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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

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<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Fay
<b>Forename:</b>	Shaw
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	26 September 1924
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Leipzig, Germany

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<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Rosalyn Livshin
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**REFUGEE VOICES:  
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

**INTERVIEW: 32**

**NAME: FAY SHAW**

**DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2003**

**LOCATION: OTLEY, YORKSHIRE**

**INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN**

**TAPE 1**

RL: I am interviewing Fay Shaw and the interview is taking place in Otley, Yorkshire. The date is September 11<sup>th</sup> 2003 and my name is Rosalyn Livshin. If you can tell me first your name?

FS: Fay Shaw

RL: And what was your name at birth?

FS: Fela Mendzigursky

RL: And did you have any other names any nicknames?

FS: Well I had a Jewish name Feige. I used to be called Feigella by people who loved me.

RL: Were you named after anybody?

FS: I don't think so – not as far as I know, not as far as I know.

RL: When were you born?

FS: On the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1924.

RL: So how old does that make you now?

FS: I shall be 79 in 10 days, 12 days.

RL: And where were you born? Where?

FS: In Leipzig, Germany.

RL: Okay now your parents, if you tell me their names and where they were born.

FS: My father believe it or not was born in Auschwitz when it was a tiny little village known for its green background. That is probably why I like trees so much and he was born in 1898 and he was born on the Jewish Easter, Pesach so he was called Peisach Mendzigursky.

RL: And your mother?

FS: My mother, her name was Frieda – she was born I think but I can't remember in Vilna, Poland, I think it was. Now her maiden name was Wiener but I don't think she ever knew her father and when her mother remarried afterwards, her name was Mansbach and they lived in Nuremburg and then, you know, she married my father, an arranged marriage as it was in those days to a highly religious person, which my father was and he was a chazan known everywhere.

**Tape 1: 3 minutes 37 seconds**

RL: Tell me about your father's background, what you know of his parents, your grandparents, his background.

FS: All I know is that his father was a very keen Talmud, how do you say studying the Talmud that was all he ever really did. My grandmother, I only remember her lying in bed, she had had a stroke and one eye closed, I remember that. I think I must have been about 5 when I saw her last. That is all I remember about my father's mother.

RL: Where was she living?

FS: They were living in Leipzig as well.

RL: How many siblings did your father have?

FS: He had a sister. You see none of them lived in Leipzig so if he had any others I don't know, you know. I think he had a sister I think her name was Lotte, I don't know why that name comes to mind, I might be wrong and I have a feeling they emigrated to Israel. You know when you get to my age so many things have happened to keep all the exact dates and occurrences when and where I am finding it difficult these days anyway.

RL: Did his parents move to Leipzig from Auschwitz?

FS: Yes because he was only I believe 3 years old when they left Auschwitz. It is very funny with my maiden name Mendzigursky I recently met a Polish chap and I said "listen does that name have any meaning in Polish"? and he said perhaps I think it has a connection with trees and I says, that makes sense. I mean he was not 100% sure but he asked his father who spoke Polish. So I thought that is rather interesting, that's is why I love green, you know.

RL: Do you know what kind of education your father had?

FS: I think he went to what you call in German just an ordinary Volksschule, which was you know the ordinary primary school and then just the.. But again he was always, because he has always had a fantastic voice, always singing in choirs and all that, other than that....

RL: You say he was a chazan. Was that his job?

FS: No he was a commercial traveller, until Hitler came in, funnily enough in wine and of course being so very kosher and all that, I always tell one story. We always at home one bottle of Liebfraumilch which we were not allowed to drink because it wasn't kosher wine. I always remember that. And then of course when Hitler came and all that, he had to stop that and the next thing he was taken to Buchenwald for a few weeks and had to do something to do with hammering wood or whatever you call it, axing with wood, you know and when he came out he quite by chance was lucky enough to. I don't know how that happened, he heard through I don't know where, connections and that, if you could get yourself a visa for Shanghai you could go to England for six months and then go to Shanghai. He got back, he came to England with the last train out of Germany arriving on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the day war was declared and I always remember that. I did not see him for a while because as he was taken to Kitchener Camp or one of those places, straight away. I didn't see him but he afterwards told me they took us all and there were a lot of Jewish people on the train. They took us out of the train, gave us a good hiding and said "here is something you won't forget, you will always remember"

RL: We will come onto that a little later, just staying with his background at he moment, I mean did he, was he a commercial traveller before marriage, was that what he went into would you know?

**Tape 1: 8 minutes 33 seconds**

FS: No I'm afraid I really don't know.

RL: Or was he in the First World War?

FS: No, no he was not old enough.

RL: When did he marry?

FS: I was born in 1924. I was the oldest so I think they were married two or three years if that.

RL: Now he was a chazan in his spare time.

FS: Oh yes

RL: Where was he a Chazan?

FS: In the most religious synagogues, what they used to call like the little steibels, I don't know if you know the expression. No official never paid for it, just as a

mitzvah. I can tell you a very interesting story afterwards about him as well I don't know if you want me to tell you now or afterwards?

RL: You may as well now.

FS: Well I was once coming from my friend from York with some other friends who had been to visit her who used to, who came over from Austria and we were sitting in the train and I was then living not far from Milton Keynes, getting the train back to Milton Keynes and they were going to the Airport at Heathrow or something and a Jewish couple had come in with a man, I had never seen such a big beard and peyers as he had and a woman with a sheitel, you know with a wig on. They sat in front of us. Suddenly the train stopped and they said only half an hour but after an hour, everybody got restless, walked around and my friend's husband Ludwig sat in front of the Jewish couple and they were talking and I heard him, this Jewish man say to Ludwig "Where did you come from in England, where do you live" he said "in Southport". He said "Do you really, do you know by any chance Peisach Mendzigursky?" You know every time I tell that story I still go cold and shivery. So I jumped up and I said "Why did you mention that name that was my father". He said "well he had the most sympatico, sympatich, in Yiddish or German, voice I have ever heard in my life". I can see it exactly in front of me; I can see them in front of me still. Oh well that's my father.

RL: Did he have a very religious upbringing?

FS: Oh terribly religious, yes. As I said his father only studied the Talmud all the time and my father did as well but his main interest was the singing part, you know.

RL: Can you tell me about your mother's background?

FS: My mother I think it was Vilna she was born in. They had an estate, a big estate. They were very well off and when they came to Germany, and I don't quite know when but I do know my mother went to a finishing school. You had to have a lot of money to send your daughter to a finishing school and she just had one brother. He is the one on the photo. He got, I don't know which concentration camp, he and his wife and two children never made it. Not only didn't they make it funnily enough my father got a letter from someone saying "does anybody know Mr. so and so, and so and so, meaning my father, Peisach Medzigursky, we have got somebody who came out of I think it was Buchenwald Concentration Camp, he is looking for him". So my father answered the letter right away but by the time these people got the letter the uncle had died. He did not make it. I don't know.

**Tape 1: 12 minutes 34 seconds**

RL: What did your mother's brother do for a living?

FS: I don't know, I really don't know.

RL: What was his name?

FS Adolf and funnily enough my younger, my only brother, he was called Adolf, we called him Adi. Unfortunately he died when he was six of pneumonia which in those days because they did not have a cure for it. He had it and that was it, which was in 1933, and one thing I will never forget was lying in his bed and he heard music outside, marching and that was the storm troopers parading along the road where we lived and he wanted to see what went on, so my mother took him to the window and let him see it. He died the following week age 6.

