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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	78

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Linton
<b>Forename:</b>	Susi
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	21 June 1920
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Berlin, Germany

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	19 October 2004
<b>Location of Interview:</b>	Manchester
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Rosalyn Livshin
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	3 hours 22 minutes

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

**INTERVIEW: 78**

**NAME: SUSI LINTON**

**DATE: 19 OCTOBER 2004**

**LOCATION: MANCHESTER**

**INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN**

**TAPE 1**

**Tape 1: 0 minute 42 seconds**

RL: So, if you can tell me first your name?

SL: Susi Linton.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

SL: Susi Braun.

RL: Did you have any other names, any nicknames?

SL: No, one name, Susi.

RL: Did you have a Hebrew name?

SL: Sara.

RL: And where were you born?

SL: On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1920, in Berlin.

RL: Now, first of all, if you could first tell me your parents' names and where they were born?

SL: My parents - my mother was born in Berlin, my father was born in a place called Stargard, which belonged to Danzig. And after the First World War, it became Polish. And that's when my grandparents left the place to live in Germany.

RL: What were your parents' names?

SL: Margarete and Adolf Braun.

RL: And your mother's maiden name?

SL: Glück.

RL: Now, first of all, concentrating on your father's family, can you tell me about his parents and his brothers and sisters, or whatever you know about his family?

SL: My father, as I said, came from Stargard. He came to Berlin when he left school, to train, to study as a teacher. My grandparents were Isaac and Henrietta Braun.

RL: And do you know what your...?

SL: My father had one brother.

RL: Do you know what your grandfather did for a living?

SL: I can't hear.

RL: Your grandfather, do you know what he did for a living?

SL: I don't know.

RL: Yes.

SL: Because they were very old when I was born, and they didn't live in the same town.

RL: Did you...?

SL: They lived with my uncle in Silesia, so maybe I saw them once a year, but they both died when I was a small child. I can just remember my grandmother, but I can't remember my grandfather at all.

RL: What do you remember about your grandmother? What kind of image do you have of her?

**Tape 1: 3 minutes 1 second**

SL: She was a lovely, lovely lady. And, obviously, I was the only grandchild from this son. She had three other grandchildren from my uncle. But when I came, then I was very spoiled and very cherished.

RL: So, do you know what your uncle did for a living? Your uncle, what did he do for a living?

SL: My uncle, he went very early on to Silesia, and he got married with a lady from Breslau. And they had three children. And my uncle was in the, he had gown-shops, he did very well, they were very, very well-off. There were three children. The girl was the eldest, my cousin, who lives now in London and is 91 years old. The two sons, unfortunately, are not there anymore. The one son was sent, aged 16, to South America, to get away from Germany, to train, to learn some trade. He was so homesick that he committed suicide, which they never knew. I mean, we, I know it, my cousin knows it, but the parents never knew. They thought he just died of a tropical disease or something. The other cousin, who was, I think, two years older than I am, got married and then left for Holland. When the Germans came to Holland, they perished as well, so the only one left from that family was my cousin. My auntie and

uncle went in 1939 to Shanghai, that was the one place that still took Jewish people, and they stayed there right through the war. It was very, very difficult and, after the war, my cousin brought them over to England. So I had the joy to at least have my auntie and uncle in London. And they died a natural death many years ago.

RL: What were their names?

SL: Georg and Elise Braun.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing did your father have?

**Tape 1: 5 minutes 27 seconds**

SL: Not orthodox, but traditional. And my father, as I said, my father was a teacher and he was employed by the city of Berlin. In Germany, teachers had a higher status. They were employees of the state, they were like civil servants. My father was a very devoted teacher. And every school, every state school in Germany, had to have one Jewish teacher. And that teacher had to teach the Jewish children Hebrew and Jewish history, which my father did. He also worked for the Jewish community, which they would call here the Cheder, to give, to teach the children Hebrew and Jewish history. So, it was very traditional, not ultra-orthodox, but very traditional.

RL: Now, did he have to serve in the army in the First World War?

SL: My father, because that is all, when I was born, I was born after that war. My father, yes, my father was in the German Army and because then, when peace was declared or whatever, in 1918, my father went back to teaching. And my parents got married 1919, in Berlin.

RL: Did he ever tell you anything about his experience in the army?

SL: Well, he was just a normal soldier. I suppose, you know, he had to do his job, his duty, and it was, you know, nothing special. I think my uncle, who was also in the army, I think he's had the Iron Cross, which is like the Victoria Cross here. He had some sort of honour in the army, but of course it didn't mean anything at the end, did it? Didn't mean nothing.

RL: Your father didn't tell you any stories about -?

SL: You see, when I was, I was born 1920 and then they tried to forget about the war. Then he had to make a living as a teacher and my parents, as I said, got married 1919, and my mother came from a very comfortable background. She had two elder sisters, much older, one was twelve years older, one was fourteen years older. So my mother was already that spoilt child of that family. And, this, I was born 1920, and I had those two aunties, which absolutely cherished me. I was the only child of that family, from my maternal family, and I was very, I was spoilt, and I was cherished and I was protected and I had an idyllic childhood.

RL: Tell me a little more about your mother's family. Did you know her family?

SL: My mother's family was Julius and Doris Bock, no, Glück, Glück. The maiden name of my grandmother was Bock.

RL: And do you know what your grandfather did?

SL: I never knew my grandfather. He died also while I was still young enough to remember. He had factories and property, they were comfortably off. And my two aunts, one never married, and the other one was a very young widow. So there were no children from that family except me.

**Tape 1: 9 minutes 3 seconds**

RL: What kind of education did your mother have?

SL: Well, my mother went, what was in Germany, went to high school, and she went also in the- she was very gifted, and she made hats, she designed hats and that, you know - in the fashion business.

RL: So she was working as a hat-?

SL: No, she wasn't working anymore, that was before I was born. Since then, she hadn't worked.

RL: And what kind of religious upbringing did she have?

SL: Neither families were orthodox, but very Jewish-minded and keeping the traditional Jewish way. And, obviously, I was brought up Jewish. But in Germany we were somehow more assimilated than the English people are, the Jewish people are in England. So, we mixed with a lot of non-Jewish people, my father was very friendly with his colleagues, his non-Jewish colleagues. And he was actually, after being there sixteen years in one school, he would have been the next on the line to be the headmaster of that school, but of course this didn't happen.

RL: What happened to your two aunts? By the time war broke out, what happened to your mother's two sisters?

SL: My mother's two, well, my parents, I've only got recently more information, my parents were in Berlin until the third of March 1943. At that time, it was absolutely awful, that was when I was already in England. Jewish people had no ration cards, no telephone, no radios, not able to use public transport, it was sheer hell. But I'd like to come first to how I came to England.

RL: Right, I was just wondering about your two aunts.

SL: Yes.

RL: Whether they survived or not.

SL: No. My auntie survived actually, my two aunts survived. They were exchanged at the end of the war. They were in Theresienstadt camp; they were taken to Theresienstadt, together with my parents. And, they survived because of an exchange for Swiss prisoners, they were exchanged for some prisoners. They had to be over seventy, which my aunts were, my parents weren't, but my aunts were. And they went in 1946/47 to Switzerland. And they hired a hotel and put all the refugees in a beautiful hotel, which I visited later, to see them. And they actually told me the actual story, what happened with the transportation to

Theresienstadt and all the terrible details of their last years in Berlin. Of course, all through the war, I didn't know, I was cut off, I didn't know whether my parents were living or not living and it was very, very hard, very hard. Never get over it.

**Tape 1: 12 minutes 21 seconds**

RL: What is your earliest memory as a child?

SL: Well, I went, when I was, I think in Germany it was ten, when I was ten, I went to high school, non- Jewish high school, but it had a few Jewish pupils there. I went to high school. In 1933, my father got increasingly depressed, because he read *Mein Kampf*. And he knew it wasn't very good. Then, of course, Hitler came to power, and living in, well, I lived in Berlin, which probably wasn't as bad as small places, things became increasingly very bad for Jewish people. We couldn't go to the cinema anymore, that's my experience. And there was not the Yellow Star, not in my time in Germany, that was after. And then in 1935, I was expelled from school, they didn't want any more Jewish pupils. And at this time, there were three things happening at the same time, approximately 1936: I was expelled from school, aged between fifteen and sixteen; my father had to take retirement, forced retirement on a very small pension, and we got notice to quit our apartment, because Jews were no longer allowed to live in that building. So, there were three things happening at the time, which already was the beginning of very bad times.

RL: Can I just ask you, before we sort of go on to that in more detail, can I just ask you about your life before Hitler came to power?

SL: My life was ...

RL: And your memories of life then, before Hitler?

SL: My life before Hitler was very, very good. I was the only child, cherished, protected, I had everything. We had lovely holidays. My father had the same holidays I had at school, because he was a teacher. So even the small holidays we went away. My father loved travelling. We had lovely, lovely holidays. We had a very nice social circle, Jewish and otherwise. We had a lot of friends, I had a lot of friends, I had a wonderful childhood. Wonderful. Which made it all the worse, what had to come.

RL: What did you do in your spare time?

SL: What did I do in my spare time? Well, I visited friends and friends visited me and what do young Jewish girls do? I went to a Jewish youth club, it was called the German-Jewish Youth Club. And I remember they had the Hitler Youth already, with the yellow blazers, they used to wear the yellow blazers. So the Jewish group had navy blazers, we had white blouses and navy blazers. And we met at the synagogue hall, once a week. So that was nice, we were young, we had youth on our side, we tried not to think about politics. When you're young and happy, you don't think about politics. That was what my father did, my mother did, but I didn't. And we had lots of visitors, my mother was a wonderful hostess, we had lots of visitors, we had a very, very good life.

RL: Who did you play mostly with? Was it Jewish or non-Jewish children?

SL: I think more Jewish, I think. But quite a few non-Jewish, we had very good non-Jewish friends as well. They all disappeared.

**Tape 1: 16 minutes 6 seconds**

RL: Would you visit their homes and would they visit your home?

SL: Yes, yes, I had one or two non-Jewish girl friends, who did visit when I had birthday parties and we were very young, you know. What do young people do, young girls, you know? We had a normal happy life, which a young girl should have.

RL: Which was the first school you went to?

SL: The first school? I went to the primary, a primary school, which was also, there was also a Jewish teacher there, who taught us Hebrew. And then at ten, I left for the high school, had to pass an exam.

RL: Did it have a name, the high school?

SL: I can't remember, it was a state school, which were numbered, the schools. They were called, my father was in 161 school, they were by numbers, the schools. The high school I went to was called the Kleist Lyceum. And that was very near a synagogue, which we attended, the Levetzowstrasse. It's a very well-known area.

RL: Who was the Rabbi of that synagogue?

SL: I don't remember. I really can't remember.

RL: What kind of a synagogue was it?

SL: Here it would be like, compared like Wilbraham Road Synagogue, Manchester Synagogue, something like, very similar, actually. That's why, later on, I joined this Wilbraham Road Synagogue, because it reminded me a lot. But things already, going to that synagogue, we were told already, 'Don't stand around talking, get home'. And a very few threw bricks through the window then already, that was already 1934/35, it was already dangerous to go to synagogue.

RL: Whereabouts were you living in Berlin? Where were you living?

SL: I was living in a very nice area, which was called the Hansaviertel. It was near the river, the River Spree. There was big, a lot of bridges there, and we had a very nice apartment.

RL: Can you describe it? Describe the apartment?

SL: My apartment, I think we had three bedrooms, and then we had a little room, because people had maids in those days, which was off another corridor. And the kitchen was all white tiles, I remember all white tiles. Because we didn't have fridges then. We did have a fridge, but they delivered ice blocks every morning for the fridge, because people didn't have fridges then. There were no microwaves or nothing like that, obviously. But we were very up-to-date, I think. You know, my mother bought nice things for the kitchen, and cooking and, you know, it was very nice. And in Germany, I think that was, we had a dining room and we had what



we used to call, which they call here a lounge, a 'Herrenzimmer', which meant that my father, being a teacher, had a very valuable big library. He had all Goethe, Schiller, all that, which was quite valuable. So he had this very big bookcase. Then he had a big 'Schreibtisch', a big desk, which matches this. Then they had, what did they have? Three piece suite, something like that, with big, big armchairs, big leather armchairs. And so that's what I remember. I had a very-. When I was a young girl, they changed my bedroom from a child's bedroom, when I was about eleven, or twelve, which was very modern then - the shiny furniture in cream colour for my bedroom, which was very pretty. My mother loved flowers, and she had a collection of cacti. Well, in Germany, you know, we had central heating, long before they even dreamt here of central heating, and we had double glazing. That was, everybody had it, I mean, that was a norm then, so in that we were a little bit advanced. No open fires, like in England. So, I can remember a nice home, a nice atmosphere. My parents had a very, very happy marriage, it was an absolute love marriage, and it was good, it was very good.

**Tape 1: 20 minutes 53 seconds**

RL: What are your memories of the different Jewish holidays?

SL: The Jewish holidays were always nice. Obviously, we always had my two aunts. Whenever there was a Jewish holiday, they came and had dinner with us, because they both were, they had separate flats. And, having no husbands, one was not married and one was a very young widow, and I do remember one uncle, I think I must have been four or five years old when he died, also very young. So my mother sort of, she was like, like their daughter really, more than like their sister. And they got on very well with my father, so my two aunts were very much part of my upbringing, of my family. And many times I remember, when I was a very little girl, I stayed with my aunt, one of my aunts, for the weekend sometimes, and she loved spoiling me and taking me out and I had a very good, it was very good. Really, I can really only sum it up, it was very good. All the more the shock what came after.

RL: What was your address in Berlin? What was the address, what was the street that you lived on?

SL: The Street?

RL: Yes.

SL: The Street was a very nice street, actually. It was a street which had a green patch in the middle, you know, it was green and nice, a very nice street.

RL: What was it called?

SL: It was Lewetzowstrasse, which also had the synagogue. A very well-known synagogue was in that same street, quite a long way down, but very much walking distance to where we lived. We had a nice, we had a balcony, we had a lift in that house already, very old-fashioned, compared. And it was good, it was a wonderful time. No child could have had a better childhood.

**Tape 1: 22 minutes 53 seconds**

RL: What floor was your apartment on in the building?

SL: What floor? I think it was the first floor, yes, first floor, because I never used the lift, you know, we walked. Yes, first floor. And I remember it was a very nice building actually, the entrance was all marble. It was very nice. There was one more Jewish family in that block, because in Germany people, in those days, didn't really live in houses, they had more in apartments. And it was very, very good.

RL: How did you get on with your neighbours?

SL: Very well. Until-. Everything was normal. It was right and normal.

RL: So, where would you go, where would your family go, if they wanted to go out somewhere for entertainment?

SL: Well, when I was, when all this happened, when I was fifteen, being expelled from school, and all that, we couldn't, we weren't allowed to go any more like in to cafés or dance-halls or whatever, which we didn't, and to theatres, no, no.

RL: But before that, did you go to-?

SL: Yes, yes. When I was a child, I mean, I didn't go dancing then with fifteen years old, but we were mixing, we lived a completely normal life, very acceptable.

RL: Where were you taken as a child, where would you be taken?

SL: Where was I taken to? We went, there was a smaller place, which-. But a lot to the seaside, which is the Ostsee, the Black Sea, which is a few hours from Germany. Then I went, we went to see my grandparents in Silesia once a year at least. And we went in to the Harz Mountains. We had good holidays, you know. The surroundings of Berlin are very, very beautiful, the lakes around Berlin, Berlin is a very green city. It was, I don't know how it is now, but it was a very green city. And we had we had a good life. We had visitors once a week and we were invited another weekend. And it was very, very normal.

RL: Did you go to the cinema?

