

IMPORTANT

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AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	97

Interviewee Surname:	Fachler
Forename:	Chava
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	30 March 1922
Interviewee POB:	Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Date of Interview:	31 March 2005 and 4 September 2005
Location of Interview:	Salford, Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	4 hours and 42 minutes

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

INTERVIEW: 97

NAME: CHAVA (EVA) FACHLER

DATE: THURSDAY, 31 MARCH 2005

LOCATION: SALFORD, MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: I am interviewing Chava Fachler and today's date is Thursday 31st March 2005. The interview is taking place in Salford, Manchester and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

If you can tell me your name?

CF: Chava Fachler.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

CF: Becker, B-E-C-K-E-R.

RL: And your first name?

CF: It was Eva, but my husband didn't like Eva particularly, and when I met him he said Chava, but a person before him, lehavdil elev havdolos said it already. The Ponovitcher Rav came to us, he is a relation, and when he asked me "What is your name?"

And I said "Eva".

And he said "Oh, no, not Eva, Chava."

And my sister said "Marianne"

And he said "Marianne, no, Miriam."

And my mother said "Melanie".

And he said "Malkah".

With my father he was perfectly alright because his name was a very good Jewish name.

RL: And where were you born?

CF: In Frankfurt am Main

RL: And the date?

Tape 1: 1 minute 42 seconds

CF: The 30th of March 1922.

RL: And that makes you ...?

CF: 83 yesterday and the Jewish date is the 29th of Adar, not to forget. But the Hebrew year I don't remember.

RL: Now, if you can tell me something about your family background, you know, about your parents' family.

CF: It depends how far you want me to go ...

RL: As far back as you can.

CF: I have a very interesting story, on both sides. My father was born in a little town on the River Russ, R-U-double-S, in Lithuania, and he went to school in Russ, but they didn't like the schooling particularly so they thought it would be a good idea to send him to Germany, and they sent him to Wurzburg in the south of Germany, but not for a very long time, he and his oldest brother, not the middle brother for some reason, only the eldest one, and he, was the third son, were sent to Wurzburg. In the meantime, his father, was Moreino Rav, and he learned all day, and his wife had a little inn, and, by the River Russ, and people came down with logs, along the River Russ and they stopped at the inn and my mother, my grandmother, did meals for them there, that was their only income. Now, he had lots of cousins, my grandfather and they said to him "You shouldn't be living here, you have got six children, you haven't got any money, you should be coming with us to South Africa, we are going to South Africa, we are going to Pretoria, we are taking you with." The interesting thing is that I met, when I went to South Africa, I met the cousins who I thought took him with to Pretoria, it turned out that they were not the cousins at all. I, we wrote a book, my husband and I, between us and I mentioned there, that we had cousins Levis, cousins from Lithuania. One came to Frankfurt and the other one came to London. I, my children all received that book, and my daughter-in-law in Netanya gave it to her very good friend, Hetty Meltzer. And she phoned me up, all excited, she said "Chava, I know two people that you mentioned, Levis and Guttentag." So I said, "The Guttentag story I know, but Levis? You met Levis?" She said "Yes. A South African."

And my heart jumped, and she gave me the number and I got in touch with him, so he said "Yes, I am about 80," he must have been about 80 years old, "and when I was a young man I came to London, I hired a car, I ran around with my car all over London and I came to the East End and I saw a big corner shop called 'Levis and Ordman'"

I said "That is my cousin Levis."

He said "Yes, I went inside, and I met your cousin Levis."

And I said "My father is called Benjamin".

Tape 1: 5 minutes 34 seconds

He said 'I know your father, we are cousins'.

I said "and ...

And he said "and what?"

I said "You didn't keep in touch with him?"

And he said "No"

So I said "Tell me about you. Where were you raised?"

He said "In Pretoria."

Now I have to admit, that I hadn't yet been able to speak to him, but I have every intention for Pesach we are going to be in Netanya, B'ezrat Hashem, and I am going to ask him, because I think that my grandfather came out with the Levius cousins who are not from the other side, they are not related to the Ponivitcher Rav like my father, my father is, I thought they were my cousins from this grandfather's side, but they are not, they are from the grandmother's side, the Levius's. So when I told my cousin I have got three cousins, kneine hara, older than me, living in Israel and when I told my girl cousin she got as excited as me. She said "We used to play with the Levius's."

I said "I know, but you didn't know there were Leviuses that came from Pretoria."

And she said "No!"

RL: So your grandfather ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: Went to Pretoria?

CF: He went to Pretoria with the cousins, I think they were the Levius's, and he left his wife and children behind. He said to them "I am going to make money, I am going to take out a South African passport, for all of you and then I am coming back and fetch you and we are all going to live in South Africa." And that was his plan.

Now, the story that I heard from my father was that he went to South Africa and did very well, he had knowledge about the logs, and they made paper for cigarettes in Pretoria, they had a factory, so he had some knowledge about wood shavings that went into the paper that made the cigarette paper. And after a while he took out nationality for himself, his wife and his six children, and he said "I am going now back to Russ and bringing my family over." And he sent a message to them, or a telegram "Pack up your things; we are going to South Africa." And he went back to Russ and with the South African passport, and they were ready to go to South Africa. That is the version my father told me.

My cousin Henia, her father, Uncle Max said he came to South Africa, that story is the same. He found there no work at all, he hated it, they weren't frum enough for him, and he returned with South African passports, because she also has one, back to Russ.

The third version is that he went there, also not frum enough, but nothing to do with how my story ends. And he came back again, with the South African passports. Then my

Tape 1: 8 minutes 50 seconds

Father told me that he got a message from, as they were, he got return tickets, but as they were about to go back to South Africa he got a message to say “Dear Samuel, Don’t come back you have got nothing left. Your partner ran away with your money.”

Now, my father was asked by his cousins to go into partner ... my grandfather, was asked to go into partnership with his cousins, with the Levius’s. But he said “No, I know that you shouldn’t go into partnership with your family.” So he went into partnership with another guy, whose name I don’t know, so they were stuck in Russ, with a South African passport with return tickets they couldn’t use, and didn’t know where to go.

So the children said “Look, we all speak German, why don’t we go to Germany?” So they all went to Germany. One daughter was already married with a husband and two children; I have a lovely photo of the whole family with this Auntie Fanny with the two children. By the way, she married her cousin, Reuven Wolpert. Lots of Wolperts are in South Africa, so we assume that he was also South African or his family also went, and all the Wolperts want to be related to us, because we are related to the Ponovitcher Rav.

RL: How are you related to the Ponovitcher Rav?

CF: My father, my grandfather was his uncle. He was my father’s first cousin and I am in touch with the Kahanamans, a very strong connection with the Kahanamans.

RL: And in Germany ... What did your grandfather do?

CF: When my grandfather came to Germany he said “Kinderlach, that’s it. You have to look after me now.” So, my uncle, David, the eldest, he married a very rich lady, Auntie Bertha, Werblowski! From a famous Rabbonische family, but they were very wealthy, unfortunately they had no children, so my grandfather said “My sons, my children, will look after me.” My grandfather went to the orphanage in Frankfurt to daven there and as he passed by, I stood on my cot, looking out for him, waiting for him to pass by, he waved to me with his stick and I waited at him, he came back from davening and again he waved. He was on the Hapsburger Anlager, he walked and was about level with my bedroom. So I was very fond of my grandfather, and my grandmother, and my grandmother was a real Litvisher lady, and she was blind. She said, she told me, that she went for a walk, with all her children in Lithuania and there was a sandstorm, and it went into everybody’s eyes, the others got better but she didn’t. When she was in her early eighties, in Frankfurt there was an eye specialist, and he said to her “I could easily ... you’ve got cataracts, I could easily do it.”

She said, “I think I am too old.”

So he said “So you don’t need to have it done, but I just did it for my mother.”

“Oh” she said, “How old was your mother?”

So he said “ninety”.

So she said “Yes please”.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 55 seconds

And we visited her in the Gagern Spital, and she had little covers over her eyes, and the made the holes bigger and bigger and bigger, and we saw her, almost before she went on Aliyah to Palestine, she saw us all. Unbelievable.

RL: So when did they immigrate to Israel?

CF: Well, I must tell you, that my aunt. My father, there were four boys and two daughters, very clever girls the daughters. They had a nose for Hitler before anybody else. We all lived in Sachsenhausen, we moved from the Hapsburger Allee to Sachsenhausen. They lived in a workers, like, block of flats, and when they moved, my father said "Let's also move." We couldn't find anything where they moved so we went a bit further out, not much further out, ten minutes walk, also into a worker's block, fantastic workers flats, we had every convenience you can imagine. And, these aunties said "Hitler may be only beginning now, but can't you see that it is going to be dreadful here. We are sending our children to Palestine." So, my aunt had three or four children. Auntie Tzila, beautiful lady, Yosselovitz, he was, they were all from Lithuania, they were all Litvaks, and Auntie Fanny was the eldest, with Uncle Reuven Wolpert, they sent their children illegally to Palestine, via France, via Marseilles. And when they arrived in what is now Israel, they managed to get their parents over to Palestina, and when the parents were in Palestine they managed to get their parents. In other words, my grandparents went to Palestine in the early thirties and they lived in Yerushalayim, I know that.

RL: So was it just the two girls, the two aunties, or did any of the boys?

CF: All of them, they all went, David went via Holland but he was, he opened a big factory in Israel first, then he went to Holland and made different business. My father actually worked, and my mother and my father, both worked for him for a time before they went out.

Now, the only two who didn't go, was the youngest, Uncle Issy and Auntie Lena, they lived in Berlin, they had two little girls. And my father, Samuel, and Melanie Becker, we were the two older girls. My sister and myself, and they were the big politicians. My father was a big politician and he loved England, and he had, an abonomore, he got regularly. The Times sent to him and he read The Times from end to end, and my mother also. They are all very keen on English.

RL: Tell me about your mother's family.

CF: My mother had a very sad story really. They came from Silesia, and her father was a silversmith, and he went from market to market and I have at home a wonderful Siddur, that she wrote, my mother, my grandmother Marie, that is why my sister is called Marianne, and the Ponovitcher Rav got such a shock when he heard Marie, but in Silesia

you gave these names to Jewish children. She wore the wig, she was very, very frum, her husband had long peyers behind his ears, always a big Jewish ... high Kappel, you

Tape 1: 17 minutes 26 seconds

know, like they wore, they were, not Litvaks. I never knew where they came from. I knew where she came from because I met all her cousins and I knew them by name, some lived in Berlin, some lived in Breslau, but him, I never knew where he came from.

Shall I jump a bit forward?

One day we were invited to Vienna, to a wedding, all expenses paid, that was about 15 years ago, and I remembered in the Siddur that my grandmother gave my mother, and my mother gave it to me, it said that they were all born in Vienna, and they lived in Vienna. So I said to my husband "Let's go to the Viennese embassy and find out whether they ...". We had no idea where my grandfather Yosef comes from, Yosef Friedmann. We thought he came from Silesia. Pois, my father used to Oberpoisen he called it. Not a word about Polish, not a word. So, I went there, there was a young lady there, not very friendly, and she started to speak, and I always speak English in Vienna, not a word of German out of my mouth, and she started to talk to me. And I said "You are Israeli".

"Oh," she said "how do you know?"

I said "I can hear your accent." So I said "Why don't you let me look it up? What is there to stop you from showing me my father's and my grandparents wedding certificate." So she showed it to me, and where do you think my grandfather was born? In Krakow, in Poland. Why is it such a joke? When I brought my husband home for the first time, my parents lived in Letchworth, we were on Hachshara Kibbutz in Buckingham and we later got married there. So I brought him home, very proud ...

RL: Good looking?

CF: Gorgeous fellow, and my parents were pleased, and my father interviewed him, and he said "Where are you from?"

And he said "From Berlin."

"Oh yes, I have got a brother," he was still alive then, "A brother in Berlin, but he is in Vancouver now. And where are your parents from?"

So my future husband said "They come from Poland."

My mother said "From Poland! But I don't understand. Why did they come from Poland?"

So my husband, now my husband, said "A lot of Polish people, the whole family Fachler, came from Poland and moved to Berlin."

"Oh" my father said, "I see, I see."

And he called me aside and he said "Leibchen, how could you? How could you bring me a Polish boy into the house?"

I said "Daddy, you are not ... not ... you are joking?"

"No", he said "I am not, Litvak and Poles, they don't go together."

I said "Since when are you a racist, I don't believe it."

He said “No, no, no, no, no ... I am not a racist, but ... okay ... if you love him and if he is good to you, then I don’t mind.”

Because he knew that once I bring him home.

Tape 1: 20 minutes 48 seconds

He said “Where are his parents?”

I said “His parents died in the Shoah, in the Holocaust, not only his parents, 35 members of his family, grandparents from either side, uncles, aunts, cousins, the lot. The only one who came out is his little sister. His little sister, she came out.” And I said “Please G-d, when we get married you will see her, you will meet her.”

And I don’t think my father had any idea that my mother’s father came from Krakow, otherwise he wouldn’t have been so upset about me going with a Polish boy. How could he have done? In those days nobody knew, I am sure my father didn’t find out where they came from, how could he, he never went to Vienna, and my mother didn’t know, he died very young. My grandfather, Yosef Friedmann died very young. Every child was born on a different market, where he went selling his silver and his gold, I have a whole list of exactly where they all were born, and the last one, and my grandmother wrote it, not as each child was born, but as she remembered it when she wrote it.

So, the first one was Isho, Izak.

The second one was Maurice, he died young.

The third one was Margaret, she died young.

The next one was Leo, but he was still alive when she wrote that and then she wrote that.

And then she wrote and my little daughter Melanie, sol sie gesund sein, she should be well, was born in Vienna.

And my next daughter Stephanie was also born in Vienna.

So I have got all the dates of all the children, and we have got two names that we have used amongst our children, Yitzchak and Moshe. When her husband died he left her penniless and she had no job, she had no education for a job at all, so she put her son Leo into a Siechenhaus, which is a home for the incurable, because he must have had some very bad illness, like in those days that they couldn’t cure. I don’t know exactly what was wrong with him, I never met him. And she put Uncle Isho and Auntie Stephanie into the orphanage. She couldn’t bear to put my mother into the orphanage, and this is what was happening before the First World War. This all happened before the First World War, and she found a family, called Langer, L-A-N-G-E, in Frankfurt, and they fostered her. In the meantime my grandmother learned to be a midwife, she worked first with a doctor, then she worked on her own, and when she had enough money and she came back to Frankfurt and opened a little pension, a little ... mmm ... you couldn’t sleep there, but you could eat there, in the Zeilstrasse in Frankfurt. And then she brought all the children home. That was Isho and Stephanie and my mother, Melanie. My Uncle Isho got married to a lovely lady, she was a very gifted and beautiful lady, Auntie Jenny, I don’t remember her maiden name, although I knew her parents also. My Auntie Stephanie got married to Freund, to Walter Freund, who lived in Berlin. And his single sister, Auntie Lydia, worked for the AJR. In Frankfurt and later in London, and we were very close to her, and when she died she left me little bits and pieces from her flat. She died in London.

So, my mother never knew her father. She couldn't remember him at all, and when I grew up in Frankfurt and I kept on saying "So, what was it like?" So she could only tell me what it was like during the First World War in Frankfurt. They were starving, they

Tape 1: 25 minutes 55 seconds

had nothing to eat. They went out into the fields and picked some kind of greenery and they made tea out of it and they picked like carrots, but they weren't carrots, some kind of look alike carrots, white, white from the earth, potatoes they didn't have either. Everything was rationed. They were starving. My mother always blamed herself that she didn't, without her being guilty at all, she didn't have enough calcium, so that when we were born and we got teeth, especially me, my teeth were terrible. And she said "It is all my fault, because I didn't have good food, any food at all." And I grew up in the dentist's chair, every five minutes in the dentist's chair.

RL: How did your parents meet?

CF: In the boarding house, didn't they ... Now, my mother was engaged to a young man from a very important German, Jewish family, called Horovitz, Siegfried Horovitz, but they kept it quiet because they weren't so sure how his parents would react to this engagement. And the first war broke out, all the crème de la crème of the Jewish community, the young men, they volunteered for Germany to fight. They had no idea what was going to happen. They went out, they sent them against the Russians, and they were caught and captured in the first couple of weeks of being in the German uniform in army. Now, this Siegfried had a cousin, called, it will come to me ... I met him, he was over 100 and he lived in London. In Israel he lived, what am I talking about? I met him at one of the Horvitz's grandchildren's weddings. And he was blind, and they brought me to him and he held my hand, and he said "Are you the daughter of the Schone Fraulein Friedmann?" (Of the beautiful Miss Friedmann) "You know she was called Das Schone Fraulein Friedmann in the whole of Frankfurt because of her outstanding beauty, and she was engaged to my cousin Siegfried."

I said "Yes, how do you know?"

"They sent me to the army, to find out what had happened, not only to him, but to his friends, and I met him in captivity, and he said to me 'My dear cousin, will you tell Melanie Friedmann that the engagement is out because we will never survive, they are starving us to death here, and she should consider herself not engaged' and it was my duty to bring that message back to your mother." Now I knew that she had found out that he was in captivity and she was mourning for him. She, there were all sure that they would never come out. He did come out, but too late, in the meantime my mother had a lot of friends and they went cycling and climbing the mountains, she had a marvellous time, she went to the theatre, concerts, she had a marvellous voice, she had her voice trained, she had Italian language lessons and Dutch she picked up later, and English lessons. The people that she was with, they could not afford to put her into the grammar school, so she was in the Volksschule. She was in the primary school, but even there she managed to get a very good certificate and she learned shorthand typing, stolze-schrey was her shorthand, a bit similar to Pitman which I later did, and she got a job with Mr, the head of the Agudah, Rosenheim, Yaakov Rosenheim, who was the editor and writer of

the Israelit, the only Jewish paper then in Frankfurt. And she was his secretary, and after a few years he said to her “You know, Fraulein Friedmann, you are wasting your time here with me, you can't go further up, what you are doing is the highest

Tape 1: 30 minutes 44 seconds

May I recommend you to my friends Baer Sondheim? They are a big firm and you could be one of the boss's secretaries.” Which he did, and she became the boss's secretary and travelled around with him in, mostly in trains, and took down notes in stolze-schrey, shorthand which afterwards she typed out. But she didn't go out with anybody, and my grandmother was very upset, all the others got married, one, two, three. Here she was, a beautiful girl, and then of course the war broke out, and this is, I am talking now, my parents got married in 1918, so it must have been shortly before, it must have been before the war finished, there was a time when nothing happened. The prisoners didn't come back, and she didn't have a boyfriend. So my grandmother said “There is a young man sitting here, every day he comes to me, he eats you up with his eyes. Why don't you want to go out with him?”

She said “No, I am not going out with him. I don't want to go out with him. I am still mourning for my Siegfried.”

My grandmother nagged and my mother went out with him, and I have got a few little cards they sent to each other, and one card she was very upset because she was supposed to meet him at a certain time and he was playing cards with his brothers and she hardly forgave him, until he swore that he would never play cards again. And we were not allowed to have even playing cards, children cards in the house because of this ... the promised that he made that he would never play cards again. Anyway, they got married in 1918 and ...

RL: Had your father been in the First World War? What had happened to him?

CF: Oh, oh, I forgot to tell you. When the First World War broke out they were enemy aliens, they had South African passports. So the police came and wanted to put them into camps in Ruhleben next to Berlin. It was a camp for all the English and South Africans and whoever else was in Germany at the time, and all the family said “No, we never went to South Africa. Our father brought us passports and we never, we are not at all South Africans.”

And they said “Well, what do you want to be?”

“German, we are German, we speak German, we feel German and we are German.”

And everybody said that except my father, he said “I am South African.”

They said “Samuel, they are going to intern you.”

“So, let them intern me. I am not giving up my South African nationality for anybody.”

They said “All right Samuel, bye bye, you will go to Ruhleben”

My father was in Ruhleben until the end of the war. And he had a fantastic time there. He, for the first time, he got a bit of culture, and he was a mathematician. He should have studied mathematics; he was a wizard with figures. Unbelievable, we used to try him out and we couldn't always prove it, but when we did he was always right. We gave him enormous numbers we saw in the trains, they had numbers, million and so and so, thousand and ... put it, divide it up, he gave one look and then and then and then and

divide it and divide it until the end. Every time he could do it, he was brilliant. But, there wasn't the money for him to study, so that is how he learned to be in ... he had a little store and sold ladies clothes, ladies clothes and underwear, stockings and shoes and

Tape 1: 35 minutes 0 second

everything, and then came ... And then in the meantime, ah then, while he had this store they got married, in 1918 they got married. My mother had a cook, she had a lady who did the ironing. My mother was a lady of leisure for a very short time, and then came the inflation and my father lost everything, everything, he had to give up the store and my mother had to go to work and he paid back all his creditors, every penny that he owed them, and I tell you my own husband was once in the same situation, in England, it wasn't inflation it was some other dreadful happening out of his control, he paid back every penny. I said here is the Litvak and the Polak and how alike they are.