RL: Your mother's family, where did your mother go to school. Where were they living?

FS: I don't really know, all I know is that they did eventually live in Nuremberg. That's where I met my grandmother... I think they had a, that's right they had an enormous sort of shop, which went right round the corner, and with about, I don't know how many display windows and all that, selling if I remember rightly, bed linen, sheets and that sort of thing. But as I say I can't remember the details. I can see the shop in front of me still but you know as for her schooling, I do not know. I know that my grandmother, after my mother married, sent my parents money every Friday because my father never earned a lot because all he was interested in was his Siddur, Chazan singing, and all that type of thing and, so they still had quite a bit of money.

RL: Was your grandfather still alive?

FS: No I never met either, neither my mother's father, which I don't think she ever met nor it would have been stepfather. By the time I went to visit my grandmother in Nuremberg they were dead, but I remember going to my grandmother a lot. On one of the photos there is that girl in the middle which we used to go with her always to Nuremberg. She came from Leipzig as well.

RL: How often would you go to visit?

FS: We went practically every year on our Summer holidays, quite often. The funny part is that I only remember the tiny little flat my grandmother had moved to. I can't remember at all where they lived before but it's one of these things, I can't remember.

RL: Was she on her own there?

FS: Oh yes, yes

RL: No other family?

FS: No there isn't no.

RL: Can you, what is your earliest memory as a child?

FS: One of my earliest memories is I was about 2-3 years old, we lived in Leipzig, I can't even remember the name of the anyway... On the top floor of a building and my mother sent me out of the room to sit outside the flat on the steps, leading to the door, you know and I could not understand why until somebody came to see her and

she was screaming. Apparently it was a doctor and she had a cyst taken out and in those days they just cut them out, you know and she screamed. I think that is my earliest memory. I must have been about 2 or 3 years old, that is all. I can see it in front of me, I can see where I was sitting, I can see where the bed was. That was about my earliest memory I think.

**Tape 1: 17 minutes 20 seconds**

RL: And where you were living, had you lived there long, that particular flat?

FS: No, no we then moved into the middle of Leipzig somewhere. Oh yes in a side street from a very famous street called the Bruhl where all the Jewish people had fur shops and that sort of thing Plauenchestrasse. That is the name of the street. That I remember very well.

RL: And can you describe your home?

FS: Well it is very funny you saying that, because I can always remember, that was where my brother died in that flat and I remember we had put him into our dining room come lounge whatever you call it these days and there was what we used to call a Büfett. It is like a sideboard but with a top part to it. Because now I am interested in all that, I have got to know about these sorts of things, I can see it in front of me, it was the most ...(break in recording) otherwise I can't remember much about the place I just seem to remember, well I know that... (gap).. so this was just sort of I don't know, whether they changed it over or whatever but I remember table...(gap)...light the candles and I can still see her doing the blessing for the candles .....(gap)...I am just wondering am I getting mixed up with another flat because I can also remember a room where we had an old gramophone ...(gap)...continuously playing a record of a very well known Chazan, his name was...(gap).....I can see him playing that and he was to forever play it and then that's right and afterwards I had a few violin lessons at that time (film break).....I remember that name Wilkormirsky. I believe he emigrated to America that's why my father just played these old records.

RL: On what floor was the flat?

FS: First floor, yes first floor definitely. I am trying to remember the other, there was another flat I think in that same building, we moved from one flat to another because the next flat, the last one I remember when I left Germany that was in, I can't remember the name now. But in Leipzig you had what you called The Ring, where all these, you know Leipzig was known for the Messe, for the fairs and that was just the road off there.... Oh one road I lived in was Hohenzollern strasse and that was when I was young. I think that was when I had my first memory, a side street from there.

RL: How big were these flats?

FS: They were four or five rooms. I remember we had one right at the end which was in .....you know the one when I left because that was where I still went to school from there, I can't remember the name at the moment, it might come to me later on. In that flat is where they came for my father. I remember I think that's why



I can't stand low ceilings. I need to have everything high. To hide from the Nazis who were looking for all the men, we had over our bathroom a tiny little attic, I don't know what you would call it a... and it had one of those ladders he let down and he hid in there and I used to go and sit with him for hours on end but eventually they did get him from there and one day he wasn't up there and they came.

RL: How long did he hide?

FS: Well I would not be able to say exactly how long, but it was quite a few days on and off he was sitting up there. He came down would go up again but obviously he had to come down for various things and that, I think, was how he was caught.

RL: Did your mother have help in the flat?

FS: She did in the beginning but I always remember, one thing my mother, two things she used to say but the first one I always remember she used to say "you are going to help me even though we have a maid, you are going to help me washing up dishes and doing these sort of things" because in those days you did not have a washing, you know anything to do it for you, you know a dishwasher and I remember because I always liked to do the washing and my sister

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who was only a year younger, just over a year younger, she wanted to do the drying. We said "you have got a maid, why do we have to do that?" "Well you've got to learn to do certain things." I always remember that.

RL: How many siblings did you have?

FS: I was the oldest and there was a sister who died unfortunately very young just over a year younger

RL: What was her name?

FS: Margot and then there was my brother, the one who died and then we had the little one, the one who never got out of Germany. So there were four of us.

RL: What was her name?

FS: Well her real name was Ettie Leah but at that time I had a girlfriend called Muschi who I adored and I said why can't we call her this, so we called her Muschi. ....I happened to meet this Muschi in England, funnily enough and we are quite friendly now. But unfortunately, she apparently, when my mother was taken to Concentration Camp they were put on the train to Riga, my mother froze to death so she did not actually get to the concentration camp and I once met in the East End of London, an old school friend and he said "you know, I was on the same train as your mother and sister". He said "I managed...", I don't know how whether he escaped or how, anyway he came out alive. So I said "what happened to my sister?" He would not tell me. Later on when I met him again I said "look you obviously know something". I had hoped she was adopted by somebody, you know. He said "you do not want to know, she was taken for experiments".

RL: How old was she?

FS: Well when I saw her last she was four. She was born in, I can't remember. When I last saw her she was about four.

RL: That was 1939

FS: Yes

RL: She was born in 1935

FS: Yes I think it was 1935 – that is right, '35.

RL: Coming back to your home, what kind of religious upbringing had your mother had?

FS: Well not as Chassidic as my father had, but very, very strict as well but I always remember one thing, my mother smoked and no way, once you smoke, can you all of a sudden not smoke on a Saturday, you know. So she smoked you know, somewhere where they would not see her and I always remember – I don't remember if it was my father or my grandmother telling her off I always remember that. They were religious but as I say, not as religious as my father's family. You know obviously kosher and all that definitely.

RL: What would you say was the level of observance in your home as a child?

FS: Oh very strict. Oh heavens yes. I always remember one thing in one of the flats, one day, I think I tell that in one of my stories somewhere, my father brought, he was a traveller then home a live chicken. You know we used to do that in those days if you go all over the country and he had to call in the shochet, which was the Jewish name for somebody who puts them to death and I will never forget how that chicken had to be killed. I just went out of the room and you know the whole thing takes half a second. You know it is the quickest way of killing

**Tape 1: 27 minutes 58 seconds**

an animal, quicker than even if you numb them and or less painful than or quicker than giving them an injection. I remember that very well.

RL: He did that in your?

FS: He didn't do it, he had the

RL: The shochet did it in the flat inside?