SL: Yes, we went to cinemas, but until 1936, I think, we couldn't go anymore, that was finished. And everything gradually, it sort of dawned on us that we are not acceptable. All the colleagues of my father kept away. They were friends, they used to visit us, we used to visit them, that finished. That non-Jewish people were socialising with Jewish people, that was finished. Because they were, they were like in a trance, all the people, they were hypnotised, they were frightened. They were frightened to be seen going into a Jewish home. So they stopped. So we were in a way very isolated. And, we, the Jewish people, I'm sure it's a shame that this had to happen, but it brought the Jewish people closer together, because we were all in the same boat. Now, the people who had a lot of money, or who had relatives abroad, started leaving Germany. At that stage, they could leave Germany with the money, furniture and all their goodies, which we couldn't, I couldn't anymore, we couldn't take anything. So the people who were lucky enough to leave Germany early. But then there were people like us, we had no relatives abroad. And then, when my father was pensioned off from the state, then something happened, he was offered a job as an 'Inspektor', which actually is called here a chairman of an old people's, a Jewish old age home. There's about three or four old age homes in Berlin, this one was the very oldest. I think it was early 19<sup>th</sup> century, very, very old,

very big, very old-fashioned. He was offered this, where a flat goes with this job. My father didn't take any money because he still had his pension. Except lodging and board. And we had a very nice flat. And, of course, we moved in there, because we had to leave. And we lived in that Jewish old age home, where I actually emigrated from. And there, life was very Jewish. My father took the Shabbat service and the Friday night prayers and people were, you see, the old people were, at that stage, not so much affected, they were all there, they were being looked after. And that home also had a soup kitchen because there were a lot of very poor Jewish people as well, who used to, even before Hitler, used to go and have meals there. But it became obvious that more and more people needed it because they were homeless, had no money, and people, who were at one stage very well-off, had to come into that soup kitchen. There was a lot of staff there, and actually quite a few Jewish girls, because they trained cooking and cleaning, ready for emigration. A lot of them. When I had to leave the school, the high school, my parents didn't know what to do with me. I was halfway through my education, so the only way I could do anything, it had to be something Jewish. There was a Jewish domestic college in Berlin and that's where, I was there for, I think, a year or eighteen months. Together with-. All Jewish, all Jewish, they learnt Jewish cooking, cleaning, everything, which one needs to know. And it was actually, in spite of all that's been going around, we were young girls, we were quite happy there. And when that's finished, my parents decided, now I'm going to 1937-.

**Tape 1: 29 minutes 3 seconds**

RL: Can I just retrace a little bit? I wanted to ask you when did you as a child become aware that things were changing? When did it impinge upon you?

SL: When I really became aware, because my father talked a lot, I mean, the radio was on all the time, and then Hindenburg was finished and Hitler took over. I knew what was going on. But, you know, I think when you're young and, you know, it doesn't make that impact. The impact came with the three things happening - my father having to leave the school, I had to leave my school, and we had to be thrown out of our apartment. That really, that physically, that affected me very much, obviously, it was a completely new life.

RL: At school, before you were expelled, how had life become for you?

SL: Well, before, I think probably a few months before we were actually expelled, there were three Jewish girls, we were put at the back, we had to sit together at the back of the class. We were mostly ignored, actually. One of the girls was a very, very clever girl, actually, but she was completely, you know, more or less ignored. They didn't use her intelligence at all, they didn't want to know. We were just there. They just had to tolerate us. It depended also what sort of teachers you had. If the teacher was anti-Semitic, then it was bad. So, we got a letter to say that it would be wise to leave the school.

RL: How did the pupils behave towards you at that stage?

SL: At first, there were one or two, I think we still socialised a little bit. But that finished after a very, very short time. Because-. It wasn't that they didn't like me anymore, but because they were frightened. Anybody associated with Jewish people was treated like the Jewish people, you know, they had the same fate. So people kept away, to safeguard themselves.

**Tape 1: 31 minutes 11 seconds**

RL: Did you come across any anti-Semitism in the streets? Personally, did you come across anti-Semitism in the streets?

SL: No, well, you know, when you saw the Nazis running around with the Swastika, you tried to avoid them. You know, they were marching all over the place and shouting all over the place and we tried to keep away. Not to be sort of connected with anything like that. So people more and more had to stay at home. There was not that socialising going on and the Jewish people, everybody was preoccupied. How do you get out of Germany? What's going to happen next? It was a constant, constant anxiety.

RL: Living in Berlin, did you see Hitler?

SL: I didn't see Hitler, but I saw, no, I mean, Hitler was there and everybody was running out to see him, because we stayed away, not to see him. But sometimes, when you do did go out, you got involved with the marching and it started even to affect me. And I never thought, my father never thought of leaving Germany. Because he said he fought in the First World War. A lot of them did that. And he had his, he was with the old people in an old age home, they won't do anything to the old people. He was living in, he believed it couldn't happen to him. And that's why he didn't get out. Well, then things gradually, you know, every day there were new rules, you know: all the shops, 'Keep out of the Jewish shops', and then big Swastikas, and big mondovits all over the place, 'Keep away from Jews'. It became increasingly difficult and people really stayed at home a lot.

RL: What happened during the Olympic Games? Do you remember that?

SL: The Olympic Games? Well, I was sixteen. I think it was 1936, the Olympic Games in Germany. And we were interested in the sport, but what was going on, it was a very political show there. You know, Jewish people were, we couldn't go if we wanted to, we wouldn't get tickets to anything like that, that was finished.

RL: I'm just thinking also about earlier, with the burning of the Reichstag-?

SL: The Berlin before Hitler?

RL: Well, 1933.

SL: 1933? Well, I was thirteen years old and by that time my life was still pretty normal, '33.

RL: Do you remember the burning of the Reichstag?

SL: Yes, I do. When the Reichstag was on fire, that was also a very strange day, the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. I do remember the date, because it was my auntie's birthday, who lived at the other side of town, of Berlin, not very far from the Reichstag actually. We were there, well, this was sort of the custom of the Germans - big afternoon tea, coffee and cake. And we were going to my auntie, I think it was a weekday, it was the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1934, I think. Was it '34 or '33? Anyway, we were there, sitting with my aunties, and she had one or two friends there, having coffee and talking and putting in the presents and whatever, when we heard, all of a sudden, an awful lot of fire-engines. So, my father said, 'That is something big, that is something big going on'. Then he put the radio on. And they said, 'The Reichstag is on fire.' So my father said right away, 'We go home.' We stopped, we went home immediately. We went on a tram, there were no buses, on the tram. We went home immediately. And then, of

course, they blamed this Jewish fellow for doing it and then things really started. That really was the beginning of the end then. And that's what happened. Then, when we lived in that Jewish old age home, which was also in the different part of Berlin, not far from the Reichstag, and very near the biggest synagogue of Germany, Oranienburgerstrasse, which has had a golden dome, which actually they replaced now. Now, are we coming to the Crystal Night? No.

RL: Right, I think we are almost there. I was just going to ask you did you father belong to any organisations, any societies?

SL: Yes, my father belonged to something which is equivalent here to the Masons, to the Oddfellow Lodge. Now there my parents had a very, this was actually a Jewish lodge, I think 90 percent were Jewish in that lodge, and my father was the worshipful master, like my son was just now. And my parents were very much involved. My mother, they had for the ladies, you know, that was a good social life for my parents. Well, that was closed, 1933 already, Oddfellow Lodge was, that was finished, all these organisations finished. Any organisation, any Jewish. The only thing they had Jewish at that stage was the Jewish Kulturbund. For culture. They had their own theatre, and that's the only place we could go to. But it was frightening to go to that as well, because the Nazis were outside throwing stones. So, that had stopped, because they stopped it, you know, finished. I think I went to see Carmen, that was the only time I've ever been in that place, and it was the last time, because they had to close as well.

**Tape 1: 37 minutes 11 seconds**

RL: Was your father interested in any politics? Was he involved in any politics, either Jewish or-?

SL: I don't think he was very involved in politics, no. He was an intelligent man, he was a teacher, obviously, he was interested, and he knew what was going on. But he somehow, I can't even to this day understand why he did not take action and try to get out of Germany, at that stage. We had no chance, because we had no relatives, no affidavits, we had nothing.

RL: What about Zionism? Was he interested in Zionism at all?

SL: Oh yes, yes, of course. My father was all round interest, you know? People-. We had a Jewish paper, the 'Zentral', I can't remember what. 'Jüdische Rundschau', 'Jüdische Rundschau', that was the paper we had, a Jewish paper. And my father obviously was interested what's going on in Germany and outside Germany, all the time. Reading a lot, he was a big reader, my father.

RL: Did he belong to any Zionist groups?

SL: No, I don't think so. No, not that I know of. He was quite active with the Jewish Berlin community, he was very well-known. And he was a very great friend of the leader of the Jewish community at that stage. I think his name was Max Rosenthal. He was then the leader and, actually, because of him, I got out, I that's how I got out. But, I'll tell you that later.

RL: So, in what way was he involved with the Berlin Jewish community?

SL: Well, he was the chairman of the Jewish old age home, so he's had enough-. He was very involved and that old age home belonged to the Jewish community. So, he had a lot of involvement with that. And, of course, we had, there was non-Jewish staff, but we had more and more Jewish staff in that home. I remember they had a caretaker and his wife, who lived in as well, they were not Jewish. They were very, very good. Until they couldn't be good. They weren't, they couldn't allow themselves to be good any longer, and they left. They wouldn't be working with Jewish people any more. So, slowly we had to replace with people, who also had lost their jobs, lost their homes, replace them more with Jewish staff. We had a very, very good Jewish cook there. She was a wonderful cook. And it was, I mean, we felt safe there, very safe. And, because I was a young girl, what was I doing there in the first place, you know, with my parents? But, well, we lived in a nice flat, we had our own maid at our disposal. And they either sent the meals up to us from the big kitchen - they had a huge kitchen, they were cooking for about 200 people, because it was a soup kitchen - and we had our meals sent up, and my mother had a, there was a tiny kitchen at the apartment, where we could do our own thing, if we felt like it. But that was all good. And my parents were busy and that was also good. My father couldn't-. He was 45 years old, my mother was 43. They were young; they couldn't retire, doing nothing. So they were busy, which was very good for them. But by that time, I think I have to come back to this.

**Tape 1: 40 minutes 45 seconds**

SL: The last continental holiday we had, continental, we were on the continent ourselves, we went to a place where Jewish people were still allowed to go. And that was Lithuania. There was a very beautiful resort by the Black Sea, called Schwarzort. Well, I was, by that time, maybe sixteen and a half, seventeen, something like that. So we went, we usually went for four weeks holiday, not like they do here, for the week or a fortnight. My father took that time off and we went there. And this was a very beautiful place. We had to stay a night in Königsberg. It was a long journey, because there was no flying. By train, we went to Königsberg, where my father had a friend, who was a solicitor there, but he was also retired by that time. And we stayed a night with them, I remember that very well. And then we went on a boat through the Kurische Haff, along to Lithuania. So, that was a very nice experience that was a lovely place. So, there were a lot of Jewish people there, because that was one of the few places where Jews still got money to go there, exchange rates and whatever. Well, anyway, met there a lady, who was also Jewish, she was actually an artist, she was in the theatre, but a Jewish lady. She must have been about thirty then. And somehow we got very friendly. She took a fancy, she took me out when my parents had something else, we went swimming and this and that, and it was quite nice, we met a lot of people. Now, this lady always kept saying she'd got two brothers at home. And it came that they lived very near where we lived. Actually, that was still-, when we were still in our apartment. We were not in the old age home then. And she took a great fancy to me and she liked my parents and she said we must meet again. Now, she had an elder brother, and when her mother died, the father married the sister, which-, the Jewish people do that, married the unmarried sister of the mother. And they had two boys from that second marriage. And this lady, her name was Hanna, was very, very family-minded and she loved her brothers. And, anyway, so that was the story. When we got back to Berlin, after a very short time, I think, she phoned us, yes, we still had the phone, phoned us, whatever, we must get together. So my mother invited her and she said, 'Can I bring my brother?' So, she brought her brother and that was it. I fell madly in love with that brother. I was seventeen and he was twenty-three, a man of the world. And that was it. I would have certainly married him had I not-. But he perished as well. He didn't get out. The few letters and that was the end of it.

RL: What was his name?

**Tape 1: 43 minutes 54 seconds**

SL: Hans Rosenthal. So that that was, from day one, that was really it. It was, you know, these things are happening, you know, like a fairy story, but this happened. Because my parents were very, I was so young and so ignorant and innocent. And, 'What? You want a boyfriend?' You know, it was too much. But eventually, actually, it turned out that, after I left - because I only left thinking my parents and he will follow, otherwise I would have never left, that, I tell you, if you interview people, everybody will tell you that, they would have never left had they known - and I left him and I left my parents, and after I left my parents were both near breakdown and he was very good to them, he went every day to see them and then, until then, he was taken long before my parents, you know. But I got the news much later. You see, to live in England and not to know what's going on, it was a nightmare, living a nightmare, morning, noon and night.

RL: So, I think we must be really up to 1938 now.

SL: Now we are coming to the Crystal Night, actually.

RL: We are getting there.

SL: Now, this Crystal Night, I mean, that was absolute the end. Where we lived then, at the Jewish old age home, we could hear what was going on. I saw the synagogue burn and we were in a state of a shock. How could this happen? How could this happen? We should have known better. We should have expected this to happen, what's been going on beforehand, but we didn't quite. It was a disbelief. How could this happen? To Germans? We were German citizens, born in Germany, for generations. It was unbelievable. Now, that was the Crystal Night. So, of course, there was no sleep for anybody there, you know, we were in a state of shock, frightened what the next morning will bring.

**Tape 1: 46 minutes 3 seconds**

So, when I saw this synagogue burn, meanwhile I heard that about thousands of synagogues all over Germany were burning. So, a day after that - that was the night from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November - on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, my father had a phone call from his friend, who was the leader of the Jewish community, Max Rosenthal. He said to my father, 'Your daughter has to get out, Susi has to get out'. So my father said, 'How? What can I do?' He said, 'You come and see me in my office'. My father went, it was in walking distance, and he said he has just got news that England is taking ten-thousand girls, to the age of eighteen and older, to do domestic work in England. And he had all the application forms. 'Take the application and immediately apply.' So my father, he was, my parents were in tears, but they did. You see, I was young, I didn't know what was going on. I was, I don't know how I got through it, and I don't know what I did, I can't tell you. It was so unnatural, everything that was happening, and so unexpected. Well, we should have expected it, but we didn't. So, my father filled in all the application forms and I had to have a certificate that I was of sound mind and health, which I got. Because we had only Jewish doctors, we weren't allowed to go to any non-Jewish doctor. The Jewish doctor, and he stood up for all the Jewish girls, you know, to do that. So, that took a long time. I think in March I got the letter to say that I'm accepted to do domestic work in England and I should come on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, to go to Liverpool, because there was a Catholic Teachers' Training College, which were each month taking two Jewish

girls to learn a little bit of the English way of life, to ease them into it, before they had to do domestic service, which was a great privilege. And I was chosen to do that, but I had to leave for some reason, which I cannot remember, and I don't know why, I had to leave Germany on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. So there was a gap between the 16<sup>th</sup> of April and the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. But I had a letter from a lady from Liverpool, who wrote you have to report to Bloomsbury House, which was, that was the busiest time, I think. That time, more people than ever emigrated, all the girls coming to England, and that was because of the Crystal Night, that was the final straw. And I got this letter, so my parents got ready to get me. You see, I was young and it was a little bit of an adventure. It was a bit of fright of the unknown, it was all the things going through your mind: 'What will I do? Will I be on my own? Where will I work? How are the English people?'