RL: You said your mother had to go out to work?

CF: Yes.

RL: What did she do?

CF: She went back to work. She was a shorthand typist. She worked for Baer Sondheim and she went back to Baer Sondheim and they took her in with open arms. And she was nearly trying, they were trying very hard to have a baby, and nothing happened and my parents were very upset and my mother was avante garde, I mean she did things that I mean, none of her contemporaries worked. Nobody that went to school with her worked, nobody had a job as a shorthand typist, I mean these young ladies in Frankfurt were very rich ladies, mostly German, they didn't need to work. Their parents had a lot of money and they married rich husbands, but my mother, well she married a quite a well off man, but then the inflation came, I don't know how the others managed, they must have all lost, but my father had nothing left. So she went back to Baer Sondheim and she wanted a baby, and she went to her doctor and she said "Why can't I have a baby?" So I don't know the exact details but I know he did something and low and behold she was expecting me. I was born on 30th March 1922. My grandmother Friedmann, Marie Friedmann, caught the flu, everybody had the flu then, and I was two and a half when she passed away. Very, very tragically, my mother never got over it. She called her die liebe gute oma and everything we did, and die liebe gute oma would have said this and she would have said that, and she would have done this and she would have done that, and she was pregnant at the time and lost a baby. It was a little girl, when her mother died. She fell pregnant again shortly afterwards and again she lost that child, it was a little girl. The first miscarriage and the second were little girls. And then my sister was born sol sei gesund und stark in 1924, 6, 1926, four years after me. And we were both born just before Pesach. And whenever my mother needed somebody the heating wasn't on, so there was a heitzer, somebody who looked after the heating, and she had to call him to put the heating on again because she was very nearly giving birth and I was born at home. In those days they were all born at home, all children were born at home, and they had to put the heating on. And when my sister was born, although she

was born a few weeks later, again it was freezing cold and she had to call the heitzer and he had to put the heating on and he said "That is the last time I am putting on the heating for you Mrs Becker, because I am finished now, I am not doing this any more. Can't you

Tape 1: 39 minutes 20 seconds

have a baby some other time of the year?" I remember him saying this when my sister was born.

RL: What did your father do?

CF: He went Hausihren, he went with all the stuff he had in the shop, he took that stuff, and he had clients who had shops. Non Jewish people, but when Hitler began to come those clients didn't dare work with a Jew, so he had no more work, he couldn't go to work.

RL: When you say he had clients did he travel?

CF: He travelled around from place to place ...

RL: Right ...

CF: ... around Frankfurt to the little places and most likely these people, he knew them from when he had the shop. I don't know where the shop was, but you know, supply and demand, they all knew each other, everybody knew where the stuff was coming from, but when I grew up already he didn't do it anymore. He didn't do it anymore, and he helped my Uncle David in the rubber factory, in Ost End, in the East End of Frankfurt. And one day there was a big fire broke out in my Uncle David's factory, Boruch Hashem nobody was injured, but the whole factory and all the stock and all the rubber, burnt, that we could see from our house, everybody in Frankfurt remembers when The Becker factory burnt up. It must have been around 24, 5, 6, something like that. And of course my uncle got a lot of compensation. I don't know how the fire started, they must have found out. And he made another factory, and in the end my mother, Baer Sondheim already had closed down, they didn't have any more employees, so she found the Niederlandische Handelskammer, the Dutch Commercial Embassy, the Dutch Commercial Embassy was all manned by Jewish people from Holland. The boss was a Doctor May and there was a young man there Kleerkooper, and I don't remember the other names. And she worked there, and that is how she learned Dutch. Until Hitler came and closed even the Dutch down, so that was, times were very bad. But what I forgot to tell you is, that when I was two years old and when the inflation happened and my mother had to go to work again she had to have someone to look after me. She took a young girl, how she got her I don't know, called Anna Lottes from Suggenheim in Bavaria. When I was two years old, and I think she was 18 when she came and she called my parents mama and papa, and she was a vegetarian. And she had two sisters, both were married to Gustav, one was a tram driver and the other one, I don't remember what he did, and they adopted us, none of them had children, and we were their children. What they could do for us they did for us. For instance, I mean, we never celebrated Christmas, why should we, we celebrated

Chanukah, no? We also have to have Christmas, and they belong to a vegetarian organisation called Mazdaznan. And my eldest son went into deep research

Tape 1: 43 minutes 27 seconds

and he found a book about Mazdaznan and we had to go to all their parties and we dressed up as angels and we went up on a ladder and then we had to go flying down. And I went to the wrong side, my sister went to the wrong side, but never mind, we had a wonderful party, and then we came back with us and made us a huge dolls house, with electricity, with water, every thing in that dolls house, but we weren't allowed to play with it, only Chanukah time, it went up in the boidem and came down only Chanukah. I don't know why. And one day I went up to the boidem and I found my doll that I had loved and cherished and my mother had said she had given it to a poor child, because she had got fed up with this doll, I was always with that doll, and it didn't look so good any more and there wasn't anyone to give me a new doll, there wasn't any money. Once my auntie came, Oleh Hashalom, and I was very ill, and she said "You know what, I am going to buy you a doll." And when she went out, back to Berlin, I said to my mother "I am not going to get it."

She said "How can you say that?"

"She won't buy me one."

And you know what, she didn't, she didn't. And you know what, I played with all kinds of girls in the neighbourhood and with a lovely Frankfurt accent, and one day, this doll, which I found upstairs and brought it down again, this girl took her and threw her out the window, and she said in her best Frankfurtish accent "Die alte Puppe [...]" I cried and cried and went out in the garden, fetched it in again. I don't know what happened to it but we did not bring it to England, I promise you. That was my doll.

RL: Can you describe where you were living? The apartment.

CF: Yes, we had a beautiful flat in Habsburger Allee. Number six. With a lovely garden and we had a balcony with steps going down into the garden, and there was a big sandpit. And my parents let me play in that sandpit, get filthy dirty. I have got photos somewhere, sitting there with my cousin Henya, the one who was so happy when I found the Leviuses, who lives outside Tel Aviv. And her sister Esther, her sister who wasn't very well, and they let me get filthy dirty in that pit. And I have always admired them, Anna and my mother, and sometimes people came and said "Where are your children? In that dirty sandpit?"

"Yes, they are happy there, they love it there. I let them play there."

Very important in my life was my kindergarten. I had a Tante Nettie, she was called, it will come to me, Heidelshiem, Heidingsfelder, Tante Nettie Heidingsfelder, I saw that name, later on in Jerusalem, on a door, and they were related. Tante Nettie Heidingsfelder and she had us at three years old. Now, when I came to that kindergarten I fell in love with two girls, straight away, one little pint sized girl with pitch black hair and Chinese eyes, and another one very refined, very quiet, blondish hair, and there was another one there, those two girls were called Ilse, one was Ilse Westheimer and the other

one was Ilse Goldschmidt and the third was Ilse Lederman, and they did not take the other Ilse, I was frightened that they would not be friendly with me because I was not called Ilse. No, they chose me, those two, they must have been there before me, and we

Tape 1: 47 minutes 46 seconds

became the best of friends all our lives. Ilse Westheimer died last year, this year I went to her stone setting and I spoke, a wonderful, wonderful person. The other one lived ... Ilse Westheimer lived in Fechenheim outside Frankfurt and her father had a big warehouse selling shoes. He had pencils as advertisement and every customer had a red pencil. At her stone two weeks ago every guest had a red pencil from that warehouse, very touching. The other Ilse lived up the road, I knew her mother and her father and her grandmother and her auntie. I didn't know anybody from Ilse Westheimer, she had no family, just an only child and her parents. And my parents were very friendly, the Goldshmidts and the Westheimers and the Beckers were all very friendly together.

Now we were really the most religious of them all, and it is really only because of my grandparents. My mother wasn't brought up religious, she ... the family that looked after them they weren't so religious, when people said to her "Oh you are so good, you are doing so many mitzvoth and middot."

She always said "I am not doing it because I am religious; I am doing it because I like to do good deeds." She was a mikveh woman, in Frankfurt in the Ostend Strasse there was a house where all the poor people got to eat, my mother used to cook there and sew there and do every afternoon, evening, she was in the Ostend Strasse. And I hated it, because she wasn't at home, every afternoon, "Where's mummy?"

"In the Ostend Strasse." Helping the poor people. And she kept on saying that she was not religious. But my father's parents were very, very religious, and when we became school age and the two Ilses went into the Philantropin, so I thought that I would also go to the Philantropin, which was a Jewish school but was not religious. My grandparents said "No, no, no. No child, no grandchild of ours is going into the Philantropin. You have to go into the Shimshon Raphael Hirsch School like all the other cousins. My father said "It is very expensive."

My grandfather said "I am going to ask Uncle David. He has got to pay. I won't have a grandchild in the Philantropin," And I thank G-d for that, because we had a fantastic upbringing, fantastic upbringing. What I am learning now we learned a lot in Jerusalem, I have got chavrusos all over and I still go to shiurim and so on but what I still know the best is what I learned in Frankfurt from my fantastic teachers. It went in and stayed in.

RL: How big a school was it?

CF: A big school. Separated, boys here, girls here. I was a big flirt, I always went to the, there was a, a, not a wall, a separation, like a ... erm ... the German word has gone from my head. What is in the garden? Surrounds the garden?

RL: A fence ...

CF: A fence. A big fence, but all of us, those of us didn't admit it but we all did it, we had our eyes on one particular boy, each one of us, when we got to about 14, 15, 16. And I was told by a very good friend of mine who is now in Israel, she came to our 60th

Tape 1: 51 minutes 30 seconds

wedding anniversary last Chanukah, this year, and she said to me "I have a cousin, and he likes you." Oh, I was very excited, "Really?"

"Yes, he wants to be your friend."

I said "But how can we be friends? There is the gitte"

"No", she said "you write letters to him and you give it to a little child who looks through the gitte and you tell this little boy to give it to my cousin. His name was called Yosef."

And we did and we had a correspondence. And my father, every morning he said "Now who is the latest flame in your life?"

I said "I am not having new ones every day."

And he said "Well, it seems to me that you do have quite a few, I have heard a few names."

Then I had a good girlfriend and she had a brother and she was on my bus coming home when we lived in Sachsenhausen and Anna was still with us, our Anna, who came to me when I was two. And she said to me "Who is that young man?"

And I said "It's only Margeret Wasserman's brother."

So she said "You are not allowed to speak to him."

I said "Who said?"

She said "Your mother said."

I said "My mother isn't here now."

"I am here instead of your mother; you are not allowed to speak to him." That is how she brought us up.

RL: You mentioned Sachsenhausen, where you moved to ...

CF: Sachsenhausen ...

RL: Where were you? How old were you when you moved there?

CF: Ten.

RL: So you lived in one place until then, and then you moved?

CF: Yes, yes ...

RL: So just coming back to the first place ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: Can you just describe it to me?

CF: Yes. It had a huge kitchen, and an Aga stove, which warmed the whole house. Although my husband seems to think there must have been another one because there was in the hall another heated thing. And he had a name for it, he had it as home as well,

Tape 1: 53 minutes 40 seconds

it had a special name. But I had a feeling it was, no it couldn't have been, he is right, because that was the one that the man had to put on when my mother had the babies. It was on in the winter, and he had to look after it every day, I even remembered his name at one stage.

And we had a huge dining room, with a huge piano, my parents had a big bedroom and we had a big bedroom and a spare room. And down below we had a mansada, every house had it downstairs and we had a boidem upstairs. So, Anna lived downstairs in the mansada, and when my parents, things began to get bad, the reason why we moved to Sachsenhausen was because the rent was too high in the Hapsburger Allee. It was a very prestigious house, a very good address, Hapsburger Allee, everybody said, "Oo, you must have been very rich." But we weren't, but we had this flat when my father did have money and then he heard when his family moved to Sachsenhausen. Now Sachsenhausen in Frankfurt it is called Drupterbach, and we were living, Hupterbach, hupterbach was this side of the mine that, Bach means the river, we were living Hupterbach and then we moved drupterbach, over the Main into Sachsenhausen.

RL: And what kind of apartment did you have there?

CF: A fantastic apartment with all mod cons. We had washing machines, which we never had in Frankfurt that is why we had, my Anna used to wash like this, on a board. And hang it in the boiler room upstairs, because the heat goes out, or hang it in the garden, we had no drier or anything like that. We had no fridge, we put everything on the window sill and many times the birds came and took the stuff, but we had to have, we had no cold place where else to put it, only on the window sill. By the way, when my, I was very friendly, lots of friends, to this day, all my friends from Frankfurt nearly, all of them came out, and we have class reunions in London and in Yerushalayim. Wonderful, and my friends who I was friendly with, they (what was I going to say) they had of course ice boxes and the fellow came with pieces of ice, you know. This happened when we went to Sachsenhausen, there was like a box, insulated and we bought, and the fellow came with ice and put it in there.

Now we lived on the main road, and the Nazis marched past. It was a very busy pass, by-pass, and when the Nazis marched by we had to put flags out. On certain days we had to put flags out. So the neighbours put their flags near our balcony on either side and from down below it looked as if we also had flags out.

RL: This film is about to finish so we will just stop there.

TAPE 2

RL: This is the interview with Chava Fachler and it is tape 2.

I was going to ask you if your father was involved in any communal work, any communal activity in Frankfurt.

CF: No, he wasn't.

RL: Did he belong to anything at all?

CF: Yes, he ... all the communal activities that were going on was my grandfather. You know, my grandfather taught, I don't know whether I got to talk to you about him. My grandfather, when he went backwards and forwards and I watched him going to daven, the orphanage belonged to a very famous wonderful person, Mr Marks. And he said to Mr Marks "So, you know, we've come to live in Frankfurt now, and I am very interested in where you boys are learning."

So he said "They go to Shimshon Raphael Hirsch School."

"No", my grandfather said "Where are they learning? You know Torah and Mishnayot and things like that."

So he said "Look, Mr Becker, Rabbi Becker. I can't afford to pay for the extra lessons."

"Wonderful" my grandfather said. "Here am I, looking for what to do; I have got nothing to do. May I teach your boys?"

And Mr Marks was overjoyed. And he had two very interesting, two brothers there in the orphanage. I found out that in Germany you didn't go to the orphanage only because you G-d forbid you were orphans, people lived outside Frankfurt and wanted their children to have a good Jewish education, and living accommodation and they send them to the orphanage. And there were two brothers, very famous brothers, called **Warhaftig** (?), in the orphanage in Frankfurt, they weren't orphans, thank G-d, their parents were living outside of Frankfurt. And these boys were, one particular, a genius in learning, my grandfather had high hopes for him and one day the father came from the country and he said "Mr Marks I am sorry to tell you, but I have to take the boys. I can't afford to pay for them any more and I have found little jobs for them to do in the country." So this must have been, let me just think, I must have been about five or six when this happened, four or five I would say.

My grandfather would say "No, no, no, you can't do that, these boys are going to be talmidei chachamim. One particular is an ilui, please don't take him."

So the man said "I can't do anything about it, I have to take them."

My grandfather pleaded with him and said "Let me look after at least take one of them and my son will help me towards it." My father, my grandfather had no income whatsoever, and one stayed behind, and learned. His name was Ludwig. Ludwig Warhaftig, came out of Germany, probably at the time when we came. He lived with his wonderful wife in Letchworth, next door to us and then he went back to London. Lots of people from Letchworth went back to London when the second war was going to a close. We didn't move to London because my husband was working in a butcher shop in Luton. He had a butcher shop in Luton, no way was he going to go to London, so we moved

Tape 2: 4 minutes 5 seconds

-within Letchworth to a very big house which belonged to the baker. And we were only too happy that we took it and they put the mortgage rates down, down, down ... just so that we should have it. And he said "A family with lots of children, fantastic." And we had a huge house, six bedrooms and an enormous gardens. And we came from a tiny little council house, it belonged to the Aborn Estate, and that is another story. Anyway, one day we get a visit from Rabbi Warhaftig, he came with his wife and it must have been in the summer because all the boys were home, and all the boys were in Carmel College. All on, we didn't pay full fees, what is it called, they had scholarships, all on scholarships, three boys in Carmel, all at the same time, one was head boy, one the next year was head boy, and the third one was Chaim. So he came and it was a hot lovely day, and we said to the children bring the chairs and let Rabbi Warhaftig sit down and we will bring some drinks. And he said "Eva, how you brought up your boys."

And I said "What are you talking about? They are nothing special. They are so happy to have a lovely visitor like you that is good for any family."

He said "I want to tell you what I intend to do. I am going to found a Yeshiva and I am going to call it after your grandfather from the olden days. Now, I know your grandfather is not alive any more. Is there anyone in the family who could help?"

I said "Yes, Boruch Hashem, there is my Uncle David in Israel and my Uncle Issy, the youngest in Vancouver. Both of them very wealthy and they would love to help you."

Oh, he took down all the details, and he left happy, we were happy, they were happy, my boys were happy. He went home and I don't really remember what year that was, he went home a day or two later he came home into his house and he came up the first couple of stairs, and he fell, had a heart attack and never recovered. And the dream that he had did not come to fruition. The Yeshiva is now called Chaya Olam, it is a very famous Yeshiva and it had its ups and downs. At the moment it is up, I have a grandson there, it has fantastic Rabbonim and everything but it hasn't got my grandfather's name. and I have often talked about it to his widow, lovely, wonderful. She the widow, was related to Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, some relationship.

RL: So, coming back to your grandfather. Was that his full time occupation?

CF: That was his full time occupation. And my grandmother was cooking, making noodles, making cholent, all kinds of food, every Shabbos all the family congregated in Frankfurt and my grandfather learnt with the boys and I wanted also to learn, and he said "No, only the boys", I am not wasting my time on girls, you know, only the boys. And when he went on Aliyah to Israel I wrote him a letter in Ivrit and he wrote me back a funny letter. He said "You know you spelt Noach with seven mistakes."

So I wrote back, I said "Dear Opapa, Do you know why? Had you learnt with me when I wanted you to I wouldn't have made so many mistakes in Noach, would I?" But I never saw him again, they both died, a high old age, a ripe old age, high in their eighties they died and so my father thought that the others were all very old when they died, not so much his sisters, but certainly his parents and he expected to live to a ripe old age but he died in his 69th year, I mean nearly 70, and we weren't expecting, he wasn't, certainly wasn't expecting it.

Tape 2: 8 minutes 41 seconds

RL: Which Shul did the family attend?

CF: Well, my parents, my grandparents, my grandmother didn't go out. Ladies didn't go to Shul then. But my grandfather went to the Waisenhaus to the orphanage that had a big Shul. And we belonged to Breuer and when we moved to Sachsenhausen, my father and me and later on my sister marched every Shabbos over to the Breuer, to the Breuer Shul, but my father liked Rabbi Dunner's Shul in Hermesweg and his daughter, Rabbi Dunner's daughter, Hannah Dunner, she was the one who was in my class and she wanted me to become a friend to her cousin called Yosef. Now, I have to tell you something that happened in between. What was it? (I can't think of what I was going to say) (Whispered). It will come back to me. Anyway, we walked over to Breuers and we discussed the Chazzan, was he good, was he not good, we had two famous Chazzanim there, one was Steinberger and the other one was another very famous Chazzan, and we sang tunes all the way home. And the next Shabbos we reminded ourselves. Come rain but shine I with, my father and me, and it wasn't far from the Breuer to go home, but you know, in those days, we weren't afraid, we weren't afraid of the Nazis at all. My father said "You are South Africans, heads up high, march through Frankfurt. No one is going to touch you." Once you have got that in you, you think no one is going to touch you, then nobody touches you. You walk and we didn't look Jewish, we had little noses, we saw my sister, little noses and we happily marched. Other children suffered, in the same district. In Sachsenhausen we didn't suffer at all, I told you the story about the flags, how they put the flags together. Now, the children, we had rollers, you know, we played, it was down and up and down and up and the mothers watched from the upstairs window to see that no child would do us any harm. They looked after us, I cannot tell you how good that was. And we had, we were friendly with a little girl who was the daughter of the butcher. And she attached herself to us to, Maritia was her name, I don't know what happened to her. Anna told me later on that the whole block was bombed.

