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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	120

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Einzig
<b>Forename:</b>	Susan
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	16 November 1922
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Berlin, Germany

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<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Marion Malet
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	2 hours and 30 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:  
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****INTERVIEW: 120****NAME: SUSAN EINZIG****DATE: 23 MARCH 2006****LOCATION: LONDON****INTERVIEWER: MARIAN MALET****TAPE 1**

MM: Right. I'd like to start the interview by asking you to tell us your name at birth.

SE: Susan, my name is Susan Einzig and I was born 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1922, in Berlin.

MM: Thank you very much. Lovely. So now we can start with the interview. Could you tell us something about your family?

SE: My parent, my father was Hungarian and had come to Berlin when he was a young man, before the First World War. He was born in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; it was sort of around about 1873, so he was already quite old, when the First World War broke out. My mother was much younger than him, sort of 25 years younger. My father was born in a place called Eperiesch, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and my mother was born in Salischtschyky, which was, I think... it's the Ukraine border Galicia, and she was born in 1898 or round about that. Possibly a little later and met my father in the First World War and they got married and he came back to Berlin with her, in 1919.

MM: Could you give us an idea about the social milieu of your parents?

**Tape 1: 2 minutes 37 seconds**

SE: Well, it's all a bit shrouded in mystery because... I have a brother and his memory of his childhood, is entirely different from mine, but they were both orphans.

MM: Both parents?

SE: Both parents. My father, I don't know who his parents were. He was brought up by his sister, Fanny, who was his older sister, I thought he was fairly self-educated but my brother... has different ideas about it. And my mother's parents both died, very early on in her life, when she was a baby. And she was brought up by her grandparents and during the First World War because of the, they were directly on the border between Austria-Hungary and Russia and they lived in this tiny place and they never knew from one day to the next whether they were Austrian or Russian and they were bombarded year in year out. They were absolutely in the epicentre. So, that's sort of their background.

**Tape 1: 4 minutes 23 seconds**

MM: I see. And do you recall, you said your father was a businessman?

SE: He came to Berlin, as a young lad. I was told he walked, and had some relative or other in Berlin where he apparently slept in the bath because there there wasn't any room for him and he was apprenticed to a firm called Edmund Ascher and Company who were at somewhere at Friedrichsplatz, or whatever it's called, in Berlin. The rag trade was a very established thing in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and he just started at the bottom and eventually, when the old man who owned it, Mr Ascher died, he had no children, he bequeathed the firm to my father.

MM: I see. And do you know how your father met your mother?

SE: Oh, well, I was told they met at a street corner; she was selling flags for the Red Cross.

MM: Aha.

SE: And was extremely pretty and very young, don't know, 18 years old and he was already in his forties, when he was in the army, he was behind the lines by this time, sort of taking... He was an officer, in the German army, his job was to take care of the population behind, I mean he had started off in the trenches in the Western front, and/or the Eastern front, but by this time he was just in the capacity of controlling and taking care of the welfare of the local people.

MM: I see, mm. Were both your parents Jewish?

**Tape 1: 7 minutes 11 seconds**

SE: Yes.

MM: And did your mother have any sort of training after her... professional training?

SE: No.

MM: And she married your father when he came back from the war?

SE: No, she married him, probably in Salischtschyky, where he was stationed, I think they they married and then he brought her back as a young bride back to Berlin.

MM: Aha, aha. And where did they live in Berlin?

SE: I don't know exactly but I've got this, I am pretty accurate in saying that they had a flat in, presumably near where my father's, my father worked, so I don't know Berlin well enough but in the city.

MM: Yes, within the city rather than out in the suburbs.

SE: That's right.

MM: I see, I see. You have mentioned your brother. Which of you is the older, which the younger?

**Tape 1: 8 minutes 34 seconds**

SE: My brother is older than me; he is three and a half years older than me. He came to England before me, somebody got him out. He came probably a year before me, I don't know.

MM: I see. Yes, yes. So he must have gone to school also in Berlin?

SE: Yes.

MM: Now, what about your education?

SE: Ah well, when I was born, my brother was born, when they were still in this flat. But by this time, by the time I was born, three and a half years later, they had built this house in Dahlem. My father knew an architect and it was designed for them, for him and the, it was also furnished by a friend of his, called Göhrke, who in fact, he was German, both the architect and the designer were German, and who owned a farm in Lüneburger Heide where he was very supportive of, I am not sure of the exact details but he, I think, he helped to hide my parents at one point later. So I grew up in Dahlem. I went to...

MM: A pleasant place to grow up?

SE: Very, surrounded by fields in those days and went to the local primary school. And in those days what happened was that middle class children at the age of ten transferred to, well I, don't know, I went to a Lyzeum which was also in Dahlem, not everybody went because it was a very class ..., tremendously stratified. Whether one had to pay in those days, I have no idea but until I was 14 or 15, I was at the Gertraudenlyzeum in Dahlem.

**Tape 1: 11 minutes 21 seconds**

MM: How far did the classes go?

SE: Up to Abitur.

MM: Oh it did? So, Oberprima, as it were?

SE: Oh yes, oh yes, indeed.

MM: Because you now, I know in earlier times, girls' schools didn't have last classes.

SE: Ah, this one did.

MM: So you were able to do your Abitur?

SE: No, because I was born in '22, so I went to the Gertraudenlyzeum. It would have been '32. Hitler came to power in '33, from there on things became harrowing, gradually more and more. Not helped by the fact that my father was, I mean, first of all, a very unworldly man, only interested in culture and books and a very introverted, withdrawn man and he was very old.

MM: He wasn't working by then?

SE: Oh yes, he was working, he still went to work every day, that was before the Kristallnacht '38 and my mother was, well, that's another story, but I had to leave school. I can't remember, its, what the names of the classes are. You have one to three, when you are there, and then it starts you have Unter- and Ober-

MM: That's right. Unter- and

SE: That's right, Unterterz...

MM: No, I can't remember.

SE: And then, as you said Unter-, I mean I was very good, it was very easy for me. I was very lazy, it all came, you know, quite easily. I enjoyed school but I left when I was 14, I think, because I had to prepare to, it wasn't very pleasant either in the end, you know. It became very, completely, one was very isolated there as a child because the others weren't allowed to talk or didn't want to talk to you. There were very few Jewish children there, hardly anybody, and I went... What did I do? I went to art school. There was a private art school, because the Academy by this time was forbidden to Jews. And there was, I went to something called the 'Breuer'. He was the man who ran it, was, had been at the Bauhaus and it was a private art school. And I was meant to be prepared for the rag trade abroad, to do drawings for collections. And since I have absolutely no talent whatsoever for this...I did design instead, which I was, sort of, really quite a plodder. I liked craft. I learned to draw. It was actually very serious stuff, and we did a lot of life drawing and all that, and I worked very hard. It wasn't what I wanted to do, but it was my father's idea that I was artistic and this was the direction he chose me to go and I didn't question it... and... then that came to an end.

### **Tape 1: 15 minutes 51 seconds**

MM: Can I take you back a bit first? When you were still at school, after 1933, you said there were very few Jewish girls in the school. And were your parents told at some point to take you away from this school, were you aware of any of this?

SE: Oh yes, and also, looking back... I don't know, I was a very solitary person, child, anyway, always. Why, I don't know but my parents were always frightfully worried because I didn't want to play with anybody. I lived in a sort of world on my own, and did a lot of drawing and dressing up in my room and...

MM: Did you ... Were any of the other children at the school, non-Jewish children, were they unpleasant to you because you were Jewish?