**Tape 1: 49 minutes 17 seconds**

My English was a very little bit of school English, which meant nothing. Didn't know what to do. Then we had a letter, we had to report that I'm emigrating to the Nazis, we had to report. And they said that when the packing is being done, an SS-Mann will come to seal the luggage, to see that we are not taking anything we shouldn't take. I must mention that all jewellery had been taken off the Jewish people already. They collected all jewellery of Jewish people already, while I was there. So, there was no way that my parents could give me anything. They wanted to give me everything, but couldn't give me anything. The only thing they could do, and they did, I had a very, very good, a lot of clothes, lots of outfits for the winter, for the summer, for everything, you know. They didn't know what to do, you know, to give me everything, bed linen, things like that. Because they, I went into the unknown, I didn't know. But, being young, I think, is different, you don't see all the seriousness, you are more optimistic. So, as the day drew nearer of me going, it became-. My parents were-. It was very, very depressing. It was-. I was frightened to go, there was no going back, my parents were heartbroken of leaving me, don't know when to see me again, what am I going-, how I am going to be treated, what's going to happen. It was a complete nightmare. And, when I went, there were my two aunties, my boyfriend, of course, and my parents, at the biggest station in Berlin, Bahnhof Zoo. I don't know of how I went through that whole procedure of getting to that station. My father, when I went, he blessed me. How I got to that station. They brought me magazines and chocolates and everything. Somebody said, 'Oh, when you go past Cologne' - I was going to Oostend to get the boat there to Belgium, the border was Germany-Belgium, via Cologne - 'Look at that beautiful cathedral'. And, I tell you, that was the last thing on my mind to look at the cathedral. I don't know how I stayed in that railway carriage, I just don't know. As I got in the train, there were two or three people, not Jewish, I mean, I was the only Jewish person there, the only refugee. But I wasn't, yes, I was a refugee then already. So, we went on that train, everything was okay until we got to the border. Then they came into the train to check the passports. Of course, my passport had 'J' in it, for 'Jew'. As soon as they saw that: 'Out, out of the train.' Everybody was sitting in that train, that train was there for an hour or so. 'Out of the train.' And they searched me. There was a woman and she completely undressed me. And then I said, 'It's either going to be England or concentration camp'. That was unbelievable, what went through my mind there. I thought, 'Well, I'm in their hands now. There's nothing, I can't go back, I can't go forward, I'm there'. Anyway, at the end of the day, they get me on the train, all the magazines and chocolates, everything was gone, but that didn't matter. I got over the border. And I have thanked God that I'm out of Germany. So there was another hour, an hour and a half journey to Oostend. When I got to Oostend, then I had to, it was near the boats, I think, we then went on a ferry, I was the only one there. But then already there were a lot of refugees on that boat, came from all over, from Vienna, from all over. And I felt, 'Oh, thank Goodness, the people have the same fate as I



have'. But people, we didn't talk a lot, people were so preoccupied. Everybody was so frightened and worried, that there was not much communication, even then.

**Tape 1: 53 minutes 31 seconds**

SL: And then we got on a train to London. From Ostend, Dover, from Dover to London. I arrived at about twelve o'clock at night, at Victoria Station, London. And somebody from Bloomsbury House was supposed to meet me, which they did, after half an hour. I was standing there in tears, because nobody was there to pick me up, I didn't know where to go. I had 16 Shillings. Eventually, I don't know what happened, somebody found me. They put me in the most dreadful boarding house for the night, which was absolutely dirty and horrible. And I had the next morning, they said they will collect me to report at Bloomsbury House, which was a centre for the Jewish refugees in London. Well, there were queues. I waited for hours to get to talk to anybody. When I did, they were very nice, they did what they could. They were all voluntary workers helping there. We were all, you know, everybody had the same worries and everybody was preoccupied and it was, you couldn't even converse with people. Anyway, they gave me vouchers, there was a like a canteen, or something, they gave me vouchers for food, so I can eat there. And I had to go back to this awful boarding house, which was so dirty, I didn't even want to go to bed there. Anyway, I went there and then they arranged the journey to Liverpool for me. They bought the tickets for me and they said that a Miss Parry will meet me at Liverpool Lime Street Station and she will take me to the college where I would be for the month. They were very nice, they did a wonderful job, considering how overburdened they were with all this. So, when the 1<sup>st</sup> of May came, I went on that train. All my big luggage I had left there was in some depot, I just had one or two suitcases with me. I got to Lime Street Station and there I think she arranged to say that she had something in her hand to recognise her. And that was a very - English, not Jewish - a very, very nice voluntary worker, a lady. She was, she kissed me when I came. She was absolutely lovely. And I felt, 'Oh, goodness, thank God, I met somebody very nice'. She took me to the college. That college was absolutely lovely. It is still there. It is a Catholic college, teachers' training college. I had my own room, I had the same room as the teachers. I had my own lovely room and they were, they couldn't do enough for me. They were all interested, for them it was something new, to have a Jewish refugee girl there and they were, the staff and the students, were absolutely lovely and I thought, 'This is good. I can live with that'. And then the other girl came, the second girl, she came via, I don't know how she came, she came over Italy, and this girl, we became firm friends until she died two years ago. And so that was good. And halfway through that training, Miss Parry came to see me again. She kept an eye on me, she kept coming and kept an eye on me. She came and she said I had to leave after one month, and, obviously, I had to do domestic work. So she said, 'There is an English clergyman from a vicarage, who particularly asked for a Jewish girl, to do domestic work, to be as an au-pair' - we weren't going to be cleaners, really, we were more au-pair, mother's help - 'and they would love to have a Jewish girl'. So I thought, what my father said, 'Be with Jewish people'. But then I thought, 'This is a good man, he asked for a Jewish girl'. So she said, 'I'm going next to the arranged day, I'm going to take her to meet these people'. They, from the day one, they were absolutely wonderful. They couldn't do enough for me.

RL: Yes, now we just going to have to stop here, because this hour is just about to finish.

**Tape 1: 57 minutes 48 seconds**

**TAPE 2**

RL: So, Susi, you were just telling me that you've got a letter here that was inviting you to come to England. Would you like to tell us about this letter, maybe read..-?

SL: Yes, yes. This letter comes from the Merseyside Coordinating Committee for Refugees and it was written on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1939: 'Dear Fräulein Braun', they put 'Fräulein' instead of 'Miss', 'the Domestic Bureau of the Central Office for Refugees have obtained a permit, a permit number 32111, for you to come to England to do domestic work and wishes you to come to Liverpool for a month training in English domestic work before being placed in an English family. This training will be given in a large training college in Liverpool, where we feel sure you will be happy and receive much help from the bursar and her staff and also from the students, who are training as teachers. If possible, will you arrange that you arrive in Liverpool on May 1<sup>st</sup> when the college can take you in. If, for any reason, it is necessary for you to leave Germany earlier, will you please advice the Domestic Bureau, Bloomsbury House, Bloomsbury Street, London WC1 and report there immediately on arrival. They will then arrange for you to stay in London until May 1<sup>st</sup>. I should be glad if you write and tell me what arrangements you are able to make. I feel sure we shall be able to place you after this short training with an English family, who will do their best to make your life in England happy. While you are waiting to come over, will you try to learn as much English as possible. It will make everything much easier and less confusing for you if you can understand and speak the language. I hope to hear from you soon and to know of your immediate plans.' Signed: Elisabeth A. Parry.

RL: Did you make attempts to learn English?

SL: I tried to do, you know, I had the dictionaries, I tried to do as much as I could. But, strangely enough, you know, when you come and people speak to you, you couldn't understand anybody. Because in a foreign language, you always feel people speak too quickly and it was very, very difficult. I could say a few things, but I mean I couldn't have any conversation with anybody. I could just, maybe the things I needed or wanted I just learned from the dictionary, but difficult. I think one has to be in the country to really learn the language. And I still have an accent now.

### **Tape 2: 3 minutes 8 seconds**

RL: During the time between Kristallnacht and leaving, did you continue to go to the domestic service college that you had been going to in Germany?

SL: Yes, I went to the domestic college, because that was a Jewish, a completely Jewish place.

RL: And that continued after Kristallnacht?

SL: No, I think that, I think all Jewish institutions were closed down in any case. Everything was closed down. The only thing, and I think that's one part why my father felt safe, the old aged homes weren't closed down. And the Jewish hospital was taken over as well, there was a big Jewish hospital in Germany, in Berlin, and that was also taken over. I think all institutions had to close. All official, finished.

RL: So how did you spend your days after Kristallnacht until leaving? I mean, there were a few weeks?

SL: Well, then I was working in the old age home, in the kitchen, until my emigration. I worked there all the time. And I was treated, I mean, although I was the chairman's daughter, I was not, I had no privileges, I was doing my work, I got my wages, and something very much in my favour, which I didn't know or appreciate at that time, was that they had to stamp, for every employee, they had to buy stamps. Like for the social security or whatever they called it then. And that came in good stead when later on I reclaimed some money from Germany - it was very good that I had those few stamps.

RL: Just coming back to Kristallnacht for the moment, what was the first point at which you realised that something was going on?

SL: Oh, that point came very early on. I mean, the way when I had to leave school, my father lost his job-.

RL: Until about Kristallnacht, when did you-?

SL: After Crystal Night?

RL: Yes, yes.

SL: You know, after Crystal Night, well, then soon started, I'm thinking about emigration then.

RL: Well, I was asking about the night itself, when you realised in that night that something bad was happening?

SL: Oh, that was, I knew that something had to happen then. My parents couldn't, I knew that people were, you know, people overnight - this family's gone, our friends had gone, people had no time to socialise anymore and tell them, 'I'm going to emigrate tomorrow.' Everything was done quickly and, you know, people really, they weren't in the right state of mind any more, the Jewish people. They were driven, they didn't know what to do for their best any more. Some people could get out and, unfortunately, a lot couldn't.

RL: On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, did anybody come to the old age home? Was the old age home left alone on Kristallnacht?

## **Tape 2: 6 minutes 13 seconds**

SL: The old age home, yes. What I haven't mentioned before, that maybe six months before the Crystal Night, maybe even longer, they rounded up Jewish men, to take, not to Auschwitz or Theresienstadt, but there were lots of camps round Berlin. Buchenwald, one of them, and then there was Dachau, and there were various other camps. They rounded up the men, and they released a lot of them, but they had to promise to leave Germany almost immediately. Now, near Berlin, there was a camp and the people were, where they were released to in the first place, was to us, to the Jewish old age home, to the soup kitchen. We fed them. And I actually-, that is an experience which no young girl should see. The people coming from the camps, we fed them, we had to nurse their wounds, they were all in a dreadful state. Eventually, we got them all, they were all voluntary workers, Jewish people helping them get back to their homes and get out of Germany, as quick as possible. So, I think I saw sights which no young girl should ever see. And I think this sort of thing, that never leaves you, that

is there. And I paid for it with my health, later on. So, the time between the Crystal Night and because the day after Crystal Night, the application to England came. So, there already - we were working - that was the main problem for us at that stage. I mean the overhead problems were there, but our own private problem was my leaving Germany. And it was, you know, this happened in thousands of Jewish households, every day in Germany, at that that time. I think that that really was the last straw, that is when people said there is no more life for Jewish people in Germany. There is no life.

RL: Did you parents reconsider their position in Germany after Kristallnacht? Did they think of leaving?

SL: Well, I think it was because-. My parents said, 'We have to get out, you have to get out of Germany'.

RL: What about them?

SL: Well, they couldn't get out, they had nobody, they weren't in the age for domestic service or anything. We've written, I think, my father tried then, they just couldn't get out, they couldn't get out. They could have gone, I think, and I've only heard that years after, they might have been able to go to Shanghai. But there was also limited, you know, they probably weren't quick enough. Aunty and uncle did it, they went to Shanghai and they survived. It was very hard, but they survived. My parents didn't. So, well, we knew already that there were concentration camps, because they were rounding up the men. But we then, then I don't know what happened afterwards. But, anyway, I left on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1939 to England and I came to Liverpool and then I had a job with the English clergyman, in a vicarage. And it was wonderful. I never had to do any hard work. They had a cleaner to do all the hard work. A very big place, a big vicarage, and its own grounds, a very nice area of Liverpool. They had one son, who was in the navy, and one daughter, who was my age. And she was training as a nurse in London, but came over. Whenever she came over, we were treated like sisters. When she bought something for her daughter, she bought something for me. I had a lovely room and I was eating with the -, I was one of the family. And it was wonderful.

## **Tape 2: 10 minutes 14 seconds**

But that wasn't going to last either. Because war broke out, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939 and then, of course, the English people had their own worries, you know. Husbands, sons in the army. And for some reason, which I can't explain, people were all so much nicer, sort of, we were all in the same boat. The English people were suffering too. And I was suffering with them and thinking what's happening in Germany. In January 1940, a law came out that all - we were classed as friendly aliens - all aliens, friendly or otherwise, had to leave Liverpool on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June or before. Because it's a port and it's a harbour and they want no foreigners in Liverpool. And I thought, 'Oh my'. I was crying again. I was just settling down with these lovely people and now I'm going again into the unknown. There was a tribunal and the vicar, he said 'I guarantee for this girl, let her stay with me'. 'No, that is the law.' A lot of refugees by that time were interned to the Isle of Man. But I wasn't. For some reason, they overlooked me or a lot of others. My late husband, he was interned, they were all at the Isle of Man, which was also very hard. Because they felt they're coming out of Germany and they're going in a camp again.

RL: Do you remember going before the tribunal?

SL: No. I was-. I had a lot of friends, who I knew, they were interned, I wasn't.

RL: Do you remember going before a tribunal?

SL: Yes. With the vicar, he came with me. And there I was told I had to leave by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. So they said I can go to Sheffield, Birmingham or Manchester. And I knew somebody from Berlin who went earlier on to Manchester, for also doing domestic work or whatever. And I had that address. I thought I know one person in Manchester and also it's a big Jewish community and a big Jewish refugee office in Manchester. It was the best place for me to go. So I had to say goodbye to these people. I left all my luggage with them, except one suitcase. He said, 'I bring it over whenever you want'. Because I didn't know where I was going to sleep that night. That refugee committee in Deansgate - there was a big furniture store, before your time, Woodhouse, and above that was the refugee committee - very, very busy at that time. There were three ladies, one was a Mrs. Baruch and one was a Miss Cardish. Somehow, they were from the beginning very nice with me, very nice. They said, 'We've got lots of jobs'. Of course the people applied - for ten shillings a week, they got a cleaner, well, it was to be a mother's help, didn't turn out like that. And they sent me to a house in Waterpark Road. Somebody took me there, actually, with the luggage. And, they left a phone number, if there's anything you want. They were very nice, they did their best. I came to that house. A beautiful home, in Waterpark Road. People were obviously well-off. It was a nightmare from day one. You get up at half past six, make the fire clean, clean the steps, you know, they used to clean the steps in those days. 'Clean the steps, get the breakfast ready and start the washing in the garage.' That's the way they talked to me, there was no personal contact, no sympathy, nothing, nothing. And, well, this went on, I worked so hard, I tell you. I had a dreadful bedroom. They gave me like a little-, no heating, nothing. It was just very, very bad.

**Tape 2: 14 minutes 16 seconds**

And I thought then, you know, there's so many people wanting-, I'm not going to stand for that, to be treated like that. So, I think I stopped it at about eight weeks or so. I went on my day off to the Refugee Committee. Meanwhile, I found out, I don't know how it came about, that two or three girls were in the same area, refugee girls, working. And we were all in the same boat. They all complained the same as I did, how badly treated they were. We got together on our day off. We used to go to Lyon's Corner House and sat all afternoon with a cup of coffee, crying. We were-. That was really unbelievable. And I was not frightened of work, I was healthy, I was young, I didn't mind the work, but I did mind-, I objected to the way I was treated. So I went to the-. They said, 'Oh, another one', because they had these complaints all the time. I said, 'I'm going to somebody else'. So I got somebody in Brentwood Road, which wasn't any better. They would let the food go bad rather than give me anything to eat. I didn't get to eat. All the rations went to the husband and I just got the sort of leftovers. I ate - with both these Jewish families - I ate in the kitchen, not with them. And I was treated like an ordinary maid. Not like a domestic, not like an au-pair or mother's help, nothing. So, I stood that for a few weeks, then I went to the third one. That was the last. That was even worse. They were people going on the markets in Blakely New Road. They had two teenage sons, mind you, maybe a bit older, maybe seventeen and nineteen, they threw their shoes at me every morning, I had to clean all their shoes. And threw the washing there. You know, they were just uncouth. Terrible! Not interested what's happened in Germany, what happened to the Jewish people, nothing. Nothing. So then, finally, as luck will have it, we didn't have to do domestic work, because of wartime. We were allowed to do wartime jobs. We had to get out, we could get out of the domestic, that was finished. So, I was the first who went back to the Refugee Committee: 'Can I train as a nurse?' Which I always-, which I

might have done even in Germany. And they said, 'Unfortunately, it will not be possible'. Because in those days you had to pay for the training, couldn't do it. But they were very nice and said, 'Let us think what we can do with you'. I said, 'Well, that's what I would like to do'. A few weeks later, I got a letter from them to come to the office. They said, 'We had an offer. Would you like to train as a nursery nurse?' I said, 'Yes, very much so'. There is a state registered nursery in south Manchester, who offered to take three refugee girls for training. It was called the Rosmund Day Nursery, it was off Oxford Road, it doesn't exist anymore, it hasn't existed for a long time. And we lived in and got board and lodgings. So I said, 'Well, board and lodgings are not really enough, we need a bit of pocket money'. And we had to buy the uniform. It's a two and a half year training. The Refugee Committee said, 'We will buy the uniform for you, we will buy the uniform and we will give you five shillings a week pocket money', which was very, very nice. So we trained and I shared a room with a girl, with two girls. They were a little younger than I am, they came with the Kindertransport. Now, they had guarantors, people who took them in and they had somewhere to go on their day off. We had actually a whole weekend off, every three weeks. They went to their homes because they were taken in like children to their guarantors.