FS: Yes, yes. Yes I can see it still. Funnily enough I can see it, it was in a big hall at the side and we had one of those in that room, we had one of these early fridges where we used to have big blocks of ice that used to be delivered and I remember them putting the animal in there afterwards. It is funny the things one remembers.

RL: Do you have any memories of the different festivals? Do you have any special memories of the different festivals and the way they were celebrated?

FS: When I was a child?

RL: Yes

FS: Well obviously my father being born on Pesach, I remember you know, I remember we always had one or two people, which you are supposed to have coming to eat you know at the Seder at the Seder night with us and I think I remember.....I can't remember if it was in Germany still or was already in England, seeing my father who was, we were just Israel, you know you are either a Levi or a Cohen, we were just Israel and I can still see him, I think at Simchat Torah, isn't it when you dance around, I'm afraid I have forgotten a lot of these things. I can see him dancing around and that and singing and all that, because I was very, very observant. I used to never, ever miss going to the synagogue on a Saturday, never. I belonged then to Mizrachi, which was quite a religious, not the most religious group of people and I went every Saturday to synagogue. In fact when I go now to my synagogue which is the Sinai synagogue which is the Reform Synagogue, I always marvel how different their songs are but a few of them are still the same and I still remember them, you know and I am always very happy when I can sing along with them because I used to have a very good voice but not so much now.

RL: Which synagogue did you go to in Germany?

FS: Well although we didn't belong to that, you did not have to belong to that, I used to go to what is called the Otto Schill Strasse which was a very well known one. It wasn't a Chassidic one it was a very religious one. I used to go to that one with my friend Muschi and all these people. We, I used to love singing rhythm along with all these.

RL: This Mizrachi group, that you went to, what kind of things did you do?

FS: Well for instance we had a sports group as well. I think one of the photos is of the group, yes I think it was. Well we used to sing a lot. At certain Jewish holidays, like, what's the one with Esther called?

RL: Purim.

FS: Purim. We used to have Purim plays and that sort of thing. We all stuck together and were very friendly. And very you know. At that time we enjoyed life, you know, just a normal childhood and because I happened to go to a Jewish school anyway because when I sat for, what I suppose what they would call now the entrance examination for the next after the infants, whatever you call them, Juniors, I wanted to go to a very well known school in North Leipzig called Gaudeck which was a private school and my grandmother was going to pay for

**Tape 1: 32 minutes 54 seconds**

me but that was then about that time when Jewish children were not allowed to go to other than a Jewish school. So you know I went to the Carlebach School in Leipzig.

RL: What was the first school you went to, the Junior School?

FS: I can faintly remember it, but I am not so sure about the name. I know it was in North Leipzig but I am afraid I can't remember, because I suppose I was so interested in later on going to you know, I just do not remember my early, very early school days.

RL: The Mizrachi group, was that a Zionist group?

FS: Yes oh yes. We were all very Zionist, in favour of Zionism and all that in those days.

RL: Did your father belong to any groups or societies?

FS: No, no, no nothing at all, as I have said, all he was interested in was Talmud and singing. That is the one thing. In fact when he died, do you know what happened to him? He had come out of his, what I call stiebel, the one where he was so well known for singing, he crossed the road and he did not look where he was going, a car was coming and he got knocked down, he did not die right away but he never really recovered from that. It caused him to have a stroke and then eventually he died of a stroke in Manchester.

RL: In Germany he didn't belong to any groups of any kind any societies or organisations?

FS: I do not really remember but I can't think of anything like that. I might be wrong but I don't think so.

RL: And your mother?

FS: No my mother – she was quite modern in her ways you know. She was a very smartly dressed woman always and you know everybody said, “oh look there's... you know”. But I don't think she belonged to anything because she was not as religious as my father. As I say, when he found out that she once smoked on a Saturday - oh boy!

RL: Did they go out for entertainment at all? How would they occupy themselves for leisure?

FS: I can't remember. I just don't remember. I remember there was in Leipzig somewhere, what was it called, Crystal Palace, I think, which had revues and light musicals. I had been there so I assume my mother must have been there but I don't think my father would have gone there. He just did not mix in these circles but I think my mother went. But again I can't remember.

RL: What about the Opera and Theatre?

FS: I think my mother went but I don't think my father would have gone. That was when you were that religious, you just don't go to that sort of thing. I do remember maybe because I learned the violin quite a few classical pieces I must have heard

them somewhere. I don't know, it does not somehow quite fit in that I can say yes it was like this or it was like that.

RL: Was he interested in politics?

FS: Not at all. There was only one interested in his life that was reading the Talmud and singing, you know, being a Chazan.

RL: Did he get newspapers?

FS: Do you know, I don't know, I can't remember that part at all.

RL: Did you have a radio?

**Tape 1: 37 minutes 27 seconds**

FS: You know I always get mixed up, I remember, I think we did have one, just before, I can see an old radio whether that, it might have been one I saw in England when I first came to Manchester because, no I think it was in Manchester. No I don't think they would have had that sort of thing in the house. Religious people would not have had that. As far as papers are concerned, at that age I was not interested about papers in the house, you know. I am sorry I can't remember that at all.

RL: As a child, you know, say in the 20's and very early 30's how did you get on with the non Jews around you. What was the relationship like between the non Jews and the Jews at that time?

FS: Do you mean in Leipzig in 1929/1930?

RL: Until 1932 - while you were young.

FS: Well I was very young. I don't remember anything unpleasant because it wasn't until Hitler was well established that all that anti-Semitism started and by then I went to a Jewish school so obviously my contact was with other Jewish children and I was happy relaxed and was not bothered about anything.

RL: Did you have non-Jewish neighbours?

FS: I must have had but I mean they did not do anything against you. As I say it was once Hitler started all his things, that some of them turned, not all of them.

RL: Did you have any examples of that happening that you know, to your family?

FS: Not really. You see I mixed in Jewish circles all the time. I had so little contact. Where we lived in our last place, funnily enough we were on the first floor again and below us was a butcher and I somewhere seem to remember that they once warned my father when they though they saw Nazi's coming. That is why we hid in the attic. I can't remember the details, sorry.

RL: Did you or your parents come across any anti-Semitism, yourselves, personally as opposed to the general?

FS: Not as I remember anything because as I said, we were amongst Jewish people, amongst Jewish friends so you know I don't remember anything like that. No I can't, no I really can't remember anything. I can't remember good or bad, I just remember, sorry I can't help you with that.

RL: You mentioned your brother watching a rally, a march going by

FS: Well listening to it when he was lying in bed.

RL: Were there many such marches?

FS: Well yes, they did occur more often then but I mean we obviously as Jewish people, we would not stand in the crowds watching them. You would not be lining the streets watching them because then you realised it wasn't the thing to do.

RL: How would you say, how were the family, were the family affected by for instance the Nuremberg laws, you weren't because you were in, except for the fact that you could not go to that non-Jewish school and with regard to your father's work or perhaps the maid. Did it affect you in any way?

FS: Well yes you were not allowed to have a maid anymore after that so that, I think, is one of the reasons my mother knew it was coming why we had to learn how to wash up and do that sort of thing. I don't remember any specific things about that, sorry.

### **Tape 1: 42 minutes 5 seconds**

RL: In 1938 at the Kristallnacht what happened to your family during that time?

FS: All I remember about this that the following Saturday. What day was Kristallnacht, I can't remember what day it was, I mean I remember it happening but. All I know is that the synagogue I used to go to Otto Schill Strasse, they completely wrecked it. That I do remember and I remember seeing one or two shop windows, you know which I assumed were Jewish shops but that is all I remember about it because obviously we were not allowed to go out anyway so we would not know about it. If I had been a bit older perhaps but in those days you did not let your children roam around, except for going to school and that sort of thing. You were at home or with parents, you know.