SE: I just didn't have any friends because it became... I went to the Lyzeum in '32 and by '33 ... it became completely, I had to conform to, I mean, we had assembly every mornings, singing the Horst-Wessel-Lied or the 'Deutschland', you know, I mean, and making the Hitler salute right from the beginning. There was one other Jewish girl in my class, I can't remember her name, and I think by this, people were packing, the Jews... were, ... I remember being asked to tea by one child who I admired, very blond and blue-eyed and, but then obviously they ..., I wasn't asked back, there was a sort of gap but I did have friends outside school, they were neighbours, not neighbours, but they lived not far from us. And they were Jewish, and they... had two daughters and by this time I was sort of young teenager, sort of 12, 13, 14 and I became very close to them and we played in their house. They, always in their house,

they were rather progressive, their children had been educated co-educationally and Montessori and they were politically..., the mother was one of the sort of early suffragettes in Germany and liberal, whereas my parents, I just remember them being sort of frightened and living in a..., my father lived with his books in this library. And my mother was just, I mean she became increasingly hysterical, of course, so...

**Tape 1: 19 minutes 37 seconds**

MM: She wasn't working? Or she had never worked before?

SE: She never worked, no, she never worked. She expected... she had the idea that she had married this older, she had never had a father, she was probably..., she expected to be looked after and give tea parties, and run the house and... I didn't have a close relationship with her at all, very distant.

MM: You said your father was very interested in culture.

SE: Yes, very.

MM: Was your mother as well?

SE: She... No.

MM: Not really.

SE: No, but she, no, I have this memory of her taking, sort of, lessons in Kultur or learning French, none of it ever came to anything, you know. She played the piano a bit and sang a bit and there was a bit of this and that.

MM: I see. Your father, did he enjoy this culture? What form did it take? You said he was a person who was very much turned in upon himself?

SE: Well, he came home from..., in the morning he disappeared with his tie and suit and moustache and what do you call these bags, the Akten-

MM: Aktentasche.

SE: Aktentasche... and came home in the evening, very tired and... played patience in my nursery or in the bathroom or wherever or was in the Herrenzimmer with his books and on, at the weekends, he would often, very often, right from, I was a tiny, take me to the National Gallery which was recently on the Museumsinsel but has now been moved into its new home in the Eastern, what was the Eastern sector. And I was the kind of apple of his eye and he would show me, I mean it was Berenson, it was, it was the Renaissance and... there were paintings in the house, we had a Liebermann in the dining room. He bought art, a bit, quite a bit, and he would go..., he was a Wagner man, he used to take the librettos to the... What do you call the, you know...?

**Tape 1: 23 minutes 9 seconds**

MM: The score.

SE: The score. He would go to the opera, the Meistersinger, with the score. I mean they lived the life of, I mean, it's all wonderfully written about, I have recently read a book which absolutely was an eye opener to me because it told me of where I come from, because, and that is 'The Pity of it All' by Amos Elon, which is a history of the German Jews from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century right up until Hitler came to power. And they were the product of the 19<sup>th</sup>, he was a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Germany was considered the centre of civilisation, of liberalism and there was the Weimar Republic after the First World War and that was his world. So, he was already quite old, and when Hindenburg made Hitler chancellor. I mean, he was hopeless, and the 1920s had been traumatic with the inflation, and he had to take out a vast mortgage on the house. You know, there was no money; it was just one thing after another. I think, my parents, by the time Hitler came to power, they both lived through the First World War and after that through..., I mean, as you know, Germany was absolutely smashed, and the inflation was..., destroyed all these businesses, and, so that by the time Hitler came, I think, looking back now, my father's way of dealing with it was to be cautious and was to say, 'Well I have to do it but I will take my time, we will emigrate, but first I have sell the house, I can't do it all in one go', and also as you well know, and I might as well, it is relevant to the story. You couldn't emigrate, Hitler, the Germans took half of your money or your possessions, huge slice of everything, your money. And no country, all the countries closed their doors, they didn't want this influx of penniless and in my, in my father's case old, an old man. So they were stuck and the house, my mother wouldn't allow him to sell the house, she felt it was the only thing they had, the security, so there were these horrendous scenes where she threatened to kill herself, and, I mean my childhood was just a nightmare. And he couldn't do anything because she wouldn't let him sell the house. He wanted to sell the house. And he did eventually manage to sell the house and they moved, that must have been early in '38, they moved to a flat in, I can't remember the name of the road from, we went to the flat, I can't remember, it's off the Kurfürstendamm, and it was very comfortable, it was a nice flat... and then of course the Kristallnacht, all hell broke loose.

**Tape 1: 27 minutes 15 seconds**

MM: Do you remember that?

SE: Oh yes. And he had to disappear so that he couldn't be picked up and the firm was ransacked and smashed and... So then, you know, I was at home by this time. I had stopped going to the art school and I was already almost too old to go on a children's transport. That stopped, I think, when you were 16 and I think, I was going to be 16 that autumn and my parents, my brother had gone, they had managed to find a way to get him to England.

MM: You don't know how?

SE: Yes, they've, they, my father threw his business connections, knew people, clients, in the North of England and somehow an apprenticeship was found for him. So he went as a... and the Marks and Spencers, the Sieffs, I think, were helpful, but he went straight into a factory. And I was waiting for the children's transport to come through, which it did in the spring of '39. No, can't have been. Yes, '39, yes, that's right. And I came over with one of the last children's transports before the war broke out. I had to have a guarantor in America, as you know.

MM: America?



SE: Yes, because the English wouldn't let anybody in, well anyway, wouldn't let me in, and these people who I was friendly with, who lived near us, they had got out. They had a lot of money and they were very streetwise, I mean, the Goldschmidts. He, and they were very involved in organisations in... by this time they had gone, they had emigrated to England and helping Jews to escape... And they took me in.

MM: Before you left? Oh you mean...?

SE: No, in London, in London.

**Tape 1: 30 minutes 12 seconds**

MM: So you went to them, so you went to people who were known to you?

SE: Yes.

MM: And so you came in the spring of 1939?

SE: Yes, that's right.

MM: And you came to the Goldschmidts, your old, former neighbours, and in London?

SE: In London.

MM: So you must have been, as you said you were 16, just over, by then, if your birthday is in the autumn.

SE: Yes, my birthday is in November, so 22, 32 and seven. Yes, I was 16. I would have been 17 in November '39.

MM: Yes, I see. Okay. So, I presume... Did you go to school in England? What happened?

SE: I came, and somehow my work, my parents managed to send the folder with my work, I went to, I was supposed to go to the Central School, which was in Southampton Row, in Holborn. But I got very ill, I was in a bad way, when I came, I was very ill. And so I didn't start until the autumn, after war broke out. And in the summer, I went, I was supposed to learn English, I couldn't speak any English, so I went to a family in Kent to look after their children and clean the house and so on, to learn, which made me excessively miserable.

MM: That was for the summer, was it?

**Tape 1: 32 minutes 11 seconds**

SE: Yes, yes. That was during the summer, it seemed, it probably wasn't frightfully long but at the time it seemed to go on forever. I hated it. I was desperately cold, permanently freezing cold and then the war broke out and there wasn't an arts ..., they were all closed, the LCC art schools. And I think they didn't reopen until Christmas or something, so there was a delay there, but anyway, I did go to the Central and then, as you know, nothing happened. The bombs didn't come down, and I had a wonderful time in a way, well, I was very excited about this, because it was a new life and this is where I wanted to be. And I have memories of being in the basement and rolling bandages for the event when the bombs would come, and I can't

remember the sequence of events but anyway, by Easter, I think, at home where my foster parents lived in Golders Green, they built a shelter in the garage and every night.... When did the Blitz start, it was spring, wasn't it?

MM: I think so, yes.

SE: Spring '40. And so we slept every night in the shelter, all of us. And, including grandma, their, her mother, was frightfully old and very deaf. We all huddled together which was quite cosy, and then they sold the house or let it, or whatever, anyway, they relocated to Yorkshire. And the Central School closed, I think the Blitz had started, and, that's right, I went with them to Yorkshire and was miserable there because I wanted to be at the art school. And we had a house, rented a house, in Burley in Wharfedale. And God it was cold, again. And the Central School had closed, all the art schools had closed and they relocated to Northampton because most of the staff were by this time called up, the older students were in the army and what was left of all the art schools in London became the London Art School and was evacuated to Northampton. And I then was allowed to go there and we had 15 shillings given to us by the LCC, the London County Council, as evacuees, which was enough for our rent and our food, everything. And I was there for, until about, don't know, 2 and a half, 3 years, that was nice.