**Tape 2:18 minutes 18 seconds**

I had nowhere to go, so the Refugee Committee again - they have a hostel in south Manchester, the Kershaw House, which took in refugees - And they said, 'You can spend your weekend there, you can sleep there, you can eat there, you spend the weekend at the Refugee hostel'. And they actually gave me money for the bus fare or whatever. They were very, very good to me. And I said, 'If ever I can repay'. I did repay, years after, I repaid them. They were very, very good. The training was very hard, but at least I knew there was something at the end, I will have a training, I will be a nurse. And I didn't have to do anything different than anybody else. We had lectures, it was very hard. The girl with me was also from Berlin, one of the girls. And her father was -an only child, too- and her father was a High Court Judge in Berlin. So, we shared an awful lot. Recently, I visited her twice in America. She's very well-off, she's also a widow now. But we are still friends, we are every fortnight on the phone, now.

RL: What's her name?

SL: Inge Beer, now here name is Beer. Anyway, that training was good, but then I started paying with my health. Then illness struck me. I got jaundice. I think I was there about a year - nine months, a year - I got jaundice. All in wartime, this was wartime. I was very ill and I had to go to Withington Hospital. At that stage, only very old people were taken to hospital, because they were short-staffed, it was wartime. But sometimes luck was on my side. I got very friendly right away with the staff nurse there and she said, 'When you're better, I take you to Ireland, I take you to my parents and they will get you well'. She was lovely. I didn't go but I was friends a long time with her, from day one. Now, all were old people, very ill people, in that ward, the ward about twenty people. But next - not the next one but the one next - was a young woman. She was expecting her first baby but had something wrong with her leg. She was originally a nursing sister. But somehow, it was nice, she was young, you know, and we started talking. My English was still not very good but we were talking and we liked each other. And she was lovely. Mrs. Roberts, Margaret Roberts. Her husband was a policeman. He came every day, to bring her little bits and that. And he introduced himself to me, because she said, 'Go over', you know. Every time he came, he brought a little something to me. They were absolutely lovely. Well, they were friends of mine until they died. They were at my wedding, they were at John's wedding, Bar Mitzvah and everything. They were

life-long friends. So, I said to her when I left, I was six weeks in hospital, and when I left I said, 'As soon as that baby is born, please, please let me know'. And I scraped all the money together to buy a present for that baby. Anyway, I had to go straight back to the nursery, so I had no convalescence or anything. Four weeks later, I was back in hospital again, with acute rheumatism. It's all stress-related illnesses I had. My skin was suffering, I had a lot of skin rushes and it's all stress-related. And of course, you know why, you know. And, so I went back. So, I had time off, actually. I had to take my exams much later because I was off so much. And every time I went back, out of the hospital, I had to go back straight to work. So I had no convalescence, I had no chance to get over it.

**Tape 2: 22 minutes 12 seconds**

Then, when I finished my training, in 1942, '42/'43, you know, I can't give you the right date, but something like that. People applied for baby nurses there, you know, they wanted trained nurses. Now, my friend and I we were both very lucky. My friend took the job as a children's nurse to family in Didsbury, called Borkova. They had two, the other one wasn't born yet, they had at that time two young - a baby and I think a toddler - two children. She was very happy there. We were already in a different status, we were trained nurses. And so she was very happy there and I was placed with a family in Chorlton, a Jewish family. They were delighted to have a Jewish children's nurse, which were not many about. So, that was very good. The lady was a hairdresser and the husband was in the Forces, and that was their first baby. Now, that John was two/three months old when I took over. That was happy. Because I adored the child and the child was thriving and was lovely and I even did the cooking. I didn't have to but I did it because she was in the shop working. We lived over the shop. Later on, they bought a house away from the shop. And that was all through wartime, with rationing. And both families were very nice, because we went out together with the children - my friend with the Borkova children and I with the baby. We used to go in the summer for lunch, took sandwiches, went to the park. And she was welcome in that place I lived and I went to the Borkovas. That was all very nice. But the worry what's happening in Germany didn't go away. Then there were rumours with the camps and the gas chambers and all that. No communication whatsoever. That was trying.

RL: Did you have any communication?

SL: No communication, except a few Red Cross messages, but very negative. They tried, it was impossible. I didn't know anything at all, at that stage, nothing. Then, I was still with the Cassel family, when the war was over, 1945, 8<sup>th</sup> of May, wasn't it? End of war. Everybody was rejoicing and happy that the war was over. I had very mixed feelings. What am I going to hear next? What's happened? What's been going on? Well, I still didn't know at that stage what was going on. And then the Cassel family decided, they come originally from Southport, they decided when he came out of the Forces, to go back. He was in the furnishing business, originally. They were very well-off. 'We are going back to Southport.' And, although the boy was already nearly school age, they wanted me to come along. Well, I thought about it. I already made a lot of friends in Manchester, mostly refugees, some English people. And I thought, 'You know, how long can I be a maiden?' And all this. 'The boy is going to school, what am I going to do? To be a housekeeper. No.' Anyway, I said I'd like to think about it. But I decided, 'No. I've been living with strange people for all these years in England, I want to have my own life'. So, I got a bed-sitter in Whalley Range and I worked then as a staff-nurse for the Manchester Corporation Day Nurseries, which was still classed as wartime work. And I was very happy there. I made friends with the matron. I had a lot of nice people, I met a lot of people. And I was going home and I could do what I like and I didn't have

morning, noon and night calls, I just did my job, which was very hard, very badly paid. I worked with the Day Nurseries until, well, I worked all the time with them. I was transferred then to a nursery, which was nearer Alexandra Park, where I lived. And it was good, I mean, it was very hard work, but it was-. I did what everybody else did, you know, it was a normal life. Not having to be-. I had my own home. I could invite who I want, I could go out when I want and it was good.

**Tape 2: 26 minutes 38 seconds**

RL: Can I just ask you a little bit more about the war years before we move on?

SL: The war years?

RL: Yes.

SL: From being with the Cassel family?

RL: Yes.

SL: Well, of course, the radio was never turned off, and, of course, the main interest what's happening in Germany, what's going on. And the rumours and all this. You know, it was very depressing. And the people were worried about their own families. She had her husband in the Forces. You know, so it was a sharing. And meanwhile, there was of course-. The Jewish Refugee Committee was very active in Manchester, with meetings and get-togethers, which I attended. Because I felt happy with my own people, at that stage.

RL: Where did they hold the meetings?

SL: The meetings, well, the meetings, I don't know, I think probably in the Kershaw House, in one of the homes, you know, I can't remember.

RL: Can you tell me a little bit about Kershaw House? What you did there and who ran it? A little bit about that hostel?

SL: About my job?

RL: About Kershaw House.

SL: Oh, Kershaw House. Then that was before I came to the Cassels, while I was training. The Kershaw House. Mr. Kershaw, obviously, donated this house for Jewish Refugees. It was a huge house. There were seven girls in one bedroom. Can you imagine? When I came, I only came every other weekend, I wasn't, the others were regular. They were working in factories, in offices. Well, when I got to the, first of all, they were absolutely disgusted, a seventh girl put into that room. And they were disgusted. But that that didn't last long, that disgust. We were firm friends until some of them died, and some of them I'm still with now. So that was a life-long - I always say life-long friendships when I talk about life-long friendships, which actually started from my time in England. It's like a life cut in two. When I came to England, that was different. Anyway, so the Kershaw House was very good, because there we were all in the same boat. Everybody was worried about their parents, their families. We were all very much together. And I looked forward to go to that Kershaw House. And there was one lady who was very much older than I at that stage, a Miss Riese, from Hamburg. She was then



sixty, so we thought that's ancient, you know, sixty. Now, I was always coughing, I wasn't well. She used to put a hot water bottle in my bed and she used to get up at night when I wasn't well, they were absolutely lovely. Now, that lady had one niece, she came with her niece to England. That was Alice. Alice was fifteen years old, she came with the Kindertransport. That's how I met Alice, at the Kerhsaw House. Because when she visited her auntie. And that friendship is there today. That's Alice.

RL: So did the auntie, was she sort of in charge of the home, of the hostel?

SL: Yes. There was a middle-aged, married couple. He was a doctor, from Germany, Germans, he was a doctor. I don't know how they got out, but obviously they still got out with their money or whatever, earlier on. They were in charge, looking after this home. And they had a few volunteers to help with the cooking. And it was wartime but we were together. It was a feeling of belonging. I felt good, to be with my own people. Because we talked about the same things. They were all girls, my age, leaving parents behind, you know, it was a very- . I had very much in common with them. And that's kept us together, all our lives. Anyway, so when I finished the training, I went to the Cassel family, and then I left, and worked for the Manchester Corporation.

## **Tape 2: 30 minutes 31 seconds**

RL: What would you do in your leisure time with your friends?

SL: What did I do? We didn't really do, well, I think they started then having refugee dances somewhere. We used to go dancing. We didn't really do very much, because we were talking. One or two left and they had their own homes and we visited each other. In my bed-sitter, I invited people. We did what comes naturally, you know, getting together, and that was good.

RL: Did you go to the cinema?

SL: Yes, we went to the cinema. Because I found that very good, because we learnt a lot of English. And I also read a lot, that you learn a lot of English, reading the newspapers. I wanted to read the newspapers to see what's going, the main interest what was going on in Germany, never mind what I did here. What was going on? What am I going to hear next? Well, slowly and slowly, it came to light - concentration camps, no survivors. I didn't hear anything; I had no communication, so I had to come to the conclusion. Well, that was unbelievable, you know, we all went through-. That's why we had to be together with other people with the same fate. So, then something very strange happened again. I worked for the Corporation Day Nurseries. Now, at the end of 1947, was it '47 or '48? I can't remember. It must be the end of '47, there was a refugee Hanukkah party, in the Cheetham Assembly Rooms, was it the Cheetham Assembly Rooms? In Cheetham Road. Anyway, a Hanukkah party. Now, I knew a few people already, who either used to come to the Kershaw House or I met them at other refugee dos. And I did not want to go this dance, but I had a friend, who really wanted to meet somebody. She was very eager to have a boyfriend. And me, I did not want to go. And she was begging me, she didn't want to go on her own. So I went with her. We went to this place and there were already a few fellows, Frank Goldman, Warren Gordon, sitting there. And we came in and they recognised me, they didn't know her, they recognised me and said, 'Come and sit with us'. So we sat together. There were one or two other people there who I didn't know. So, there was a fellow there called Kenneth Linton. And I never met him before, I had never heard of him before, nothing. So we were-, he wasn't even dancing, he couldn't dance at all, but I was dancing with the other fellows. Nothing, we talked. Then

Warren said - he changed his name from Werner Goldmann to Warren Gordon - he said 'I'-he had a car already- he said -we lived, we both lived, my friend and I lived in the house next door, we both lived in- 'I take you home in the car'. But he said, 'And I bring my friend along as well'. And that was Kenneth Linton. Anyway, they said goodbye and that was it. The next day, Warren phoned me. Because I didn't have my own phone. The phone was in the hall, for all the tenants, and I was called down, 'There is a phone call for you'. I went down, it was Warren. He said, 'Can I give your telephone to my friend Kenneth Linton?' And I said, 'What for?' 'He's driving me mad, he wants your phone number.' So I said, 'Give it him, I've got nothing to lose, give it him'. So, the next day he phones. He said he would like to see me again. Oh, and I wasn't a bit interested, really. He wants to see me again. Anyway, we made a date and we met outside the town hall, in Albert Square. And he took me-, you know, there was a Jewish restaurant and café, the Hadassa, I don't know, long before you time, which was in Market Street. It was a picture house and then downstairs there was this café, Hadassa. So he thought, 'The Berliners like going out for coffee'. He took me - he came from Bavaria - and he took me to this place.

**Tape 2: 34 minutes 45 seconds**

Anyway, he - that one day, then two day - he wanted to see me every day. I wasn't interested. He had a brother and a sister, his brother had already married and they had a little boy already. And he lived with them. And he was working, he did typewriting and all this. His English wasn't good either, but he had quite a good job at that time already, but anyway. And he was ten years older than I am. Another thing happened at that same time. I was what you would call these days head-hunted. There was a Jewish holiday home for babies, in Lymm, Cheshire, which is connected with the Delamere Homes. And a Miss Langden and a Mrs. Jacob got to know about Jewish nursery nurses and they found somehow, they got my name. And they approached me, 'Would I work for them?' They would double my wages, I had to live in Lymm. Double the wages and plenty of time off and all that. It was a very, very good offer. And I thought, 'What am I going to do now?' I decided, 'I'm taking this'. They wanted me to start mid-January, 1948. No, that must have been already '49. '49, yes, '48/ '49. Yes, I was going to start mid-January. The home was closed, I think, and then they opened again. And I was in charge of the babies, well, up to three-year olds, toddlers, babies. And there was this matron there and another helper and a Jewish cook. And that was good. But I was isolated from my friends. But I had plenty of time off. They were very, very good. And it was good. But, just at this time, as I met this fellow, I was going away from Manchester. I was really in trouble. 'What am I going to do?' Anyway, I decided, 'No, I'm sticking, I'm going to Lymm. And, well, if he wants to see me, then he's got to come to Lymm or I've got to come to Manchester, and that's the end of it'. And I was not madly keen. He was very nice, he was a wonderful person, you know, I got to find that out later. I gave notice to the nursery, they were absolutely upset - 'You can come back anytime you want' - the Manchester Corporation Day Nurseries, they wrote a lovely letter. And I said to the landlady, 'Can I pay for one month to leave my-, in case I don't like it, that I can come back?' 'Yes.' They charged me very little, they were also very good. I had a lot of good people on my side, very often, in spite of all the difficult things. Anyway, I went to Lymm and it was very good. It was a nice job and I was in charge and it was nice. I was trained by then, you know, it was a very nice job.

RL: So what was the place? What was it exactly? Were the children living there, or-?

SL: Yes. They were children, either underprivileged children or children a bit delicate, you know, to release. The mothers weren't very well to cope with them, big families. Jewish children from Manchester and Liverpool, I think from that area. And they were there, some

were there for good, I think, or for two months, three months they were there. I was in charge though, so I had to get up early and, you know what to do with babies, look after the babies. I had a helper, a young girl in training, who was very good. It was good, I did my job, it wasn't easy, but it was accepted. And then of course I did all my courting, in Altrincham, so half-way through. And Warren sometimes came and brought him out. They came, they had supper. They were very nice there in that home. You know, it was a lovely place. But I missed Manchester, actually. I missed Manchester. But this job didn't last long.

**Tape 2: 38 minutes 44 seconds**

RL: Were you the only refugee working there or were there other refugees working in the home?

