas dinner], which usually takes place in January and to which we have now gone several times in recent years.

Tape 2 : 21 minutes 37 seconds

BL: In these encounters, does the past play a role?

ES: It does.

BL: And do you speak about...

ES: It does, it does. Some of them are more ready to talk than others, but they are still preoccupied with those years and don't really understand exactly why it all happened and so on. One of them, who I have become quite..., I don't remember from pre-war years at all, once turned to me and said, 'Tell me, how much did you know about the Holocaust, which was during the war', which is difficult to answer but I did my best and we didn't know all the details, of course and he said, 'You know, I have this son, he married soon after the war, he was in the German army in Russia and swore that he didn't know anything about the atrocities', which I have to believe. And then he said, 'And you know, he married soon after the war, produced eight children and do you know I have this son, he keeps me up night after

night, cross-examining me wanting to know why, how much did I know, and why didn't I do more about it'. And they still ask themselves these questions and this son has now, we met him a year ago and he has become very interested in all matters to do with Judaism and is now a Junior Professor in Germany, teaching Jewish history, the history of the Jews and not so long ago in Venice, we met him in Venice a year ago. So there you are.

BL: How would you define yourself in terms of your identity?

ES: (Laughs). Well, difficult question to answer again. A European if you like. I admire the way the Germans run their country nowadays. And now of course they get accused for being much too pacifist it's so ironic, isn't it, when for so many years they were regarded as the epitome of militarism and, well, it's a good change (Laughs). So I follow what goes on in Germany with interest and in this country. I just think, I claim to be in a way a, well, first and foremost I'm British and when... This is a story I like to tell, this is when my British friends ask me about my nationality, my reply is, 'I'm British and I think I am more British than you are because you just happened to be born here but I, when I was naturalized, I had to swear an oath of allegiance to His Majesty King George VI and that meant something'. And I mean it. So, first and foremost I think I am British, but I hope a British with an open mind, with an interest in Europe and with a strong hope that the European ideal will still succeed, in spite of all the difficulties it's running into.

BL: What impact do you think the experience of becoming a refugee had on your life?

ES: Sorry, what did you...?

BL: What impact do you think that the experience of being sort of uprooted...

ES: Well, again, obviously it had a big impact, didn't it (Laughs) because I am British and not German. What would have happened to me if...well, what would have happened if we had stayed in Germany is only too clear, so the impact it had, I have lived to eighty-two, instead of finishing in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. There is very little doubt that that's what would have happened. There are some who survived, but not many. If I had not, if I had...these are so counterfactual questions, well, I tell you something. There is one thing that perhaps I should recall, there was a period, I think it was in the early 60's, when there was a not very determinate effort, when the German universities were expanding, to get some of us back to Germany and I actually did have a rather tentative offer from Munich. I know I visited there and gave some lectures but I... So there would have been a possibility to go back and be a professor in Germany but I didn't really consider it seriously by then, I am not sure whether my wife would have come along and the roots in Britain were much too strong, although the terms at that time were good and the German professors, then at least, retired on full salary and ... But I can't complain (Laughs)...

Tape 2: 26 minutes 59 seconds

BL: What's the identity that you tried to transmit to your children?

ES: Well yes, we didn't make any real effort to, as far as the language is concerned, to make them bilingual. We always spoke English to each other and they picked up the odd bits of German but I think they just grew up as English or British if you like. My son and especially his wife whose sister lived for a long time in Germany are very interested in German, in Germany and German matters. They have been learning German now, they live in Bath as I

mentioned. I have been invited by the Bath German Society for a whole series of lectures which have to be held in German. I've twice been asked to lecture to them, the first lecture, which I rather enjoyed, the title was 'Die Schwaben – sind sie wirklich so etwas Besonderes? Ein Schwabe fragt'. I've managed to keep my Schwäbisch too, so that was fun. As you know of course, there were very many famous Schwaben from Schiller to Hegel. 'Der Schiller und der Hegel, die sind bei uns die Regel' [Schiller and Hegel, they are just regular guys here], as they say in the Schwabenland. And then they wanted a talk about Oskar Schlemmer, who is an artist from Stuttgart. I didn't know much about him, but I did my homework and got quite interested in him. He was a prominent member of the early Bauhaus as you may know, so I gave a lecture on him. I've just been asked at the instigation of I think Mr. Kaufmann, to give the lecture again to the AJR luncheon club in January, so that's still to happen.

BL: So have you become more involved recently in the AJR?

ES: Well, I'm not really very much involved. I'm a member, I read the Journal but, I pay my subscription, but that's really the first time I've been asked to really give a lecture there. Yes, but I've given lectures all my life, so it's something I like to do. I have also given lectures on botanical subjects, off and on.

BL: You said you lectured for Club 43?

ES: Yes, I once gave them a lecture on..., well I gave them one on Oskar Schlemmer. The funny thing is that I said, 'I have this lecture, it is in beautiful German' and I was told, 'Oh no, they don't understand German nowadays', so I had to put it all into English. So I have got two versions, the German one and the English one, you can have whichever you like. And I once talked to them about the Himalayan flower trips, I think. Yes, that's Club 43.