**Tape 1: 36 minutes 5 seconds**

MM: Did you, were you in digs there?

SE: Yes.

MM: Because, when you talk about your foster family, is this the Goldschmidts?

SE: Yes, they were in Yorkshire; they stayed in Yorkshire until the end of the war.

MM: I see, yes, and then you were by yourself with other students?

SE: Entirely by myself. In terrible digs, one really horrendous and I was pretty neurotic actually, I was pretty, I mean I had eating problems, and ... these digs, at one point, I stayed with a..., I mean, Northampton was pretty grim in those days, it had some nice things, it had a very nice little theatre which I remember. And there were wonderful things about being there. The state, the government organised all sorts of cultural things to keep the, keep the British population from falling apart, and they got art historians from the National Gallery to tour the country and give lectures on painting and it was there I just started to..., I mean that was when I began to decide, that I wasn't going to be this, I wasn't going to do horrible commercial art, I was going to, you know, I was going to be an artist. I was absolutely ecstatic with all this and we were taught by quite distinguished older artists. One of my teachers was Bernard Adeney who had been a friend of Vanessa Bell's and Virginia Woolf's and they, I sort of discovered all this rarefied English... cultural life which was absolutely..., by this time I spoke English and I read voraciously everything I could lay my hands on... of you know, Bernard Shaw and it was all pretty leftwing too, I mean we were, when Russia joined, it was all kind of, another world, I mean, that opened to me and the Adeneys had rented a house for the duration and their furniture was 18<sup>th</sup> Century, all picked up in junk shops and sort, it was all beautiful and their son, Bern... Oh God... Anyway, their son was at the Royal College of Music. And there was Malcolm Arnold, was a friend, the composer, so, I mean, it was all quite exciting. Richard Adeney, he became the first flautist of the London Chamber Orchestra. He is retired now.

MM: Did you have, did you make friends amongst the other art students?

**Tape 1: 39 minutes 50 seconds**

SE: Oh yes, oh tremendously. That was, in fact, that was wonderful, because had the war not come and had I gone to art school in London, it would have been, I might have been, it would have been a completely different life, because it was all so big and everybody was here. There you know, and I was way out in Golders Green and they lived in the town, but because it became small, I met, I mean, it was a much more nourishing, and ... culturally, I mean it was, and we painted the scenery at this little theatre which was, and Northampton became sort of, because of the war, it became a very interesting little place.

MM: It was very good that you were there?

SE: That was wonderful, yes, was wonderful.

MM: And... This 15 shillings you mentioned, was this a grant you had?

SE: That was a grant and that's what I lived on.

MM: Yes, you lived on this grant from the LCC in fact.

SE: Yes, yes.

MM: And had your parents made arrangements with the Goldschmidts at all for you because you said you went to them and you spoke of them as your foster family in a sense?

SE: Yes.

MM: Did your parents give them any money to help look after you, do you think? Were you aware of any such arrangements?

**Tape 1: 41 minutes 40 seconds**

SE: I have a feeling that some money found its way to the Goldschmidts, before I went to live with them. But, I mean they had, they were very affluent...

MM: I see. And I wanted to ask you whether at school, you know, at the Lyzeum, whether you learned any languages at all?

SE: We did French and of course by the time, I might have started Latin and other things, I had to leave. Unterprima, I think.

MM: Unterprima, that's right, Unterprima, yes.

SE: Strange how one...

MM: How suddenly the words are coming back.

SE: I left in the Unterprima.

MM: Ah. You left, yes, well that was like Lower Sixth here really. Good, so you, so you stayed, you think, 2 or 3 years in Northampton?

SE: Yes, and then I came back to London... I think, how old would I have been? 42. I might have been, yes, I was sort of, I think I was 19 by that time or 18. And I just had to do war work, one was required to work in a factory, or join the, I mean, I joined the Air force and because by this time I was in a terrible state because I was a pacifist, I was reading Herbert Read and, ah, I mean, Richard Adeney was a conscientious objector. And I knew my parents, whom I probably didn't hear from any longer by this time, were hidden somewhere and I felt, how could I be a pacifist with this happening in Germany? And I lived really in cloud cuckoo land, because I didn't belong to Jewish..., I didn't think of myself as particular..., I am what might be described as a non-Jewish Jew. Well, my parents weren't, you know, we weren't in any way orthodox you know, they were the emancipated Germans, my father was a good German.

MM: Were you ever aware of them going to the Synagogue?

**Tape 1: 44 minutes 30 seconds**

SE: No, nobody. I went once and fell asleep, I remember.

MM: When you first got here, did you get any messages or letters from your parents?

SE: Yes, a few, for a while. I think, in some contorted way, the letters went to Norway, the Germans were there already but somehow or other, I got occasionally a letter, and these I, as I explained to you earlier before this interview, to my dying shame, these were wonderful letters. My father wrote the most marvellous letters, I destroyed them all, later. I don't know. I didn't want to know about my gloomy past.

MM: Did you have, were you in, in contact with your brother while you were at Northampton?

SE: Yes, my brother by this time had joined the army, the Pioneer Corps.

MM: The Pioneer Corps. It must have been, mustn't it?

SE: Yes. And he sometimes came on leave to see me in Northampton, but I've never had a good relationship with my brother. We grew up side by side but completely separately, he was..., we were very different. So, I mean, when he came in England, I was living this high-falutin' life and he was a squaddie... I wasn't very nice, I'd never been very nice.

MM: Were you all right with being so much by yourself with no relations, how did you feel about that?

**Tape 1: 46 minutes 59 seconds**

SE: I felt I was delighted.

MM: Aha.

SE: I wanted to be English and, well, I didn't want to be English, but I mean, there were all these wonderful things. It's interesting, that eventually all the people who were sort of the cultural heroes of mine, of my culture, were eventually denounced by McCarthyism in America as the, you know, vicious communists. These were Harold Laski and Cole and all these reasonable people who eventually ended up forming the Attlee Labour Government after the war, which the Americans then decided that they, in their hysteria, were... the devil. But those were the days when the English had not faced up to, well Stalin, he was our ally and it wasn't until after the war that people began to face up to the horrors of Stalinism.

MM: So after Northampton, what did you get in the end, a certificate?

SE: That is a good question. I didn't get anything.

MM: [Drops microphone] Right, now I've got my microphone back. What happened when, when you finished at Northampton?

**Tape 1: 49 minutes 34 seconds**

SE: I came to London and rented a room in St John's Wood and I got a job in an aircraft factory on the North Circular Road. And that was, oh no, first I, when I came to London, I couldn't join, I didn't want to join the army. I think I might have been able to join the ATS. Oh no, first I, that's right, I went into hiding.

MM: Oh!

SE: I think. No, first I came to London, that's right, and worked in the aircraft factory..., which was a complete nightmare. I was suddenly, I, separated from everything I loved and everything, my life ended. And I had to go to this dreadful place where it was really Charlie Chaplin, 'Modern Times', where people worked at lathes and 'Music while you Work' and I mean, I was supposed to do some office job there and I did it so badly and, I was so hopeless that they stopped me doing that and then I was supposed to do some technical drawing or something or other which I was equally inept at and I was simply sort of desperate. And they sacked me and the Labour Exchange, that's when I just sort of started to freelance, you know. I had no money at all, I had to, you know..., from moment to moment, but I suppose it was possible to get work one way or another because everybody was away fighting...

MM: So what kind of work did you get?

**Tape 1: 52 minutes 19 seconds**

SE: Well I got, because I knew a very powerful man, designer, called Henrion. And Henri gave me work and introduced me to, oh I know what happened was that, Henri introduced me, I got a job, I was taken on, or was going to get taken on by a famous advertising agency, and when I went to get a work permit they then, they said, 'You can't, you must do war work!' And they were going to send me up to, I don't know, Scotland or somewhere. And I went berserk, you know, I had to stay in London for my sanity, I mean I was being lost in the provinces and the English provinces were, I mean indeed, if you think of George Orwell, they were grimmer, places you could..., it would be hard to imagine, bleak, and so I then got this job in the aircraft factory but then when I was sacked there. I always worked at night; I always had some work or other, illustration work or drawing. And I knew Henrion and through him met...