SL: No, no, I was the only one. But they wanted a children's nurse, they didn't really go 'Refugees or not refugees', they wanted a nurse. They were very pleased to have a Jewish nurse. Because with the holidays and all that, it was good. But over Pesach they closed the whole place, because they didn't want to change everything. They closed, the children went back home or somewhere else, whatever. And I had, I think I had ten days off over Pesach. So the natural thing for me to do was to go to my auntie and uncle, who lived in London, you know, they were liberated from Shanghai, and my cousin. So they said, 'Yes, you come'. They already had a house and I could stay with them, come over Pesach, go to London. Now my boyfriend then, he was very upset that I was going away for ten days. He said, 'And Warren is going to his brother in London over the holidays'. I said, 'I see you when I come back'. And I left actually the telephone number of my auntie and uncle. I think I was two days in London when I got a phone call from him. He said, 'Well, when can I see you?' I said, 'You've got to wait 'til I come back to Manchester'. He said, 'No, I'm in London'. He went with his friend to see me, to London. So I had to tell my auntie and uncle all about the story. 'We want to meet him, invite him.' I invited him for tea. During Pesach he came, he brought flowers for my auntie. He came, they were very impressed with him. 'He's such a decent, good person', they said, 'he'll be alright'. But I still-, I don't know what happened there. Anyway, then he also had a cousin in London, a cousin and his wife, a Dr. Sadler, Else. They were very close to him, actually. They brought him over to England. They were very well-off already, living in London. So they invited him, they wanted to meet me, you see. So we went there and we had a very, very nice evening, you know. They were lovely there. And then, I think I saw him every day in London, I think. No, he went back earlier, he had to go back to work, he went back earlier. And when I came back, then every day or whatever. Anyway, it didn't take very long and we got married in June, that same year. So everything- I had to leave Lymm again and went back to the nurseries, because I had to have a job. I had to work, not very long either, but I had to work. I got married on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1949 at the Great Synagogue in Manchester.

RL: How was it the Great Synagogue, how did you choose that place?

SL: How did we choose that place? I really don't know. We both had no parents with us. I didn't even want a religious wedding, I thought we just have a-. He was determined to have a Jewish wedding, no matter what. I don't know, we knew somebody, I don't know, I can't really tell you how that was arranged. First, there was a civil, you know, they had to get the civil, and then on Sunday we got married at that Great Synagogue. And we had a little, we then moved into a little flat in Whalley Range. I had to move there because I only had one room. It was very, very primitive, to say the least. But never mind, we made the best of it, it

was okay. I was still working for the nurseries, not very far away. We got married the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. Anyway, September-

RL: Who were the Unterführers?

**Tape 2: 42 minutes 34 seconds**

SL: The Unterführers, that was also very difficult. My husband, he had his brother and sister-in-law, and I had some friends I knew from Germany, they were friends of my parents, who settled in Leeds. By then, they had a five-year-old daughter. No, the daughter wasn't born then. Yes, she was born, they had a small child. They were my Unterführers, they came over to Manchester. And my cousin and my uncle came. My auntie wasn't well. My cousin and my uncle came to the wedding. And Frank Goldman, who was a very good friend of ours, who was very wealthy already. He had favourite ties and valerina, he was a very wealthy man already, he lived in Appleby Lodge. He made a wedding party for us at a restaurant in Davyhulme. There was a Viennese woman. And that was nice. And he said, 'Invite whoever you want'. And I invited people I've worked with and he invited people he worked with and we thought it's just maybe a drink and a cup of tea, but it was a full-course meal. Well, I didn't know that until I got there. So, that was it. And, yes, we got married. And in October I was pregnant. That was the end of my working. I was sick for three months, four months. Anyway, that was the end of my working for the time being. But then we had to live somewhere else, we had to move. Ah, and that was also a nightmare where to go and to get the money and everything. Anyway, we moved to Woodlands Road, in a little terraced house. It was a semi, it wasn't a terrace, a little semi in Woodlands Road. And then, anyway, John was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1950. So, we lived then, then some normality actually came back. I had my own home, had my own husband and had my own child. So, some normality came back into my life. But then of course, I knew the fate of my parents, I-

RL: How had you find that out?

SL: Yes, well, then it became absolutely clear. When they haven't heard anything, and that millions of people were taken to Auschwitz and first Theresienstadt. And my aunties mentioned earlier were rescued to Switzerland. Now, I was still working for the Day Nursery at that stage, that was 1947, and I thought, 'I must get every penny I can get together, I must go and see my aunties'. And I had two weeks holidays coming and I took an extra week. And I managed to save the money together. Of course it was my boat, it was not flying. It was a long, long journey, on the train. First I went to Dover, I don't know where I crossed over. And then by train right through France to Switzerland, to Montreaux. So then I saw, that was very emotional to see my aunties, they were already then in their seventies. That was very, very emotional. That was before I was married. I went over there.

**Tape 2: 45 minutes 51 seconds**

And my aunties told me then what actually happened, that they were taken, they killed the old, some of the old people, they killed them even before they took them over. And my parents were shifted from house to house in Berlin already, having to do the most menial jobs and they were rounded up and then they were out to Theresienstadt, which was a concentration camp, also very bad. It wasn't an extermination, but it was a concentration camp. They had to do jobs there, or whatever. One day, they said it was announced that they want all the professional people back in Berlin, which included my father and mother. My aunties stayed. My father and mother. They saw that train go off, with the doctors and the

solicitors and the teachers, straight to Auschwitz. Didn't go to Berlin, it went straight to Auschwitz. They knew that. My aunties were still there. They were in a dreadful state, until they were taken to Switzerland. They were still in a bad state when I saw them. But at least they were now-, of course the reunion, it was so emotional, it was unbelievable. Because I wanted to know all what's happened, you know, and they didn't want to tell me really. Anyway, I got to know the worst. So that's how I knew, then I was sure. So, then I came back, well, then this happened that I met my husband after the Swiss journey. Also, something else happened. 1947, one could be naturalised. Now, during wartime, nobody gets naturalised. So I thought, 'If I am going to stay in England', which I fully intended to, there was no going back or anything, 'I want to be British, I want British nationality'. I must have been the first one in the queue and I was naturalised in January 1947. To get that British passport and the naturalisation certificate was a wonderful, wonderful thing. I'm still happy to look at my British passport. That was a wonderful thing. I had to go to the police headquarters, I was interviewed. It was also not easy, you know, they didn't just give me the-, but that was a good, good feeling. Then I felt, you know, this is it. England is my country and I love it. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the world. Not only do I love England. Manchester. I've been in Manchester 64 years now, which is a lifetime.

RL: What were your first impressions of England when you arrived?

SL: I thought the English people –now I'm talking now more about the non-Jewish people I met- very reserved, very nice, very charming, but they didn't let you go too close. Some of them. But, on the other hand, I met some wonderful, wonderful English people, you know. Who were friends until the day they died, you know. So, yes, the longer I lived in England, the more I appreciated the English way of life, which is completely different to the continental way of life.

RL: In what way?

SL: In every way. The mannerisms, in habits, in way of living.

RL: Can you give some examples?

**Tape 2: 49 minutes 16 seconds**

SL: Yeah, but I cannot really compare, because when I left, I was still a child, you know, I can't compare that. How you feel when you're grown-up and when you are a child is a different feeling. But I completely, I wanted to be more English than the English, you know. You know, I really tried, and I think this is one of the problems we have these days with the multiracial society, that they do not want to integrate. They want to keep their own customs, keep their own clothes, they do not want to mix, and that isolates them. And I wasn't going to be isolated, I was going to be as English as the next one.

RL: What did you have to change to become English? What kind of mannerisms or behaviour?

SL: Well, even now I think continental people, really, I have been here too long to remember what really is different. Because now I'm very, very English, really. If I would go to Germany, I wouldn't feel at home. I must mention that I have been to Germany again, but this comes a little later.

RL: That's later. What language did you speak?

SL: Now, when I met my continental friends, always German. But that was in the early years, not now, any more. Now we converse in English, not in German. But my German is still very good. Because I still do German crosswords, better than English crosswords, after 65 years. You know, I'm very much for crosswords and quiz shows and that, I'm very interested in that, even now. And I've got a satellite television, I can watch the German stations. And I do like to watch the German stations for two reasons. Not because I like the Germans, but I like their quiz shows, which keeps your brain alive somehow. You know, it's good. And also there are a lot of programmes, on the German television, there is a lot of Jewish interest. But also, what happened, you know, and all that, during the war, they still show a lot of that. And not very long ago in a little town in Bavaria, where they destroyed all the synagogues of course, they rebuilt a synagogue next to a church. And there was a terrific public interest there, a lot of dignitaries were there. And I thought, well, it's good, but I don't know what it means. I wouldn't live in Germany. I could live in Germany now, and have twice as much income as I have here. No way. I'd rather starve in England than be well-off in Germany. So, no, Germany, that is a thing of the past. Because my husband was also from Germany, so we had a lot in common.

RL: How do you feel towards-?

SL: His father was killed in Dachau. His father and his, yes, his father was killed in Dachau, his mother somehow survived and was taken to Israel. She died in Israel, but I've never - she was already ill when we got married. It was very strange because he was 39 years old when we got married, because he was in the army and all this and he was very careful. And his mother always wrote, 'Isn't it time you settle down?' The minute he said that he's getting engaged, she said, 'Are you sure? Is it alright?' We had a good laugh about it, all the time. But then I corresponded and she was actually coming over to see us, but then she was ill and she died in Israel. So, that's-, we had a lot in common.

## **Tape 2: 53 minutes 1 second**

RL: How did you feel towards the Germans?

SL: Well, when I met young people, you always say, 'It's another generation, other people'. I still felt, 'What did you father do in the war?' Even now when I see German people of my age or older. No. I wouldn't want to have anything to do with them, no. On the other hand, you know, people say it's a different generation and I know, actually Bill Williams told me, that it takes three generations at least to get this out of the system, which applies to the Germans, with what they've done, because their children and grandchildren have to suffer for their grandfathers' sins. And the Jewish people, to get over the loss of their families. So, I'm only in the first generation. But my grandchildren, I make sure they know all about it, from beginning to end. And anybody I know. And this is why I'm giving interviews, because I think people must know what the individual had to suffer, not the mass, but the individual had to suffer. And that's something which will never ever leave you. That is a punishment for life.

RL: Do you think you have been psychologically affected by it?

SL: Well, when I was examined by doctors, before I got a pension from Germany, they said that - and they were German doctors that came over here, because they don't just hand out the money- they found, on two occasions - because in a five year interval they did it again - that

I'd got a damaged nervous system. And it shows even now. I'm over-anxious. If I have to go somewhere, it's all a big thing, you know. If I have to go somewhere, anything is overpowering, exaggerated. You know, what you are worried about. People say, 'What are you worried about?' Which other people wouldn't worry at all. I worry about things, I'm anxious all the time; I'm keen to do the right things all the time. It left a mark, I can assure you. And any money I get from Germany, believe me, it's not a gift, it's something they owe me. It's absolutely something they owe me. So, I think most people somehow suffered. If they've got a very strong constitution, they suffer psychologically. It's not-, you can't absorb it somehow.

RL: Coming back to you marriage and you husband.

SL: I was a very cherished wife.

RL: What language did you speak to him in?

SL: Now, we spoke a lot of-, I think that's why he-, he was going to be an accountant, you know. He was very good, but his language, his English was not terribly good, he had a very strong accent. We spoke a lot of German. Now, that had to change when John was growing up. Because I thought he can't grow up with two languages, this is not good. On the other hand, it stood him in good stead, it wasn't wrong. But he felt - not when he was young, but when he was older, when he was at Manchester Grammar, when he was a bit older - he felt it's not so good to have two continental parents, probably. You know, he was, maybe he didn't like, you know, we had accents. I think a child-

RL: You can keep speaking, yes, you can keep speaking for the moment.

SL: Oh, you finished at the moment, yeah?

RL: No, no, you could have finished what you were telling me.

### **Tape 2: 57 minutes 5 seconds**

SL: So, I thought it was a little bit of a drawback for the child to have two continental parents. We did everything for him. He went to Temple School. He was very intelligent. He got a place at Manchester Grammar. And we did everything. I mean, what we should do for him. He was an only child and he wasn't short of anything, even if we had to go short. He wasn't short of anything, he had everything, he had friends. We gave him what we could. We started travelling, he had nice holidays.

RL: I think we just stop there then before we go on to the next bit. Because this hour is about to finish.

### **Tape 2: 57 minutes 44 seconds**

### **End of Tape 2**

### **TAPE 3**

RL: Okay, you've said you had something that you wanted to tell me about next.

SL: Well, John got to Manchester Grammar School in 1961. And we decided we are going to move, for him to be nearer. My husband didn't mind the travelling, but for John to be nearer. And, as I was very happy in Chorlton, we looked for a house in Chorlton. And we bought the house in Mauldeth Road West. And we joined the South Manchester Synagogue, because we always-, my husband was always very clear that we do belong, we are not orthodox but we do belong to a synagogue. Until we left, we belonged to the Great Synagogue, where we got married, and, when we moved to south Manchester, we joined the South Manchester Synagogue, where there was a continental rabbi, Rabbi Karlebach, who is now at the old age home, next door. He is 93 years old. Very frail. And we were made very welcome in that synagogue, actually. A few days after we moved in, and that again is sort of lucky, I had a phone call from a lady, a Mrs. Sugarman. She said, 'We went through the records of the Shul', she said, 'And we just welcome you to Chorlton and to the synagogue'. She was on the Ladies' Guild. She said she is the chairman of the Chorlton Jewish Ladies' Society, she would very, very much like me to join. So I said, 'Well, Mrs. Sugarman, that's very nice, but we've just moved in, there is so much to do. Can I give it a little bit of time?' 'Of course', she said, 'take all the time, and if you need any help...'. She was very nice, she left her telephone number. Now, I wasn't keen to join anything, because I didn't join anything in north Manchester. But then my husband, he thought I ought to, I should do. So I phoned that Mrs. Sugarman, who lives here now, I phoned that Mrs. Sugarman, and she said, 'Yes, we would. Come and have a cup of tea with me.' Well, by that time, she had two boys and a little girl on the floor, nine months old. That was 1961. And she lived in Chorlton and she made me very welcome and she said, 'You will be carded to our next meeting. We're meeting every fortnight in each other's houses. We started off just wheeling our babies around', she said, 'and we thought we might do some good work. And we founded actually a registered society and we founded Chorlton Jewish Ladies at that time, early on'. They started maybe a year before I came in. There were maybe four or five. And, again, they are still my friends now, the Chorlton Jewish Ladies. So I was very apprehensive, I didn't want to go. Anyway, I thought I must go. 'If I don't like it, I don't go again.' Well, I got in there and I tell you they were absolutely lovely. From the day one, and you know, they are still, and we lost half of them, they are not here anymore, because it's a long time. But the ones who are there are still my friends. And Sheila Sugarman, who unfortunately is nearly blind, lives here in flat number one, number two. She is here, so I'm together with her again. Because we don't meet anymore, we are only a few left now from the original. But we did raise an awful lot of money for charity over the years, coffee mornings, all sorts of things. We've done a lot, Israel, whatever. We were never working for one charity, we chose each time what we want to do. And we did an awful lot. For local charities, for Israel, we did a lot. But of course that all stopped because of our ages and of losing a lot of people. But that was a very beginning of a lot of life-long friendships for me. And I think, unfortunately then my husband, well, we had John's Bar Mitzvah-

**Tape 3: 4 minutes 16 seconds**

RL: Was that society, was it mainly English-born people?

SL: All English. Two or three continentals. One was Hilda Istil and one was Trudi Fabian and me. They were English, very English, doctors' wives and-. Yes, very. But they are still my friends today. It became-, and the husbands were involved and then we had evenings the husbands came in. And my friend, Norma Liviam, she is, they are still wonderful, wonderful friends. They are my friends now. The ones which are left. And we get together as much as we can, not as a society any more. But then, what happened then? John got Bar Mitzvah in 1963, when he was 13, at South Manchester Synagogue. And his Bar Mitzvah was a time



when we couldn't have dancing, in May. You know, we couldn't have dancing. We had an afternoon tea at the Steel Hall and it was very, very nice. We invited my old doctor, Dr. Samuel, and the non-Jewish friends of ours came, the Roberts family and the Cassel family came to John's Bar Mitzvah. This was very nice, he had a good Bar Mitzvah.

RL: Are you still in touch with the vicar that you ...?