Now Anna was a story on her own. Anna, I loved her like I loved my mother, and I was only little, and she used to say "This is my church".

And I used to say "I want to go to church".

She said "but you are not catholic."

And I said "I want to be catholic! I want to go to church with you."

She wouldn't take me, she was very, very strict, she was so kosher, and there was an uncle who didn't eat in our house because there wasn't anybody there to watch what she did when she cooked with bishul akum but my parents trusted her implicitly. She really was like a Jewish girl and she was a vegetarian, so she wouldn't have even mixed ... I don't think she cooked meat. She cooked fish, I used to go to the fishmonger with my mother and we saw the fish swimming around and she pointed out which fish she wanted and she put him on the table and he jumped up and down on the table, on the kitchen table. But my mother wasn't at home very much, it was me. And one day I said to Anna "What have you got there?"

She said "A sewing machine."

I said "I want to go on the sewing machine."

Tape 2: 13 minutes 13 seconds

She said "You are only four years old."

I said "I WANT to go on the sewing machine."

So it was hand operated and I made for my mother a square of thick material for hot, for hot pots to take out of the oven. It was my first job. My mother, she came home from work, and there I was with my first sewing efforts, she couldn't believe it. She said "I was good at embroidering; I put all my initials on all my nadan." But a sewing machine, she had never been on a sewing machine, and I lived with my sewing machine to this day, my sewing machine isn't even put away, it hasn't got to be put away because I am busy on the sewing machine almost every day. Everybody brings me their sewing to do, and I love doing it, and I said to my South African grandsons wife, the Americans wife, I said "Look, when I introduced myself to her you know I used to do all my husbands, when I was single I used to do, I did all this mending."

And she said "For me you don't have to do it."

And I said "Why not?"

She said "I am sewing."

I said "You are sewing?" I said "You are the only one with a sewing machine in the whole family."

She said "Thank you very much, I do my own clothes."

I said "An American Princess like you?"

She said "Yes, that is how I was brought up."

So I had no more job for Gaby. By the way they have a little baby who was born on my birthday and we had yesterday a big party together, you know, by telephone, I said to him "You are 83 and I am one!"

RL: Coming back to Germany ...

CF: Yes, back to Germany, and Anna.

RL: And you were telling me about Anna ...

CF: Now Anna had to leave us, she just missed by a month, at a certain age the German girls had to leave and she was just a month too young and she had to leave. If she had been a month older, she had to stay 50 I think was the limit, so she left, and my mother found her a family. She thought it was a very nice family, and Anna had a nervous breakdown, and she couldn't stay, and her older sisters and her brothers were all communists and they lived in Suggenheim, and when we were little she used to take us to Suggenheim. And I told you, they were all vegetarians, but for us she cooked pigeons. Opposite her lived the Rabbi, the Mohel, the circumcision and whatever Jewish things were done and he shecht, he was the butcher, not the butcher, he was the shochet, and they used to take big fat pigeons and take them over, to the Rabbi and he used to shecht them for us and gave us his pots and my Anna's older sister Marie, she used to cook them in his pots, and that is how we ate fleishig when we were there.

Tape 2: 16 minutes 44 seconds

Now, they had a son, and of course I was keen on that son, as usual, also called Siegfried. And I said "I wonder if we are going to get married?"

And he said "Yes, yes, I am quite willing."

We weren't ten yet, I know because we hadn't moved yet, I was already getting married. Lovely photos they took. In those days already they took lovely, of my sister and me, sitting there in our best outfits in the garden in Suggenheim. Now, I heard much later, I met in Petach Tikveh a lady who came from Suggenheim, unfortunately she just lately, Mrs Worms, Worms or Wormser. She just lately died. She lived near Suggenheim and she told me she knew about that Rabbi because she knew that the neighbours, the non Jewish neighbours, warned him in advance, there is going to be a putch here, you be careful. If you can at least leave Suggenheim for the moment and go into a bigger town and then get out of Germany because the Nazis are going to kill you. And he went to America. She told me that. The other person who was warned was my Auntie Jenny. She was also warned, her husband had died, Uncle Isho had already died, she had two children, Kurt and Margot. Kurt Yosef was named after my grandfather and Margot was called after my grandmother, Marie, so we had a Margot and a Marianne, all called after my grandmother and Kurt Yosef was named after my grandfather Friedmann, and he and Uncle Isho died, everybody said he died of a broken heart. He had just something here, a growth which went in and got septic and he died and my mother, we were already in London. It must have been in nineteen thirty ... late thirty eight, beginning of thirty nine, and my mother said she was living in London in the boarding house where my father had put us all when we first came over, but I will tell you about that later. She was warned by non Jewish people, try and get out, so she phoned my father in London and she said "Look, I have been warned to get out." And my father started to get certificates for her, a domestic permit for her daughter, a Kinder Transport, and two cousins from Berlin, my Uncle Walter Freund, I mentioned before married Stephanie, had two children from Berlin, so altogether three children and my Auntie Jenny, but in between came Krystall Nacht, before he ever got the papers, and my aunt was Polish and they took her to a big place in Poland with her two children and at the entrance of that camp they said to her "Children to the right, and adults to the left." So Kurt went, and Margot she wouldn't let go of her hand, and she made such a performance there that the Nazis and the Poles decided that this woman has to go back, she is impossible here, and they sent her back with Margot, back to Frankfurt, and Kurt we never found, we are looking for him to this day. Kurt Yosef Friedmann, he is two years older than me, if he is alive he is now 85. We never heard from him again. We made enquiries at the time and after the war and with all, I haven't yet looked in Yad Vashem in this new book that they have got, we don't even know what happened to him there. Where did they take him, where did he go. He was a big communist; he tried to make me also a communist. And I said "Yes, yes, yes, yes ...", but I didn't know what he was talking about. Maybe he went with the communists and fought against them, we just don't know. And Margot we had, and my father got them all out.

RL: Coming back to you as a child ...

Tape 2: 21 minutes 15 seconds

CF: Yes.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs?

CF: Ezra Noar Agudati. Founder member more or less, where else, where did we all go.

RL: What was it called?

CF: Ezra Noar Agudati, now there were children in my class who belonged to Mizrachi, second class citizens, they were second class citizens and the Polish children were also second class citizens, in the school and everywhere. The German girls said to me "Liebchen, why do you always go to the Polish children?"

I said "Polish children, what does that mean Polish children?"

So they gave me their names, oh I said, "They are my friends. I go in on the way home to Sachsenhausen. I said they have got a house; they don't have to be invited. You can just come in on Shabbos morning." Downstairs lived one family and on the first floor lives another family, both have got girls in my class, and upstairs lived the grandparents. And I said to my parents, "When I grow up I am going to have a house like the Klausners. Open house, everybody can go in, everybody can have something to eat, on the first floor, on the second and on the third floor." And you know what, that is exactly what happened. Because I married my Polish husband and when I brought him home the first time and my father was so shocked, my husband was also shocked, he was shocked at the lack of variety on the table. In their Polish homes, money they didn't have, but they ate and ate and ate. And my husband was a very tall boy, much taller than average, and he needed a lot of food and he didn't find variety on my mother's table, so I thought to myself "I have known all my life that one day I would have a house like the Klausners and I would put variety on the table."

RL: So tell me about this youth group that you helped to found?"

CF: Our leader was the daughter of Yaakov Rosenheim, Adele Rosenheim, her highness Adele Rosenheim, the most famous daughter of the most famous man in Frankfurt. The leader, the founder member of Agudah, and a lovely wife, Roseline, Roseshoen and she was a gorgeous woman, I really got to know her properly when we came to live in London. But she was our madricha and my sister's madricha was also a lady, who they got out, she lives in London now, Kahn, Trude Kahn, was her madricha. The interesting thing was that the German Jews all managed to get out of Frankfurt. There was an organization in London that brought all the teachers and Rabbis out. All my teachers had the chance to come out, if they didn't want to come out then they didn't come out, but most of them had the seichel to come out when the opportunity arose. Very few people came out like we came out.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 55 seconds

RL: Just to stay with the youth group for a moment, what kind of things did you do? How often did you meet?

CF: Every Shabbos afternoon and we used to go on tiyulim together, and we used to go with the school to tiyulim, with our headmaster, and we went out into the country a lot, I was always out, going with my father when we were little he took us every Sunday to the Taunus, every Sunday, come rain come shine, we had to take a train to a certain stop and then we marched into the mountains and we met my family, my cousins were also the same way inclined, going out, and many holidays we spent in the country in the same places. I found a photo when I was looking last night for photos for you, I found a photo from Konigstein on the Taunus with the daughter of the lady from that inn and my sister and myself, and my grandparents were in the next building, all on one farm, and I remember my grandfather was on a diet, he had to drink goat's milk, and the found goat's milk for him. And Anna was of course with us and we went into the woods and we would get the berries and brought it home and we made all berries with sauces and afters and drinks. We were busy with the berries the whole summer, making things, you know for the winter, for vitamins and calcium and that sort of thing, but in the group we did a lot of learning. We learnt a lot and we sang a lot of songs, and we were slightly Zionist, even though it wasn't the fashion, because the Mizrachi were the Zionists, but I had my family in Israel and I always said "I want to go to Palestina" and they all had, some people did have already various members of the family in Israel, but Zionist as such it wasn't, only the Mizrachi. And they looked down on the girls that went to the Mizrachi, they called it the Zweitfroemmste Verein, the second class religious group, and the other people who suffered were the Poles, the Polish children. In school, I know families, brilliant boys, in the corner every day; all my cousins were in the corner every day because their German was not pure. They spoke Yiddish at home, Litvish Yiddish, and when they came to school they forgot themselves and they brought a bit of Yiddish into it. My aunts were in the school every week. So my father said "Right, they speak Yiddish at home? We don't. But you are not allowed one word of Yiddish. You mustn't say, also you mustn't say nebbish, pure German, he told us off when he heard us talking amongst ourselves and put a bit of Yiddish in it because he didn't, he was afraid of the anti Polish, anti Yiddish atmosphere that the teachers, they were the ones that were the culprits there, I have to say.

RL: And yet this was a religious school?

CF: The most religious school, you know one girl told me that her mother told me, in German of course "You can invite the whole class, but those dirty Polish girls, they don't come into our house." I was unaware of anything like that, unaware, at home we didn't talk like that. And my parents would have given me a what for if I had..... I didn't understand this whole peculiar resentment, and the Polish children suffered terribly. We are telling this now, we are in our eighties, at the time they didn't say a word, that is one thing I cannot forgive them. One teacher, Moses Breuer, Olov hasholom,

Tape 2: 29 minutes 30 seconds

was our teacher, he said, in those days we were all called, I was called Fraulein Becker, one day he said "Fraulein Becker, we are all Ostjuden.

I said "Excuse me sir, you are not an Ostjuden.

He said "We are, we are Hungarians."

I said "Hungarians are Ostjuden"

He said "Everybody not born in Germany are Ostjuden. We are Hungarians."

Now I was very aware of what was going on in Frankfurt with the Breuer Shul, because all of a sudden there wasn't a Rabbi, the Breuer's were ousted, or resigned, and there wasn't a Rabbi, there was one Rabbi Breuer, he lived in Shaffenberg if I am not mistaken and he said he would like to be the Rabbi. But I don't know how this came about, but they took a Rabbi from Hungary, Rabbi J J Horovitz, with his wife and a big family and they moved into, near the, near the Allee, what is it called, Frankfurt Allee, I don't know. A very prestigious road where only the rich people lived and the Eisemanns lived there and a few other rich people and a bit further up lived Rabbi Horovitz in Fichtenstrasse, Number fumpf, number five, and what was it called that Allee, it was a big avenue and it had a walk for adults and anyone could walk with big high trees and that was the famous Alley where everyone walked on Shabbos afternoon.

RL: What had happened to Rabbi Breuer?

CF: I don't remember. I really don't. There were no Rabbi Breuers any more and the one from Shaffenberg didn't get the job.

RL: And what kind of Jews davened in the Breuer Shul?

CF: Yekkers. But people like, I considered myself, and I talked and behaved like a good German girl, there were lots of Posens were there, Eisenman, Bubu Eisemann was in the choir, that was my sister's little brother. When he was born, she said to me "Now I have got a little brother."

I said "Who brought him? The stork?"

She said "The stork? You don't know who brings the babies?"

I said "I know. Anna told me. We put cubes of sugar on the window sill and the stork came to get the sugar and he brought my little sister. The stork brought my little sister into the house."

So she said "Our schwester Marta." They had a, they called her schwester, was a nurse, she told me a different story, that the baby comes out of the mummy's tummy.

I said "My poor Anna. She believes in the stork. What am I going to do? I am going to have to tell her the facts of life."

So we were then, she was about three years younger than me, so I must have been about six or seven. I didn't know what to tell Anna about the facts of life. She had convinced me it was the Clapperstorch, the stork. [Laughter]

We had a wonderful time in Frankfurt, a wonderful time. We had everything we wanted. Money we didn't need much money, my parents coped with whatever they had and we

Tape 2: 33 minutes 36 seconds

were never given to understand that there was anything wrong with us. We didn't have ten new clothes you know at the time, so we had one or two and it lasted. My sister found a gorgeous photo of us, beautifully dressed in Frankfurt. I don't know, it could have come from America, because sometimes the relations sent us clothes, and my sister tried on all the clothes and she was a big dresser. I didn't ask, whatever they gave me, I haven't changed, but my sister was always very interested in clothes and make up and jewellery.

RL: What about entertainment?

CF: There wasn't any. When my father heard that the Jews weren't allowed any more to be on the radio, he took the radio down. He wouldn't have radio without Jews. So there was a cultural committee, where they were allowed to perform, but they weren't allowed to get dressed up. So my parents were very excited, there was an opera there, The Figaro, and they took me to the so called opera. There were people standing in the row, on the stage, tall ones, little ones, fat ones, thin ones, and they began to sing, one after the other. I said "This is the famous opera that they all cry....And they said "You poor children. You have no culture; you don't know about opera, you don't know about concerts."

I said "I am missing nothing. This is what they are raving about. The old people they are here."(Pointing to her head)

We didn't know what we missed. We didn't know.

We got together, children got together. We were invited here, we had big birthday parties, there was a lady, a girl in my class called Lotte Bergman, an only child, she lived at the bottom, we lived still in the Hapsburg Allee this was all while I was under ten, and she made a big birthday party and we were, I was invited, and I went out and helped with a bowl, and there was still some ice cream or something in that bowl and I licked it out as I went along the corridor, and a few days later, ever such a nice boy on the bus. We all were on the bus or the tram, and he looked at me and I thought "Who is this?" And he said "I remember you, you were the one that licked out the bowl with your fingers like that." That was at Lotte Bergman's party, Lotte Bergman married Rabbi Zahn. She came to Manchester first; I visited her in Manchester when I was in seminary here learning in the Bachad in Brit Chalutzim Daatiim sent from my Kibbutz. I visited her very often and then she married this wonderful Shammai Zahn and lived in Sunderland and her granddaughter last year married Shloime Klyne, called after my father of Blessed Memory, the fourth child of my daughter Melanie Fachler, married to Rabbi Klyne, headmaster of Torah Temimah. Put that in.

RL: How aware were you of what was going on with Hitler and the Nazis?

CF: Well, we still lived in the Hartsburger Allei and we walked along the Allei and I saw a funny thing in the earth. I said "What is this sign?"

So my mother said “That is the sign of very bad people.” That is all she said but we heard the marching in the night. We also heard the communists marching in the night.

Tape 2: 37 minutes 52 seconds

And we lived very near the main road where they marched and whoever marched, communists, Nazis, we woke up, I woke up, straight into my parents’ bed. I am frightened. But when we moved to Sachsenhausen this all stopped. If they marched they only marched, we lived on the second floor, they marched downstairs, we didn’t hear anything and then in Hartsburger Allei we heard everything that was going on.

I also have a lovely story, my grandfather met, shortly after they came to Frankfurt, I was already a little girl, about two or three, he met an old friend of his called Rabbi Moshe Shneider from Lithuania. And they were all very friendly together as children together; they must have grown up together. And Rabbi Shneider said to my grandfather “Yaakov, I don’t know what to do, I want to build a Yeshiva.”

So my grandfather said “Marvellous, why don’t you?”

“I haven’t got anything, I haven’t got money, I haven’t got a building.”

My grandfather said “Have you got bochurim?”

He said “Yes”.

“Okay” he said “you start learning with them, wherever you can find a room.”

“What about food?”

My grandfather said “I have got four children, five children living here in Frankfurt, you can send all your boys, each one of them, I vouch for their kashrus.”

And they all came to eat with us.

For me this was exciting. First of all I saw their terrible table manners. All the things that I would have liked to do they did, and no one told them off, so I thought “Someone has to educate them.”

So I said “Oy, you are not allowed to put your knife in your mouth.”

“Don’t rub your nose on your sleeve! Haven’t you got a handkerchief?”

I was so rude. My parents were so upset with me, but there was nothing they could do. They couldn’t tell me that I was wrong, because I wasn’t wrong, they just told me to be nice to them. I said “I am very nice to them. I am educating them, bringing them up.”

Until Rabbi Shneider found a house, and he found a cook, he must have found people to pay for him and, but we remained very, very close to Rabbi Shneider and they had three daughters and a son. Everybody came out to London, with most likely Rabbi Schonfelds organisation and they made a big Yeshiva in London. And lots of my family, my sister’s family, my sister-in-law’s family grew up in the Shneider Yeshiva in London. And I am very friendly with all, unfortunately are now dead, but the youngest of all of the Shneiders, Brocha Shneider married to Alter Halpern is also no more. I found in Israel three of her granddaughters. Gorgeous young ladies, all with children in my granddaughter’s daughter’s school and we had a Siddur party and I was telling them about Frankfurt and they told me that they had a history lesson from me. Brocha Shneider, Alter’s grandchild.

RL: Now, I was asking you how aware you were about Nazism, and really if it had any affect on your family at all.

Tape 2: 41 minutes 42 seconds

CF: It didn't. All my uncles and aunts left and went to Palestina. My grandparents then went as well. We had no more family and we weren't frightened because my father told us we couldn't be touched, we were South Africans. Walk straight with your nose up and no one will touch you. No one is allowed to touch you. And he gave us such confidence, quite, really without foundation, but we believed him. We were never ever attacked or called names, never ever. And I know that all my contemporaries, most of the Polish children. You see the German children were very well dressed. I don't think that is there to say much to them. But the Polish children were from much poorer families and some of them were more scared because their parents were more scared, their parents had come from Poland to Frankfurt and got a dreadful welcome there. If you can call it a welcome. So the fear of being attacked or that someone was behind them, you know, it gave them a complex. So if you go like this, you know, of course you get attacked. You know somebody marched past us and said "Two lovely Hitler Jungen Madchen" my sister and me, the Hitler Jungen were the ladies, the girls department of the youth of Hitler. Look at those two lovely German Hitler Jungen Madchen. We thought it was hilarious, we never suffered anything.

RL: What made your father decide on emigration and ...

CF: Czechoslovakia, because you know, educated people like my father were very politically educated; he thought the Germans couldn't possibly win with Hitler. He thought my aunts had gone much too early to Israel. He didn't think that anything was going to happen. He couldn't believe it. They didn't call him Samuel the Aryan for nothing. Even though he was very proud of his South African nationality, he was also very sure that they would have more sense with Goethe and Schiller and Mozart and Wagner and all these brilliant Germans. And the Germans, he didn't go in the army, he was a foreigner, but many of his German friends had been to the army with Croix you know, and wonderful people, many people had died in the German war. How could they do something like that? But when they overtook Czechoslovakia he and my uncle in Berlin started to, they had been corresponding all the time, they had a secret language, and they started to discuss they would have to go. And they decided they would have to go to London, because London was the easiest place to reach with a South African passport. So he decided with my uncle that my father would go first and that my uncle would follow once we were settled in London. London, there was only one place to go, London.

And it went like this. We needed, even though we were South Africans we needed a stamp from the Nazis to put into our passports that we were returning. They didn't want us and yet we had to have a stamp that we would return.