MM: How did you meet Henrion? Do you remember?

SE: Yes. The awful thing is, I can't remember their name. These were friends of the Goldschmidts who lived in Surrey somewhere. And the Goldschmidts were not in London, they were in Yorkshire and these people asked me to lunch. And at this lunch, I met Henrion. They knew Henrion. And he was a very charismatic man, indeed... And I of course, I fell madly in love with him which didn't suit him at all because he had other, he was a bit older, quite a bit older. And he had women queuing up. He worked for the Ministry of Information but he was he always..., until his death a few years ago, he was always very supportive of me. And he got me work and through him I met ..., I got another job after, eventually.... But I worked also for the War Office through a designer called Abram Games, who worked..., who was English, an English Jew. And he was in uniform, he designed some of the most remarkable and classic posters for the War Office during the war. There was an exhibition at the Camden Art Centre which had all, no, he wasn't part of the 'Art in Exile' Exhibition because he was English. But this work is..., has remained a classic period of design. And he gave me an exhibition to research, it was wonderful, it was very interesting, history of fashion. And I met very..., the director of the Fashion Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum who helped me in my research..., I spent a lot of time in the library there. And all this eventually of course came to an end because the Labour Exchange caught up with me.

**Tape 1: 57 minutes 8 seconds**

MM: Right. We are going to change the reel now.

**TAPE 2**

MM: Susan Einzig Tape 2.

Right. So we left you in London, doing various jobs, often at night. Illustration and... this was still during the war of course.

SE: Oh yes and...

MM: So you did, so you weren't doing war work any more, or you were?

SE: Yes. Well, I mean, the Labour Exchange caught up with me and I then got a job through Kenneth Clark, Sir Kenneth Clark, who was the director of the National Gallery. At..., well, the thing is that the Labour Exchange, there was a sort of scandal about me because a very great friends of mine, Carel Weight, the painter who died a couple of years ago, and his partner Helen Röder took me under their wing. And Helen was Kenneth Clark's private secretary. And she went to, said to him if he could do something for me. And I went to see him with my work and his cousin was someone called Lord McCorquodale who was in the House of Lords presumably, or, I don't know if he was a Lord, I thought he was in the House of Commons, but he can't have been. Anyway, he brought this up and said in the House of Commons that there was a scandal that the Labour Exchange put round pegs into square holes and all these artists, because he of course was supporting artists. I mean, they had the war artists at the National Gallery. And I got a job with a film company through him in Mayfair, in Berkeley, so I didn't have to go up to Wales or wherever it was, or Scotland. And this was an unqualified disaster because I was really unemployable. I mean they couldn't..., they were all old advertising people and they were very cliquey. They all knew each other from before

the war. And I ended up just sitting..., they put me in a little room by myself and I had to make the tea and get their cake because I was so hopeless at the work there that I was asked to do, and in the end, they sacked me and ... I had to go and explain myself to Kenneth Clark which was a bit tough, after all he had done for me. And I then...

MM: Was he understanding at all? Was Kenneth Clark understanding?

**Tape 2: 3 minutes 55 seconds**

SE: Yes, well, you know, it was all a bit of a laugh for him, I think. It wasn't a laugh for me. I then got a job in working in another factory near Victoria which was absolutely dire, I mean making dials for tanks and they refused to sack me, because I had hoped that they would. But they said they would never sack me, my punishment was to stay there. And in the end, there was a man who had committed suicide at that point because he couldn't bear working in these various jobs that the Labour Exchange had put him in. This made the papers. This became a sort of cause. And I decided that I had absolutely..., I mean, I was dying. I went to the Labour Exchange and said I would kill myself and I was out, that, from that day, it was just that they couldn't risk any more scandals, and the war ended, I believe, that week. Or the week after. And that was the end of that.

MM: How did you meet Carel Weight?

SE: Through Henrion.

MM: Ah, I see. Yes.

SE: They were wonderfully, they were marvellous to me. I used to spend all my weekends staying there with them. He wrote poetry to me and I... Carel was this magic painter, it was just heaven. Yes, I was very lucky.

MM: Did he help with the artist's refugee camp?

**Tape 2: 6 minutes 10 seconds**

SE: Yes, yes, he was working at the, not the Courtauld, the Warburg Institute and they had a committee to get Jewish artists out of Germany. I don't know if you have heard of..., what was his name, Uhlman?

MM: Fred Uhlman.

SE: Fred Uhlman who lived in Downshire Hill. He was got out through that committee, I think, do you know ...?

MM: Yes. So the war ended and your need to go to the Labour Exchange for war work...

SE: Finished.

MM: Finished.

SE: Indeed.

MM: Yes, that must have been a great relief. But you still had to look after yourself?

SE: Well, I started to freelance and lugged my folder around and got work because there were one or two other people, because I got work, the demob hadn't... I mean, there were still masses of people who hadn't returned and there were publishing firms and magazines and things. And I got work. So I somehow survived, just about. I learned on the job which wasn't very... I was so un-commercial, and made such heavy weather of it all, but I tried to get a job. I went around all the advertising agencies, but nobody wanted me. Because they knew I was bad news but I did get odd jobs, you see.

MM: Yes. And what happened, how long did that go on?

SE: Years. And then I got a little bit of teaching at Camberwell School of Art. And that helped.

MM: What were you teaching? I mean how did you...?

**Tape 2: 9 minutes 1 second**

SE: It's quite amusing, in those days there was such a thing as juniors in art schools. Juniors were children who were hopeless at school, who were a problem. And the Ministry of Education, or whatever it was, anyway, it was decided that these children must be artistic if they, and it was hopeless. And they would be sent to art schools at the age of 14, I think. And I taught some amazingly, lovely children who went on to become famous artists later in life, not because of me, but they just happened to be there. And there I met a man who had a huge influence on my life and me, called John Minton, who had just become very famous when I met him. He belonged to a group of painters which is made up... like people always make up these labels. I mean – we mentioned Frank Auerbach earlier – the School of London, which doesn't exist, but they were called the Neo-Romantics. And Minton ..., they were sort of to do with ... because England was so isolated during the war that it turned in on itself and the artists, the young artists who came up, went back for their influence to Blake, William Blake, and Samuel Palmer and Englishness, and that was ... I became very involved with Minton and through him the whole bohemian scene in Soho in the 40s and 50s.

MM: Was this the time of Bacon, or was that before Bacon still?

**Tape 2: 11 minutes 39 seconds**

SE: No, no, this is Lucian, Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon and Michael Andrews and the Colony Room and ah, you know, and John, Johnny... wasn't a terribly good idea but I was very lonely and, there it was. And Johnny was very generous ... He was a well known gay, and the students ..., and we all, I mean it was it was very exciting, he had money, because he became very successful and so it was..., I didn't like, I mean, I found it all quite frightening, but I sort of trailed after Johnny really. It was a long relationship, it lasted, well, it seemed long. It's always amazing because so much happened. It was after the war, the people had been ..., people went a bit mad everywhere. It was the same in Paris. I mean, when I went to Paris for the first time, it was unbelievably exciting when there was Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir and Juliette Greco and Boris Vian and the whole scene of the Left Bank. It was so ..., I can't describe it. I mean it was sizzling, and a lot of Americans came to Paris. There were film stars, Hollywood film stars everywhere walking about, it was the days of St. Germain-des-Près. London didn't have that, of course, we didn't have that here, but Soho was



a bit ..., and the Colony Room and The Gargoyle and Francis Bacon was very central to it, was one of them. So it all went on and I scraped together a living, just about, to survive, doing commercial work of one kind or another, illustrating magazines and I did one or two books. And hated the work I was doing but ...

MM: Did you have time to do your own work at all?