SL: No, but the vicar, they soon retired after the war. Unfortunately, their son was killed in the war. And the daughter, she went abroad, I think, to live abroad, so we didn't hear much of her. They moved to Yorkshire on retirement, they had a little cottage in Yorkshire. They were by that time seventy-ish, getting on a bit. And he wasn't very well. And they, I had holidays there. She used to bring my breakfast to bed. They treated me, they spoil me, absolutely lovely, now they were until the day they died. That was not there anymore. They were very good people. And that family, Roberts, which I met in hospital. Now, I spent weekends with them as well, but then they had this daughter, they only had one child. She was a wonderful friend when my husband became ill. The first person I rang to was Margaret Roberts. She could take care of me, she calmed me down. And they were wonderful. They are not here anymore either, I've lost all these people, because of age. But they were wonderful friends, I didn't look whether they were Jewish or not Jewish, they were good people. That's the only thing that mattered at that stage. So we went through that. John didn't want to study, he was always with cameras. Since he was a little boy, always the cameras, the cameras. He left school at 16 and he was in training in the camera business. And he worked his way up to be a manager. Of course, since then, he got his own shops, but that's a long time later. So then we had nice holidays. Our first holiday abroad was to Switzerland, then we went, yes, we had two holidays in Switzerland, one to Lausanne and one to Lugano. So, we had nice holidays. But then my husband started being ill, 1971. We thought it was an ulcer, and he was never complaining, he wasn't a complainer, he fought it and he didn't want me to know and it was terrible. Then he had an operation and then I was told what he had. They never told him what he's got, because he wanted to live and plan and all that. It was a very, very bad time.

### **Tape 3: 8 minutes 4 seconds**

The Chorlton Ladies, they really propped me up, they never left me. They were absolutely wonderful. The husbands came to see him, two of them were doctors, they calmed him down. It was a very, very trying time. Anyway, he died in October '74. That was probably the second tragedy in my life. And John, by that time he was quite established. He had a good job, he was a manager of a very big camera concern in Wilmslow. But he was then really very good, you know, he was with me. And I didn't want that. I wanted him to-. He was young. 'Don't sit with your mother all the time. I've got plenty of friends, I don't need that.' My friend from London came, my cousin came, I had good, good people around. And Rabbi Karlebach and Mrs. Karlebach, they were absolutely wonderful. People were very, very good. People always rise to these things, you know, and are good. And I had, by that time I had established a lot of good friendships. So, that was 1974. Then I had the invitation, well, I had the invitation long before but I couldn't get away, my friend from America: 'Come, come, come.' But I said, 'I can't decide anything at this stage. One day I will come'. Then again fate goes very strange ways. In January '74, I'm getting a letter from the Mayor of Berlin, to invite me for a week's free visit to Berlin, at the invitation of the Senate of Berlin. And I thought, 'God, I don't want that'. But, you know, everybody said this couldn't come, for June, the following June, this couldn't come at a better time. There was no way that I could arrange holidays or wanted a holiday, that wasn't a holiday anyway, and I said, 'My parents got no graves. My grandparents are buried in Berlin, in the biggest European Jewish cemetery in

Weissensee. Maybe I can see my grandparent's graves'. And that was one of the reasons why I decided to go. I was in a terrible state, psychologically, physically, everything. Anyway, we had a very nice home, we had a lovely house. Of course I had John with me, but I wanted him to do his own thing, you know. He was good, he is still to this day, he's always there when he's needed. You know, that's all that matters. Anyway, I went, this is very interesting, on this trip to Germany. Now, they sent me the tickets from Heathrow to Berlin. I had to make my way. I just stayed the night with my cousin and they took me to the airport. When I got- it was a normal plane, you know, it wasn't anything with refugees or anything like that. I wasn't a refugee any more anyway, I was British. It was a British Airways plane. And the people there, I didn't see any Jewish people. Of course, you can't turn round on a plane to see who is there, but, getting on the plane, I couldn't pick out any Jewish people. I sat there on that plane and, you know, I don't know what went through my mind, it's unbelievable. What am I doing here? Am I crazy to go back to Germany? The streets are full of Jewish blood. I couldn't. If I could have turned round, then I would have done, in the middle of the flight. When we approached Berlin, the captain came over the tannoy, and he said, 'All ladies and gentlemen invited by the city of Berlin, remain seated until everybody is off'. Well, I saw all these people getting off and I think there might have been about twenty people left, there were twenty Jewish people. But I didn't at that stage talk to anybody. There were some couples. I didn't know anybody. I didn't talk to anybody. I was the only one from Manchester, all the other people were from London. So, first of all, I was the youngest of that lot, for the reason I will explain later. Why they had chosen me to come? Because my father was a civil servant working for the city of Berlin. But the others were much older.

**Tape 3: 12 minutes 25 seconds**

When all the other people were off, the red carpets came on for us. The red carpets are out and roses all the way, the girls with roses. Every lady who came off the-. For us, honestly, you know, it was like a bad dream, not like a good dream. I'm in Berlin, in that dreadful-, where terrible things happened to you, they welcome me with roses. Then a young man came up to me, because I was probably looking the youngest then, I was 54 years old. They said, 'We would like an interview for the Radio Berlin'. I said, 'Well, not now'. So he said, 'Where are you staying?' I was staying at a five star hotel. I gave him the address of the hotel. He said, 'Well, may we approach you?' I said, 'Well, you can try. Whatever'. He spoke only German, of course. And I don't know. I had the best hotel I've ever been to. They really, they couldn't do enough, I had a suite. It was just, there was a whole programme on the table there. There was a lot done from the Jewish community of Berlin for us, dinners, outings. I think one was a theatre outing. Then there was a-. They have beautiful places on lakes, outside. We were taken to the lakes, dinners here, dinners there. They didn't know what to do for us, it was really too, too much. But, you know, I felt unhappy there all the time. I couldn't-. A lot of people who were with me actually felt the same. There were people then, there were four-hundred people. There were twenty from England and I think there were two-hundred from Israel and two-hundred from America, in different hotels, but when it came to functions, we were all together. It was very interesting, if nothing else. We had five-star treatment from beginning to end. And yet, it was terrible. One day we had off and there was no engagements and nothing. There was a lady on her own and I said, 'I don't know what you are doing'. She always clung on to me, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'Today I'm going to take a taxi and I'm going to see where I lived'. I wish I hadn't gone. Because I should have remembered it the way it was. The synagogue wasn't there any more, the school wasn't there any more, and our apartment was so dilapidated, it was terrible, terrible. I wish I hadn't gone. I said to the taxi, he understood, I told him, and said, 'You just wait, I just want to walk around the street.' Then I thought, 'What am I walking around the street for, where all this was happening?' Do

you know, I couldn't wait to get out of Berlin. Well, I went to see my grandparents graves. There were two other couples, because they said, 'Don't go on your own'. There was still Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, to the other side of the town, the East. That was a nightmare in itself. We got a taxi, we shared a taxi, there were two couples and me. We shared a taxi, good job we were together. We went to that checkpoint, five times they took our passports off us. It was really-, I thought, 'What am I doing here?', you know, all the time I thought, 'What am I doing here?' And then we had to take a bus, no, the taxi could only go so far, then we had to take a bus or something. We went on to the cemetery, which was-. All the gravestones down, but they had a little office. Because I remembered my grandparents' names and the approximate dates of birth and death or whatever. So, then somebody came up to me, a man came up to me, he already found the graves of his people. I couldn't find them. He came with me all the time. He came with me and he said Kaddish. We had now found the graves.

**Tape 3: 16 minutes 17 seconds**

That was another experience. But I'm glad that I've done that. And then I said to them, I went to the Jewish community, there was a dinner the next day, 'Can I give you some money to look after these graves?' He said, 'You are wasting your money'. I said, 'Well, give it to the community'. Because he said, 'They put them up and knock them down as quick as they are putting them up again'. They are still doing it. So he said, 'Don't. Just remember what you want to remember'. They were very, very nice. So when I came back to England, I thought, 'Thank God!' I could have kissed the ground of Heathrow when I came back. Well, after that then, in 1977, I went to America to see my friend. She was very, very well-off by then. Her husband was still alive, he died after that. Now they gave me a fantastic welcome, for three weeks. And John said he would be alright. He was already 22, 23 years old, that was fine. He was 26? No. How old was he? 26, he was born in 1950, so he was 27. So he looked after the house and he was okay. And he wanted, he said, 'Yes, go. Good.' So I had a wonderful time. I had friends also whom I met in Kershaw House, who settled in Philadelphia. So I went four days to Philadelphia, to stay with them. They also gave me a wonderful, wonderful welcome. So, then I went back. At six o' clock I arrived at Manchester Airport and John was there. And when I settled down again, he said, 'You know what', he said - I wanted a flat, I wanted to get out of that house, but I thought, 'I can't, his father is gone and I can't, he loved the house' - but he said, 'No', he said, 'Now is time. We are looking for a flat, we get a two-bedroom flat'. And he said he will come with me, but eventually get his own flat, which was right. He had a girlfriend, but nothing serious at all. So, we found a flat. I sold the house very quickly, in a day I sold the house. It was a lovely house. Who came with me all the day? Alice. Alice was with me all moving day. She was Hoovering and cleaning. That was Alice. She was with me. They were all very good. My friend from London came, so that was good. So, I bought a two-bedroom flat in Fog Lane, Didsbury, Florence Park Court, which was a lovely two-bedroom flat, a big flat, on the ground floor. And I settled very quickly into the flat. There the people were also very nice, lovely neighbours. There were two Jewish couples and two very nice non-Jewish couples. That has all changed later, when they started letting and it wasn't nice any more. But I lived there a long time, I lived there until '96. Then I was always connected with the Morris Feinmann Home. I was giving them a donation now and then and visited people. This home was built for Jewish refugees, with German restitution money. Of course, now it's 90 percent English people. And I always felt close, I used to visit a lot and I was always in connection. It was much smaller, they started off in Heaton Road, in a very small place. Then they moved here. And I was not very friendly, but there were meetings already, the AJR started, and there were AJR meetings.

**Tape 3: 19 minutes 47 seconds**

And the chairman at that time was Peter Kührer, Dr. Kührer. And I was, you know, I knew him very well. And one day they said he wanted to build a luxury block of flats, next door to the Morris Feinmann Home, whenever the building becomes available. One day, 1995 or '94, this became available. They knocked the whole place down and they had a turf cutting ceremony for Barfield House. They tried other things before, which didn't work. And I was invited, because I was known to the Feinmann Home. I went to the turf-cutting ceremony and I saw the plans, there were luxury flats, one-bedroom, two-bedroom flats. And I thought - I wasn't interested - 'I'm staying in my flat until I'm ready to go into the Feinmann Home'. I had my name down there, whenever I needed it. And I would always have priority. Even now, if a refugee, if there's a waiting list, the refugee will jump the queue. Because that is what it was built for? So, Ruth - no, meanwhile, he was married already. He got married in 1979. He met Ruth at a friend's house and she was learning to drive, she needed someone to sit with her while driving or whatever. And he volunteered. So that was, he met her in October or November 1978, October '78 he met her. Anyway, so I thought from the beginning this could be serious. So I said, 'Have you met the family?' I didn't know anything. He said, 'They are English, they are not refugees. The father is a solicitor'. And they made him very welcome. I said, 'Well, that's nice to know'. And I made her welcome, of course. She was a lovely girl. But I still didn't think it would be, I didn't know. Anyway, in February of the next year, in 1979, they got engaged. And they got married on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1979. Next week, they've got their Silver Wedding. So, he married Ruth., I fell in love with Ruth myself. You know, she immediately, if you could pick a daughter-in-law, that is the one I would have picked. And I must say the parents, although I was continental, I was a widow, I could have easily been pushed out a little bit. From day one, we were very close. We're, thank God, close to this day. You know, we spend every Friday night together. And I can't do so much any more. But they are doing it, they are a bit younger. And it's a very, very close family. We are a small family. Ruth has got a younger brother, he's a solicitor. And it fell into place. Anyway, they got married and they settled in a little house in Fortbank Road, in Didsbury.

**Tape 3: 23 minutes 2 seconds**

And then Ruth was teaching, she is a French teacher. She was teaching. He then bought his own business that was the first business he bought. And Deborah was born in January '83. That was the love of my life when Deborah was born. That was unbelievable. Ruth had to go back to work, to get her maternity leave money. She was off for a while, then she had to go back. Nobody was-, she wouldn't give it in the nursery, she wouldn't have a nurse coming, she wouldn't part with that baby. And that was very, very bad. They needed the money. He just bought a new business and she wouldn't part with that baby. And how could she work? And what should she do? Anyway, she was only working part-time, anyway. So I said to her, because I was still young enough, I was 60, I said, because she knew I was a children's nurse, she said what about me? Yes! So I looked after Deborah while she was working. I had a taxi every morning to go to their house, in their house, because she had all the baby things there. And I looked after Deborah for nine months or so, you know, part-time while Ruth was working. And that worked very well. I got a very close bond with Deborah anyway, but that worked well. So I looked after Deborah. But then she stopped working and Deborah was older. Then she started nursery and that was it. Daniel was born three years later. Daniel was born in September '87. Daniel was born. He was also a lovely, lovely boy. Both children went to North Cheshire Jewish School. Daniel later, first nursery, because he is younger. Deborah went to school and when she was seven or eight, she went into the prep of Withington Girls' School, where Ruth also went. And so she settled down there in the school and she was there

all the time until she went to university. She was very happy. So it was lovely with the children, you know, that was a lot of happiness brought back into my life by the children. That was my happiness and still is today. And Deborah still, she's nearly 21, she's very, very close to me, and so is Daniel. But that is the way that the mother, the way they've been brought up. Because they are very close to me. I mean Ruth was with me recently, when I was ill. She came with me to the doctor, to the hospital, she was there. She's always there when I need her. So, she is the perfect daughter-in-law.

RL: Coming back to your son, did he belong to any youth groups as a child?

SL: I think he belonged, what did he used to? I think he did belong to, I can't really remember, he did belong to a Jewish youth group, he met a lot of people there. And what did he do? No. He had a lot of friends. He was working very hard, you know. Because he didn't go to university, but he was working hard. The children belonged to groups. I mean, Daniel belongs to FZY, he's just been a month in Israel. Deborah was also a month in Israel, two or three years ago, and she went to America for nine months too. I don't know what they did, they looked after children, I think, in America. And Deborah also went to another Jewish group from London, Aisha, or what was it, yes, she went there. Now I think she's busy studying, she's got a lot of friends in London. And she's driving and she's forward and backwards now.

### **Tape 3: 26 minutes 52 seconds**

RL: Did your husband belong to any societies?

SL: I tell you, my husband had to work very hard, he had no time to belong to anything. I mean, the Shul, yes, if he had retired I think he would have been very active in the Shul because he liked the Shul, he was at home there, you know. But he had to work very hard, you know, and then had really very little time for that sort-. When the time came, when he could have taken it easy, he became ill. So really, it was all not very good. That was not very good. We just had our Silver Wedding, he died three months after our Silver Wedding. So, that was the second tragedy in my life. So now, since then, it has been very good to be here, because this Barfield House was built, it was supposed to be ready on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1996. Peter Kühner met Ruth and John at a wedding and Peter said to John, 'Your mother should think about Barfield House'. So John, he took it on board, I think, and he phoned me next morning and he told me. I said, 'I know all about it, I'm not interested'. He said, 'Think about it'. I said, 'It's all sale stock.' He said, 'No, I think this is very genuine, you should think about it'. Well, I gave it a thought and then I phoned John back. So he said, 'Make an appointment and I will go with you'. We made an appointment and Peter Kühner said, 'Yes, he's got a few more people coming on a Friday afternoon'. And then I told John and he said, 'No way, not with a lot of other people, he's got to see us on our own'. So the following Monday we went on our own. This was still, we had to put the helmets on to get into that building, the builders were in, the staircase wasn't finished. And we looked, because we saw all the plans. And they were very cheap at the time, because they were non-profit-making. The carpets were in, the kitchen was fitted, everything was fitted, the furniture. I could choose the colour scheme, because I was the first. But then, we went, I had to put a thousand pounds refundable money down, a thousand pound. And I would get it back if I changed my mind. So I put a thousand pound down and then John said, 'We go immediately to the estate agent and put the flat on sale'. For sale, my flat. We were very impressed with the whole set-up. The connection with the Feinmann Home, it's a better thing than going into a home. I've still got my own home, I do my own thing, I pay my council tax, I pay my own bills, I'm still independent. But I've got

the back-up of the home. So, if I want a nurse, well, I've got to pay for everything, I can eat there, but I've got to pay for each meal. They would bring the meal over to me. When I had a broken arm, they brought the meals over. But I had to pay for it. But it's there. If I need a handyman, it's there. You've got to pay for it, but at least you get the people right away. So, not waiting for work people to come, you know. Yes, we put the flat up for sale and you know, I've sold that flat very quickly. This wasn't ready. The flat was sold, I had to get out of the flat. I didn't want to live with the children, that was the last thing. They didn't have enough room because Deborah had a separate room and Daniel, and I didn't want that. So, John said, 'What do you want to do?' I said, 'Get a bed-sitter or something'. And John said, 'You would be a lot better off going into a hotel, where you can eat when you want'. So he said he got a good deal in the Posthouse Hotel, it's the Britannia now, for four weeks, he got a very good deal. And I just had breakfast there, all the other meals I had with the children and friends, they were all very good. All the washing Ruth took to do in her place and I could get myself ready for this. I bought the curtains, the lights, and I could come, it was only a few minutes away from here, and I could keep an eye on what's going on.