RL: When did you find out what was going on? When did you hear about what was happening?

FS: Well I assume I queried it when I couldn't go to synagogue any more because it was, you know had been all the windows, everything had been shattered and burnt down there so I must have queried it then but I can't exactly remember.

RL: Did you continue going to school?

FS: Well our school closed down then as well, had to close down the Carlebach School but re-opened again, I think the following year. In fact I went to school right until the time I left for England and I believe it was still open when war was first declared. But then I wasn't there so I don't know. I'd left, I had been away for a fortnight but I remember going to school right towards the end, yes that's right.

RL: Can you tell me a bit about the school, how big it was?

FS: Well it was a beautiful building. I think it was what you now called Co-ed if I remember rightly because that is where I met my boyfriend, my first boyfriend. Ah yes at first we used to have separate classes, girl classes and boy classes but I think afterwards because I suppose some of the teachers had gone and all that, we, I think we had mixed classes. But I remember the school very well and I also remember I have met again in England at a Kindertransport re-union one of my friends there and in fact I have met her again here. She lives, she came to see me and I've been to her place.

RL: What is her name?

FS: It used to be Anneliese Bauman. Now...she got widowed and I don't know what, I have forgotten her married name. As I said, it was very funny, at the first Kindertransport re-union we had all tables from various towns, so obviously I was sitting at the table for Leipzig. Opposite me somebody said "Fella", I said "yes". "Don't you remember me?" "Sorry", "I am Anneliese Bauman". Obviously by then she had a different name. We have been, you know, in contact ever since. She then lived in Rugby and I went to see her and then she moved from there last year and lives somewhere else now.

RL: Who was the head of the school?

FS: I think, I think, I don't know why this name comes into my mind, I think it was somebody called Weigersheim or something like that. I must ask somebody once who because I've got a very, oh no he wouldn't know. I've got a friend here who I met again from Leipzig. In fact through the AJR I saw him advertised, you know, new members and then it always says where they came from and it said Martin Kappel from Leipzig and I had just moved into this area where I did not know a soul so I said great. I sent him a letter, then I said are there any other Leipziger in the area here, who, you know, I am lonely, I am alone here, I do not know

**Tape 1: 47 minutes 3 seconds**

anybody, so he rung me the next morning at nine o'clock and was on the phone about 2 hours and I am still very friendly with him now. He was at the meeting. Sorry, what was the actual question you asked me?

RL: I was just saying about the headmaster of the school.

FS: Yes, now I could ask him but the only thing is, he is, what, 6 years younger than I am, he hasn't gone to .....school.....(break in the tape) would be the

same head master. I don't know I just seem to remember the name Weigersheim, I don't know why. Who could I ask who would remember.....

RL: It was called the Carlebach?

FS: Carlebach School, yes (inaudible) In fact I have got some pictures somewhere, where, yes this this Muschi who I met again, she.....(tape break).....gave me, sent me a picture. Oh no, this Muschi, her story was on the radio.....(tape break)...what was her second name, good point, oh me and names, I've got it written down, anyway, she had her story, do you know about that.... Sorry what did you ask the original question, my memory?

RL We were just talking about the school and I was asking about Carlebach.

FS: She might know the name of the headmaster. She obviously went to the same school, that's how I knew her.

RL: So back to .....When..... taken away – when did that occur?

FS: You mean to Buchenwald?

RL: When they came to arrest him.

FS: All I know is that I can't exactly remember quite honestly. I don't remember the details. I know, I wouldn't know exactly what date. I remember the place where it was and I remember. I do not think I was at home that day when it happened. Somehow I don't seem to remember any details of when it happened at all, I don't know why, I just don't.

RL: Was he still working at that point?

FS: I really don't remember. I know he had given up travelling because it was much too dangerous. Because by then it was 38/39. Sorry, I can't remember those details.

RL: So once he had been taken, how did you and your mother and the family manage? What happened next, would you take me through the next few months,

FS: How did we manage in which way?

RL: Financially.

FS: Well money wise, as I said, my Grandmother sent every Friday, she sent my mother money, every Friday because she had a lot. In fact I should have really gone in for claiming some because I do not know what happened to her money. I am the only person left, you know, I don't know. I have come to the conclusion that some of the things.....its very funny..... I will tell you why I feel funny about all this. Now my father as I said was born in Auschwitz and I have got his birth certificate as well somewhere and when the first restitution money claims were first put in and at that same time they asked if the German born people, told they should apply for a German



passport, it would make it easier. I can't remember all the details for claiming restitution money. So I did not have a passport myself but my father's passport is what was called the fremdenpass which is you weren't a German, what do you call it, a German, he did not have a German passport so I went up to the German embassy with my

**Tape 1: 52 minutes 7 seconds**

father's who by then I think was dead, yes obviously, otherwise I would not have had his passport, went up to the German Embassy in London and I said I think I am entitled to some restitution money but I haven't got, you know, any, how shall I say, anything to show but I showed them my father's passport, which I had brought with me and they said but your father wasn't a German so I said but he lived in Germany since the age of 3. He had not needed a passport in that respect because in those days you did not travel all over the place, you know. So they said "But looking at his passport it says in brackets Hasenlauf. It says Peisach, Paul, he was known as Paul to non Jewish people, Peisach Paul Mendzigursky in brackets Hasenlauf. So they said "why is that?" So I said "Well I seem to remember that in those days in Poland, Jewish people were not married under the Polish civil law, you just went and had a Chuppah, you went under the Chuppah, the Jewish way of getting married but you did not have any official document for that". So they said "well if you wanted to get a German passport, I don't know how we would do that for the restitution but I wanted to point out to you that in your case and that had something to do with my age, all you would get is £12 per month. So you know what I did, I got up and I said "stick it" not the usual sort of thing I would say so I just walked out and that is why I altogether with claims, I always remember that, I was so upset about it all, you know that I thought no. And I have managed without, let's put it that way.

RL: With him being not a German national, did he have trouble, you know when they threw out the Polish Jews from Germany in 38, was he not involved in that?

FS: No, I have a feeling, what was the time that he was in Buchenwald, it might have been that he was already in Buchenwald then but that is when my Grandmother from Nuremberg apparently was sent to Poland, so was my grandfather, his father because I don't know if you know, there has been, this is through Thea that I have found out, there is someone called Karlowitz from Leipzig who has written a book about the background and what has happened to the Jewish people from Leipzig and she read me some passages out of the book. I didn't want to get it, somehow I thought it would upset me too much. Some of the things I just don't need to know. I can't do anything about them anyway. But what was the exact question you asked me?

RL: I wondered if your father had been thrown over the border

FS: Yes no, no, I had the feeling that he was at that time in the concentration camp because otherwise he would have been taken. Because, you know, I think he was in concentration camp four to six weeks something like that.

RL: How was he treated there – did he talk about it?

FS: He might have done but to be quite honest, I don't remember. I think all I remember is that they told him he had to chop wood. I don't know why I remember that but my father was not a very tall person and certainly not a strong person. But no I don't remember anything more about that. You know there are certain things I don't want to remember. I have had a lot of unfortunate things happen to me and I find that I am better off pushing them to the back of my mind and not dwelling on them. I can't change them anyway.

RL: When did the family decide that, you know, emigration was something they wanted to do? At what point and when did they decide that you would be sent – how did all that come about?