I also have to tell you that in 1937 my mother suddenly became very ill, she became anaemic and they told her she didn't have enough red blood cells in her blood and she

needed to eat liver and all kinds of vegetables. And my father decided that the best thing to do for her would be to take a little holiday in St Moritz, and I have got beautiful photos

Tape 2: 46 minutes 30 seconds

of her in St Moritz and in the meantime I took over the household. I burned the lunch every day but my father was so good, he really didn't complain, my sister probably complained much more than he and she borrowed from somewhere, from somebody, a fur jacket. And that fur jacket was thrown at us much later on. People in the family said "Your father had money to send your mother to Switzerland. He bought her a fur jacket." And I was only young and I said "He didn't buy her a fur jacket, she borrowed it from somebody," and I said "and I am sure he borrowed the money, also we didn't have any money." I can't forget that. What a nebbech. The little holiday she had, the best holiday and even that wasn't..... Anyway, my father went to visit his parents and had a marvelous time and came back and his uncles and his aunts and his cousins and said "We are all going to live in Palestina one day. It is wonderful there, the only thing is they haven't got any apples." No apples and he had to have an apple a day, the doctor said he needed an apple a day, and you couldn't find any apples, and he was very upset, otherwise everything was fine. They all lived in Tel Aviv, except his parents, who lived in Jerusalem.

Anyway he got in touch with his brother, Issie, Isadore Becker and Auntie Lena and they decided between them, that somebody would come to us in Sachsenhausen, where we lived, and we would pack up all our silver and our clock. We had a beautiful, special clock, you know, a big clock, and pack it up with sofa cushions and blankets and put it in a big box and somebody would collect it and it would be collected by Uncle Issie and that would be somehow, would appear in London.

The other thing I have to tell you is that there wasn't any more proper kosher meat in Frankfurt. We couldn't get kosher meat, they wouldn't let you. So there were some people who kept Neue Kosher, which was when the animal was stunned and then slaughtered the right way. But of course orthodox people wouldn't dream of touching Neue Kosher.

So then the plan was that we would officially go on holiday to Holland. The only people who knew was my Auntie Jenny and all Anna's family. We arranged with her a tram driver Gustav Loesch, to meet us in the middle of Frankfurt, very casually to say goodbye, and he said to us "You will come back soon, I know, because I remember in the First World War the Italians were the Germans, they didn't fight, they were not fighters, this is happening again, don't worry, you will be back before you know it. You should keep everything here back for you, ready to come back. That is the Germans themselves didn't believe that Hitler would come to any great power like he afterwards did, and Anna of course, Anna knew. Oh and when my Anna had a nervous breakdown my mother had to find her where else to go, and she had a brilliant idea, she put her into the Jewish Hospital. Into the Hochilcha, and she came to the kitchen. She was allowed to come and visit us. And she came to visit us and she said "You have no idea what is going on in that hospital. They don't keep kosher, milk and meat all mixed up, I tell you.

I shouted at them, my families grandmother is having her eyes done, the cataract operation, if I tell her what is going on here in this chazer treife kitchen shtal she

Tape 2: 51 minutes 4 seconds

wouldn't come here. She said "You have to do it now, how I say." She made the kitchen kosher again. Anna, the Catholic, the vegetarian, and of course my grandmother came and everything was fine and that was it. So she was very happy in the hospital and we left and we had to have that stamp in our passport. We didn't have it. My parents went to the office, we didn't do it, separately they went. They sent me to the office, look, I wasn't scared, I wasn't scared, I didn't have any fear in me. The way we were brought up was that God looks after you, you be a good girl, God looks after you, nothing is going to happen, and you are South African. So I marched into the office, I didn't get the stamp either, and my father said "Right, it is Min Hashmayim, we are going without a stamp." My sister had no idea what was going on. We left a lot of stuff in our flat, in our apartment, in Sachsenhausen, the only person with a key was Auntie Jenny. Anyway we went on a train and I was shaking and shivering and then I was really worried because if the Nazis looked at our passports at the border between Holland and Germany and see that we haven't got the stamp then that is no joke any more. We come to the border and first come the Germans. "Show your passport." They didn't notice it, Boruch Hashem. "Open your cases." They opened my mother's case first and we only took each a case, we were only going officially on holiday for a month to Holland. So he said "You've got a little typewriter in here?" to my mother.

She said "If you would see my handwriting you would see that no one can read it, if I want to correspond with my family in Frankfurt I have to type it."

"Doilies you have got here?"

So my mother said "Well, I am going to this dirty country Holland. How do I know I should put my good stuff on their dirty table, I need doilies." How these ideas came to her, and she was this quiet and really a very refined quiet, lovely lady. I don't know where these ideas came to her, and we got away with it. And my sister said "What's going on? What's going on?"

"Shhhh, shhhh ... why are you crying?"

She didn't know what was going on. And then the Dutch came in sweet and gorgeous. And when they finally left the train finally left again and of course we laughed and cried and Marianne said "What's going on? Why are you laughing? Why are you crying?" She didn't understand a word. And when we got to Holland from the Niederlandische Handelskammer, all my mother's good friends were waiting for us at the station, and they took us home, the Kleerkoopers took us home, and they gave us meat and cold cuts and we were looking with ... Marianne had forgotten completely what meat was or what sausages or things like that. And there was this table laid, it was like Gan Eden, it was like paradise. Specially for the fresser like me, always eating, eating, eating ... And my parents were so relieved and these people were so sweet. Newly married with two little babies, Kleerkooper, a very important name. My father only stayed a very short time, we went to Knokke on holiday and would you believe it, my best friend, Friedl Horovitz, the Rabbi's daughter was also there on holiday. They went back to Frankfurt but all came out to London, and lived in our district, and we were the best of friends, again like we had been in Frankfurt. So, my father went to London, he went to a boarding house, in

Highbury Quadrant, in the Jewish religious district and he booked us in there and then my mother said "Alright, we are going to London." And she said to me

Tape 2: 55 minutes 37 seconds

"You go first, you can speak English." I opened my mouth, nothing came out. "Come on", she said "speak English!"

I said "I can't".

She said "I sent you to the Shimshon Raphael Hirsch School, I paid a lot of money, and you don't even know how to say 'I want a room in Dover or whatever, where we were going', she couldn't believe it.

I couldn't get a word out, I couldn't. Then I was frightened, or whatever it was, whatever you call it. And again my sister said "What's going on? What's going on?"

Anyway, we arrived in the station, in the dirty station, Liverpool Street Station ...

RL: How did you cross over from Holland to ...

CF: By boat.

RL: From where to where?

CF: From Dover to ... From ... no, we had a holiday there ... Felixtowe, and we arrived in Liverpool Street Station filthy dirty station, I had come from Frankfurt, everything is clean, you could eat off the floor, I come from Holland, that was the irony, that the Germans really believed my mother, when she said "the dirty Dutch". The Dutch are known to be the cleanest, most fastidious people you can imagine, and I come to this filthy, dirty station in Liverpool Street, but my father was there, and I thought "We have arrived."

RL: Well we will just break off there then and restart ...

TAPE 3

RL: This is the interview with Chava Fachler and it is tape 3.

So, I just want to ask you ... Do you remember what you had brought over in your suitcase? What you had packed ...

CF: Yes ... very little. Because we weren't allowed to bring much, out of Germany we weren't allowed, and we didn't buy anything else on the way, we only got fantastic food, but we didn't buy anything new, so all I had with me was just my very minimal of my clothes. I had a coat, I had a raincoat, I had a few skirts and a few jumpers. We were very simple people, you know, where clothes were concerned. My mother would have been a fantastic dresser, but she didn't have the means, but we were, we coped, we were never, no one every complained about money in our family. Melanie and Marianne will confirm it, nobody ever thought that there was something missing.

RL: Did anyone have to supervise your packing, the packing of the case?

Tape 3: 1 minute 16 seconds

CF: No ... we were coming ... officially we were coming to Holland as a holiday, my husband has a completely different story, but we were South Africans going on a holiday to Holland, that was the beauty of it.

RL: So you arrived in Liverpool Street, and what happened next?

CF: Well, the weather was hot, very hot, and the boarding house was very bare, and very basic, and there was a girl, she put the shoes there, I don't know whether deliberately, you had to put your shoes outside, and she put them back every time the shoes were left..... We knew we weren't going to stay there very long, but it had a lovely garden and we had a fantastic summer, an Indian summer. So my parents were very busy trying to think where they should move to and what they should do. But one thing they straight away knew, there was a lovely family, Lehman, down the road, and we all went to Rabbi Schonfeld's School, it was at the Adass in, in, in ... Stoke Newington. He must have had an address, it will come to me. Now, and they told us, it was holiday time, none of my friends were in London, everybody was on holiday. I tried to get in touch, and I went to Shul, I was sure they would all be in Shul. Nobody, none of our friends, my sister's friends, I knew they had all come to London but nobody was there, so the only people we really knew were the parents of Adela Rosenheim. Yaakov and Rosalyn Rosenheim, and they didn't live far away from us so we used to go there. I don't know if my sister when there as much as I, but I needed to go somewhere. I needed to talk. She was a much quieter person, still is. I needed people around me, so I went to Shul, I made a lot of friends, and I saw some boys staring at me and my father decided to move to Allerton Road, there was a family downstairs, and we went up the stairs and made like a separate flat. Probably also they needed money, in 56 Allerton Road, and there was a cupboard and when you opened it there was a sink and hot water, meter, hot water container there, electric, and a kettle and a petroleum stove, on which my mother cooked. That was the kitchen and dining room or whatever, and then there were two bedrooms. And my mother brought straight away sofas where underneath was another sofa because she was expecting all the children to come. All my nieces, my nephews, my aunt, they all came and they came to us first, they lived with us. And then a terrible thing happened. They had Polish passports. Margot had one, but she was too young. Somehow they didn't find her passport, not my Auntie Jennie's either. But my poor two cousins from Berlin, they were taken to the Isle of Mann to be interned, you know the story, it was the story the wrong way round. My father was an English man and they were Poles. And it was a terrible shock to us all. Now their parents, my Auntie Stephanie and Uncle Walter, they were very wealthy people, they waited until the very last minute and then they got to Shanghai. And in Shanghai they were evacuated with the Mir Yeshiva, together, very close to the Mir Yeshiva, and for the first time my Uncle Walter came in touch with very orthodox, wonderful Rabbonim and people, and he, for the first time in his life began to appreciate religion. When he was at home in Berlin he

wouldn't let his children keep anything, and after they had been to us and they knew they mustn't put a light on Friday night and lots of things, when he said "Put the light on". They said "No, it is Friday, it is Shabbat."

Tape 3: 6 minutes 7 seconds

He said "Put the light on", and he forced them to put the light on.

And he almost succeeded; he succeeded with his son but not with his daughter. So that is what my mother bought and I had to do something, and I wanted to be a nursery nurse. I had a fantastic school in Frankfurt, a famous school, where for years and years and years I knew that is where I would go. I needed to work with children and I had a love for children. I always said to my mother "Everybody has a brother. Where is my brother? Why haven't I got a brother?"

She said "Well I didn't get on."

I said "Then buy me a brother, I need a brother."

So I stuck to my cousins and then they all went to Palestine, again I was lonely, so I needed, I wanted to be a children's nurse, and it was too expensive. There was a big house on the River Thames, when my father went in and he found out how expensive it is and a good friend of mine, J Eisemann, she found the Highbury Home for nurses and they had money and she managed to get training there, wonderful training, and she had full training as a nursery nurse, in London.

But when we came there was nobody there, everybody was on holiday. So my mother had always said "Whatever job you take, you are not going to be a shorthand typist like me. I want something much better for you." There was no choice. I was enrolled in Pitman's College and my sister was enrolled in a school, in a non Jewish primary school, not far from where we lived, Finsbury Park. Now, I couldn't speak English, I really couldn't, and when my father first said we were going to England, I said "No, we are going to France."

He said "Why?"

I said "My French is much better, I speak French fluently and I can't get used to English."

And here I was in England, no friends, and I had to speak English, very, very hard. But in Pitman's College nobody bothered me about speaking, all I had to do was learn shorthand, I learned it like a language, one, two, three. I could spell English better than all the girls and boys together in my class and she shlepped me by the scruff of neck in front of the class, and she told them off "There is this foreign girl, and she can make no mistake in spelling, and you make lots of mistakes, and you should be ashamed of yourselves." And there was the daughter of our dentist later, and I am sure she hated me, because you know, she was told she should be like me, thank G-d she wasn't like me, but I had a marvelous time. And then when the holidays were over they all came back. And they corrected my English straight away, we weren't taught right, French we were taught immaculately, we said "but" instead of "but" and we made various mistakes, we couldn't pronounce the T H, we weren't taught properly, but I have got a good ear and I tried very hard and I think, I mean my father said "No German spoken, no German books", he took us to the library. I said "Where shall I, what book shall I take?"

“It doesn’t matter, any book, take a book, bring it home.”

I brought home a marvelous book about the Prince and the Garden, a wonderful book, and I was amazed, how I understood every word, so I did, I was taught well, just not

Tape 3:10 minutes 10 seconds

speaking. Maybe it is just as well because I would have had this awful accent that they were, all my friends have got, their English was disgusting, forget what you learned in Frankfurt, try, and don’t say “r” or “d” or “f”, say “th”, and one, two, three, I integrated beautifully. My sister was in that non Jewish school and then my mother heard about Schonfeld School so she put her into Schonfeld School, Avigdor School it was called, I just now heard it is closing down, closing down, the Avigdor. Avigdor was called after Rabbi Schonfeld’s father. And I became completely, I may use the word ‘besotted’ with Rabbi Schonfeld. He was my guru, my Rav, my mentor, a wonderful beautiful man, and I hoped maybe he might marry me one day, why not? And so we were going around with, really in love, and I wasn’t the only one, all the girls of my age were all in love with Rabbi Schonfeld. Charming, beautiful, tall man, with long legs and we knew that he walked from one end of London to the other end of London where he had a community somewhere, and he spoke this fantastic English, beautiful language, his sister had the same accent, his sister was called, oh, a beautiful girl, looked very much like him. Zena, I think Zena, yes. Zena, and we made a big garden party, in, I think in Rabbi Schonfeld’s mother’s house, or in a big garden. Of course I told you I met all my old friends again, and their sisters and we were close again, we had family, and my sister found their cousin, my sister’s cousin, she had friends, I had friends, a wonderful, wonderful social life.

And there were three little boys, who were younger than me and they wanted to take me out, and they knocked at my door, in Allerton Road, and I heard my father go down and he said “Yes, what is it?”

He said “c c c c c can we take Eva out?”

And I was then sixteen and a half, nearly seventeen. And he said “How old are you?”

They said “f f f fifteen.”

He said “Get out of my garden.”

They said “We bought her chocolates, After Eights.”

“Take that chocolate with you, don’t come here again. My daughter is not going out with any of you. Fifteen years old, what is going on here in London?”

They were so upset, one of them, came to live in Yerushalayim next door to our flat in Ramat Eshkol, with a lovely wife, and he said to my children “If your mother had married me, you would be my children.” And my friend Lola told me the same thing happened, one of her, we call them boyfriends, we didn’t touch, I mean we, it was a platonic, but very strong friendship, and she was sure this boy, who went from Hungary and then to America, and he came back to see, he went to Gateshead and he looked for her son and he said the same to thing to him. “If your mother had married me you would be my son.” He came home upset. My children came home upset and we laughed, we thought it was hilarious, and to the day that one died, in Yerushalayim, my next door

neighbour, every time he saw my husband he went to me ... he didn't agree (laughs) with anything he said, not with anything, they were so different, yes ...

RL: Was there any kind of youth group in London?

Tape 3: 14 minutes 37 seconds

CF: Yes, "Chaverim", in the Shul. Boys and girls together, not like in Frankfurt. Chaverim.

RL: Which Shul was this?

CF: The Adass, Rabbi Schonfeld's Shul. Adass Yisroel. And Rabbi Schonfeld was this fantastic Rabbi, and they said to me when they came back, after I finished, ahh ... then the war started. I hadn't quite finished my Pitman College Studies when the war broke out. Now, I didn't belong to Avigdor's School, but I went to Rabbi Schonfeld's Shiurim. And Rabbi Schonfeld said that anyone who comes to the shiurim, including those who had been to the Avigdor, they should come two days before me would be able to be evacuated if the parents so desire when the government gives the warning. One day, the government said "Now, we have to go". We had our little cases ready and my mother said "You will have to go, otherwise I can't let your sister go. You have to be there also." I didn't mind because I could see lots of my contemporaries who had left school long ago, or a year ago at least, they also went, so I thought wonderful, we will have a wonderful time in the country. And we went in various buses and everybody was told to go in this bus, and this bus, and this bus. I could see that the bus I had to go because of my little sister wasn't going in the same direction, but they all said "We are all going to Shefford, we are all going to Shefford, you don't have to worry." Instead there were three destinations, Shefford was the main one, Stotfold was another one and another little place where Friedl Horvitz landed up, another one. But I used to have a bicycle, and I bicycled to all of these places so I saw all my friends on and off, but I was a bit lonely there in Stotfold, although they straight away after a few weeks, we were staying with people, they opened a kitchen and a school. Even in Stotfold, no child under Rabbi Schonfeld ever had to eat treif, it didn't exist. Every child from his school ate kosher, it didn't happen to any other school. I know a lot of children, who were evacuated, with other schools, and they had to eat treif, there was nothing they could do. The children came on the Kinder Transport just, my sister in law came just before the war started, the last boat but one, my husband's sister, had to stay with goyim and had to eat. And the Chief Rabbi wrote a letter to all the children "in, on evacuation, this is a matter of life and death, you have to eat what your hosts give you". Because at first we were also not, the school didn't come from one day to the next, there were two or three days, or maybe four, so we had to eat with the non Jewish people. But we had a fishmonger who was our host, my sister and me, and they gave us fish, it was ok. And he sent letters around "You can't tell your hosts what to give you, but you can choose if you can maybe don't eat pork. But you have to eat, you have to keep up your strength, it is a matter of life and death and there is no restriction on kashrut for anyone evacuated in the school system." And that was how it was, and we didn't need to, we had came, Schonfeld came to Stotfold

and she taught us philosophy and psychology and we were in awe of her. I was learning with another older girl, all the Hebrew that I had been learning in Frankfurt Allemein, she came from Budapest and was Hungarian, and we had shiurim together, she and me.

Tape 3: 19 minutes 11 seconds

But I wrote to my mother, “Look, there are no bombs, nothing is happening, I am dying of boredom here. Marianne doesn’t need me she has got lovely friends. Let me come home.” So I stayed three months in Stotfold and went back to London. The minute I came back to London the bombs really started falling. But I didn’t care. My father said “Nothing will happen, you trust in God, you are a good girl, you daven in the morning, you daven at night, nothing is going to happen.”

Now, where we lived in Allerton Road was a water tank, a huge tank, still there now, and from above the planes saw an area of something they didn’t know what it was, they didn’t realise it was water. But it looked different from any of the other surrounding, so they constantly bombed that water, and my mother was very nervous. She had to wake me up at night, shake me, to drag me down to the shelter, and I went half asleep down and came back half asleep, it never worried me, never. I would have liked to have stayed where I was but she wouldn’t let me. So my mother said “What about your people, your lovely people in Stotfold? Do you think maybe we could stay with them? And Marianne was still in Shefford. So we wrote to them, and they said “With the greatest of pleasure.” So my mother and me and my father evacuated ourselves to Stotfold and stayed with the people who took us in in the first place, lovely, lovely people. Of course we made our own meals, and my mother managed, don’t ask, she did manage, and my father and me went into London every day, and we did come back. We had to go to Baldock first and had to take the train from Baldock. And then my father said “Where am I going to go to Shul?”

So everybody said “Letchworth, there is a wonderful kehillah in Letchworth,” and it was a beautiful work from Stotfold, along the fields, and we came out, by the other end of Letchworth, not where we lived later, where the Schischas lived, the Weingartens lived in lovely houses there, and further in they made a minyan, in the Scouts Hall and all the various halls, minyans for Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, everything provided for. And my father said “Why are we living in Stotfold? Let’s try and live in Letchworth.” So he made arrangements to go to Letchworth during the week, and he found out that there was a Bornstein Estate. All the houses belonged to Abba Bornstein, big, very famous, the leader of the Mizrachi in London, in England. Abba Bornstein, it was called the Abba Bornstein Estate, and all his friends, and all the people from the Mizrachi, when the bombs began to fall, or when there was talk of bombs maybe, everybody came to live in Letchworth in his houses, and the houses were all empty, nobody wanted to go there, he built the houses, like council houses, but they were empty, so everybody could take a house. Now we didn’t have money to take the house, so we looked for rent. We went in and we found a lady, Mrs Smith, and we lived there above where she lived downstairs and we lived upstairs.