SE: Yes, what Johnny did for me, I mean what happened because of my link with him, was that we spent every weekend together, with some of our students. He taught at Camberwell, that's where I met him, and drew each other. These drawings still, I mean most of them are gone, but I've still got some of them. I try and give them, I still know the people, I have given some away. It was, in that painting, you are quite right, I did paint.

**Tape 2: 15 minutes 43 seconds**

MM: Did you find that you were very influenced by this group of people?

SE: By Johnny. I mean, his influence was overwhelming. Yes, indeed...

MM: Did you ever feel later on that you had to get away from it because it was too overpowering, or were you just learning so much still?

SE: I think, at later stages in my life, I had one or two influences which were like that, when I felt this was, you know, I am very easily influenced and regarded these people as, I mean, Johnny and Keith Vaughan who also taught at Camberwell and, they were all gay, it was a gay scene which in the late 1940s and early 50s, because it was still against the law, was a very sort of closed little ..., and I wasn't really a part of it, ... as a woman, and the wrong sort of woman very much. I mean, but it was a social ..., as you know, it become quite a mythical era.

MM: Indeed, yes.

SE: No, I didn't want to get away, I mean, I needed an identity and that had become my identity.

MM: Yes. And how long did that last, do you think?

**Tape 2: 17 minutes 53 seconds**

SE: Well, it lasted, I was getting to be 30. And I... became more or less suicidal really, my loneliness just, I mean I was really excluded from, I didn't belong. And, and I couldn't. And it was all so hugely destructive, I mean in those days, all those people with the exception of Francis Bacon almost and Lucian Freud, died of alcoholism, of drink. There were two Scotsmen, who you may or may not have heard, Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, not many people now know of them but at the time they were central to English ..., to painting in this country and both of, died of..., I mean it was hugely destructive, I mean the Soho scene. And Johnny by this time had moved to the Royal College and I was made a member of the Common Room there... met lots of, I mean that's when I met the Cassons, Hugh Casson and Rita Casson, who, I had nowhere to live and then I went to live with them. And I lived with them for quite a few years, as a lodger. They had a house and they, that was a different possib..., a door that opened for me, because they were much saner and they sort

of, I don't know, they were very supportive of me ... Yes, I was naturalised ... Hugh signed my guaranteed ..., Kenneth Clark and Hugh Casson guaranteed my naturalisation. ... So I became a British citizen at this point. No, that was before, I mean, just after ...

MM: Yes, probably in that wave just after the war.

SE: Yes, after the war. ... The thing with Minton, I mean he was very self-destructive, and the drink got to him and all that fell apart, and it was at that point I decided, somebody, I don't know how, I decided I had to do something. I didn't want to become successful and I became a bit sort of well known, so I decided to have a baby. That wasn't fashionable. It was, I tell you, this was many, many years before feminism. I didn't know anybody who'd ..., I deliberately did it, and that is now my daughter, and I am a grandmother and ...

MM: Would you be able to tell us who the father was?

**Tape 2: 22 minutes 9 seconds**

SE: Yes, it was someone called Ted Dicks who was a student at the Royal College and he was rather, I don't know, I just ... I was drowning and he was appalled when he found out and forbade me to have this child. And it was the Korean War and I said that, all I knew was that the whole world was constantly murdering and destroying, I mean, the war had just ended and here we were again with more bombs and..., and I wanted to give life and I wanted to ..., I needed to anchor myself to some reality... and I, he knew that I would never ask for anything and the Cassons, I mean they didn't, Rita didn't, Lady Casson didn't think it was a very good idea, but when I decided eventually after a ghastly few months of agonizing, whether to, because I didn't particularly want to have a child, I just didn't know what the way forward for me was..., she was wonderful and you know, I found somewhere to live through someone, had a room, where I could have Hetty, and she was born and I must say it saved my life.

MM: So your instinct was right. You found something to anchor you.

SE: Absolutely, I mean, it was in spite of the fact that I was absolutely alone and it was really tough, bringing up a child, in the situation I was in, was very, very lonely and tough. My foster mother was very supportive, she gave me £150 which by today's money, I wouldn't know, and this is 1954. ... £3000?

MM: I don't know.

SE: Who knows, who knows, but it was enough to get this room and to furnish it and... The Cassons gave me a cot, a cot from their children and, somehow ..., and I've brought my daughter up on freelance. I don't know how I did it, looked after the baby during the day and...

MM: How did you manage, oh I see, you probably worked at home then, didn't you?

SE: Oh, yes, absolutely.

MM: Yes, so in fact, you didn't need a babysitter?

**Tape 2: 25 minutes 14 seconds**

SE: Well, there was a problem because, quite a lot of the work..., for instance, I did quite a lot of work for the 'Radio Times' who in those days used artists, a lot of drawing. And I would get the script on a Friday and had to produce the finished art work by Monday or I mean, by this time, I had a wonderful Irish lady who came and cleaned and she adored Hetty and I mean she was lovely, Annie, and she would look after Hetty so I could do the work. I mean, a lot of my time I had to juggle it. It was tricky. But, it's amazing, I don't know how I did it now, I have to go to bed now.

MM: You are a little older now.

SE: Ah, I don't know, how I..., it was really hair-raising stuff. We survived somehow, just about...

MM: What part of London were you, was this, where you lived with Hetty?

SE: Well, we lived in this ... was a big room, in a very beautiful Bayswater Victorian house, overlooking Kensington Gardens, where now stands on that site the ugly Lancaster Hotel. They pulled down these ravishing terraces that terrace there on the corner. I forget what the station is called; it is next to a tube station, isn't it?

MM: Yes, I know the one that you mean.

SE: And it was one of the students at the Royal College, an older student called John Underwood... rented the maisonette. He was a photographer, had found a studio there. It was a marvellous studio at the back. And he knew that I was in a desperate way and said that I could have the ground floor, the room on the ground floor, and that's where I lived.

**Tape 2: 28 minutes 8 seconds**

MM: I see. Good. Did you have, during this time, any friends among other people who had come from Germany or Austria or Czechoslovakia, or were you in a more English milieu?

SE: I think almost entirely English.

MM: It sounds like it from what you have told me.

SE: It was artists. Then when I had.... yes, slightly bohemian, English bohemian.

MM: But you did not, like through Kenneth Clark or anything, meet any other refugee artists? Because as you said, he was very...

SE: No. I didn't know Kenneth Clark very well, I mean it was only through Carel Weight and ...

MM: Yes...

SE: I mean I..., that's way above my station, all that.

MM: Well, I know, he was very kind to many refugees, so I just thought...

SE: Yes. He was absolutely, hugely supportive, yes, absolutely.

MM: Did you..., so, I believe you have two children?

SE: Yes.

MM: Did your other child come along later? Was it close to Hetty or...?

SE: No. Many years later, seven years later.

MM: So you continued with your illustrations and ...

SE: Yes, and a bit of teaching.

MM: Yes. And you felt better already with Hetty around even in spite of the hard work, the terribly hard work?

SE: Oh, I've never for a second questioned what I had done, despite the... that it made my life complicated. It brought, I mean ... I had no substance at that point, you know, and nothing was real, sort of unreal.

**Tape 2: 30 minutes 18 seconds**

MM: Yes. So, how did your life evolve from then?

SE: ... My mother came over. She'd come over, I'd had to get her over. This was a very, very difficult thing. My parents had lived hidden, one of my father's tailors, a man called Jakobowski, had taken my parents in, they've worked in a factory, the house was gone, you know, ages, and the flat was gone. And then it became too dangerous for them and Jakobowski took them in. This was a heroic deed because if he had been discovered, he would have been killed. And my parents lived for certainly a year, if not two years, in a room sealed up, on the top floor somewhere and got their food through a basket.

MM: This would have been in Berlin?