FS: Well I have got distant relatives in Manchester who were quite a well known family on Cheetham Hill at the time, I am quite sure you know. You might have even heard of the family, oh no you are too young for that, Segal. Segals were very well known. She did a lot to help people from Germany and my father had a, no my father was the uncle, had a, I assume a nephew, although the nephew was older than my father, his name was Mendzigursky as well and they brought over a load of the family. Not all of the family because his wife never managed either but brought over two sons and I think, a daughter that's right and then when we I don't know how we found out about that, I don't quite know how the first steps were

**Tape 1: 58 minutes 7 seconds**

taken, you know, I mean all I know is that one used to go to Sorgengemeinde it was called, you know the building where all these people sort of had to help you with your, if you wanted to leave, where you wanted to go. I don't know, my mother did all and I really don't know anything, and quite honestly, I mean from that point of view I was not interested. Because I always remember one thing that when I left Germany so far as I am concerned I was going to England. I learned English at school, I have always wanted to go to England, to me it sounded, having relatives there, how lucky I was going on a holiday as far as I was concerned. I mean I wasn't sad to leave my mother behind because I thought I would be seeing them. My mother had applied and my relatives had got for her a job as a maid. You had to have something definite that and she was waiting for her papers to come through. Unfortunately they did not arrive in time and I was happy I did not have to take my little sister along, because she was going to bring her, you know at my age I was going with my sister who was a year younger and but at that age I did not want to have the worry of a three and half or four year old girl to look after, you know. It would have been quite a responsibility and I thought well she is coming in a week or so, she was due to come anyway.....

RL: So what arrangements had been made for you to come. How was it organised that you and your sister would come?

FS: You had to go to this special place there and they did all the. I mean I don't know how I, why I managed to get on the transport other than these relatives, I don't know if you know, they had to have, I think they had to guarantee that we were not going to be a problem to the state and had to put some money down, which they did for me and my sister. I suppose that entitled us to go on the Kindertransport. How

exactly my mother came to arrange it, and all that, I don't know. It would have been my mother who would do all this sort of arranging.

RL: What did you bring with you/ what did you pack to bring with you?

FS: Well that is very funny because in my book it will tell you, we were allowed a tiny little case only and all you had with you was a change of underwear. I can't remember all the details now but all I could take was a tiny, a tiny little case and I know I did not have a pyjama because I remember the people I was sent to which my relatives had got, because they had brought so many people over they did not have any more room to bring more, so they got other Jewish people. I had a relative called Glass, a distant relative, and across the road from there they had a shop outside Heaton Park, there was a couple living who said they would take me in.

RL: We are going to have to stop here.

**Tape 1: 60 minutes 0 second**

**TAPE 2**

**Tape 2: 0 minute 38 seconds**

RL: Tape 2 with Fay Shaw, you were just telling me about the case that you took with you, did anyone have to supervise you packing that case?

FS: I don't think so, I don't think so, you were just told, if I remember rightly, you just had a very tiny case with the absolute necessities, so that is all that there was in the case. But I am trying to remember there was one particular thing I must have brought along because at one time I remembered what it was but I can't recall it right now. We each took something which meant home but I can't remember what it was. You see I came with my sister and we each had a case and I can't quite remember what was in hers and what was in mine. Except for the clothing we had to take. But I do know I did not have a pair of pyjamas because the first thing when I came to England and came to those people, I said I must go and buy a pair of pyjamas or nightdress or whatever one wore in those days. I had not got one with me, sorry that is all I remember about that.

**Tape 2: 1 minutes 56 seconds**

RL: Who took you to the station?

FS: My mother and my little sister.

RL: Where was your father at that point?

FS: I can't remember. Funny you saying that, I think he had to work, he had to work as a wood chopper, that's right, I think he had to do that. Somehow I don't know why I remember that. I can't remember exactly how right I am but I somehow seem to connect that he was doing that, which he had to do what he was doing in the concentration camp. So it was my mother and my little sister who saw us to the train

and we lived only maybe ten minutes walk from the station so there was no problem getting there. Because I believe that station was completely destroyed during the war. I can see it in front of me but I have forgotten what it was called. All I know it is Hauptbahnhof but I can't remember the name of it.

RL: What kind of sight met you when you arrived at the station?

FS: You mean in Germany, Leipzig? I can't remember. All I remember is I can see us getting on the train with all the other Jewish children because you know I assume there was a whole compartment just for the children and they were all very jolly because as far as we were concerned, we were going to England and going to have a lovely time there, going on holiday. We knew it wasn't a holiday and we weren't going to come back to Germany but it was the same sort of feeling. It was exciting and of course we all hoped we would see our relatives, which we'd left behind, we'd see them again soon and you didn't think that in two weeks after that there would be a war.

RL: What was the date?

FS: About the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> August. Very shortly before the war and that is why my mother didn't make it. If the war had broken out a week later, my mother and sister would have come over too.

RL: Do you remember the journey?

FS: Not really but it is very funny, I remember, I don't know why I remember but I was listening the other day to what's his name, the one who brought over those children from Prague, Win...he is very well known, Esther Rantzen had a programme with him (Typist - Nicholas Winton). It was the same journey that he brought the children from Prague that we came on the same train journey. It is funny that, when I saw some of, you know, the pictures of that particular part of ... I am sure I have been there before. That is the only time I would have been there.

RL: Can you tell me anything about the journey?

FS: Not really, I remember coming to England. Oh yes, there is one funny thing, when we got on the boat in Holland, wasn't it... we then landed in Harwich I think it was, I think it's Harwich, and as we got off the boat, I assume to go on the train or whatever to get us to London, there was an enormous big clock there. Just a few yards from there, there was a policeman and I went up to him and I pointed to it "what clock is it?" So he said, "What do you mean?" What I really had wanted to show off my English and wanted to know what time it is and instead of saying what time is it, I said what clock is it, he killed himself laughing. I always remember that. I can see that clock still a very big tower type clock. I wonder if is still there, who knows. Then of course I arrived in London at Liverpool Street, I think we all arrived at, wasn't it yes and I remember sitting there on a bench and people came to collect and I knew I was going to go eventually to Manchester. Practically all the children had been collected and there was only my sister and I think one other little boy, and I thought nobody is coming for us what is going to happen? But they did arrive eventually. Then of course I was taken to Manchester.

**Tape 2: 6 minutes 56 seconds**

RL: Who picked you up?

FS: Good point, I think it was Yetta Segal herself or was it, sorry I can't quite remember because it was such a big family, it might have been one of the Bauman family, I don't remember because my relatives in Manchester were an enormous family and in fact one of them, one of the, what was she, great niece or niece of my aunt I had there, is Elkie Brooks. Have you ever heard of Nat Bookbinder, the band, it is his daughter. My sister worked in their shop. They had a grocery shop combined bakery shops. Bookbinders were known for their bakery shops in Manchester. Did you know that?

RL: How are they related to your family?

FS: Good point, distant relations. I know there was one family called Segal, there was one family called Bauman. Now I think the Bauman family, the lady, Mrs. Bauman, I think she was my father's aunt or great aunt or something like that and the Bookbinders, I think he was a son of theirs, or a brother. I am not sure if he was a brother or son, I don't remember but that sort of relationship that's how I.. and Yetta Segal she was a sister I think,. There was such a big family, I really can't remember all the details, you know.

RL: You say they put you up with another Jewish family? Called?