**Tape 3: 30 minutes 48 seconds**

As promised, the flat was ready on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, when I moved in. And there was, I got a picture here, Peter Kühner and me moving in, which was in the Jewish Telegraph. Do you want to see it? I can't now. Later?

RL: Maybe later.

SL: And so that was the first for him as well. He was very proud of the Barfield House because it was his brainchild. They had a terrific reception here when I came in. And John was free, Ruth was free, they were all helping. And I had a cleaner from the other flat, who came with me and is still, after 16 years, still with me. She still comes here, once a week. And this, I think everybody who lives here, a few people I knew before, like Sheila Sugarman and Gretchen Hermann, I knew a few, and Joyce Bantata, I knew a few people before. But everybody who moved in here, you know, we are on such wonderful terms, we are not neighbours, we are all friends. But we respect each other's privacy. Nobody would come and just come in, knocking on the door. It's always a phone-call first. We do things together, we are very, very close. It just happened this way. Unfortunately, now we're already losing people, you know, and new ones are coming in. It's a turnover already. But there are nice people here.

RL: How many flats?

SL: 16. And they are all lovely people, really lovely people. I mean, they are all there for me anytime and I'm there for them, you know, of course it goes both ways. And it was good. But I was three weeks here on my own before anybody else moved in. So the matron said, 'Look', he said, 'I don't think you want to be in that building by yourself, you can sleep over in the home'. But I said, 'No, I've been now in a hotel, I'm going here.' They put a fellow, one of the caretakers, put him, sat at night downstairs. To watch over me, so I'm not alone in the building. They were very good. It's not so good now anymore, because now we've been here 8 years. It's been established now. But it's a wonderful place, we are very close.

RL: What kind of things do you do together?

SL: I tell you what we do. We go every Thursday, we go for lunch at the Sale Shul. Well, not everybody goes. My friend, who unfortunately - I'm very, very upset today - is ill, Joyce Bentata, who is a very well-known lady in this community, for the Queen's Road Synagogue, actually where Ruth and John got married, at the Queen's Road. And John was a couple of weeks ago Rosental at that Shul in the Queen's Road. The lovely Shul Rabbi, Elitov, he's lovely. We have every Friday morning Rabbi Fox, from the Menora Synagogue, comes and we have a discussion group, every Friday. Most of us are going. Lady Liever lives here too, got a flat here. Her husband was Lord Major of Manchester. She's Ray Liever. Now she's a close friend of mine. We go over 11 o'clock every Friday morning to the Rabbi's discussion group. He's a very nice, very nice man. So that is Friday, we're together.

**Tape 3: 34 minutes 5 seconds**

Then, it's always, I play cards twice a week in the home. Two people from here and two people from the home. So, we play cards twice a week. Then we have our own little circle, three or four, sometime Saturday afternoon, like Sheila, Barbara Jakeson, Barbara Hofmann, and Ray Liever, we have a cup of tea together on a Saturday afternoon in one of the flats. So we are very together. Unfortunately, this is why I'm very upset today, my friend Joyce Bentata, who will be 91 on Friday, has been taken to hospital yesterday. Breathing problems. Now, she and I were going on that holiday together to Turkey, with the club, Thursday. I had to cancel because I got a bad back and now she's in the hospital, she's got to cancel. We are not going. But we are very much together, Joyce and I are very, very close friends. And her daughter lives in a bungalow across the road, Mrs. Mesrey. Her son just married a lady from north Manchester, Trudi Simon. Her father's a dentist, they've got twin girls. She lives now in Cheadle, got twin girls. And so, Jackie, she comes over. Every morning is coffee morning over there. So, if I have nothing else, I go over, have a coffee and talk to the people. A few of us are going over. Everything is at leisure, you don't have to do anything. But you get, you know, it's nice to mix with them over there as well. They think it's lovely when we come over there. You know, it brings a bit of more life into it. It's a good relationship, it's very good. It has worked very well. This is the best thing we, and I think everybody who lives here will say the same, the best thing we've ever done. People had doubts to be with old Jewish women together and all this. It is just wonderful. So, I must say, my old age, I mean the memories don't go away; the things I've gone through are there all the time. But present day, I think for an old age to live here is as perfect as it can be.

RL: You know you mentioned that your son got married in Queen's Road.

SL: Ruth and John got married because Ruth, although they are Ashkanazi, but Michael was a solicitor, he was a friend of that Rabbi then, Rabbi Gagin. And they moved, they come originally from Southport, Michael and Adele, Ruth's parents. And they settled in Didsbury and, being a friend of Rabbi Gagin, they just joined that Shul and they stayed there. There are a lot of Ashkanazis now. It is very mixed now. But it's a very nice community. I never knew Sephardim until I came here. Well, Joyce is a Sephardim. I know a lot of Sephardim, lovely, lovely people. We used to go, that's how I also knew a lot of people from Didsbury, there was a Misan Sumac Centre, where we used to go three times a week. We could go for lunch there. And that was very, very good. Corinne Davis was the one who was running this. She passed away a few years ago and then this thing closed down. But there was only a gap from maybe six months until this year and then Wilbraham Road started the lunches.

**Tape 3: 37 minutes 31 seconds**

But Wilbraham Road is finished as a Shul really. So then Sale offered the premises, so we're travelling in Joyce's car, she is 91, she's taking four people very Thursday to go to-. She drives me everywhere. But now, I don't know, she's ill, I don't know what's happening next. But the Shul-. And Sheila Sugarman, who was a fantastic chairman, she's very well-spoken, she is a lovely lady. That is her brainchild, that luncheon club. We're paying four pound for a meal, a three-course beautifully kosher meal, beautifully cooked. And it is socially nice, there's about 40 people.

RL: And where was that?

SL: At Sale Synagogue.

RL: That's in Sale?

SL: Sale, yes. And they made us very welcome, so that was very nice. I'm also, it's very amazing, I'm quite friendly with the Lubavitch, which I thought I would never be, because the girl who's working for the Lubavitch is very active socially. And whenever there's anything on, they arrange everything in the Feinmann Home. They do the people's nails. They are very good people. And they always invite us here. We've just been to a Sophos party, in the Sale Synagogue. And that is run by the Lubavitch, Rabbi Jaffe. And we've been to a Shevors party, always invited to parties. Also the federation is very active here, people are, I think because there's so many old people now, I think that people are waking up that this is very important now. Now the federation, the girl who was running it is Peter Kühner's daughter, Susanne Cohen. She's just resigned, because she has four children and has got enough. They are absolutely wonderful. And Joanne Epstein. She's moved back to north Manchester recently. She is Dr. Samuel's granddaughter. And a few other girls, all volunteers. Well, Susanne and Joanne got paid, but the others are all volunteers. There's two or three ladies, we get collected here, we are going every month. Every fourth Tuesday of the month we are going out. We go either to John Lewis, to Marks & Spencer, or the garden centre. They collect us and bring us home, the volunteers. That is the federation. I think people are very, very good with old people, there is a lot. The necessity, the AJR is waking up to this as well, they arrange now a northern holiday for the people. Because they know the old people don't want to travel alone any more. I can't go abroad any more. There is a need for all this, and they realise it and they are doing it. So I think the community is very, very good.

RL: So what have you been with the AJR? What have you done with the AJR?

**Tape 3: 40 minutes 32 seconds**

SL: What have I done with the AJR? Well, I've done nothing, I've been a member with the AJR and I attend all meetings. Every three months is a meeting, a local one, which is very often in the Feinmann Home. Werner Lachs is the chairman. Do you know him? And now of course, for the Northern group, now is going as far as, I had a meeting yesterday, actually, is going as far as Scotland. And they are all over. They are getting people, who've never heard of the AJR, who never wanted to be associated with it, all of a sudden they are coming out. Because they are old and there's a need for it. So they arranged that northern holiday, which is Ruth Finestone, who is in the London office. She married a Londoner. She is a Manchester girl. And actually her parents were very, very close friends, Frank Anderson, he is a very close friend, and Thea. They are very, very close friends. So, I've known Ruth from day one,



Ruth Finestone. She's about, she would be getting on to 60 now, she's got seven grandchildren, she lives in London. And she is at the head office of the AJR, a social worker. Now, she used to cover the Manchester area as well. But it was getting too big, so they employed a Barbara Doherty. She has continental origins, she is now looking-, she's a social worker for the Manchester region. And then Susanne Green is the organiser for the North of England. Now, I saw her yesterday. Now, these two girls, Ruth Finestone, I call them girls, I mean, they are about-. Ruth Finestone and Susanne Green, they are coming, they are doing this holiday. And the way they're doing it, it is unbelievable. They're looking for us, they are caring for us like children, they are wonderful. Everything is arranged. Everything, outings, and entertainment, they are just wonderful, they really give us love and care. And of course I've known Ruth all of my life, all of her life, and then there is Susanne Green, she is a lovely, lovely lady, she lives in Liverpool. You've met Susanne Green, have you? Yes. She's lovely. On holiday, we had such good times together. Now, I've been-, they started last year and I went again this year. And hopefully go again next year. Because that is, the continental people, it brings them, there is a bond. Because people always say, 'Do you feel happier with continental or English people?' I say, 'Well, I feel equally happy, now it doesn't matter. But there's something with the continental people, there is a bond'. But some people, you see, there are some continental people who cut out the-, they don't want to talk about the past, they don't want to know about the past, they are British, they are English, or whatever. Finished. Well, a lot of people like me, I can't cut out the past and I don't want to cut out the past. I mean,

[Interruption - the telephone rings]

SL: My telephone again, yes? I had a past, you know, and I don't want, you know, it's there. And it will be there, because you can't, I can't get away from it and I never will.

RL: We'll just let the phone stop ringing in a minute. We must have forgotten that one.

SL: Because they were trying all day, I think.

RL: Do you feel different to the British in any way?

### **Tape 3: 44 minutes 1 second**

SL: I feel very, very close to the British. Because of the British, I'm alive. They saved my life. Very British. I've been a member of the Red Cross. When my husband died, I had to do something, you know. I was going mad. And it wasn't children I wanted anymore, to look after children. Except my granddaughter later on. I did two, I did a lot, because I was in such a state I just had to do too much, actually. I volunteered with the Red Cross as a hostess at Withington Hospital, once a week. I went for the day, to sort of introduce people to bring them to the consultants or whatever. Helped generally. Then again, the sister of the outpatients department I befriended or she befriended me. And we are still friends. She's retired a long time ago and lives in Wiltshire now. But we are still corresponding. So that is also a friendship from a nursing-, she was in charge of the outpatients at Withington, Mrs. Hackitt, Mary Hackitt. She was a lovely lady and she is still my friend. And I stayed there until I became ill again, in 1981. Ruth and John were married already. I had a rheumatic-, acute arthritis. And I had a very good specialist, National Health, Withington Hospital. He was very good, and he said, 'I'd like to take you to Devonshire Royal Hospital in Baxton, to arrest it before it gets much worse'. And I was very young and this hospital is being closed down now. I had hydrotherapy. He said, 'Just go for a fortnight'. He was very good, he was

very sympathetic, he knew. So I was there six weeks. And it got me better, it was good. I mean, it didn't arrest it altogether, but it was good. I was being looked after and there were no complaints. And then I started working, I took a training course with the CAB, the Citizens Advice Bureau, at Gatham House. Now, I found that very, very hard, very hard. Because I think, now it is impossible, because they need solicitors there, because it's so much legal work now. People come with so much legal work. Already when I was there I thought I can't take it. Now they - I volunteered to work one day a week - but then they wanted me two or three days and I worked there I think for a year and then I've had enough. I found it too hard, too demanding. You know, I took all this work home with me and it was too much. And then I wasn't that well any more and I was getting older. And then I finished. All the work I did was-. If there was anything to do with the Chorlton Ladies, I did my part. You know, baking, cooking, whatever was needed. And that was enjoyable and that was it. That was no more working. But I was old enough then to retire.

RL: I was just asking before whether you do feel different to the British in any way?

SL: Well, you know, what always annoyed me, even to this day, which is very wrong from my part, that people say when they meet me, people who meet me for five minutes, whether it's a milkman or people who don't really mean-, no personal friends, I always volunteer when people say, 'Oh, you are German', I say, 'No, I was born in Germany'. I will not be called a German. I was born in Germany, which I can't deny. But when they say, people who hardly know me, in shops or everywhere, 'Where do you come from?' And I think it's impertinent to ask people where they come from. So I say, 'From Didsbury'. You know, that somehow-. That is me. A lot of people-. That is something that annoys me. It is probably very natural for them to say that, but the people I know - but those are the people who don't know me and who I don't know - the people who I know, I tell them very, very soon who I am and where I come from and my past and all that. I don't deny telling them. But I object to people, who don't know me, to ask where I come from. No. But the British, I made so many friends, I've got so many good British people. And I feel very British. I mean, it's a long - 65 years. It took a long time, it doesn't go over night. But I think over the years, when you have a child, and the schools and the business and all that, it's your life. I don't live a German life, I live a British life.

### **Tape 3: 48 minutes 53 seconds**

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

SL: I did a bit, the last two three years in my other flat. I heard remarks, which weren't actually made to me, but were told, because I had friends there as well: 'Oh, there's a Jewish woman there, the Jewish woman and the Mezuzah at the door, Jewish woman'. When I first moved in there, there were quite a few Jewish people and the English people were nicer English people. But then what moved in after, and that's why John really wanted me out of there, he said, because it wasn't nice anymore, as nice as the flat was, the surroundings, the people weren't as nice any more. And that's why, he often said that he was not happy for me being there. Which was good at the beginning. So, here at least nobody will call me that, we are all Jewish people here. There's a Mezuzah at the front door.

RL: When you first came to England, did you experience any anti-German feeling?

SL: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Because I quickly, when that came up, because they knew, with my accent or whatever, and my English wasn't good anyway. I always said that I hate the

Germans as much as you hate the Germans, you know. Which was very difficult the first time, wartime, when war started. My English wasn't good, and my friends, we were all the same, our English wasn't good. We could not allow ourselves to speak German openly anywhere. Because it was wartime. How dare you speak German in England? Until the people, you see, the intelligent people they knew why we were here. They knew what was happening in Germany. They knew we hated Germany as much as they hate Germany. But the trouble was, of course that goes back to the First World War, when I was a child, I don't know, that the Jewish people were so settled in Germany. That's why so many people perished, they wouldn't leave it. My parents included.

RL: So, you say, you did experience anti-German feeling. Can you give an incident?

SL: Not really, because the people I knew, I mean, I soon told them, you know, why I am here and why I speak German better than English. I said I'm doing my very best to learn English, to talk to you in English, but I find it difficult. You know, because I was very lucky, I met a lot of very nice English people and the other people, well, you've got to live with it. We've got to live with it now, here, don't we?

RL: When you registered with the police, how did you find that? When you first came and had to register with the police?

**Tape 3: 51 minutes 59 seconds**

SL: The police, well, you know, in Germany it's all with stamps and uniforms and everything. I was used to that, you know, with the stamps and the uniforms. But then they said, 'The English bobbies are so nice' and all that. No. I found them very friendly and very, very nice, very understanding. Because I had a curfew, we had a curfew. We had to be home by ten o'clock. And when you move from one place, I remember when I visited this vicar, when they were in Yorkshire already, very early on, I had to register with the police there and report here and report there. Which was really a bit stupid at that time, but you had to follow rules, you know, it had to be done. I didn't object to it at all. And when I got naturalised, I felt very happy, very happy. I had to swear the Oath of Allegiance to the King, because it was a King then. It was a big thing, I took that very seriously. And they said if there's any, if you commit any crime or anything, you know, then you will be stripped of the nationality again. Anyway, I've had it now since 1947, haven't been stripped of it yet.