SE: Oh yes. And with us lived the man who had been in the trenches with my father in the First World War, and who had worked with my father, took him into the business. He was a Viennese Jew of quite outstandingly sweet nature and a charming, charming man, Jewish. And... I knew him as Uncle Willi, although he was no relation, and he lived with us in Dahlem, in the house, and he was a bachelor, a lively person which helped because my father was reclusive and he was much more extrovert and he kept my mother fairly, you know, enjoyed having him around a bit. I don't think, there was no question ..., I don't think she had an affair with him or anything like that but he was quite sporty. He was a delightful man and he lived, he moved with us to Clausewitzstraße, which is the road which leads off ..., that our flat was in. And then the business, after Kristallnacht, ceased to exist and one day the Gestapo came for him. And I heard later from my mother, that he ..., you see the Jews, I mean, there were endless discussions round the dinner table about what the future would hold and how things would go and the only thing people talked about was how to get away and how to save, you know and so on. And Uncle Willi's, his take on it was 'Oh, when Hitler comes to power and whatever happens, when it gets bad, I'll buy myself a little sailing boat and I'll go around the world and by the time I come back he is gone.' Because they thought that this was insanity and that the Germany that they had known, the centre of civilisation would not tolerate such

... this was madness, and it wasn't going to last. And Uncle Willi, I am sorry to have to say, well, he apparently ran down, he jumped over the banisters and was... presumably broke all his legs because the flat was quite high up. And they patched him up and took him to the gas ovens and that was the end of him. Then my parents lived sealed up and ... and somehow or other got false papers. I don't know anything about this because I mean...

MM: No, well, you, ...

**Tape 2: 35 minutes 35 seconds**

SE: I was here, this was during the war, and I mean I know this... from my mother, that they got on a train, with these false papers, and the train was stopped and the SS got on and they went along and my mother was blonde and blue-eyed and she was absolutely horrendously hysterical and self-involved woman, made my father's life a hell on earth, but when there was a crisis, she functioned, whereas my father... was the classic Jewish victim. And they got on this train in separate compartments and the SS went through and checked the papers. And my mother managed to be okay. And my father was ordered off the train, he was in another compartment. And she said, that he ran, tried to run, and fell and... apparently he cut his wrists. And they patched him up and he was, ended up in Terezin, Theresienstadt, where he eventually died, I don't know, a day or two or whatever, after the Russians liberated Terezin. And he is buried there, my brother has been, he actually has a grave, well because, that is Terezin because it wasn't a mass grave. My mother got through to Switzerland and was taken care of by some family, the Laroche family, the pharmaceutical company, and wrote to me and wanted to come to England. And I didn't see any way in which I could not let her come to England. It was a huge mistake on my part. My foster mother kept on saying `You must go to Switzerland and stop her', because I hated her. I mean, she had made my childhood a nightmare. I knew it would be a disaster, I mean she was disastrous. And I very foolishly didn't go to Switzerland because I was frightened of her and couldn't face ..., I am my father's daughter, the head in the sand, is my big ..., my middle name. And, so she came and it was absolutely a nightmare, she was a nightmare.

**Tape 2: 38 minutes 57 seconds**

MM: When did she come?

SE: She came... 1949, something like that, I am not sure and she was, she thought that I would take over my father's role and look after her and care for her, and I could barely keep afloat myself. And she wouldn't let me work and, I mean she was ..., I can't describe it and I don't want to describe it.

MM: Did she want to live with you?

SE: Oh yes, yes.

MM: Did she did live with you?

SE: She did.

MM: So in fact there were...?

SE: The whole thing was abs...

MM: You had to earn for her as well.

SE: Yes, absolutely. ... And I ran away and hid with friends and she didn't know where I was. For the archives, I am not proud of myself but, until she died, which she did eventually, went back to Berlin because, she was in such a state, and ... they were going to take her and put her in a home here. She had a flat of her own, by this time, eventually, she had somehow furniture left from the house, and brought it all over here and lived in St John's Wood in a flat but she was ..., it was a very sad, the whole thing was tragic.

MM: Because presumably she didn't know many people here?

SE: No, she sort of made a valiant effort but... people, there is point which human beings are exhausted. Their funds are ... and nothing worked because the older people get, the more the more difficult it becomes to help them because she ... 'Why don't you take a lodger?' and she couldn't bear anybody near her and then she needed nursing and she alienated the nurse and the nurse would leave and, do you know, because I've lived through this with other people and eventually she was frightened because she thought that I would have her put in a home and she packed up and went back to Berlin where she lived for a few more years and then died. ... And until she died, I felt threatened by her. She was a very... I mean it is only now in my own old age that I can see that the whole history of the European Jewry of Central Europe, these, they were destroyed by the First World War. It never stopped, the disasters of Europe, which led to Hitler. I mean by the time Hitler came to power, an awful lot of Jews were like my parents, completely destroyed.

**Tape 2: 42 minutes 26 seconds**

MM: Yes. Especially those who had come from the East of course.

SE: Exactly. And I mean, and all, of course a lot of, if they were ...I have only just now learned through Amos Oz, that a lot of them committed suicide that went to Israel, because the reality of what went on in Palestine was very, it wasn't, I mean it was shocking for a lot of people. I mean, Palestine was not a land without people, it had the Palestinians in it.

MM: Indeed. Yes.

SE: As you know, as we know.

MM: Yes. So your contact to England and English things were, tended to be through this group of friends you mentioned?

SE: Yes. Through the arts, through the arts entirely.

MM: You didn't join any groups or political parties or anything?

SE: No, I was very, I think I didn't become really politicised until things went wrong for me many years later with my son. I, we thought, that when the war ended that we would, England would become another civilised democracy like the Scandinavian countries. And we thought that things could only from now on ..., the bad, the worst was over and from now on the world was going to become ... enlightenment would prevail. And it's only with hindsight, I mean, the information we got was... I mean, I wasn't very political. I just, one took it for

granted that one was left wing and a socialist. I was never a communist, it didn't appeal to me, instinctively. I had never been attracted to closed systems. But socialism was, it was natural, I mean the fact that we ended up with Thatcherism had never... we didn't dream of this, I mean, you know, I mean all the people I knew were interesting. I mean, Kenneth Clarke was a socialist, we voted for Labour government and it ..., you know what happened to it, we all know. But, I wasn't politically active at all. I think I've always been a fence sitter, an artist.

**Tape 2: 46 minutes 1 second**

MM: So, I wanted to talk a bit now, if you don't mind about integration and assimilation, or integration into this country. If your perspectives changed, you know, how, to try and think a little bit around those topics, I don't know...

SE: No, it's a very, it's very germane to the whole story. Unlike other people, I don't think I have ever become English, I don't think ..., the older I have become ..., my identity depends on being what is so despised, I am a European, I am a Jew, I am a human being, I belong, I have no sense of, I mean, of Jewishness. And yet, as I grow older, my best friend is one of my former students who, whose parents, she is a Cooper, they were South African, they were part of the ANC and her father is a very well-known man, I can't remember his name – Cooper, but they were at Berkeley University. Eventually, they left when it became very militant, because they had these two little girls to bring up and they left South Africa but they were close friends of the Slovos and very active. And she has remained ..., she was a student of mine, a mature student, and she is Jewish. And there is a kind of ..., it is very complicated, but then I think that is the condition of mankind today, and very few people, millions of people feel this today, like this but that they are not, they are neither South American nor are they French nor are they this nor are they that but one is a citizen. I think, for me, that the Jews have a contribution to make, today. I think Hitler has destroyed the culture, the Central European culture, but I feel very, very isolated in a world that has gone so wholeheartedly to a globalised market economy where only money counts and success and I mean, I'm, it's totally disastrous. I have become totally reclusive now. And I can speak English, I look English, I...

MM: And you speak it faultlessly.

SE: Well, that's my language, but... And I have become committed now, politically committed.

MM: So later in your life, much later in your life?

SE: Yes. After my son, what happened with my son. And I realised that this need not have happened, I mean the brutality of the system if you didn't conform to what was demanded of you. I had thought my children would be very clever and they would deal with the system but my son, in fact with hindsight, was an Aspergers Syndrome, or mildly autistic and dyslexic and couldn't cope with schooling. And eventually he became depressive and it ended in tragedy. He has disappeared, I don't know where he is, he may be dead, I don't know. But it didn't need to have happened and I wasn't ..., it is very largely my own inability to fight for him, because there are women who fight for their disabled children. But... I was confused.