FS: Yes it will come to me in a minute but all I remember about that family was that all they wanted from me is to do the cleaning. I was a glorified maid. They were very nice to me. I mean I did everything with them but I had to help and it was the first time I had heard of somebody having a washing machine, believe you mean it was very early and they tried to teach me how to use it and all that. I was not particularly interested because all I remembered saying to them, I want to learn to speak English properly. My mother told me I have got to go to school and learn, you know. That was the one thing, I always, my mother's last words to me and they weren't very interested and that. What was their name? I know he was a, what's it called, an optician. They had an optician shop on Cheetham Hill Road, the name will come soon. I can't remember at the moment.

RL: Where did your sister go?

FS: My sister, you know that drawing I have of me, that picture, she went to those people, he was an artist. Abraham, I think the name was, or Abrahamson I think. They had one little boy, I think or something. Anyway she stayed with them for a while and then I don't remember the sequence after that. Sorry no.

RL: How long were you with your family for?

FS: What this first family?

RL: The first family

FS: A very short time because I did not want to have to do housework and not get a chance to learn anything. So I remember going to see Yetta Segal who was the one who instigated all the coming over and all that sort of thing and she said "I'll tell you what, I have got some friends down the road who have a cloth shop. They want somebody to help them on a Sunday because they were religious and were obviously not open on." I have always been able to sell. Another one of my earliest memories, I should have said, I remember I was about four years old, my mother coming into the room I was in and says "what are you doing?", and I said "I am making a dress for my dolls". She said "Well how do you know how to do it?" I said, well I just know" so that has always been, I have always been in that sort of, fashion, dressmaking, designing that type of thing and that is how I spent my days. Sorry what was your original question?

RL: You were telling me that Yetta Segal was finding you another family.

**Tape 2: 11 minutes 44 seconds**

FS: Yes so she found me that job and by then of course war had broken out and I said "ok can I live there"? Now they were, now which way shall I put it? I remember them so well, Sedofski, very nice people but um what shall I say, I don't want to be nasty because their daughter, funnily enough, came to see me here seven years ago, anyway they were very nice people but I needed to learn something, do something and I said I could sew, so they said "ok you help us on Sunday, you live here for nothing obviously and we will get you a job. We know somebody who needs somebody to do sewing". By then war had been declared and I started to do sewing on a machine but I can't remember what. I can see the place still in front of me. So I lived there.

RL: Where did they live?

FS: In Cheetham Hill Road. A well known cloth shop. Everybody knew the Sedofskis.

RL: So you just worked for them on a Sunday?

FS: Yes, helped on a Sunday in the shop

RL: And worked elsewhere?

FS: Worked in a factory all the week sewing. Later on I met a girl there next to me, who funnily enough wasn't Jewish but was also German speaking. She was Austrian. She was one of these people who decided not to stay in Austria, you know and she says "oh I know a group called Young Austria. Would you like to join them". You know so I started to join there and that is how I got all my contacts with German speaking people and I still have my earliest friend from there..... Now called Shatzberger.

RL: Was it a mixed group of Jewish and non-Jewish?

FS: No, no, I don't know how she knew about that group but she just told me about it. Whether she even came there, I don't remember but she knew about it and I started to go there.

RL: Where did they meet?

FS: In, do you know I can see the place in front of me, somewhere not far from Alexander Park I think, except it must have been near there because that is where I met all my other friends there because I afterwards lived in that area as well, that's right, yes.

RL: What kind of things did you do in this Young Austria Group?

FS: Well I remember one thing, we used, where we used to meet, I've forgotten that name, it might come to me eventually, there was a big grass area and we used to play a German ball game called Volkerball which is sort of a line across and I was very good at it because I was, although I say so myself, a very good sportswoman in every way. I mean that is what I wanted to do, anything to do with sports, that was me. Sorry what exactly did you want to know?

RL: What did you do in the Young Austria?

FS: Well we played that ball, we had a choir there, some musical things, you know and I think one of the photos I've showed you is from that group and I met my first boyfriend there.

I mean my first boyfriend in England, who, funny that, was 3 years younger than I was, he was and his parents had forbidden him to go out with me because they said "it isn't fair to Fay. You will be going to University which he did eventually and you can't expect her to hang around waiting for you". And that was when I decided and we weren't allowed to meet or anything. We were heartbroken, we were so much in love. I was about 16 then, no he was 14 so I was 17. That is when I decided, meeting him all the time and not being able, allowed to speak to him. In those days you listened to what your, you know especially his parents said.

**Tape 2: 16 minutes 45 seconds**

They were very nice people but they said they did it for my sake because he went to Manchester Grammar School and got on very well and became a very, very well known person, anyway so

RL: What happened to your first boyfriend?

FS: The very first one, the one in Leipzig, he got killed in Krakow. After the Kristallnacht he was sent to Krakow, to Poland and that was that. I had quite a few letters up till 1941 in England from him, which I've still got.

RL: What was his name?

FS: "Dodo" Yosef Dodoles. Isn't it funny how some names. He must have made a big impression on me.

RL: Going back to the Young Austria Group, how many people belonged to it, how many were there?

FS: I really would not know. I mean we were quite a large group, who used to meet at something House. I can't remember. I don't know 20 to 30 people. We were quite a big group because I mean to play that ball game we had to have 11 either side, so there must have been, I think it was 11. Sorry I don't remember, I don't remember anymore, it was a long time ago.

RL: How often did you meet?

FS: I don't know because we were all working by then, you know. I assume it was just weekends, on a Sunday I think or a Saturday but I wouldn't swear to it. I can't remember those details, sorry. We were working so we couldn't have met during the week.

RL: When war broke out, how did you feel at that point. You had only been in the country just over a week really.

FS: A fortnight. How did I feel? Well one of the things of course, was that my mother hadn't managed to get out in time. I wasn't to know what was going to happen to her, although when you are young you are optimistic, so you don't think of the worst things which will happen but all I know is that I decided I wanted to work to help win the war and I decided because I could sew, I started to work in a factory opposite Victoria Station, sewing gas mask cases. I always remember that and I was very proud of myself because I did them quicker and did more of them than anyone else. I always remember that. I was very good at sewing, you know quick, I used to be very quick, more than I am now. So that is how I helped the war effort with sewing, you know gas, later on we also started sewing sleeves for the Khaki uniforms and that sort of thing. And you know I always remember one thing there. Being opposite Victoria Station I had gone out lunchtime to get I don't know a sandwich or whatever it was and they were just bringing a group of German prisoners, who obviously must have been by then because I had been there quite a few year, from the station to wherever they were going and I always remember if I had had a gun I would shoot the lot. That's me, who I can't kill a fly now without apologising to the fly first! I can see those boys in front of me and they were no more than 16 at the most, maybe younger. Funny how one remembers certain incidents and others, I just can't recall at all.

RL: How long did you stay at the Sedofskis?

FS: Not terribly long because I then started to live in Whalley Range. Yes that's where I lived and I think that is where we, no that wasn't where we met, I can't remember exactly where it was anyway....Sorry

RL: You went to live in Whalley Range? How was that organised? How did you move down there?

**Tape 2: 21 minutes 56 seconds**



FS: I think I remember all I know is I was still working at, I think the factory was called Abrahams or Abramsons. I don't know. There was a girl called Liesel, who by the way I met yesterday again at the meeting. I am in touch with her all the time, from Manchester. I don't quite remember how it all went. I just don't remember the actual connection, you know but as I say I went to live in Whalley Range in a little flat. I can see the road but can't remember the street name but my landlady was called Mrs. Rose, I think. Why do I remember these things and other important things I can't remember. And I had a tiny little room there. I mean when I say lived in a flat I didn't have a flat, oh no I think she had the flat on the first floor only or whatever, you know. I don't know, it was through somebody in Young Austria, that's right Lisel, the one I saw yesterday, who lived down the road from there. So whether she told me about it or whether I had gone to see her, I can't remember the sequence to be honest.