At that time already my sister had decided she had had enough from The Schonfeld School and she came home and she worked in Hitchin for a Jewish Insurance Company that had been evacuated to Hitchin.

Tape 3:23 minutes 30 seconds

I, on the other hand, had finished my Pitman's College, but I didn't have any qualifications because the war was still on. So I went to the religious employment office which the Agudah had, and I said "I am really a shorthand typist."

But they said "You haven't got any qualifications. You haven't got papers, you can't please it, you know." And I think Pitman's College was at that time not even working during the blitz, so they said, "What else can you do?"

I said "I can sew on a sewing machine." Do you remember the sewing machine?

"Oh, can you sew on an electric sewing machine?"

I said "Yes". I didn't know what they were talking about. I knew I was good on the machine. "Ah, there is a Mr Gold in the East End, he is looking for a machinist." And my Auntie Jenny was staying with us at that time, so I went to Mr Gold and he said "You are a machinist?"

And I said "Yes."

"You know all about electric?"

I said "Yes".

"Come on, I give you something to do."

He gave me a coat with lapels and he had already done, or somebody had already done the first row, and he wanted three rows in white on navy blue, and I passed the test on an electric machine, which I had never seen in my life before. But I was good at the machine. Thank you Anna!

Now, when we first came to Letchworth and the war finished ... no, we are not that far yet ...

RL: Can I just ask you?

CF: Yes.

RL: What was your father doing from the point of arriving in England?

CF: Ahh ... yes, yes, yes ... my father got together with another Frankfurter who was selling and buying ... no .. that came later. My father got in touch with Kleerkoopers from Holland, who was working for my Uncle David. You remember he had a rubber factory which burned down in Frankfurt? My Uncle David continued with his rubber business in Holland. Although he lived in Israel and had much more important things to do, he built up a fantastic factory there, but that rubber was still being collected and sent to various countries from Holland. So my father worked to begin with for my Uncle David in the rubber factory and was in touch constantly with Kleerkooper. And then the Germans overran Holland, and Kleerkooper was in London at the time on business, and he couldn't get back, and my father lost two or three shipments of rubber which were

coming from Holland to London, which never arrived, and all my Uncle David's money was invested in that rubber, my father didn't have to invest, but he was going to organize it. And Kleerkoooper was in London in a state I can't describe. "My wife, my children, my children, my wife ..." He tried to get in touch with them, he couldn't get in touch

Tape 3: 27 minutes 21 seconds

with them, there was no contact with Holland whatsoever, and he was desperate. All the time crying in our house, "What am I to do?"

My mother said, "The only thing I can advise you to do is to join the Free Dutch. Go into the army and fight the Germans, now is your chance." Which he did. He went to the Dutch, he was immediately accepted, he was up in England somewhere, we kept on corresponding and I found his letters many, many years later, that he wrote, you know, "what a good idea, and now I am in the army at least, I am going to do this and I am going to do that and I am going abroad." We never heard from Kleerkoooper again. My mother couldn't understand it, and people called Kleerkoooper came from Holland to London. That Kleerkoooper they didn't know. Sigmund, they didn't know, Sig. What happened to his wife? Nothing.

Can I jump a bit?

RL: If you want.

CF: About seven years ago, I am looking in the Jerusalem Post, sitting in Yerushalayim, and I saw and advert that someone had died, and her name May Kleerkoooper. I thought "My last chance", maybe these are the real Kleerkooopers and they were. I found his wife and the two children. She was in Australia with the eldest girl and the youngest girl lived in Netanya. This woman that I wrote to, it was her mother who had died, and she was born Kleerkoooper, I tell you, you don't know, I wrote her a letter to Australia, I said "I don't know, are you or are you not, my name is Eva Becker and my parents are ..." And I got a letter back, and there is a correspondence between us, and she is now 96, 96 or 97.

She wrote a book herself of her experiences. What happened was that her, she and her girls, went to, tried to get over to England with the other boat, but they couldn't get on, they were either only going to take her, or only the children, and she didn't want to be separated from them, when she didn't even know where her husband was. She knew her husband was in London, but that is all she knew. So she decided to make the two children hide, they were hidden children with non Jewish people and she also hid herself, and they were very well looked after by the Dutch, and they are still in touch with those families, and they have been to Australia to visit her. After the war they couldn't find Sig, so they must have had some connection in Australia, and all three went. But the younger girl came back and married a Dutchman and lives in Netanya and the eldest one lives near her mother in Australia. And our eldest son, and our middle son, Chaim, my husband, found family in Australia. If you ever interview him he will tell you all about that. Somebody got married there and my husband had had a heart attack in the meantime and he couldn't go so he gave his two sons and one daughter and two

daughters-in-law money to go to Australia to be at that wedding. But the first thing that Yanky did, the eldest, he took the book that I had written, where she is mentioned again and again and again, and took it to her. Well, you can't imagine, and we correspond all the time, when she wrote her book of course she wrote it and sent it to us ...

Tape 3: 31 minutes 47 seconds

RL: You were talking about your father's work, and how the shipment of ...

CF: That was the end and finished ... they had to do something else. So he met a Frankfurter whose daughter was in school with us and he went into partnership with him and they sold rags. People in tailor shops cut coats and things, and everything that went on the floor stayed on the floor. At the end of the day somebody came and gathered it all up together, put it in a sack and somebody collected it and then it was sold again. And my father had it collected for him, and they came to him and weighed it in his little office in Howland Street in the West End and sold it.

RL: And how long did he do that for?

CF: Until he went to Israel in 1949.

RL: Right ...

CF: In the meantime my mother died, when my elder son was one year old. What she had, this anaemia that they said, that was really cancer, only we didn't know. And she had it in the ovaries; they took one ovary out in Hitchin and told us very proudly that they left the other ovary in. I mean she was long past child bearing age. Why they left the other one in? The following year the other one got the cancer and she died on Yanky's first birthday, my eldest child's first birthday. Young, 57.

RL: So during the war then you were in Letchworth ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: And you were commuting ...

CF: Yes, I was commuting. And when my aunt found out how I hated it, because he wasn't a very nice man, Mr Gold, to me he was very nice. I was a machinist, I was up here, but the others, the seamstresses and the people who iron were treated like garbage. And he always didn't let me go home in good time to be at home in Stamford Hill, Allerton Road, for Shabbat, so I said, I had to do all kinds of thing. I had to pretend, I fainted in London and they let me go into the bus, because I could see I was not going to get home on time. And my aunt said "This has to stop, you are so unhappy, why do you stay there? Why don't you ask your cousin Levis, his wife is married to a Houndsditch warehouse girl, Berstein, Faye Berstein. Why don't you ask him?" It wasn't even her family, it was my father's cousin, but she knew about him. She knew about him why,

because she knew that my father borrowed from Levis, the money he needed £50 per person that he took out, my two cousins from Berlin and his, and her daughter, and he had to give that money back to Levis, but Levis lent it to him. And my father did very well with the rags and he gave the money back. Then Levis' daughter got married, and we were constantly in touch with the

Tape 3: 35 minutes 26 seconds

Levis'. They even came out to Letchworth during the war, thinking they might live there. So, I became a secretary in the Houndsditch warehouse. Did I feel big? The bombs were falling left, right and centre. We came from lovely Letchworth into London, we came to Finsbury Park, they knew us already there, they said "You want to go to the Houndsditch? The Houndsditch is down. Everything is down, East London is burning." We went by bus, everything was down, everything except The Houndsditch. The Houndsditch stood and my father said "Because they keep closed on Shabbat." I never had any trouble on Friday there; I had no trouble at all. I was in clover while I was working there, they called me Miss Becker again, and I was allowed to take the typed letters to the director or my mishpocha, like this, and I was always when I went to the lift I blushed. And the fellow in the lift said "By the time you leave here I will stop your blushing, and he did. I don't know how he did it, but in the end I went to the lift and I didn't blush. I was a sweet innocent.

And then I got my calling up papers, because I was a South African, wasn't I. Either the army, or the navy, or the air force, or the machine, and the ammunition factory. Now by that time another person came along, a good friend, she is now, she lives also in Israel. She said to me "Now I am working in Bloomsbury House. I have got a marvelous job. Why don't you come and work in Bloomsbury house? You get more money than you get in the Houndsditch." And I got top wages in the Houndsditch. And she said to me, much younger than me, very confident she was "I will tell the boss, you have to go to Letchworth, up and down, half the wages that they pay you go on fairs. They should give you a rise; before you tell them you are leaving you should ask them for a rise." So I asked Levis for a rise. Not Levis, Berstein, his brother in law, he said "Look." He took me to one side and he said "Already you are getting top wages, if I give you a rise what about the other girls in the office? They will also need a rise. I can't give you a rise." But before that something terrible happened, also one day we came from Letchworth, and everything was burning, and I came into the Houndsditch and the bosses are standing at the door. There was a queue until we got in. "It has been a terrible night, there were many people killed in the area." Now in my office was another Miss Becker, who was engaged to be married. Where she was, the house had a direct hit although they were all in the shelter. Direct hit on the house and Miss Becker was killed. So he didn't know which Miss Becker was killed and he stood there waiting, and when I came in he said "Thank God" and disappeared. I didn't know what was going on and they were sitting there crying for Miss Becker. So many people got killed. My father gave me thrupence to go to the market to buy myself some fruit, I took sandwiches with. I used to go to the Weingartens to visit them, I had friends there the Eisemann, Eisemann worked in the jewellery shop in Weingartens. I got friendly with all the Weingarten girls and

boys. I had, wherever you put me, I had a marvelous time, until I was called up. And then I didn't know what to do, but by then I was working in Bloomsbury House and I was working for The Chalutz and for the Kinder Transport children who had come on Kinder Transport, and put into, the lucky ones, been put into Kibbutzim. Three or four Kibbutzim of the Brit Chalutzim Daatiim. One was near Bedford, one was in North Wales, two were in North Wales and one was near Dennington. Somewhere in the

Tape 3: 40 minutes 27 seconds

country, they were all farming places. What did we do? We farmed. We helped the farmers. But the fellow that I worked for, Arieh Handler, the famous Arieh Handler said to me "Miss Becker, come to my Kibbutz. I will get you into the Land Army, you will get a uniform, this is your war work." But I didn't want to go to his Kibbutz. I don't know why, near Birmingham. A big kibbutz. Bideford or something like that.

Now, I had an English girl, a Jewish girl in Letchworth, an orphan, Lehman, Channah Lehman, and we both got our papers together although she is about a year younger than me. She is in Lavi, in Kibbutz Lavi now, and I said "What are we going to do?"

She said "I don't know."

"I don't want to go to the army."

"Neither do I."

And then I poured my heart out to Arieh Handler.

He said "Join the Kibbutz movement."

I said "I have got a friend in Letchworth."

"Tell her also, she should join, she would be in the Land Army, she would never be called up for anything, it is a wonderful job, you work on the land, you work together with a whole crowd and you learn various jobs, you can work outside, inside work. It is religious, you have shiurim. There is in Manchester a Bet ..." hmmm, where I went when I was pregnant with my eldest son. Bet ... a big house belonging to the movement when people in turn from the kibbutzim were sent, boys and girls, for the year, to learn. Wonderful.

So I said "Come on Channah, tell your mother."

She said "My mother won't let me."

I said "My mother won't let me either." I said, "But you know what, if I tell my mother that your mother lets, and you tell your mother that my mother lets, then efshar... we can work it out."

She went to ... near Birmingham, met her husband there, Engel was with my husband in Whittingehame Farm school in Scotland. And I met Eli Fachler.

RL: Where were you? Where did you go to?

CF: I went to Hardmead first, near Bedford. Why did I go to Hardmead? Well, after the, after they came back from their holidays, before the war actually started, they said to me "You are now working in Bloomsbury House." It must have been after the war.

“You are on the phone, you organise a holiday, you are such a macher, so organise a holiday for the chaverim from Schonfeld School.” So I did.

I asked Arieh Handler, “They have asked me to organise a holiday, where shall I go?”

“Go to one of the kibbutzim.” That is the first I heard about the kibbutzim.

“Where?”

“Near Bedford.”

I took my best friend, she was the Rebbetzin Steinhaus from school to, Fritta Diller from Frankfurt Am Main, she married the late Bernard Steinhaus, they lived in

Tape 3: 44 minutes 8 seconds

Yerushalayim, she is unfortunately a widow and still a very good friend. They used to go to Sweden and put the shtampers on all the kosher cheeses and things. I said to her “Come on Fritte Leiben, we are going to have a look where we are going to have our holidays in the summer, we must have a look.” So they said “Go to Mrs Jacobowitz, she is evacuated in Bedford, you go to her and she will explain to you exactly how to go to this place Hardmead.” We went to Mrs ... on a taanis, you know, in our little shoes. We marched over all the fields, my shoe fell off and broke, I had to go barefoot. I don't know which taanis, in the summer, and we arrived at this little farm school, I go in the kitchen, I knock at the door. Who opens the door? A Frankfurt girl. A Frankfurt girl who was an orphan, who was in another home, not that famous orphanage but another home in Frankfurt, and she opened the door. “Eva! What are you doing here? Fritte! What are you doing here?”

So we said “We want to have holidays here? We have come to see around.” And I said, “And I want to see the kitchen.”

“Why do you want to see the kitchen?”

I said “Look, I am bringing with me Jacobovitz, they are all going to be Rabbonim.” Jacobovitz, Cohen, Sruli Cohen who became a Rabbi, one English, Baum, Lippa Baum, I had four or five students in Jews College going to be Rabbonim. Friedle Bamberger, Oleh Hashalom, from Frankfurt, from my parallel class. I said “I can't just bring them into a kibbutz, although I understand that you are 100% kosher, I can't rely on it.” Oh, she was very cross with me. “It's not fair, you come ... and I want to tell you something. We girls are four girls here, right, we have all got boyfriends. You tell your girls, not one of them is supposed to go with any of our boyfriends. Is that understood?” She was much younger than me but she said “I have a boyfriend, this one has a boyfriend, that one has a boyfriend. Four girls we are here, and every one has a boyfriend.” I said “We are not coming here for boyfriends, we want a holiday, we will only eat your food. You cook for us and we will pay you. We just want to have the tents on your land.” It wasn't their land either, where they were put. And while I am standing there with my broken shoes a little guy came in, and they also had conscientious objectors there. And this was a much older guy and I said “I am in such trouble.”

And he said “Give me that shoe and I am going to mend it for you.” And of course we were fasting, so we didn't ... I said “Why is it so quiet? Where is everybody?” Betty was her name; she is not alive any more. She said, “There is another kibbutz, a not religious kibbutz nearby. And there is a lecturer there from Israel and they have all gone over to listen. And whilst he was mending my shoe they came back, there comes back a

tall fellow, with a shock of hair, and shorts, with a pipe, and I said “Betty – Who is this?” She said “He is a year and a half younger than you, you don’t want him.”

I said “What is he like?”

She said “He came yesterday, from Scotland.”

Okay. Then another one came in. I said “What about that one?”

She said “Noooo! He is a friend to Celia, the other girl don’t you touch him.”

So on the way out I said to her “Fritta, you know he is a lovely boy this tall one.” She

Tape 3: 48 minutes 20 seconds

Celia’s friend.” She said “We mustn’t go anywhere near those boys.” Anyway we did make a camp there, and I was in charge so I had to have a look, so they invited me on another ta’anis. I think the ta’anis was on a Sunday, and I came for a Shabbat there, and the Chevra arrived on Sunday. We had the most fantastic camp, and next to us was a Bnei Akiva camp, we were not Bnei Akiva, we were chaverim from Schonfeld but next to us was a Bnei Akiva camp. Lots of people from Bnei Akiva who I met in Israel afterwards were also on that campsite, the same as us, but we didn’t mix with them but we knew they were there.

RL: So was it boys and girls who came as part of Chaverim?

CF: Yes, yes ...

RL: How many came? How many ...

CF: To me it seemed a lot, probably it wasn’t such a lot, I mean thirty we had, and they had a similar amount. And we had a tent, tents for girls and tents for boys, and everything was very separate, but when we saw a boy and girl together we said they are brother and sister, don’t you know, because they were brothers and sisters there. We saw in the shadow two people, boy and girl, brother and sister, go and find out who they are. And we had horses there and B’nai Akiva kids were lovely, we had the most fantastic time.

RL: When was this? Was this during the war?

CF: Yes.

RL: Yes.

CF: That is why I was called up. Towards the end it was, my husband was born in 23, he was 15 when I saw him the first time. That tall boy, with the hair and the shorts, 15, and I was 16½.

RL: In 1938?

CF: No, a bit more, it must have been 9, ’39 ...

RL: I was 16 ... he was 15, born in '23, I am born in '22, I am a year and a half older than him, I was nearly 17.

RL: When you went to work in Bloomsbury House ...

CF: Yes ...

Tape 3: 50 minutes 36 seconds

RL: Can we just try and date this?

CF: Yes, yes, yes

RL: When would that have been that you went to ... ?

CF: Straight after the Houndsditch Warehouse. There I got my calling up papers.

RL: So approximately how old were you?

CF: 18?

RL: You were 18?

CF: No, no, no ... not, about ... Because I made that camp in the following year. I got my calling up papers, I was 18, that is how I got my calling up papers at 18.

RL: And, so you went to ... so tell me what happened then as a result of ...

CF: Well at that Shabbat, there were two boys. One was my husband and there was another boy from Hamburg. They had a bet on me if you don't mind. Hymie said to my husband "This girl is for me", and my husband said "I bet you she is for me. I know nothing about her." I know both of them were trying very hard to talk to me about politics and Israel and the labour party and conservative party, and he won. I didn't know.

So then when the calling up papers came I joined up to the kibbutz, where else would I go?

RL: And what was your work there?

CF: Everything ... threshing, planting seeds. There was a course, every course there was I volunteered because I wanted to learn more and more and more. I am a natural farm worker, I didn't even know how strong I was, I was one of the strongest kids there. Look, I didn't come over on my own, I came with my parents, with my sister, I had a normal youth everywhere we went, my mother fed us very well, the vegetarian Anna also

had vitamins and what we should eat and what we shouldn't eat and so on. I was a very strong girl, I never knew my strength, until I worked along with the boys. The boys from the kibbutz, me in my uniform, they in all kinds of rags. They didn't have a uniform, I was the only one in uniform and my picture was in London in the head office of Bet Chalutzim, they had a picture of me in my uniform and they said "You join the kibbutz and that is how you will look. You will get a uniform, if you are English you go to the land army and it was propaganda for come to the kibbutz. And there was a little leaflet went out and my picture was in it. And I was very cross because they had never asked

Tape 3: 53 minutes 24 seconds

me and I got no money for it. I should have been paid something. But you were in the kibbutz and you must muck together, nobody has anything, everybody has everything. My mother gave me skirts, I came home, "Where are the skirts?" "Well, she didn't have a skirt and I lent it to her and she has still got it and ..."
My mother had to give me new stuff every time I came home because I left everything.

RL: Who was in charge of the kibbutz?

CF: A good question. Akiva Kornbluth from Letchworth. He was the manager, and I knew him from Letchworth. He was married to a Bornstein, from my family, from the Bornstein, from the Aborn Estate. One of them was his wife, the eldest, she had two sisters, and his son, Jonathan Kornbluth became very friendly with us when we were in Letchworth in our big house, and when he came and I heard Kornbluth, You're Akiva's son! Did we give trouble to your poor dad! [Laughs] ... (oy and sigh). And we had a cook, Mrs ... and she said to my husband in German "You only eat to annoy me!" Because he was always hungry and he always wanted second helpings and she hated him because he ate so much and she didn't have enough, you know. A German woman, or Viennese ... [something said in German] We had such fun, hard work, but we got double rations, double ration cheese, double ration meat, vegetables we grew, we had our own garden, and the people used to come and visit us. Rabbi Jacobovitz came to visit us, me especially, we didn't know anyone else. And I was just looking after the garden around, and he said to me "Why are you wasting your time here?"

I said "I am not wasting my time!"

He said "I could get you into Jews College, you could do a degree."

I said "I am very happy here with what I am doing, and I have to do war work."

He said "I could arrange it."

I said "No, thank you very much."

Then he tried another friend of mine, and it didn't work either. And then he found his lovely Emily, and every time she saw us talking together, she said "I know you knew him long before me, I know you knew him." And we are the best of friends now.