**Tape 2: 51 minutes 21 seconds**

MM: Or was it perhaps , before people understood so much about this condition?

SE: Oh absolutely, totally. No, he was born in '61. And no-one had heard of dyslexia, it wasn't even recognised for many years. No, no, you are quite right. That's it. Had he been born now, you know, there are, it would have been different.

MM: Did you have him with you for, in the early years?

SE: I had him with me until the age of 28, he was living here and ... he became so alienated and so depressive and so mad and so... psychopathic that... I couldn't cope with it. And again, I was extremely selfish, I mean, there was no point, he was destroying me. And I didn't know what to do, so in the end, I, he left, I got him out of the house, I knew I would never see him again, because he is, he is actually heroic. I loved him, absolutely, the only person I've ever really loved that... And he was also ..., it didn't help to have an extremely clever and ambitious sister.

MM: Older sister.

SE: And you know, who was, you know, academically ..., and she is worldly and she wasn't going to stick around. There are lots of stories like this, mine is not exceptional but it has, that has politicised me.

MM: And your daughter, you said, is married and has children?

**Tape 2: 53 minutes 56 seconds**

SE: Yes, she is married, to a Scotsman from Edinburgh, who... She got married quite late and had her children quite late; she is now in her early 50s. ... And they had ..., they wanted to have children, that's why they got married. They have these two very bright, sparky girls, and they fit into this world which we inhabit now, this society. She became eventually ..., she went to Cambridge, she did languages, French and Italian, and she went to a comprehensive and she was one of the first people to go to Cambridge. And she worked, she went to the Courtauld Institute which I was much against that she did it. And then she ran an art gallery and hated it, understandably, it was desperately boring, horrid. And then she became a psychotherapist and she sort of went along that route, New Age, all come from the West Coast. And she ran ... she worked for the voluntary sector for many years, ran a thing called 'Parenting'. She is very heavily into this, as that generation is, into having children and bringing them up properly, not like her bad mother. But we get on and I was...

MM: So the bad mother can't be all that bad.

SE: I ca... Well, I must have done something right.

MM: Exactly.

SE: Anyway, I looked after the children for 12 years, I went over there, they live in North East London.

MM: Oh yes.

SE: Until..., I stopped when they were 12 or 13, it's enough. It's another world.



MM: Absolutely. And I suppose, a completely different relationship between generations where there is one in-between?

**Tape 2: 56 minutes 44 seconds**

SE: Unbridgeable. Huge. But she's an incredibly devoted mother, I mean incredibly, very tough, I mean, all those qualities that helped to destroy my son, the ruthlessness and the toughness have been brilliant, I was a useless mother, I mean, I ... always took the line of least resistance but, you know, she is very controlling, and I think children quite like that, I don't know.

MM: I suppose a lot of them do, yes. I wanted also to ask you about later connections with Germany.

SE: There aren't any.

MM: You told me before we began the interview that you did make a visit to Berlin.

SE: Well, that's very recent, that's last October.

MM: Yes. No, you told me, I think, you went to see an exhibition in Berlin in 1986.

SE: Yes, of which I was part.

MM: Yes. Can you tell us a little bit about that for the interview?

SE: Well, it was, I can't remember when it was. But ...

MM: Yes. It was in 1986. It was the big 'Kunst im Exil' show at the ...

SE: Was it in '86?

MM: Yes, I think it was in Schloss Charlottenburg, in Berlin.

**Tape 2: 58 minutes 22 seconds**

SE: Right.

MM: Wasn't it? Yes, and I think you went over there for it.

SE: Yes, for three or four days. I went with the woman who later got the exhibition, it toured Germany and then it came over to the Camden Art Centre. And there were four of us, there was the woman who ran the Camden Art Centre, Zuleika Dobson, and with her was Monika Duchén.

MM: Bohm-Duchén

SE: Duchén, who sometimes lectures at the Tate, and my daughter and me, and I thought, none of it had anything to do with me. And it was this time, when we went with the children, that I began to see the possibility that Berlin had something to offer.

MM: Yes. Now that was this last time, wasn't it? ... Right, we break there for...

### TAPE 3

MM: And you were just beginning to mention the fact that you made a recent visit to Germany, very recent, I believe, with your daughter?

SE: That's right.

MM: Could you tell us a little bit about that because I think we want to contrast it a little bit with the earlier..

SE: My impression, my feeling about the whole thing. It was my daughter's idea. She wanted this for her girls that they should..., they have a family in Scotland through her husband. And they have that, that's a very strong established thing. And she is very painfully aware, has always been very painfully aware that she grew up in this, she always says, this terribly lonely way, of being my daughter. And she is much more extrovert than I am and she loves ..., she is ..., I have done it, I have achieved what I wanted which is, that she is English, she belongs into this society, she is a survivor, she does well in it and doesn't question things and doesn't go down nasty, nasty places that might prove problematic. But she also suffers from quite a lot of depression, which I think, I am quite comfortable with depression, I think it's understandable, but she isn't. There must be something very wrong. Anyway, she decided this was going to happen, and I limply went along with it. And we all went, for just three days and stayed near the Kurfürstendamm, just off. Very nice. My son-in-law who is a born tourist guide, took over and I was never asked to ..., since I speak German to produce this ability. And they decided that what we were all going to do and I just, sort of, shadowed along. And the first day, on the Sunday, I think we went to the Jewish Museum, and I spent the visit with my younger granddaughter. And I didn't get as far as the top floor where the historic, the museum bit, which I regret because apparently that's really very good. I found the ... My feeling is very ambiguous about the whole thing. I don't like it. All these memorabilia and these photographs downstairs and the way the thing is designed, I find very alienating. And the second day, and where we stayed, on the Kurfürstendamm, which was after all previously the most elegant and buzzy and sort of well-heeled heart of Berlin, is now very quiet, because it has all moved East. And I can't remember what it's called, the part that's now fashionable but it doesn't matter, we didn't go there, there wasn't enough time to go anywhere, and ... I don't like Berlin. I find it, the architecture heavy and gloomy, but it was sort of beautiful, lots of trees, the colour. It was a golden autumn because of the climate change.

### Tape 3: 4 minutes 53 seconds

MM: Yes.

SE: It was here as well, in England. And on the second day we went to Dahlem, where I was a child, and we went to my house and we met this, which is now part of the Berlin University, the faculty, department, Modern Language, Philosophy and Modern Languages. And we met, I believe, he is a Head of Modern Languages who was there and it was just, I came to life. He was so ... respectful, welcoming, civilised ... and sophisticated and warm and human and that it was a delight and the house is... it's very sad, it has been converted into these filing cabinets and, there is nothing left of it. There is just a tiny bit downstairs in the Herrenzimmer, my father's study, where there is a tiny bit of the designed ceiling left and a few shelves where formerly Nietzsche and Buber and Shakespeare lived. Now, as I say, the

files, it's full of files. The garden is, I mean it was, my father was a passionate gardener. You know, it's just not looked after, neglected, nobody there who would care for it, and plants have died, there is nothing. But I found Berlin ... and then the second day we, I'm sorry to interrupt, we went to East Berlin I think, we went to the National Gallery which has lovely pictures in it. And I think they went off, there is a new bit now. It's all, the money has been pumped into the East, and becoming nice shopping, glitzy shopping and I met such ..., I actually let them all get on with it. I didn't want to go to these shops and so I did mostly ... It was Monday, and Monday all the museums are closed. And being typically me, it had poured with rain but I trenched across to the Museumsinsel which, as I said, totally closed. And then I had arranged to meet them at the tube, I can't remember the name of the tube station, and promptly lost my way of course and asked some lady with an umbrella to show, she was an East German lady, ordinary person, and she said 'I'll come with you. I am going in that direction.' And my German is sort of, if I lived there I would patch it up fairly, reasonably quickly. And I just so enjoyed talking to her and meeting her. She was again, there was something very nice about her and I asked her lots of questions about how they survived the war and about being in the East and, because I mean it is clear that although, in spite all the drawbacks of the communist regime they had somewhere to live and they had work whereas now unemployment is horrendous and it's sort of strange, isn't it, that this fissure or whatever you call it, between the recent history, what has happened, that Germany was divided and the whole business of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. And I don't think it can ever be mended. And that nationalism, you know, that unity. But I really remember that encounter with that woman, this warmth and I thought, that it was sort of real, she was real, you know modest and ordinary. And ... melancholic.