RL: Why had you decided to move?

FS: Well the Sudofski's were extremely nice people but let's say being brought up in Germany you are very fussy about, as I still am and getting worse all the time, how you like your place to look or be run. They were not quite so fussy. Lovely people, the nicest, kindest people you can meet.

RL: And in the new place in Whalley Range?

FS: Well I had to keep my room clean. No that was clean. It was not a Jewish, you know person who owned the place. At the other end of the road I had other friends who lived around there. Was that the same road? I don't think so.

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

FS: It is difficult to say because I mean I was just glad to be in England. And obviously, you know, as far as I was concerned great I'm in England, I love England, you know. I was very impressed by them as a whole. I think I was just, I was happy, I was, I don't know, I was glad to be there.....I wanted to go to England not because only of safety reasons but because having learned English at school and having heard a lot about England in lessons and all that I just wanted to come to England and I made it!

RL: Was it different in any way to what you were used to?

FS: Well you see it is difficult to compare because the last 2 years, I mean especially under Hitler things in Germany were you know, although in a way, as I say, I kept going to school but you had heard about the Kristallnacht and you knew what was happening to people so obviously, I mean, it was a relief to be in England because there wasn't anybody who seemed to be anti Jewish or was anti-Semitic so obviously you were relaxed and at ease.

RL: In terms of way of life did you find it different?

FS: How do you mean? In which way?

RL: Culturally – the way they did things here.

FS: I don't know if I am right but having been put into a Jewish circle, there is a certain relationship between Jewish people all over, you know. I mean the holidays, you know, were kept and all that sort of thing so I didn't from that point of view see much difference except that nobody was bothering me, I wasn't being treated as a dirty Jew sort of thing. No I felt relaxed. The only thing I was sad about was when I wanted to go to school, they had closed the schools down. So that was that.

RL: Did you have to register with the police?

RS: I can't remember – how do you mean?

**Tape 2: 27 minutes 16 seconds**

RL: When you possibly reached the age of 17 or 18 did you have to register?

FS: I can't remember quite honestly, I might have done, I might not I really can't remember

RL: Did you have an identity book?

FS: Well I had the usual identity card, like we all had to have during the war. I had an identity card. I wonder if I have still got it somewhere. Probably not, I don't know. We all had to have an identity card. I wonder if I have got it. I can't be bothered going through all that lot again.

RL: So you are in Whalley Range, so take me from there on.

FS: Well I always wanted to go to London and when my Bob, his name was and when Bob's parents I broke up our friendship, I was so heartbroken I thought right, I will go to London. I had met a, I had moved from that place to somewhere else where a girl was staying, who was in Manchester because in London because of the bombing, she had come to Manchester to stay there and she always said to me "well if ever you want to come to London let me know, we have a flat there, come and see me and all this". So I remember saying to her "right". She had gone back by then. And I remember saying this was about 1946 I would say, just after the war finished, she went back to London, she might have gone back in 1945 when the bombing had stopped and all that

RL: Were you in Whalley Range the whole time until the end of the war?

FS: Yes, yes not in the same room. Yes I lived around there. So I went to see her in London and I liked it, you know, so much I said right I am going to stay here and I managed to find a flat, not a flat, a room, a room that's what it was, in Oxford Street I think it was, not Oxford Road, Oxford St. I can see that place exactly. It is funny how one remembers some things in details and others I just can't recall.

RL: Before we come to London, tell me a bit more about your time in Manchester.

FS: In which way?

RL: For instance, did you experience any bombing in the war?

FS: Oh very much so, when I lived with these people Sudofsky's, I remember one day, they had a girl and we had gone to the pictures on Cheetham Hill Road, down the road, we used to call it the Flea, what was it called, the Flea something, the Flea Pit or something, wasn't it, some name for the pictures and while we were in the pictures, the sirens started so we made our way home walking along Cheetham Hill Road, and as we came along, practically every house seemed on fire. So we thought gosh, I wonder what has happened to your parents and to their place. That was one of the few which was untouched. I will never forget that. I can see us walking along there. One of the very few places which was not bombed out. Because we always, they had a very deep cellar and we used to go, whenever the air raids started, we used to go and sit in the cellar and when they let their bombs go, you always used to count a certain time until you knew it was going to come down and hit. Yes I always remember that sitting there and counting.....fine, gone further. Yes that was Manchester. That is what I remember during the war, just the usual bombing all the time, many a time.

RL: Were you in touch with any refugee organisations or committees?

FS: Well the Young Austria to which I belonged.

RL: Besides that?

FS: I don't remember quite honestly. Because you mustn't forget, I was brought over by relatives so I don't think I, I don't remember I might have done but I don't remember that at all.

**Tape 2: 32 minutes 13 seconds**

RL: Where had your father gone to?

FS: My father came over on the last train leaving Germany and he was right away interned in Kitchener camp. Then eventually he was in Manchester as well. I don't know exactly how he got there but obviously the relatives were all in Manchester. You know, I don't know where he stayed at first to be quite honest. I can't remember that part at all. I don't know where he lived at the very beginning but at the end in Manchester, as I said before he then started to work in a Wine Cellar Company where he couldn't drink the wine because it wasn't kosher anyway. But I think eventually he did then work for a kosher winery, whatever you want to call it but can't remember the details of that.

RL: Where did he live eventually?

FS: Well eventually he lived in Southport.

RL: Do you remember the street?

FS: I can see it in front of me but I can't remember the name.

RL: Was he on his own?

FS: Oh yes, he never married again but you know it is funny you saying was he on his own, I think where he worked at this Wine Cellar, Winery, I don't know what it's called, there was a lady working there and I know he liked her but he died fairly young so.

RL: When did he die?

FS: When he was 63 and he was born in 1898, so it was in 1961. I don't think I will forget those three years. I lost first my sister, then my father and a year afterwards, my first husband died, I don't think I will ever forget those three years.

RL: How often would you see your father during the war years? What kind of contact did you have with him?

FS: I can't quite remember how often. I saw him frequently but I don't know if there was a definite schedule, you know. Because he was very religious still and I was only, what I would say religious in his sense for about 6 months or so and after that I became less and less orthodox and slowly slipped into sort of Reform Judaism. But I can't remember how often I used to see him or what was happening. Sorry.

RL: What do you think caused the transition from your upbringing to a different level?