RL: How many people were on this kibbutz?

CF: About 50. And we had a deaf and dumb boy who went to Israel before any of us. He had come with his, no he came with a Kindertransport, he was, he was adopted by a family in Letchworth called, a famous English family, with a W, and he suddenly appeared on the kibbutz. And I learned how to talk to him, not sign language, but he talked ...

RL: Yes, and ...

CF: And he was on the kibbutz. When we got married on the kibbutz - many, many couples got married on the kibbutz. Betty also got married to her boyfriend that she said

Tape 3: 57 minutes 17 seconds

“Don’t touch him – he is mine.” And Celia didn’t get married to her boyfriend, she married another lovely boy.

RL: Okay, so we will just finish here. Okay.

TAPE 4

RL: This is the continuation of the interview with Chava Fachler and this is tape 5 [THIS IS ACTUALLY TAPE FOUR, INTERVIEWER GOT NUMBERS WRONG]

Now that I know we were up to the year 1954 and you had, you were working in the Yeshiva by this time, in Letchworth. And your husband had opened his own butcher’s shop in Luton, and you were telling me that in 1954 you gave birth to your third child, who was a daughter ...

CF: Fourth child ...

RL: Fourth child who was a daughter ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: So if we could pick the story up at this point and you tell me what happened ...

CF: Just a minute ... I had four children, and then I had a girl ...

RL: So this was the fifth child?

CF: Yes ...

RL: And what was her name?

CF: Melanie Malka, after my mother. And she was born in '54. And shortly after that I took the Yeshiva job, because the cook went away. And I had a lot of help from the ladies of the community and I managed, but I made it a condition that when my children came back from school they can eat in the Yeshiva, because I couldn't manage to cook at home and cook for the boys, that didn't work out. So I made that a condition, and I also got help in the kitchen. Cleaning, I certainly had a cleaner and I also had help in the kitchen with the vegetables.

RL: How many boys were you cooking for?

Tape 4: 1 minute 41 seconds

CF: At the time was about 23 or 24.

RL: And where were they from?

CF: Some were English. Quite a few were Israelis. We had a lot of Israeli boy for some reason. One particular boy, he came, he was an orphan, I think he was a survivor, and he had an ulcer, and we had to cook a special diet for him, and we had to constantly, interesting things were happening, one boy was playing football and he got a knee in his mouth and he lost all his teeth. And the doctor wired them together and we had to feed him through little ... little ... What do you call it?

RL: Straws?

CF: Straws. And then his father came and said we saved his life, very interesting it was. Until the new cook came along and I was very happy when that happened. But with the money that I made, which wasn't much, I brought myself my first pressure cooker, so that I always remember.

RL: How long were you cooking there?

CF: I think it must have been nearly two years. And then I was expecting in 58 another child, that was Myer, Shlomo Myer, and in the meantime unfortunately my father passed away. My father passed away when Melanie Malka was about a year and a bit. And ...

RL: Where was he living at that point?

CF: He has been living backwards and forwards between me and my sister in Manchester. Because I originally, that was their house, but we were in Letchworth, and when my husband left the army we lived with my parents, and my mother died first, very early on, when my eldest child was a year old, I am sure I said that in the interview, and my father died in 55 when Melanie was a year and a bit, and he had been very ill. In the meantime he had been to Israel and it didn't work out and he came back a very broken man, and he had a heart attack and pneumonia and that was the end.

RL: Where was he buried?

CF: Where they are both buried. In London, English Federation Cemetery, in Enfield and our son David is also there, so we have got my parents and our son there, in Enfield.

RL: How big was the Letchworth community at that point?

CF: Well, at that at point, it was still quite big, because there were two or three roads in the Bornstein Estate, in the **Aborn (?)** Estate, house by house was a member of the Jewish community, and there was another community on the other side of Letchworth, under the

Tape 4: 4 minutes 51 seconds

auspices of Rabbi Sassoon, who had come from London, from a very big house, had bought two or three houses in Letchworth and he had his own minyan, so the people who lived near him on the other side of town used to go to that minyan, they left Letchworth and went back to London, all of them, some of them to Israel. In 1969 or 70 Rabbi Sassoon and his entourage left for Jerusalem. So, in the meantime the Yeshiva also went back to London, you see people were slowly then going back to London, we were really the last ones to leave, but three or four families, but in the meantime in 1959 when Myer was about a year old we had bought a very derelict house, also on the other side of town, in the same street as Rabbi Sassoon had lived and we used to go to the minyan there.

What happened also was that, then the Yeshiva left first, and we hadn't got a minyan any more.

RL: When did the Yeshiva leave?

CF: It must have been before 1960 because, before 1969, it must have been about, early sixties I would imagine, I really can't remember ...

RL: What made them decide to go?

CF: I really don't know, they decided to go back to London.

RL: And who were the teachers in the Yeshiva?

CF: The teachers were Rabbi Eisenberg and he had come from Spain, they had been in the Spain Yeshiva and they came to Letchworth most likely, Rabbi Sassoon and his brother in law, Rabbi Feuchtwanger, they had been helping them financially, I am sure of it, and they went back to London, so we didn't have a minyan any more in our street in Hallmead, so we also had to go to the Sassoons, and then we bought the house, and of course there was no minyan and by that time most of the people had gone back to London. The Bornsteins had gone back, the Hollanders had gone gone back, all the little minyan that was left behind after everybody went back had also left. So by the time 19 ... 19 ... we left Letchworth in 1971 to go to London, so I am going back quite a bit.

Myer was born in 58 and we moved to the other side of town in 59, he was a year old. And in that time hardly anybody was left anymore, in the Aborn Estate, that became empty. And then we had another community on the other side of town. There were three or four families who regularly came to the Sassoons. That was family Schischa, I am still in touch with them, I am very much in touch with them, and family Ross, unfortunately they both were nifta this year, and (she said some names quietly that I couldn't hear) and Pollack, family Pollack, they also went to London. And we used to have a big Kiddush after, in our house, in our new house, for the children, and for the grown ups, and the children mostly used to have Kiddush at the Sassoons but all the other people who had davened at the Sassoons, the adults, came to our house for a big Kiddush. And I had

Tape 4: 8 minutes 55 seconds

already a Kiddush when we still lived in Hallmead, but not to the size that we then had when we lived in the big house, and it was really very nice.

RL: Which of the families that were living around Hallmead. That went back eventually, who were they?

CF: Bornsteins, Cohens, two families Cohens, Hollander, Broch, Schischa, they were really the ones, the mainstays of the ...

RL: And were these English families or refugee families?

CF: The Bornsteins, originally, back, they were English born, most of them were English born, and the Hollanders were related to them, the Kirsch came from Leipzig, I am talking about the older generation, these people were born already in England.

RL: But their parents?

CF: Their parents had come mostly from Germany.

RL: And the Sassoons?

CF: The Sassoons are Baghdadi Jews, and they had a big house in London, and before anybody else was evacuated they evacuated themselves to Letchworth. Why they chose Letchworth I don't know. It was a beautiful town, lovely, it was the first garden city, everybody needed a garden, they had a huge garden, on all their houses, in fact Rabbi Feuchtwanger's wife was also Sassoon. She was the sister of Rabbi Sassoon, Flora Sassoon. Her daughter, Moselle got married in their garden and Melanie was a bridesmaid, I am sure she was a bridesmaid at that wedding.

RL: So was that a Sephardi minyan that they had?

CF: It was a Sephardi minyan but we took it in turns, because Rabbi Sassoon was married to a lady who comes from in Frankfurt, in Germany. She went to a school with

me and when she was older, she was older, but there was a whole, and his mother was from Holland, she wasn't Sephardi, so there was always this mixture, so we got on very well indeed, there was no friction at all, it was pure love. But all my children know how to pray the Sephardi way, and we all know the tunes and we took a lot of their tunes for instance into the Haggadah on Pesach, we sing the tunes that we heard at the Sassoons.

RL: Did you have Seder together?

CF: No we didn't have Seder together. We didn't.

RL: Right. Where did you do your kosher shopping?

Tape 4: 11 minutes 53 seconds

CF: My husband had a butcher shop in Luton, he also had groceries there. In fact he even had Pesach groceries. Before Pesach he sent out lists to his customers and according to what they ordered he bought, but during the year we all had our stuff from Luton. My husband came back with boxes and boxes because we had a big household. Apart from the children, who weren't there during the week, on Shabbat they were there. We had three boys in Carmel College, on scholarships. Yanky the eldest, Marcus Mordechai and Chaim. All three on scholarships in Carmel College. And my husband supplied Carmel College with meat and groceries, so we had a lot of connection there, so we were never short of groceries.

RL: At what age did they go to Carmel?

CF: Yanky went straight after he was, after his 11 plus, Mordechai went three years later, and Chaim two years later.

RL: And what about the girls? Where did they go?

CF: Well Melanie went to the school in Letchworth. First she went to Letchworth Primary and then she went to Hitchin Girls Grammar which was a town nearby, and we had some Jewish people there also and they told me that some of them walked over on Shabbat from Hitchin for the minyan. I must tell you something else that happened there, in 19 ... I have to think ... we had, I don't know if I mentioned to you ... Did I mention St Christopher's? The vegetarian school across the way.

RL: No.

CF: There was, there is still, a vegetarian school after Mesora, a special education, Massora, Massori (I think she means Montessori) or something like that ...

RL: Right ...

CF: Which is a way of educating children; you call the teachers by their first name. There aren't any duties ... you have to choose what you learn and what you want to learn, and it was strictly vegetarian, so a lot of Jewish children were sent there from London. Also there were ambassadors' children and people who travelled the world and couldn't stay in London sent their children there, and we had a lot of connection with it, because I became friendly with one of the house mothers there, Mrs Abayme, she was English, but she was married to a Biafran, and she sent me all the Jewish children. They came to us and we taught them, and we took them to Cheder with our children together, my children taught boys Bar Mitzvah and I think we also taught them Bat Mitzvah, some of the girls. So we had a great connection with that school. And one day she found a little girl and I tell you, how old she must have been, I think three years older than Myer, she must have been born in '43, '43 or something like that, and when we found her she was seven, and

Tape 4: 15 minutes 33 seconds

she had lost her father when she was six months old, in America, he was a soldier, who had been imprisoned and in prison he had suffered physically and when she was six months old he died. Her mother came from Manchester and her brothers brought her and her baby back to Manchester. From Manchester she went to live in London and in London she became very ill and the uncles decided at that age when she was seven that her mother couldn't look after her and they sent her to this school, St Christopher's, and the house mother told me about her, and she came, she was a poor little thing, and we felt very sorry for her. And her mother, in the meantime had had a nervous breakdown and was in hospital in London. So I asked Mrs Abayme to tell the uncles to come to us for tea next day when they next looked after her, and we offered to keep her with us, because she was terribly unhappy in St Christopher's. The others were not unhappy, she just, she couldn't stand it. She said "If you take me, there is another little boy who is also always crying, can you have him also?" She wanted to bring them all our to us. We said "No, he can come and visit and we will be friends with him", and she stayed with us, supposedly until her mother came out of hospital. And when her mother came out of hospital she came to visit us, and ... a charming beautiful girl. And she said she had a letter from the doctor to say that she is now home but she is unable to look after her child, can we keep her longer. So we, you know, we discussed all this with her uncles, and they said "Yes, if you don't mind." But I must tell you that they had said to us "It is not going to be easy with our sister. The girl is lovely but it is going to be difficult." And it wasn't very easy. We used to go and visit her and she used to make her come to London and we went on holiday she also came, but on the whole we managed to live amicably together.

And when we left Letchworth, in 1970, we decided we had to leave Letchworth, because we had a meeting and most of the families said they wanted to go to London, and many went to Israel, the community was going to be finished. Already we had terrible trouble to make a minyan once the Sassoons had gone, because the Sassoons also had a lot of visitors, and so did we, together we made another minyan, but when they were gone, number one we didn't have premises, so we took it in turns with family Shisha, once they davened with the Shishas and once they davened with us. And for a minyan, we need ten

people at least for prayers, I found on the train one man, a student from Cambridge, and my children were very embarrassed when I told them I started chatting him up, because he had a kippah on in the train, which was quite an eye opener for me. I thought he was going to a Yeshiva, in fact he was coming to Cambridge.

And I said "What are you doing in Cambridge?"

He said "Where all the Jewish kids are all the boys are wearing kippot."

"There is no anti-Semitism?"

And he said "No."

So I said "Why don't you come once? We have got a lot of young children and they need a bit of guidance." At the moment, since the Sassons have gone, we had no one to look after the kids.

My children said "He won't come."

Tape 4: 19 minutes 43 seconds

What can I tell you, he came with a friend, and from then on he came every Sunday afternoon and he said "Can I call it Bnei Akiva?"

I said "No, don't give it a name. Don't give it a political name; some people don't like Bnei Akiva."

He called it Letchworth whatever it was called, Melanie knows, she will remember, and we became very friendly with the boys, and when they realised that the Sassoons were leaving and we didn't have a minyan we could call on them at any time, with the greatest of pleasure, they came and stayed with us. They stayed with us and with the Schischas and the Kirsch, mostly over Shavuot. Because at Shavuot they had their main exams, and of course they couldn't take them, so they needed somewhere there to supervise them. The girls brought an older girl who had already finished, and she was in charge, and the boys were under Rabbi Feuchtwanger, but when the Sassons left I don't remember who then ... invigilating it is called, I don't remember who invigilated them, because Rabbi Feuchtwanger and Rabbi Sassoon they left together, but we made very close friends with these Cambridge boys.

RL: Who were they?

CF: Oh, I can tell you their names. One was, unfortunately he had an accident, he died, was Benji Cohen, one was, ad meir v esrim, Michael Wieselberg. Michael Wieselberg I found on the train, he brought along a boy, Victor Ross, then there was David Rowe, then there was ... Pearlman, I think Joseph and Chaim Pearlman, cousins of Benji Cohen from Sunderland. You must have known him? And then there was, oh I forget, many more, and girls as well.

I have a very nice story. There were two couples used to come from Cambridge. A boy and girl. And Rabbi Feuchtwanger said to me "You know these couples? Are they engaged?"

So I said "I don't think so."

So he said "Well they need to become engaged."

So I said "Well are you going to tell them?"

And he said "No, you are going to tell them"

So when they came next time, I bought them into my husband's study and I said "I have a message from Rabbi Feuchtwanger, I hope you don't mind, he told me to tell you ... Are you engaged?"

So they said "No."

"He would like you very much to get engaged.

So they looked at each other and they said "Okay." And they got engaged and they got married and we went to both weddings. Really we had a wonderful time. And the last Bar Mitzvah we made was Myer's Bar Mitzvah. We made it in Letchworth still, and shortly after that he went to Israel to a yeshiva in Nachalim. But before that, I forgot to tell you, that when Melanie became 12, Rabbi Feuchtwanger, Rabbi Feuchtwanger had made a previous remark, at Chaim's Bar Mitzvah, Chaim was born in '50, so this must have been in 63. He said "It is wonderful to be here with the Fachlers, and the next," and he looked around and he said "Melanie's Bat Mitzvah."

Tape 4: 23 minutes 23 seconds

And I said Rabbi Feuchtwanger, since when do we make Bat Mitzvahs?" So he said "Well, this is the time to start." So after her Bat Mitzvah, all the girls in Letchworth had a Bat Mitzvah, until then, they didn't, and it made such a difference to the girls, an unbelievable difference.

RL: You didn't mention cheder. Where did they ... ?

CF: Cheder was at the Sassoons, they had special accommodation, and they brought teachers in from London, all kinds of teachers. Some were very good, some were not so good, but there was also tuition for the children

RL: How often did they have Cheder?

CF: On Sunday.

RL: Each Sunday?

CF: Yes.

RL: And the Sunday afternoon activity, was that like a youth group?

CF: Yes, a youth group. They sang, people came and taught them songs, they told them stories about the bible, it was wonderful. I remember mostly it was in the garden. The weather was always good in Letchworth. The kids were always sitting in the garden, and a lot of children, whose parents didn't even come to the service, came to this group, it was quite famous.

RL: What other Jewish groups or societies were there?

CF: The only other thing was B'nai Brit. And my husband was a founder member, but it was the Luton branch. Letchworth didn't have it.

RL: There was a branch in Letchworth? Or was this it?

CF: No, whatever happened happened in Luton.

RL: Was there any other kind of communal activity of any description?

CF: Only the Shabbos Kiddush, that was the highlight of the week, and everybody could come, and we didn't ask them how they came, they came. And it was very interesting, very political, big fights, labour against the others, and you know people were very fiery about their political opinions and disagreed many times but then they all had a good drink, and a nice fish and whatever and herring and cakes and cheese cake and that was the end of the arguments. And once we even had Shirley Williams in the house,

Tape 4: 25 minutes 42 seconds

because a lot of the people were very friendly with her, from the labour party, I believe it was then the labour party and they said "wouldn't it be nice if she came to visit", and she came, it was very, very nice.

RL: Ahhhh. So yes, was there anything else about life? How did you get on with the non Jewish community there?

CF: Beautifully. Look, the shopkeepers, they all relied on the Jewish clientele, you knew that the Sassoons, I mean the flowers and the food that they consumed, was all, unless it was the kosher stuff, the fruit and vegetables and all that sort of thing was all from local Letchworth people. And we did our shopping in the shopping parade. There were a few Jewish shops down there, there was an upholsterer called Abrahams, one of his sons still lives in Letchworth now. There was another shop, also a Jewish owner. In Hitchen there was the Kirglove Company that was the Kirsch, family Kirsch, they made gloves. Two brothers, and the parents, directly after the Sassoons came to Letchworth the Kirsches came to Letchworth, and the two boys got married and their children belonged to the group of course, their girls were about Melanie's age. And the Pollack were also about Melanie's age. The girls were a bit younger but they stuck together very, very nicely.

RL: Yes, I was asking about relationships with non Jews.

CF: Very good. We had neighbours on either side, extremely nice people. They had a little boy the same age as ... Who was it? Myer, on one side, and on the other side a lovely lady, very sophisticated and well educated and we were on very good terms. Across the road on Sollershott East we found a family, again through the children, they were at school together, and we found out that she had been a Jewish girl, from the East End, and I found out that, you know, she used to go to the library and bring books. And

the books she brought me were so Jewish, with Jewish interest. And one day I said to her "How do you know?" And she said, "I am telling you, I come from a Jewish family from the East End". And I am still friendly with them now.

RL: Are they still there?

CF: Yes, they are still here. They have moved but they are still in Letchworth. When we go to Letchworth, when we go to Letchworth, unfortunately most of our friends have died so we don't really go to Letchworth so much now, but our children go and they take their children with, Letchworth is still very important to them.

RL: You were mentioning to them the Sassoon household. How big a household was this?

CF: They had an enormous household. They had with them people from India, dark, very dark, the old couple, their children and their grandchildren. There were ... two,

Tape 4: 29 minutes 12 seconds

four, six ... and they were like their servants, but they treated them like one big family. Rabbi Sassoon had two sons. The first one had a boy and a girl, so that is ... but they had visitors from London, I mean ... every week, they could have been ten visitors. Family members, people from Baghdad, people who had come later, all very interesting people, so they had an enormous, and they had cleaners and washer women, and all kinds of employees there. It was the talk of the town I would say.

RL: What did the Sassoons do?

CF: They didn't do anything as such. They inherited a lot of books and Judaica from his father in Baghdad, and I think that sometimes they had sales, and I think that was their income, most likely they had other monies also, but we know that they had sales of their goods.

And when they moved into a house in Jerusalem, it must have been in the mid sixties, they bought a big house, we very often visited them, and they had their own Shul and again they had another entourage there, with all kinds of ... but no more servants, they had people there but not the original ones and when they went to Israel they made their own Aliyah.

RL: So you eventually decided to leave ...