Tape 2 : 30 minutes 45 seconds

BL: So what do you think for you is the most important part of your German-Jewish heritage?

ES: Oh dear (Laughs). I think my involvement with German literature. I mean I've still got the book of poetry 'Deutschland hoch in Ehren', which we used in our class in the Reformrealgymnasium and most of the Schiller ballads I know more or less by heart, 'Die Bürgschaft' und 'Die Kraniche des Ibykus' and 'Der Taucher' and so on, and so I'm interested in German literature, not so much the contemporary literature, more the classical literature. And well, those who were heroes, Erich Kästner and his poetry and Karl Ettlinger, who is rather forgotten but he was a very funny writer. I suppose that's the main thing, really, and I mean I follow the work that goes on on recent German history, especially the Nazi period.

BL: Is there anything, I mean we've discussed...Is there anything to add or which I haven't asked you?

ES: Well, I'm sure there are many things but I can't think of any just at the moment, they will occur to me as soon as you've gone (Laughs).

BL: Is there any message you would like to give somebody who might watch this video based on your experiences...?

Tape 2 : 33 minutes 0 second

ES: If you've had such a fortunate life as I have, be grateful for your good fortune, watch out for your opportunities in life, try to recognise them and cease them when they occur. That would be my message.

BL: Okay. Thank you very much Mr. Sondheimer for this interview, and we're going to look at some photos now.

ES: Right.

Photographs

(First picture)

BL: Can you please describe this photograph?

ES: Well, that is my grandfather Julius Sondheimer, my father's father. I don't know where it was taken, or exactly when but towards the end of the 1920's at a guess because he died in 1931.

BL: And where was it taken?

ES: That I don't know. I assume it was in Stuttgart where they lived.

(Second picture)

BL: Can you describe this photograph please?

ES: Well, that's my grandmother Lina, my father's mother, my mother Ida and myself. I was clearly still at an early age so it would have been probably in 1924, I don't know where it was taken.

(Third picture)

BL: Yes, please.

ES: That's my beloved grandmother Sophie, my mother's mother with myself and my brother, taken in the garden of their house, which was a little way outside the town in Wertheim am Main.

(Fourth picture)

BL: Yes, please.

ES: Well that is the house in which my maternal grandparents lived on the Marktplatz in Wertheim am Main, in front is the famous Engelsbrunnen, which dates from the Renaissance period.

BL: And when did they leave Wertheim?

ES: They left Wertheim soon, fairly soon after the Nazis came to power so it would have been at some time in, probably in late 1933 at a guess.

Tape 2 : 36 minutes 3 seconds

(Fifth picture)

BL: Yes, please.

ES: Well, that's me and my brother Franz, taken in 1929.

(Sixth picture)

BL: Yes, please.

ES: So that's on the left my brother Franz, on the right myself, and the year is probably 1934.

BL: In Germany?

ES: In Germany.

(Seventh picture)

ES: This is the rather grand house in the Heidehofstraße in Stuttgart in which my paternal grandparents lived in the 1920's. We lived quite nearby in the Libanonstraße.

(Eighth picture)

ES: That's my father and me playing table tennis on the flat roof of our house in Broughton Gardens in Highgate. The year is probably 1939.

(Ninth picture)

ES: That's from left to right, my mother, my father, myself and my brother Franz, taken I think in the garden of my parent's house in Edgware, soon after the end of the war.

(Tenth picture)

ES: That's me, looking out of the window of my room on the top-floor of I- staircase in the Great Court of Trinity College Cambridge taken some time in the late 1940s.

(Eleventh picture)

ES: Janet and myself on a pond on the river Cam in Cambridge, soon after, I think, our engagement in July 1949.

(Twelfth picture)

BL: Yes, please.

ES: A wedding photo, August 1950. From left to right: my brother Franz, myself, Janet, Janet's cousin and Janet's father.

Tape 2 : 39 minutes 17 seconds

(Thirteenth picture)

ES: Well, that's Janet, me, our son Julien, who was born in October 1952, my mother and my mother's father, my grandfather Adolf.

BL: Where was it taken?

ES: I am not sure, possibly at my parents' house in Friern Barnet, but I am not sure.

(Fourteenth picture)

ES: Well, that's an advertisement poster for my father's business 'Sondal Glues', at the time of the Festival of Britain in the Exhibition in 1951.

(Fifteenth picture)

ES: Wedding photo of my son Julien and his wife Philippa, taken at their marriage in 1984.

BL: Where?

ES: At the Registry Office in...can't remember exactly where (Laughs)...in London.

(Sixteenth picture)

ES: Well that's at the back my daughter Judith, her husband David and in the front, their son Graham, taken probably around the year 2002.

BL: Where?

ES: Don't know where, probably somewhere in Bedford, where they have been living for some years.

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

ES: Thank you for your attention, and it's been a pleasure.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 10 seconds