**Tape 3: 10 minutes 51 seconds**

But I didn't come back from that visit, I mean I was so ... appalled, which is what I mean, I thought I would never ever want to have to do anything with Germany and this time I felt, sneakingly, it is the first time I actually say this, I had begun to think I might rather like to go. The pace of life seemed not as hectic as here. There weren't quite so many, in three days, I mean, what did I know? I didn't meet quite so many tattooed girls with streaky hair and regulation teeth and working in the city, God knows how ...? and affluent. There were sort of old ladies somehow beached by the march of progress and bumbling up and down the Kurfürstendamm. I mean, there didn't seem to be so many cars and also I just sort of feel, that there is world out there that I don't know anything about. I mean if the Americans are provincial, the English also have this idea that the Anglo-Saxon world is the only possible model, in which we must all live, you know. There was a sense, I mean, I don't know much about Brussels and all the bad things and of course big business and the whole world has been taken over by the market and yet there is a culture there, and, I mean, this man whom we met in my house, the Head of the Language Department, was also an ardent Francophile and so we talked about France. He goes all the time to Paris, and I go as often as I can scrape the money together, once or twice a year. It was nice, that was a really, and when I have met young Germans, when I have been on holiday in France or wherever, the ones I had met, I had liked so much. You know, they were all so ..., I have had bad experiences too. I had very bad back problems and at one point a couple of years ago, or whenever, I was recommended to go to Slovakia to have mud put round me, sulphur bath, and this place was absolutely ..., Přestani, there were a lot of Germans from East Germany there because it is very easy...

MM: It is very close, yes.

**Tape 3: 14 minutes 42 seconds**

SE: And a lot of Russians because, and Poles and a lot of Israelis because it was cheap in Slovakia. And the, I met some Germans, because I can speak German. There were sort of one or two experiences there, that when people who befriended me, nice youngish couples or middle-aged couples, and at one point I did ask them about anti-Semitism in the East of Germany and to my surprise there was an embarrassed silence and ... You know, and then they said, 'Well, we are fed up with this, you see, it has been thrust down our throat, the whole question of anti-Semitism.' So I didn't pursue it, but there were, you know, the Israelis were a nightmare, well hysteria and paranoia, of being pushed into the sea, it's understandable, I have become a little bit more tolerant recently, reading Amos Oz. But I can understand, but I would never want to go to Israel in the first place. But it is much more ..., it is very complex, these are very complex issues.

MM: Of course they are.

SE: But I mean really that's all I have to say, about this little, short visit.

MM: Thank you very much. There is one more question I would like to ask you and that is 'Do you feel anywhere as your *Heimat*?'

SE: Not really, no. But I feel, to copy Lucian Freud: 'We are here because we are here because we are here'. I'm here.

**Tape 3: 16 minutes 52 seconds**

MM: Yes. Fair enough.

SE: I think, '*meine Heimat*' is in my heart and my head. I have no deep sense of belonging although I have two coun...

MM: Yes, you have two.

SE: Two cultures, I think, I feel strongly about. And I mean Harold Pinter. That's the sort of Jew I can connect with, that generation of, and people like Arthur Miller, that's where I belong, that's my home.

MM: In your own painting, who do you feel, which artists do you feel have influenced you most?

SE: This is very, very difficult, because I came to England. I became of age at the end of the war. I ... stumbled into this Neo-Romantic, into this English art, which was, because of the war, quite insular. ... I think I'm, as culturally, I'm altogether 19<sup>th</sup> Century, I've never got over the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Literature, I am, I am almost more literary than I am visual ... You know, of the, I suppose although France remains my favourite reading, and you know the world of Zola, Balzac and Flaubert and all that, and so on and so on, and nearer our day too. The Russians, I mean Tolstoy and Chekhov remain my favourite and I suppose, well, as I said, they are actually mostly playwrights.

MM: Yes.

SE: Tennessee Williams is someone I absolutely, always identified with and Arthur Miller and so on. Artistically, as far as painting is concerned, up to a point I really remained stuck in

the Minton legacy. And I have really been, I knew you would ask me about this and I think I always yearned to be rooted. I don't feel that you can ..., the sort of painting that I care about which is people like Cezanne and although I say it, perhaps I am a lost soul after all. I don't really belong anywhere, and I have such powerful doubts about what I do.

**Tape 3: 20 minutes 57 seconds**

MM: But don't most artists?

SE: Well, no, there are people who, you have to be focussed, I was going to say, yes, but you have to be... The people I envy are the Arthur Millers of this world, because through language you can speak of the thing that I feel most passionate about which is the human condition. I mean, 'Death of a Salesman' must be the best play. Do you know it? There are others.

MM: Yes of course but it is...

SE: But I have two film directors that I idolize, where I have a profound ..., they are able with their work to do something that painting can't do. I so often have the feeling that painting is the icing on the cake, the sensuality and the individuality and yet, what else is there? The poetry it's ..., I don't know, and yet this is who I am. But the two film directors that I care most about and the only ones really, ultimately, are Ken Loach and Bertrand Tavernier in France, because the content is so important to me... I know, there are others, there are some wonderful women, coming up, young women. But it's a complicated...

MM: It's a very complicated topic, I know.

SE: Complicated being an artist today, I think.

MM: Extremely, I can see.

SE: Because we are living in a period where everyone is making installations of the Tracy Emin ..., I don't belong there.

MM: No. Yes. Well, thank you very much indeed for speaking so much and so openly to us today.

SE: Thank you for asking.

MM: It has been a great privilege.

SE: Long enough, God knows.

MM: Oh dear, I forgot the message.

**Tape 3: 23 minutes 53 seconds**

SE: This photograph which has survived amongst my possessions, is of my father's sister and her husband and two little girls, all of these, the whole family, the only family my father had, died in the Auschwitz gas ovens, immediately after the Germans marched into Hungary. And the year which is on, written on the back, is, I believe, 1915 so that the Hoffnung, I think their

name was Hoffnung. And the, Mr Hoffnung, my uncle, is wearing obviously the Austro-Hungarian uniform; he must have been in the army. It's all I know about it. Wonderful.

The figure in this little photograph is my father. He was an officer in the German army. The reason for this is that he was too old, nobody wanted him, by the time when the First World War broke out he was already in his mid 40s and he ended up an officer in the German army. He fought in the trenches, he won the Iron Cross which I played with in the sand pit apparently, lost, and there he is, his uniform, I don't know where it was taken, but probably either on the front in France or in the East, on the Eastern Front.

The date of the photograph is 1917, so I should think it's almost certainly on the Eastern Front by this time.

This is a photograph of my mother. I'm guessing that it was taken in the early 1930s but it might be earlier than that, and I don't know the date.

This is their house; I was born in and grew up in, in Berlin, Dahlem. And the photograph was taken recently; last autumn, when, on a brief visit with my daughter..., with my family. It was taken by my young granddaughter. The house looked, I mean, it's changed a lot since we lived in it. It was, it's lost quite a bit of its charm, the window in the roof has been vandalised because they wanted more light obviously for ..., it now belongs to the Berlin ..., to the university, and the little room that used to be the attic is now an office and they wanted a bigger window. But it was quite a nice little house. Well, quite substantial really by today's standards. In a very affluent nice part of Berlin with big parks and when I was a child surrounded by corn fields now all part of the metropolis built up.