CF: We had to leave because we didn't have a minyan. We made a meeting with all the Jewish families. Some said they were going to Israel, some said they were going back to London. We said we were going to Israel but in between we had first to go to London, so we decided, we all left, at around about the same time. Now, the Kirsches had two girls, and when they wanted to go to London, they put a deposit on a house in London and they

were hoping to sell their house and enrolled the girls into a big girl's school in Hampstead Garden Suburb. I can't remember a famous girl's school. And then it all fell through, their house fell through and the one they had chosen fell through and she didn't want to take the children out of the school back to Letchworth because she would lose their place, it wasn't so easy to get them into that school. So she asked me would I find someone who would have the girls during the week. And I gave her a few addresses but she phoned me back, she said "It's not suitable". So I said "You know Janet, I will tell you what. Let them stay with me. My house is empty; I have only got my little one." My little one was born in 67, so when we were get to 67, and he was five when we left Letchworth. I said "That is all I have got, one little boy. All my children are either in Carmel College or in Israel." Suzy, when we moved, this girl that we took with us and we kept her with us to the end and then she went to her mother, there was nowhere else for her to go. We couldn't keep her, we had a small flat, but we had an enormous bedroom and we put a Chinese screen there. Yossi slept in this corner and the girls slept there, and they got on like a house on fire. And they were with us until they finally sold their house and bought a house in London, and that friendships, you know, I am their auntie, it was lovely, it was wonderful with them.

Tape 4: 33 minutes 19 seconds

RL: Where did you buy in London? Where was it?

CF: On the Finchley Road, Dunrobin Court.

RL: And it was a flat?

CF: It was a flat, yes. A tiny kitchen, when I saw the kitchen I thought I can't do any cooking here, I can't make parties here, and I can't make anything. My sister's eldest son got married and she said "He is expecting you to make Sheva Brachot."

I said "I can't."

She said "Why not?"

I said "Have you looked at the kitchen?"

She said "You have to, you must, you will get used to it."

And I rolled up my sleeves and I decided, right, I am going to do them. And people came to my door and I said "I am sorry I can't help you now, I am busy cooking, and I didn't let them in."

And I got used to it and I made sheva brachot there, and I made Bat Mitzvahs there, and I made engagement parties there, in this tiny little kitchen.

In the meantime our eldest son had got married, to an Israeli girl, and I was already pregnant with Yossi, so this was the year 66, Chanuka 66/67 that he got married, and we all went to Israel for this wedding. It was very exciting, very, very nice. And my friends that knew me in Israel said "Chava, you have put a lot of weight on?" I was pregnant with Yossi and I had a lovely maternity dress that somebody gave me, gold, gold colour, and they couldn't believe that I was having a child. I was 44 then. And he was born when I was 45, and he, when we went to London, he was born in February 67, and our grandson, our first grandson, our eldest son's boy, was born in the same year, in October,

so they grew up like twins, and very often they used to come still to Letchworth, in the last few months of our Letchworth stay, and they grew up like twins these two little ... like brothers, these two little boys. So we had our first grandson.

RL: Did your children, your boys, all go to Israel from Carmel College?

CF: Yes.

RL: Right. And what did they do in Israel when they went?

CF: Most of them went to the Yeshiva. The eldest one had gone, with his wife together, to University Brunel in London, and they got their degree in Industrial Psychology.

Tape 4: 36 minutes 14 seconds

The second boy, a very clever boy. I mean the second child died but our third son was Marcus Mordechai. He went to the yeshiva. He is very, very orthodox. And, but we wanted him very much to go to university. He had the entrance, he had very good marks and he could have gone to Cambridge, but he decided not to go and to stay in learning, and he got married in, they have got their anniversary now. When did they get married? About 34 years ago, something like that, in Israel also. To the daughter of my best girlfriend, and she is not so well now, but she lives in Jerusalem, and we phone each other and we see each other and we are now machutonim, machutenistas. And he has asked to go to South Africa to a kolel. By that time they had two little boys. And he went, and for three years supposedly. It wasn't very easy, it was in fact very difficult to begin with, but in fact he became very fond of South Africa, and so did his wife. And they stayed much longer, and there they had a third child, a little boy, and no one went from the family to visit them. So my husband said to "Someone has to go, either you or me." So we decided that I was the best one to go. So I was working in London in the Etz Chaim Yeshiva, as a secretary, and I also did a bit of cooking when the cook couldn't cook. So I got another job in the afternoon with the marriage guidance council on the Finchley Road, in order to help me pay the fairs. And I went via Frankfurt, which I really didn't want. But the only good thing there was that on the way home we met up with Anna, our nanny, our German nanny, who came with her sister's niece to the airport, and we had a big reunion there, we cried more than we talked, and it was wonderful, that was the ... and we had a fantastic time in South Africa. I loved it there, and I could see how happy they were there, and then our son became a Rabbi in the community. He left the kolel but he still had lots of connections there, and she became a teacher in one of the schools. Until it became really bad for them, about five years ago they decided to come to London, and they live in London now.

The middle boy, to whose wedding we all went to his wedding, in South Africa, he got married to a lovely South African Jewish girl, they live in London. But the eldest and the youngest, they youngest is the one whose brit I attended, the youngest, they live in Modi'in and the oldest one lives in Alon Shvut. He is married to an English girl in Alon

Shvut and the little one ... we call him the little one, but he is not so little any more, to an American girl. They are very happy, lovely children, so my children have got three grandchildren in Israel and two in London, all boys, only one girl. So that is the second one.

Chaim, the third one, he also had entrance to Manchester University actually, but he also didn't want to take it and he decided to go to yeshiva after the Mira Yeshiva he went to another yeshiva in Tifrach and he married my sister's niece. Her ... my sister's late husband and our daughter in laws late husband were brothers. So my sister was auntie to both sides. But as children they never met. We had many pictures when he was with us and when she was with us, but they never hardly met. Until they went out with one another and they live in Israel now, in Netanya, and they went on aliyah, and they have got five children and many grandchildren, Baruch Hashem.

Tape 4: 41 minutes 6 seconds

RL: Yes.

CF: Now Melanie went to the Michlala, she had to learn Ivrit with the Rebbetzin Feuchtwanger because she needed it, and it was very difficult to get in to the Michlala in Jerusalem, and she went, and after school, after ... she also went to college in Stevenage, to do a degree and, to do her A levels, sorry, she didn't want to do them in two years like the Hitchin Grammar School expected her to, and they wouldn't let her do it in one year, so she found this college in Stevenage where she could do it in one year. She took three subjects, and I think she came out with two As and a B, in mathematics. And then she went to the Michlala, and maybe, we when we were, I must go back now to 1971. In 1971 we still lived in Dunrobin Court. My husband decided to buy an apartment in Israel. And the, our, Marcus Mordechai, the one who married my best friend's daughter, was looking to find an apartment, in Jeruaem, as near to the border as possible, and he found an apartment on Sderot Eshkol, on Sderot Eshkol, Ramat Eshkol, and we bought it, it was very, very reasonable in those days, so the children all had a home there, even if we weren't there. They all got married and lived in that place until they found their own place. All of them, except for the youngest one, I am coming to that.

And Melanie got into the Michlala, she had lodgers with her in Ramat Eshkol, in our flat, mostly Americans but also she had an English girl. That worked out very well, and she got married to another friend's son, from Manchester, from here. And he was also in yeshiva, in Beer Yaakov, where Mordechai was also. The same yeshiva and the same Rabbonim and they adored them, their Rabbonim. And she also got married and lived in our apartment. She got married in Israel and lived in our apartment. She got married in Israel and lived in our apartment for a couple of years, and then she, we helped her, and his parents helped to buy a flat. By the way Mordechai also bought a flat, on the other side of town, but she went to chabad, near shikkun chabad, and she bought a flat very high up, no lift, but she managed, and she had there two girls and a boy. And when she was expecting the next boy she realised she couldn't do it any more, she was then teaching, and it was too much. And the money she gave to the metapelet, to the

babysitters, mostly ate up the income that she made on teaching. So he decided he would look for another kolel in England, or in Holland, he went without looking, and he decided in the end to go to Glasgow. There was a kolel there ran by Rabbi Bamberger and Rabbi Weiss, and they went there, she was expecting number four, and I came up every time she had a baby. And I visited her when my husband went to Israel, I visited her mostly, I didn't go with him, and so she had her fourth child in Glasgow.

RL: What was her married name?

CF: Klyne, K-L-Y-N-E. Her parents in law lived here; they had a big house on the main road, Lesley and Toby Klyne. Lesley unfortunately passed away, but Toby, ad meir v esrim, she is fine, a grandson of hers is getting married either today or tomorrow in London.

Tape 4:45 minutes 35 seconds

RL: So where does Melanie live now?

CF: Melanie lived in Glasgow, until after she had, she had four children, the last one, the fourth one was born in Glasgow, and then she had a daughter. She had two girls and two boys, and then a daughter, still in Glasgow. And then another boy, and one of her sons, the children needed schooling. The girls needed to go to a proper school, they didn't send them to school, the ladies of the community, mostly were teachers, they had a little school that they, where they taught the children, but there were only one or two or three kids in each class, but they got very good tuition and we didn't even realise it, because when they moved to London, and went into the Beis Yaakov schools the girls, everyone was amazed at how clever they were, at how much they had learnt in Glasgow, without going to a real proper school. So it was very successful.

Our son in law had various options, but he decided to go as headmaster into a school called Torah Tmima, in London, and he is still there. And my daughter teaches in Beit Yaakov, and her eldest daughter got married, and she lives in Jerusalem. She has got four little girls. She married a Posen, Avraham Posen. The second one got married and lives in Kiryat Sefer, she has got four children. The third one, her first son, he married a daughter of Rabbi Weiss, the Rosh Yeshiva of Glasgow and lives in Jerusalem. And they have got three little girls, and then she has another son married to Rabbi Zahn's daughter from Sunderland and Gateshead and they live in Jerusalem. Her daughter just got engaged, Freyda, I have got even a picture.

RL: We will look at the pictures later maybe ...

CF: Will we?

RL: Yes.

CF: I haven't got a lot of pictures. And ... now I have forgotten what I have said ...

And she is engaged to a boy and Please God they are getting married in December, and they are going to live in Israel. I don't know where, it depends on what Yeshiva he wants to go to. So she is now left at home with three boys, one is 16, one is 14 and one is nearly 10. That is her story. He is still in Torah Tmima and she is teaching the top class in Bet Yaakov.

Now we come to Myer. Myer was supposed to go to university in London. He didn't like it at all, he left, without really telling us and went to Jews College, and he enrolled himself in Jews College, and we were already living in London then, it was after all the others had gone to Israel, Yossi was then the only child at home. Yossi was in Nechalim, no Myer was in Nechalim. Then he came back to London. He had a place at university but he didn't like it and then to Jews College and he did his degree in Jews College. And we used to go every Yomtov to Israel and of course he came with us, and

Tape 4: 49 minutes 43 seconds

he was asked to go to Russia, and he went twice to Russia with various people and the second time he went to Russia, someone suggested a young lady for him, from Jerusalem, a professor's daughter, also originally they came from Germany, on both sides, both grandparents, his parents and her parents, and they got married and about ... the girl was twenty and a half, about 22 or 23 years ago, in Jerusalem and they also lived in our place to begin with. And they also spent some time in England and he worked for the Chief Rabbi and she did a degree in Jews College, and then they came back, they came back with three children, and I used to go their house every day to look after the children while she was at university, and cook and take them to kindergarten and bring them home, every day in London. I had a marvellous time, and now they live here in Baka, in the meantime they have six children, two girls and four boys, and the eldest girl is twenty and a half, and the next boy is in Hesda Yeshiva and the next one will be next year in Hesda Yeshiva, and then they have got another boy and a little boy, six altogether, I hope I have left nobody out. That is Myer.

And then we come to Yossi, Yossi was in Netiv Meir, in the Yeshiva in Jerusalem, where he wasn't very happy at all. But he got used to it, and I also spent a lot of time in Jerusalem, then with him so that he shouldn't be so homesick, he was really very homesick. And when we came back to London he belonged to a youth group called Hmmm How could I forget?

RL: I don't know.

CF: Sinai, I think it was, he was a big macher in it, he was a madrich, he was ... he had ... he was in charge of the camp, and there he met a young lady called Sarah Hass. Her father is the famous Chazzan, Shimon Hass, and her mother unfortunately she died quite a few years ago, Elaine, and they got married, that was the first wedding they made. They had to, he was a Rabbi, so they had to make ... he was a chazzan, so they had to ... in the West End ... so then they came to London, but then they came to Yerushalayim and lived in our place while we were still in London. And unfortunately, during the Gulf

War, they were in Israel, I came back from London during the Gulf War, to be with my children, I couldn't really bare to think that they weren't going to, that they were going to be by themselves there, and I knew that nothing would happen in Jerusalem, I was convinced a lot of people were very scared. I didn't stay at home by myself; I stayed with Myer in Baka. Myer was called up to the army, and I slept downstairs with the children. I said wake me up when the sirens went because I didn't hear it. And it was very difficult, we had to put the babies into containers and we had to put gas masks on, it was hard, very hard time for them, but I was there that Purim when the Gulf War was over and Boruch Hashem everything was fine.

And, Yossi was in Netiv Meir and then he went to another Yeshiva, I can't remember the name. He wasn't, he wasn't ... Where did he do his exams? I think he did it in

Tape 4: 54 minutes 30 seconds

Nechalim. Yes, I know that he was, he went to Rabbi, he is still in yeshiva now, in Jerusalem, near the Wolfson ... that is where Yossi finished learning, carried on learning. And then her parents, Sarah's parents were very ill, after the Gulf War they decided that they had to come back to London to look after them, and unfortunately her mother passed away and she looks after her father and she still looks after her father.

Now they were married for 13 years and they had no baby until they had been married for 13 years they had a little girl, who is now nearly two, on Rosh Hashanah she will be two and she is the apple of all our eye and Boruch Hashem they are very pleased about that.

RL: So are they living in London still?

CF: Yes.

RL: And what does Yossi do?

CF: Yossi does all kinds of things. He does a lot of teaching, lecturing. He was actually together with Rabbi Shaw, on behalf of the Chief Rabbi, because Rabbi Shaw wrote a book called "60 days for 60 years, Holocaust" A very interesting book. And they wanted to go around the world, the Chief Rabbi wanted them to go and tell communities that they should also do something like that, books in their country, the idea was to ask a lot of people, I think sixty people, to write what they thought about the holocaust, and that is what Rabbi Shaw did, and they went round with that book, selling it, and as an example that the community should do a similar thing, and collected money for other books, and they went first ... they started off in Hong Kong, and then they went to Australia, and then they went to ... one more place ... America ... Yes. And the report is coming soon and we are looking forward to reading it because we haven't had time to talk with Yossi about his terrific experiences while he was there.

RL: Ok. This tape is about to end so if we just stop.

CF: Okay.

TAPE 5

RL: This is the interview with Chava Fachler and this is tape 6. [THE INTERVIEWER GOT NUMBERS WRONG, THIS IS ACTUALLY TAPE 5]

You were just finishing off telling me about Yossi and what he has been doing and in the meantime if we could catch up with your life. I mean, we have got you in London, in the flat, and you mentioned in passing that you had started working, but if you could just tell me a bit about you. We will catch up with your life now.

CF: Yes. Rabbi Gabbay who had married Moselle Feuchtwanger in Letchworth said to me that his secretary in yeshiva was leaving, and would I like to be the secretary in Etz

Tape 5: 0 minute 45 seconds

Chaim, the yeshiva in Bridge Lane, so I did, and I did various other things. I looked after old ladies, very good friends, I had to fill in my day, because I only had Yossi, and he was in Pardes House and he didn't even come home for lunch, so I was really, I didn't know what to do. I had no garden, so I couldn't be busy in the garden like I used to be in Letchworth, so I started to work in Etz Chaim.

In the meantime, I told you that we had a grandson, the first grandson, and they had moved very near to Dunrobin Court, just across the road, so we were together with them until they went on aliyah, it must have been in the early seventies, about one or two years after we came. And they lived in Petah Tikvah, and they had another child, Amit, and we went to Israel for his brit and his ... his brit. And he now lives in his parents old flat, he is married to a lovely girl and they have a little boy called Uri, that is Yanky's family.

So I worked in Etz Chaim, and I told you that I worked when the cook couldn't be there, I was also the cook, and I enjoyed it very much indeed. And I went to shiurim and I went to visit friends and I had a really full life.

RL: Where did you daven?

CF: We davened in Shomrei Hadass, on the Finchley Road ... and we used to, like in the olden days take all the people back to us for a Kiddush, so, there was a boarding house, a little hotel across from, a bit further up from the Shul.

I must tell you about the Shul, it was in a very old building, very dark, it used to be a church and they turned it into a synagogue, but they decided that they would have to build us a new Shul, and they would build it around the corner of the old building, and the old building wasn't allowed to be dismantled, but they dismantled it inside and made it into flats, so now we had a brand new Shul around the corner, Shomrei Hadass, and we had a lot of friends there because a lot of them had lived previously in Letchworth. So

we were very happy in the Shomrei Hadass. And our son, Mordechai who was in South Africa, after a few years in London, they asked him to be the Rabbi there, and he is the Rabbi there, of our old Shul in Shomrei Hadass, Rabbi Mordechai Fachler. They bought a house, between our, they bought a house, within good walking distance, and we have got an apartment in 117 The Vale, so when we go to England we stay there, we have a place to stay. That is our address, 117 The Vale, ten minutes walk to Marcus and Naomi, and that is very nice, but for Shabbat we usually stay with our daughter, the one, you know, the one you know ... our one and only.

RL: You were working in the Yeshiva ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: And was your husband still a butcher?

Tape 5: 4 minutes 40 seconds

CF: My husband had a butcher shop ... yes ...

RL: In Luton.

CF: Yes.

RL: So you still commuted.

CF: Yes. Then one day there came a new Rabbi to the Yeshiva, to Etz Chaim, and his wife was going to take over the office. So again I didn't know what to do, and a friend of mine said "You love cooking; you are good at cooking, would you like to work in Harmony Close, cooking for schools and for people who can't cook by themselves. There were two or three at the time, and about, quite a few ladies and gentlemen on their own who had food sent, I don't know whether the government had anything to do with it, but I know you could get kosher meals, through your doctor, if you are medically unfit to cook by yourself. And although I had cooked in the yeshiva and in the kibbutz a long time ago and at home, but this still this wasn't for hundreds ... and I cooked for a hundred and something people every day. There were two ... I was employed, and there were two or three other ladies employed, very nice staff, we got on extremely well, and I really enjoyed myself. I had to be there very early in the morning, my husband dropped me on his way to Luton, but when I came back I managed to make my own way home.

RL: What was Harmony Close?

CF: Harmony Close is an elderly people's housing estate, called Harmony Close, off the ... mmm ... in Golders Green, very famous, everybody knows it, I can't remember off which street it is, not far from Bridge Lane, round the corner from my Yeshiva.

RL: And were there big kitchens there?

CF: Huge kitchens! Huge machines, mixers and everything there. Huge ovens, we had people working under us and people ... volunteers also there, who did it out of the goodness of their heart, but I was employed, I carried on with my insurance from the yeshiva, I had a card and everything. And I got, when I finished, when I retired, I will tell you in a minute why, I got a pension.

RL: Which schools were you cooking for?

CF: North West London and I really don't remember what other schools ... three schools, and the meals, the single meals, which were collected, also by volunteer staff. I can't remember. And my husband was still in Luton and about two years after I started in Harmony Close, two or two and a half years, my husband's secretary was not well and left, and he said "I need a secretary, I need you" and I told them, I gave my notice in, and I said "I won't leave you until you have found someone to take my place. They

Tape 5: 8 minutes 18 seconds

could not find anybody to take my place, they said "This is not a job for one, it is a job for two, and we haven't got even one, never mind two." And they had to close down Harmony Close, they cooked somewhere in Edgware Later, but the schools had to find their own cooks. They only cook for the meals on wheels department ... of the ... as far as I know.

RL: So when was this? When did you go and work for Harmony Close?

CF: Melanie was in Glasgow already, because I remember going there when Yitzchak was born, and Yitzchak is now 17.

RL: So ... 1988?

CF: I was in Harmony Close.

RL: And how long were you there?

CF: I was there for about two years, something like that, until my husband needed me in Luton, and then he would take me up to Luton every day, and I usually came home on my own, earlier than he, on the train, because in the meantime a very good friend of ours, who had also been in Letchworth, had passed away, and her husband had asked us to stay with him and look after him. So we moved from Dunrobin Court, we had been in another flat in the meantime. And we moved into this house, and we took over this house, we had a cleaner, but I did all the cooking for him, and we got on extremely well, he was like an uncle, you know ...

RL: What was his name?

CF: Bornstein, Sali Bornstein. And he had a son, Yehoshua, who got married to an Israeli girl, and they bought the house next door to them, and they also waited for about ten years before they had a child, and then they had a little boy and he is now twenty and a half, the same age as our granddaughter, Myer's eldest child, twenty and a half... and

RL: Where was his house?