RL: What about your relationship with Israel? How do you feel towards Israel?

SL: I've never been an orthodox Jewish woman. But I've always had an awful lot of Jewish that is within, that is there. That's in-born. I felt always very Jewish. But I'm also very open to other religions, I'm not sort of, you know-. You see, here I found, when I came to England, people always say, when you met somebody, 'Is he Jewish, is he Jewish?' To me that didn't matter. If it is a good person, it doesn't have to be Jewish. There are good people everywhere, not only Jewish people. And my experience with the Jewish people at the beginning was very, very sad and very bad, so I had very bad memories. But of course, since then, thank Goodness, I met a lot of very good Jewish people. But then it was already, I was more accepted. In those days, they thought they can do what they like with me. They knew I couldn't go back, they knew I had nobody to talk for me, I was dependent on the ten shillings per week and they exploited that. They knew I couldn't go back and say, 'No, I'm fed up, I'm going home'. I had no home to go to. And that's what they exploited and that's what hurt

more than anything. The work, I did not so much object to the work. It was the attitude and treatment of these people to me. That I objected to.

RL: Did you find it difficult at the beginning being accepted?

SL: Accepted, what with the Jewish people? With the Jewish people, I wasn't accepted, I was the foreigner, I was a refugee. With the Jewish people, I wasn't accepted at all. With the English people, the nice English people, I was lucky to meet a lot of nice English people and they were very sympathetic. They wanted to know what my parents did. And the most touching thing that I have ever experienced was when I was in that vicarage. On Christmas Day, they had all the dignitaries for drinks, that is a custom. The doctors, all the bankers, or whatever. I was never sitting in the kitchen, I was always with the guests. And they were drinking there and I was very sad, very sad. And they stood up and drank for the safety of my parents. A toast for the health and survival of my parents. That was so touching, no Jewish person has ever done that. You see, that's non-Jewish people. So, I got very mixed feelings about this Jewishness. Is only good Jewish people and good Christian people. It's the people that matter, not the religion.

### **Tape 3: 56 minutes 3 seconds**

RL: Do you feel accepted by the Jewish community now?

SL: Oh yes, very much so.

RL: When did that begin?

SL: Well, I think that's got a lot to do also, well, first of all, I think also when I joined the Shul and the Chorlton Jewish Ladies. I mean, I was completely accepted, I was very much accepted. And more so now, since John got married, and grandchildren, and Ruth's parents. You know, so. And well, here, obviously, you know. But yes, no, completely. John was Rosental at the Queen's Road, and I don't belong to that Shul, but the Rabbi-. And I knew a lot of people through living in the Didsbury area. It was wonderful. You know, it was a wonderful occasion. He mentioned his father and they made me very welcome. But because I go every Thursday, well, not every, but very often to the club, well, maybe now I can't go so much. Without Joyce, I can't go anywhere. Because she takes me in the car everywhere and I can't walk.

RL: This film is about to end, so we just stop here.

### **Tape 3: 57 minutes 20 seconds**

### **End of Tape 3**

### **TAPE 4**

RL: Susi, what would you say gives a person a sense of belonging? You know, what has made you feel that you belong?

SL: Belonging is being accepted whoever you are mixing with, being one of them and not being an outcast. I think that is feeling of belonging. When I used to walk in to my synagogue in Wilbraham Road, I felt belonging. I knew everybody. Everybody was nice and friendly.

Belonging? Living here and in the Feinmann Home, I am belonging, part of the scene, that's belonging. And that is a good feeling, because for a long time I didn't belong to anybody or anything.

RL: How long to you think it took to feel that you did belong?

SL: I think after I got married probably more, because then I wasn't alone anymore. I had a husband and a child, we were a family, and I wasn't alone. I think all the years, I was ten years alone before I got married, and then I was very alone. And to this day I think I will never be lonely, because I've got too many good people and friends, but I will always be alone. When you lose your husband, then you are alone, no matter how good the children are. And I'm blessed with good, good children.

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

SL: Identity? Well, I think belonging to this society and that society, it gives you, I mean, I didn't do anything special to stand out or gain anything, but I was just one of the-, I didn't feel a stranger anymore.

RL: Do you think you've got any kind of continental identity?

SL: I don't know. Maybe I'm losing it now, but I don't think one will ever lose. Because, you know, when you are born in a country, living 18 years in a country, I think you can't just wipe that out. I think the continental, it's not, I always see there are continental faces. Now, I can see a continental person immediately. You probably wouldn't, but I can. The mannerisms, the way they are talking, the way they are moving, it's very much-. I've got one or two people I can think of who you would definitely say they are continental. Without opening their mouths. There must be something. That's natural. I don't particularly work to lose it. I haven't worked, I don't really want to be more English than the English. I mean, I know why I am here and I've been here long enough to be accepted and to be at home. But I can't get away from where I was born and where I was brought up, you can't. That's part of you and you've got to live that way.

RL: What does a continental identity mean to you?

#### **Tape 4: 3 minutes 32 seconds**

SL: The continental way, I think, it's also eating habits. I mean, the continental food. I mean, the German people, but I'm talking about the German people 65 years ago, I don't know, they also have changed. I mean the English people have changed a lot and so have the continental people. The way they, you know, this afternoon, coffee and cream and chocolates and all that, you know, that is a continental way. The women spent the afternoon drinking coffee and eating cream cake and that sort of thing, you know. And I think the continentals give a lot of priority to good food. But the English people, you know, all the nations have changed. It is not how I remembered it. It is completely different, because I've been abroad a lot, since I'm in England. I've been 19 times to Italy, and to Switzerland. So I know the continental people, the mannerisms, it is something that is different. English people are far more reserved, you know, they are much more careful in making friendships, you know. But I always said if I have an English friend, it is a real friendship, because it developed slowly. When you meet some Jewish people or continental people, they are all over you right away and forget you the next minute. No, I think, the English friendships I made are very, very genuine. Because they

took a long time to develop and they really meant something, not to me, but to the people as well.

RL: You mentioned food, did your cooking differ to-?

SL: I still do a lot of continental cooking.

RL: What sort of things?

SL: I don't know what, sort of making continental Goulash or things like that. But not really anymore, so much. Well, first of all, I don't do a lot of cooking now anyway. But, yes, I think it is a bit different. Because when we first came here, of course, we couldn't get all the food, because then the rationings started, we couldn't get all the food. And you see now all the Jewish shops, everything is really continental, isn't it? Israeli-continental, the Jewish food, and that's what we eat and what we like and that goes for all the people, for all the Jewish people, not only continental. I think that's come together with the continental. Because it's all originally, it's not from Germany that goes far back from Poland and from Russia, you know, not the German so much as the Russian-Polish influence. Because the people who came over here at the turn of the century to England from Russia, they came because there were also pogroms. But a lot of them came to escape the National Service or they had the army and they didn't-. Because people told me, I get very annoyed actually, 'Oh, we had to go through that'. They didn't. They didn't have to go, they weren't killed. They were badly treated, they were anti-Semitic and all that, but there is no, I get very annoyed when people compare anything that's happening in the world, maybe what's happening now in Iraq or whatever, to the Holocaust. Because to build factories, to do what they have done, that was systematically planned in *Mein Kampf* already, and what happened later. So that is different, it's not happening at the spur of the moment when they are shooting somebody, killing somebody. That was planned. That was their programme and that, I think, makes it quite different from any other thing. All the atrocities, I cannot compare anything. And people, only because of religion, because they were Jewish. There was no other reason for what they have done. Because they are Jewish.

**Tape 4: 7 minutes 40 seconds**

RL: What does being Jewish mean to you, your Jewish identity?

SL: Well, I've suffered enough for being Jewish. My parents were killed because they were Jewish. So my Jewishness is there and always will be.

RL: What does it mean though?

SL: Well, it had actually - you know, I've talked about it over the years, many years, especially earlier on - it had different effects on people. Some people didn't want to know about religion, where was God, they just kept away from religion. Other people became more religious. That is an individual thing. I don't think I became more religious, but I certainly didn't turn against religion, because I always thought I must keep the Jewishness for the sake of my parents, that was what they wanted. You know, we had no marrying out, I married a Jewish man, thank Goodness. John married a Jewish girl, you know. But I don't condemn anybody who does anything different, it's not my place to condemn anybody, the people do what they want to do and good luck to them. But I don't think I could have ever married out. Not because I'm so religious, but it would go against my grain. And my husband, you know,

he felt the same. Without being ultra-orthodox or anything like that. It doesn't have to be that, you've just got to be, it is in you, that Jewishness, and nobody can take it or give it.

RL: So, besides that aspect of it, what else does being Jewish mean to you, in a sort of practical sense?

SL: Being Jewish to me, actually living in Manchester with such a big Jewish community. I mean, I personally didn't suffer really any anti-Semitism in England. I mean, things are changing. The English people have changed, it's not that I have changed, the English. When I first came over, the foreigner, you know, I always felt the English hate foreigners. When I first came. Until they understood why we are here, that we are refugees and all that. But things have changed. We are a multi-racial society now, and I think that changed the English people a lot, they have to accept it whether they like it or not. And it is in favour of the Jewish people, in some respect. Because we are not isolated as foreigners or a different religion, we are one of many religions now. We were here first, probably, but, you know, it's mingling now. It's got to be accepted. But the English people find that, I think, very difficult to accept, you know. When I first came, I always felt that they don't like foreigners, English people don't like foreigners. And in Germany, when you saw a coloured person, that was one in a million. I never met coloured people before, in Germany. Well, they hated everything foreign, especially when Hitler came to power - with Aryan blood, blue eyes, blonde hair, you know.

RL: Do you think your experience affected your religious belief in any way?

SL: No, not at all. Not at all. I have the same shade of religion I had when I was a child. Not orthodox, but traditional. Because I was free to do what I wanted to do here. I could have turned against religion, I could have changed my religion or could have become ultra-orthodox, but I think, you know, I always said I like to live in the mode my parents would have wanted me to live. And that's what I have done. And my husband felt the same, about his upbringing and all that. We were very much together on that point. John, because he went, when he was first at school, he went to Temple School, where there were a lot of Jewish children, and then Manchester Grammar, of course, there were a lot of Jewish, he mixed a lot with Jewish and non-Jewish. Because now, of course, they keep also traditional, not ultra-orthodox, traditional. Of course John is working when he's got to work, but there's always the Friday night, they always keep the Friday night, and keep all the Yom Tov, and buy kosher food. And, you know, the children went to a Jewish school, they had a good Jewish education, and they are very respected members of their synagogue. So that pleases me. I have not done anything towards it, they have done that themselves. But then again, that is their upbringing. Because Michael and Adele, Ruth's parents, are also very traditional, you know, so we are very much the same shade, which is very good.

**Tape 4: 12 minutes 28 seconds**

RL: What is your relationship with the state of Israel, how do you feel towards-?

SL: I've been to Israel once. Because I thought I must see Israel once. The state of Israel, you know, I really cannot tell you about that because every day things are changing there. I'm very much for that there should be peace, that one day there will be peace. I can't see it. I wish it, I can't see it. I mean what they have done to this country is unbelievable. It's an unbelievably beautiful country. But it's very hard to live there too.

RL: When did you visit?

SL: I went actually on a holiday with Jack Goldstone, many, many years ago. 19-, after I came out of hospital, I thought I must go to Israel even if I can't go any further. We went with a friend, we stayed at Tel Aviv, in a very nice hotel and we stayed three days in Jerusalem, in the Plaza, Hotel Plaza, very nice hotel too. And we've seen, because we've been on sightseeing tours, you know. I went to the Hebrew University in Tel Aviv, I spent the whole day there. Wonderful. Things have been, you are just in awe of what they have done, this beautiful, beautiful country. So, all that, I wish, like every Jewish person, that one day they should have complete peace. I can't see it, but I hope for it. Because when we emigrated, there was no Israel. Thank God, Israel is there, because of us. Because there was a need for Jewish people to have a country. Because they had nowhere to go. And that's where the state of Israel comes in.

RL: How safe do you feel in Britain? How safe do you feel here?

SL: Safe? Well, the way I'm living here at the moment, I feel very safe. But I don't think the Jewish people should be too complacent about it, because I think anti-Semitism is on the increase. Because I listened to Joy Woolf, who sometimes talks about it and reports. There's a lot of incidents in England, anti-Semitic. And I think people should be-, a little warning. Maybe I'm more sensitive about it, because I've gone through all that and, God forbid, I should not see it here. But it's there. It's definitely on the increase. Definitely. And in Germany, they are planning for years to have a memorial for the Berlin Jews, who have been killed in Auschwitz. And I have a letter, I asked them to make sure that my parents' names are on it, they assured me it is. It has been demolished twice, it has been vandalised, it never comes, it won't happen at all. And on the cemeteries, the stones. And it's rife. It's all over the world. The Jews are to blame for everything.

RL: Did you only ever make that one trip back to Germany?

SL: The journey back to Germany-.

RL: Did you only ever go the once?

SL: Once.

RL: Yes.

**Tape 4: 15 minutes 54 seconds**

SL: After that, I said I'll never set foot on German soil again. And I won't. I could go for free again, they are inviting people again. They would be too happy. Once there was something, if I want to have, because I was stateless for a while, they had taken the German nationality off me and I wasn't British yet, so I was stateless. And they were doing all they can to offer us the German nationality again. I said, 'No, thank you'. I'd rather be stateless. Oh yes, they were courting us. But that is all finished now, because they've got the same problem as here with all the-. Now we've got a much bigger threat with all the terrorists. So we are living, again, in a very uncertain world.

RL: Now, is there anything that you think we might have missed out that you want to add?



SL: I can't think of anything else. You know, I'm very happy where I am at the moment. Thank Goodness, you know. But of course with old age comes illness, you know. You can't do what you want to do, but you've got to accept that, that is part of ageing, the ageing process. And I always think as long as the brain works, and I keep my independence, that is very precious, my independence. My children know that. I make my own decisions. They would like me to, you know, they are very caring, very caring. And, you know, there's a terrific closeness, we are a very small family. Because Ruth, she's got a brother, one brother. And Adele, one brother. Michael is an only child, I'm an only child, John is an only child. So we are a very small, close family. And we are very, very happy to be together.

RL: Is there any last message you would like to give to end with?

SL: No, all I can say I don't wish this to happen to any other generation what we had to go through. To have peace, here and in the whole world. This is a big, big tall order. Because it is getting worse all the time. I've got to live out my life the best way I can, can't I? I've gone through enough.

**Tape 4: 18 minutes 20 seconds**

RL: Thank you very much.

SL: Yes.

**Tape 4: 18 minutes 31 seconds**

**End of Interview**

**Photos and Documents**

**Photo 1**

That is Doris Glück, born in Berlin, early 1900. My maternal grandmother.

**Photo 2**

My paternal grandparents, Isaac and Henrietta Braun, photo taken in Stargard, early 1900.

**Photo 3**

My father, Adolf Braun, taken serving the German army in Brussels, some time during the First World War.

**Photo 4**

My mother, Margarete Braun, approximate date, just before the First World War, in Berlin.

**Photo 5**

My parents, Adolph and Margarete Braun, taken on their honeymoon, June 1919, in the Harz Mountains.

**Photo 6**

That is Susi Braun, taken on her third birthday, 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1923, in Berlin.

**Photo 7**

My national registration card, for Susi Braun.

**Photo 8**

My national registration card and addresses I've moved to during the war.

**Photo 9**

Susi Braun, training as a children's nurse, 1941 in Manchester.

**Photo 10**

Last Red Cross message to find the whereabouts of my parents, in 1943.

**Photo 11**

Susi and Kenneth Linton, 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1949, on their wedding day in Manchester.

**Photo 12**

Wedding invitation for Susi Braun to Kenneth Linton, 12th of June 1949, in Manchester.

**Photo 13**

SL: A German passport with a 'J' for 'Jew'.

RL: And whose is it?

SL: From my husband, Kenneth Linton, Kurt Lilienthal.

**Photo 14**

My son and daughter-in-law, Ruth and John Linton, with their children, Deborah Linton and Daniel Linton, 2002, in Manchester.