CF: In Highfield Gardens ... Highcroft Gardens ...

RL: In Golders Green?

CF: In Golders Green, Yes ...

RL: Aha ...

Tape 5: 11 minutes 2 seconds

CF: Then they bought, the young couple bought a big house, and made him a flat downstairs, and we got a council house, we were on a list for a council house and we moved to Bray, in Hampstead, West Hampstead, but we still managed to go to the Shomrei Hadass. And we made a lot of friends down there, in Bray, in the council flat.

RL: So you had moved from Dunrobin Court you say to another flat ...

CF: Yes.

RL: And then into the ...

CF: Into a house ... we moved into the Bornstein's, and then into the council flat.

RL: And when was that? When did you move into the council house ... council flat?

CF: It must have been about 18 years ago ... 17 or 18 years ago. I am thinking how old the boy was when we moved.

RL: So again ... about 1988.

CF: Uhu ...

RL: The same time as you started to work in Luton?

CF: I ... yes ... I went from there to Luton. From the Bornstein's house.

RL: Uhu ... uhu ...

CF: That was about the same time ...

RL: Quite ... yes ... right. And how long did you work in Luton?

CF: Until my husband sold the shop. And then we went on Aliyah.

RL: And when was that?

CF: 1970.

RL: No, it must be more than that.

CF: No, because we came back again. We tried to go on aliyah and we came back again and we stayed in Bray until we sold Bray ...

RL: Let me ... I lost track, lost the plot a bit here. So when did you first make Aliyah?

Tape 5: 13 minutes 10 seconds

CF: When...when that house was being built. And that was when Chaim got married. Chaim is now ... he was born in 50, and he got married in 70 or something like that.

RL: Right. And you made aliyah at that time?

CF: At that time we tried to make aliyah. We had the flat, we had an apartment in Ramat Eshkol, and we tried to make aliyah. My husband had an arrangement with a friend, with a butcher, to carry on his business, but it didn't work out, so we had to come home again. But we never left the flat empty in Ramat Eshkol because all the children, one after the other stayed there.

RL: So how long were you in Israel?

CF: Not very long. We realized ... maybe a year, we realised that it wasn't working out. And my husband didn't want to lose his connections there, so he carried on in Luton with me and then he ... maybe my husband should tell you that when you interview him, if there's time, to tell you all the details, because we managed to sell the property in Luton and then we went on aliyah properly.

RL: And when was that?

CF: If you are talking about the first aliyah, the thirteen odd years, he has a better memory than I ...

RL: The second time when he sold everything, when was that?

CF: That is what I am trying to think.

RL: Right ... right ...

CF: And we sold Dunrobin Court ...

RL: Right ...

CF: That is when we made the first aliyah ...

RL: Yes.

CF: We managed to sell Dunrobin Court.

RL: So when you came back ...

Tape 5: 15 minutes 20 seconds

CF: After that we came back to Bray, to a council house.

RL: So you had a council house from then ...

CF: Yes.

RL: And ... but you lived with Mr Bornstein after that?

CF: I lived with Mr Bornstein when they built him the flat in the house, his children ...

RL: Ah, yes ...

CF: Then we moved to Bray.

RL: Then you moved to Bray ...

CF: And I will tell you, when we left him, that was 18 or 19 years ago, because Myer was in London then and Avinoam was born and he was a baby, and we looked after him. He is now 19.

RL: Right. So when did your husband retire from the business in the end.

CF: That is when we went on the proper aliyah.

RL: Uhu ...

CF: Let's go back the 19 years, what were ... how old were ... what year would that be?

RL: Well, it is 2005 now, so 1986 would have been 19 years ago, 1986.

CF: Shortly after that we came on the real aliyah, we made the real aliyah.

RL: So we have got our dates a little bit wrong then. I have got down here that you became secretary to your husband in Luton in 1988. So ... you were still working for your husband in Luton in 1988, but you have just said in 1986 you made aliyah ...

CF: Yes there is ... yes ...

RL: It must have been later ...

CF: I will ask him ...

RL: Yeah ... and you went to your flat in Israel?

Tape 5: 17 minutes 19 seconds

CF: Uhu ...

RL: Yes ... and how did you settle down there?

CF: Beautifully. We had children there and grandchildren there and we used to entertain a lot, and I went to shiurim, I still do, I went to Israel Centre to shiurim, I made lots of friends. Everybody said "You won't make friends at your age, you won't make friends." But I did. The whole house were friendly with next door and all around there in Sderot Eshkol. And we had a Kiddush nearly every Shabbat. And the Shul is in the miklat, in the shelter, which is in, on our floor, you go out to the right, and the wall of my yard is the wall of the Shul, so near we are to it. It is a small Shul, sometimes there is standing only, I am very happy there.

RL: Did you speak Ivrit?

CF: I learned to speak Ivrit because I had a friend who came from Argentina and she couldn't speak English. I did have a bit of Ivrit and I had to practice really, because unfortunately a lot of my friends don't speak ... they speak English, so we speak a lot of English. But now we have a new granddaughter in law, they have just had a little boy, and she cannot speak any English, and with her I can really converse in Ivrit, especially if there is nobody else there, and I get on extremely well with her in Ivrit. So that is really my only Ivrit speaker in the family. And the grandchildren, some don't speak English, so I have to speak Ivrit with them also.

RL: Have you done anything work wise in Israel? Or your husband?

CF: No, no. My husband also not.

RL: How does he fill his time?

CF: Oh, he is so busy. First of all he does all the shopping, in the market. Unfortunately he had in the meantime a pacemaker put in, lots of doctor appointments, he has also got diabetes so we have to be on a diet, and we have very good doctors, and we are very well looked after. We belong to an insurance for older people and they phone us up to find out how we are, and there are handy men, if anything goes wrong, a bulb goes or we need something mended he will come, and it costs hardly anything. It is wonderful, wonderful, wonderful welfare, what can I say.

RL: How often do you travel backwards and forwards?

CF: About three times a year. Roughly, you know. And, people don't understand how I do it. For instance we arrived in Israel on Thursday night, nearly Friday morning, we had to get up early, because at ten o'clock we were taken to go to Euston to come to

Tape 5: 20 minutes 31 seconds

Manchester, and my sister looks at me and she can't believe that I am sitting there smiling. She says "How do you do that?" I said "I don't know how I do it." But I have done it, Boruch Hashem. And my husband also, but he is a great help, without him a lot of things wouldn't be happening, so he is a great help. Now we get assistance to the plane, and when we change in London, the English welfare is also extremely good, but so is the Israeli.

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

CF: Look, I am a Yekker, I am not really, but I was brought up in Germany in a very Yekkish atmosphere. We came to London and I acclimatised to London and I made lots of friends. Then I went on hachshara, this is all my story. I have got lots of friends on hachshara, and a lot are in Israel now. Unfortunately we are all getting a bit older now and we are already lost a lot of people. So I have got so many identities. We still make reunions from the Frankfurt School; we had one about two weeks ago. A friend of ours, the Rabbis daughter from Frankfurt, originally married a boy from Strasburg and moved to Montreal. I have been to visit her there. She came to marry off her granddaughter in Jerusalem, and we have about five from our class that we were very much in touch with, but unfortunately only two could come, there was one was away, one wasn't well, the other one we couldn't get hold of, so we had a reunion with this girl from Montreal, and we were all about 83.

RL: How do you feel towards Britain? Where does being British ...?

CF: Look, I am very grateful, and so is my husband, for the Kinder Transport, and for the way we were received when we first came. We didn't come on the Kinder Transport but still, we were refugees, so called. And I have got a love hate relationship with them. I appreciate all they have done for us, really I do, and not just for me, for everybody. For

all of us who came out, and for the people from the Kinder Transport, but sometimes their politics are a bit painful.

RL: And how do you feel towards Germany?

CF: I can't quite forgive them. I am trying very hard. I have got this correspondence, I am sure I mentioned it. That we had a nanny and when she died I got a letter from her sister's niece, with all the letters that we had written to her, and, and in German, what she said was her inheritance. It didn't come directly, I told her I had these letters and I asked her to send them to me after a year or so, and when I was in Luton working for my husband, I started writing a book, and Yanky edited it, and it was called "The Four Cities", Frankfurt, London ... three cities, and Jerusalem. And my husband never wanted to talk about his past, and our children persuaded him, and about a year or so ago, he wrote his memories, and the son, Yanky, the eldest, he put my book, some of my experiences together into one book called "The Vow" and there is everything written that he wrote, and some stuff that I wrote is also in that book, for the family, or whoever

Tape 5: 24 minutes 45 seconds

wants. So I was busy writing, while I was in Luton I didn't have so much to do, there wasn't so much work for me, but he needed somebody.

RL: I was asking about your feelings towards Germany.

CF: Yes, this lady, started to write to me, and she was very good to our Anna, to our nanny, and she called her Tante Anna, Auntie Anna, and she loved her as much as we loved her, and she wrote that she thought she was a bit jealous of this love that Anna had for us, and she always thought that Anna loves us more than we loved her, but when she read the letters she realized that it wasn't right, that we loved her as much as she loved us, and she wanted to correspond with me, she still corresponds with me. But I have nothing against her as such, she is much younger but I hate to hear German on the television, on the radio, or anywhere else, I can't quite ... and although I went back to Frankfurt once with my husband, when Myer was about two, because I had an uncle and an aunt in Frankfurt, and my husband tried to get a lawyer to see if he could get any money from Berlin for his family and I had nightmares in Germany and although they took me everywhere and I vowed I would never return, the only time I came, was when I went to South Africa I had to change planes in Frankfurt. And once or twice we have been to Israel via Frankfurt with Lufthansa. That is as far as I go. All my family were invited to go to Germany, my sister also, we can't go, there is no reason really why I can go. There is nothing they can say that will make good what happened, in my humble opinion.

RL: You say when you were there you actually had nightmares ...

CF: Yes, I heard the Nazis marching, which in London I never had, as soon as I slept on German soil I heard the Nazis marching, like a little girl when I was in Frankfurt before I came.

RL: Have you heard ...

CF: I looked at everybody and I thought "Where were you? What were you doing? Were you one of the guards in the concentration camp?" I judged everybody and I am not going to do that again. My sister never went back, and she also feels just like me.

RL: Have you ever had nightmares since then?

CF: No.

RL: Do you think that your experiences affected you psychologically in any way?

CF: Look, I am not a psychologist. I have still got a good nature, I know that, I see myself; I compare myself sometimes to others who have had similar experiences. I must have been given by God a very good nature, I don't get panicky, I don't get scared, when

Tape 5: 28 minutes 10 seconds

we came to London the bombs, I didn't even hear them, my mother had to wake me up during the blitz. The same in the Gulf War here, when I was staying with my son, while he was in the army, with my daughter in law, I didn't want to put the gas mask on, but I did it, really to please her, but I was never scared as such, never scared. Maybe it is because, you know, I have had it good thank G-d, wherever we have been, we have experienced loving kindness, and I have got a lovely husband, one sister who lives in Jerusalem now, and her family. We are surrounded by children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, I never imagined this ever. My parents had, my mother met one grandchild, Yanky, she died the following year, the day after his birth. My father saw Melanie, that was the last one he saw, and a few of my sisters. But we have got grandchildren and great grandchildren, and there are some on the way now. Boruch Hashem.

RL: Did you ever get restitution?

CF: No, because we had South African passport. My grandfather came from Lithuania, went with his cousins to South Africa and took out South African nationality, and came back with this, with these passports, and my father was a South African. That is how we came out of Frankfurt. I am sure I told you about it.

RL: You did, you did, yes ...

CF: So ...

RL: You did ...

CF: If you have a South African ... and the funny thing is that my father went with me to South Africa House, when he was still alive, and wanted a British passport. So the fellow there said "Why do you want a British passport? Why do you need Britain altogether? Why don't you go to South Africa?"

So my father said "I have traveled enough now, I don't want to go anywhere, I want to stay in England."

He said "You will be sorry." And that was it and he gave us a British passport.

After my father died I thought I am going to go to South Africa House and try and see if maybe I can do something, so I saw the fellow there and he said "You have been here before. You came here with your father. What did I tell you? Now you want money? Didn't I tell you, you should go to South Africa?"

I said "Okay, okay, okay." He recognized me. Nothing. I got schooling money, everybody got, because my schooling was cut short, everybody got, we all got the same few hundred pounds, and I get a little pension now, from Germany, very little. It is all official, they know it in England, I get a little pension from England.

RL: You all took out British nationality?

Tape 5: 31 minutes 24 seconds

CF: Yes.

RL: Yes. Do you feel British in any way?

CF: It is hard to say. When I am in a crowd and I hear a really English speaker, I love it, then I would always find them and talk to them, you know "Where are you from?" and ... so on and so forth. I feel very comfortable with English people, and Canadians I also like, and South Africans. I like really everybody, but you know, the English come first.

RL: Did you ever have any contact with any refugee organisations, or join any refugee organisations?

CF: Well, my husband is a kind from the Kinder Transport, and he doesn't go to the meetings. I go, because I love going to the meetings and I meet all those old friends of ours there. In Israel, mostly, so I, we get the leaflets, and we belong to the HLB, that is also a refugee organisation, from Jerusalem, we get their leaflet and we pay money there, I am a member of Amit, I am a member of Emunah.

RL: Were you a member of Emunah here?

CF: No.

RL: Just in Israel?

CF: Yes.

RL: Yes. Here were you a member of any organisation, any refugee group.

CF: Not refugee, but when we were in London, Rabbi Schonfeld's Shul, Chaverim it was called, we belonged to that. And then when we went on hachshara, with chabad, I became a bachadnic, Brit Chalutzim Daatim, that is Amit, I was on hachshara, we got married on hachshara.

RL: Yes ... yes ... So Chaverim in London ...

CF: Yes ...

RL: That was a ...

CF: The Shul had a ... you know ... boys and girls together, in those days.

RL: Yes. Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

Tape 6: 33 minutes 40 seconds

CF: I just want to tell you about Susie. Susie, went to Israel and met there an American, and eventually they got married and they live in San Diego, and she has got three children, and when we had our fiftieth wedding anniversary last Chanukah she came and celebrated with us, and she stayed with us and we had the most fantastic time. All the children came, thank G-d, all the children that we could get a hold of, not all of them could come, but most of them came, and a few babies, great-grandchildren came, and we had a few friends, from the kibbutz that we knew, from England that we knew, and we had a very nice time, but the highlight was the speeches, especially Susie's speech, people are still talking about it, how she feels so connected with us, and her mother is very ill in Manchester, here in Heathlands, and my sister is the only one that who this lady will suffer, to visit. She has got family, and she doesn't want to visit them, a very difficult lady, and Susie comes to visit her once a year. But, she is a sad case, but, she gave us this lovely speech, and the other speech that stands out is from our youngest son's second child, Amit, he also spoke beautifully. And they made skits and sang funny songs, and it was a great party.

RL: And this was in Jerusalem?

CF: Yes ... yes ...

RL: How long did Susie live with you?

CF: Seven years.

RL: Seven years. Yes.

So any message you would like to finish with?

CF: Look, you have to be an optimist. Sometimes it is very difficult, but I think I was born an optimist; maybe I inherited it from him. My mother was always, we never saw her sad, and unfortunately she died very young, of cancer, but she never complained, a very sweet personality, and I must have inherited something like that, you know, that I am always looking at the bright side, lekaf zechut, we call it in Ivrit. Automatically, if someone accuses someone, I am straight away on there side, whatever, and my message is love your neighbour, you know. And of course we have become, now that we are, we have become big Zionists now, we weren't in Frankfurt, it wasn't the thing to do then. But we have become big Zionists now, we won't have a word said against the country, from either side and it is not always, it was very hard these last few weeks, with what was happening, but again I see how our grandchildren reacted. They went to help in the hotels, looked after the children night and day, every one of them, they went to Gush Kaitiff and cleared, helped clear the rubble. They are very involved. They are not with the orange fliers, but quietly they do their job, and this is what we would have done, had we been younger.

Tape 5: 37 minutes 23 seconds

RL: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

CF: Pleasure.

Photographs

This picture was taken roughly in 1920, two years after my parents were married, in Frankfurt, from left to right. My father, Samuel Becker, my mother, Melanie Becker, nee Friedmann. My aunt Rivka, nee Kahanaman. The sister of the Ponovitcher Rav, and the last one on the right, my Uncle Max, the younger brother of my father Max Becker.

This picture was taken in Letchworth, Hertfordshire in 1949. myself with two of our children, on my ... the first from the left is Yaakov Fachler, on my lap is David Fachler.

This picture was taken on 3rd December 1994, taken on Kibbutz Ein Tzurim, in Israel. The first on the left on the back row is Batsheva and her husband Yehuda. Batsheva is Chaim's youngest daughter. Myself and my husband, my husband's sister, Miriam Litke, and her husband Rabbi Litke.

Second row, first on the left, from left to right, is Susie Knight, who is now Susie Deutch, who was like our foster daughter. Chaim and Judith Fachler, our son and daughter in law. Yanky Fachler, our eldest son. Mordechai, our third son. Myer, our fifth son.

Third row, left to right, Gaby Fachler, ex South African, Mordechai's son, who was learning there. Dov Fachler, Hillel Fachler, Avinoam Fachler. Dov and Hillel are Chaim's children, Avinoam is Myer's and Rachel's child.

I didn't do the second row, I didn't do further after Myer.

RL: So, just continue on then. Do you want to start again from left to right?

CF: I will start again ... for some reason ...

RL: From the middle row ...

CF: Do the middle row again.

RL: Yes.

CF: From left to right. This picture was taken on 3rd December 94.

From left to right, back row, Batsheva and Yehuda Spectre, Chaim Fachler's eldest daughter. Myself, my husband, my husband's sister, Miriam Litke, and next to her, her husband Rabbi Litke.

Second row, left to right. The first one is Susie, Susie Knight, now Susie Deutch, our foster daughter. Chaim and Judith, Chaim is our son and Judith is our daughter in law. Yanky our eldest son, Mordechai our third son, Myer our fifth son, and his wife Michal.

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Yossi our youngest son, on his lap is Boruch Fachler, Myer's son and on Myer's lap is Ateret, Myer's daughter.

Third row, left to right, Gabby Fachler, Mordechai's son. Dov and Hillel Fachler, Chaim and Judith's sons. Avinoam Fachler, Myer's son. Amit Fachler, Yanky's second son. Yonadav Fachler, Myer's son, and next to him, his sister Tanya, the eldest girl of Myer and Michal, and behind them is Michal Fachler and Yonat Fachler, Chaim's daughters. Better than the first one, wasn't it, I left them out!

This picture was taken in Letchworth, in front of our old house in Sollershott East. From left to right, my husband, Avinoam, Boruch and Yonadav Fachler, son's of Myer. Myer Fachler, his daughter Ateret, his wife Michal, his daughter Tanya and his little one, Katriel.

RL: And the date?

CF: I think I said the date, no? It was dated last year, in the summer of 2004, outside our old house in Letchworth.

This picture was taken in Jerusalem. It was our fiftieth anniversary, 2004, Chanukah 2004, and the following people, from left to right. Behind the lady on the left is our son Yossi Fachler, Yosef Ephraim. The lady on the left in the next row is Melanie Malkah Klein, our daughter. Myself, my husband, our son Mordechai, our grandson Gedalia and the lady on the right is my husband's sister Miriam Litke.

We go from left to right, top, it was taken in 2004. Top left, Hillel Fachler, Yehuda Specter, Dov Fachler. Second Row, Yehuda Specter, his wife Michal, Michal Fachler

and behind her, her husband Yossi Hoffman. Batsheva Fachler, Batsheva Specter. Michali Fachler, Dov's wife.

From left to right, Judith Fachler, Chaim's wife, next to her, her mother Lottie Lopian. My husband and myself and Chaim Fachler, and at the bottom gracing all of us are Chaim's fifteen, I think, I am not counting, Chaim's grandchildren and our great grandchildren.

RL: Where was this taken?

CF: Keren B Yavneh, it was taken in Keren B Yavneh at the Pidyon Haben of Chaim's grandson, of Dov and Michali's boy called Benzion Aaron.

RL: And the year again?

CF: This year, 1905, 2005.

Tape 5: 44 minutes 13 seconds

This picture was taken in London in 2004, summer 2004, from left to right is Freyda Klyne who is a daughter of our daughter Melanie, and on the right is Tanya Rebecca who is the daughter of Myer Fachler, our middle son.