FS: I think by then I probably would not have realised but I was starting slowly to be agnostic and I think I still am now, because I don't know what to believe in. Because how can one explain what goes on in this world? You can't blame G-d for it, he didn't do it but I don't know, I suppose that is how I changed over the years, when you see what goes on in the world. The funny part I must just mention that, my three grandchildren, that is my younger daughter's children, the eldest one, ever since I remember, whenever I came to see them, I had to take them to a synagogue, the Sinai Synagogue. They went to Cheder, all three of them. The older one and his twin brothers and one day, he always couldn't, when I used to take them home, he used to ask me questions, "grandma what happened in the Jewish religion then and what happened then" and I answered them as well as I could. Then at the end of September 2001 when I was fetching them from synagogue they had been to Cheder, the three of them and Sam said to me "grandma I am not going anymore". You, you of all the people, who, he was so looking forward to his barmitzvah and everything. He said after September 11<sup>th</sup> how can anybody believe in religion? What can you answer him, so one of the twins said "you know he is right grandma, I am not going any more" but funnily enough the youngest of the twins, well a few hours younger than his twin brother said "grandma, I am still going" and he believe

**Tape 2: 37 minutes 33 seconds**

or not is being barmitzvah at the beginning of January. So how do you explain these things? Maybe he has got his grandfather's, who he never knew obviously, he is a violinist, he won a scholarship to Bradford Grammar School on his musical talents

apart from general things. Maybe he has got my father's musical gift in him. Although my father did not play an instrument but he obviously had the ear, I would say for it. Why am I telling you all this, sorry I should not have brought that in should I?

RL: That is fine, I was asking about your change in religious outlook, and how that came about.

RS: Yes maybe it is the same with my grandson, that's right that's why I started telling it. When you see what goes on in the world, you get less and less a believer, I mean that is how I feel. You do not know what to believe. I felt like that a long, long time ago already, it has not just happened now.

RL: Did you ever discuss this sort of thing with your father?

FS: Oh I would not have dared to, I would have upset him like anything But do you know, as I have said, I have lost my father, my sister and my husband in such a short time. I know why I started to feel less and less in that respect.

RL: Was your father aware of your change?

FS: Oh yes definitely, definitely. But in that way he was understanding. If you weren't religious, you were not a good person so far as he was concerned you were a bad person and I always remember when I married my first husband, although he was barmitzvah but he came from what you would now call a Reform Jewish type background. When he came to visit me when my first daughter was born in 1951, I was astounded that he even came to visit me because I was then living in London and he was in Manchester. So he came and he said "she is a lovely girl". But I wouldn't have thought, he said "Having seen her now, he must", referring to my husband, "he must have been a gutte menche to have produced a lovely child like that." I always remember that. So you know, that was how it was. I remember after he had his accident and I was by then living in Edgware and he came to stay with me and I had to make what I call a separate kitchen for him. I had different cutlery for him and all that sort of thing so that it was kosher but I would not have thought, years before that he would not have even come but then he accepted I was different, as long as I did not enforce my opinions on him and that was how we got on.

RL: And your sister how did she fit in religiously, where did she fall?

FS: Well she was kosher at home with her husband and I don't know, she was fairly religious. I remember spending Seder night with her and her husband and she had 2 little boys, 2 nephews. She was, she was religious, you know. In fact when she got married, I had got married to my husband at Willesden Green Registry Office, only a Civil Marriage. When my father heard my sister was getting married at a synagogue in Cheetham Hill, I can't remember which one it is. He said, "I am going to arrange for you and your husband to be married under a Chuppah, is that all right". So, you know, I got married under a Chuppah about four weeks after I had got married. She was religious but not like my father. Just normally and so was her husband.

RL: Had you had any kind of Hebrew education as a child?

FS: Oh yes, I went to a Jewish school, of course I did. In fact it is very funny, I read fluent Ivrit and could even read without the punctuation because that was how you were taught. But I have forgotten it all and now when I go to synagogue with my young grandson to attend services and fetch him from Cheder, I am starting to be able to read again, which I had completely forgotten, which I am very pleased with.

**Tape 2: 43 minutes 10 seconds**

RL: So we had digressed a little talking about your father and where he was. You were going to tell me about your move to London and how you. I stopped you at that point and took you back to Manchester but you were just taking me onto when you moved down to London.

FS: Oh yes I moved down to London. Yes I can remember where I lived. I can see the place in front of me but can't remember very much about that.

RL: What kind of work did you get there?

FS: Well I have always been able to sew and I am just trying to think, I can't remember how the connection comes into it but I don't know whether this was first but in Manchester I went to evening class or whatever you call it. No I think I went privately to somebody I think I paid for it, to learn dress designing. I have always had a flare for that. I have always had an eye for it and a flare for it. I am not academically bright but I can see things before anybody else can see them as far as, anyway, I am trying to think what happened then. I don't know which way round it happened but anyway I went to classes and I wanted to learn designing. When it came to the examination, I was ill. I can't remember what I had some illness, I could not take the test. So I thought well what am I going to work at. I mean I thought I would get a job as a dress designer and I don't remember how I got to know this particular firm, I think they were advertising in the Jewish Chronicle or something like that. They wanted somebody, a machinist who could do samples, samples, you know dress samples. So I went there and had an interview and I said I know a little bit more than you know, being able to design and I became their manageress, which was some in, I can see the street, round the corner from Tottenham Court Road, somewhere. I can see the place and I worked there, until I eventually met my husband and got married.

RL: So tell me a little bit about your husband, where was he from?

FS: My first husband, my children's father was from Berlin, from a very well known family in Berlin. What do you want to know about him. How do you mean, in which way?

RL: When did he come over, and what did he do?

FS: He came over in 39 I think May because he was just I think you had to be not 18. He was just before; he must have come over the end of April because his birthday was on the 5<sup>th</sup> May and he would have been I think. Wait a minute he was born 1920. You might be able to work it out better than me, anyway I remember there was a

certain, did he come over with the Kindertransport, it might not have been, it might have been a different way, I don't know. I really can't remember that part of it, he might have told me at the time.

RL: What did he do?

RS: Well for him to be able to leave Germany, he must have been turned 18 because he had to take a job learning to be something to do with not engineering, plumbing, that sort of thing and that is how he was able to come over to England and that is how I assumed because that was before I knew him. I was 24 when I married him, so I don't quite know what he did all the time before that. I know he was, when I married him, he was a commercial traveller funnily enough in, you know what he sold, he sold what do you call when you wanted to have a copy of something, that blue paper, copying paper.

RL: Carbon

FS: Carbon yes. He was a salesman for that and believe it or not when I came to, here, I don't know how, I looked through my mail, when he died, you know, when people sent me letters, and there was one address in Leeds. So I phoned those people because I did not know anybody. And it was a chap who he worked for, for a while or worked with for a while but afterwards, he started to work for an insurance company. He became, he had an insurance broker, how shall I say, He was an insurance broker so we had our own agency for a while and

**Tape 2: 48 minutes 49 seconds**

I used to help him a little bit but I wasn't much good at that sort of thing but. He worked for a company called The Imperial Life of Canada and he won a lot of prizes and all that sort of thing. He was very brainy. I always tell this story about my husband. When he came to England, and he was, when war broke out, in Kitchener Camp, you automatically, you were either sent I can't remember where or else you joined the forces. So he joined the forces, which in those days you had to be a, as he called it, a ditch digger, you had to be.. Pioneer Corps. He was in the Pioneer Corps for a while and he said this is ridiculous; I could be of much more service using my brain than digging. So he wanted to join the REME because when he trained as a plumber he also had to know certain electrical things.....So he wrote a letter to them and said or to wherever, "I would like to join the REME". So they said well you need to take a test to see whether you are clever enough for it, whether we, you know, whether you would be of any use to us. So they, he had to sit for an exam and he got 98 degrees, percent so they said "we have never had this before, can't be true so we are going to give you the test again, you will have to sit for another one". He got 99 percent, so obviously

he joined the REME. He was in the REME for about 3 years and then he heard that his parents, through the Red Cross had been sent to Theresienstadt and he wanted to get in touch with them because by then they were still alive. That was going on towards the end of the war by then. Before the Russians came there and he asked the.....in British Army, could he be sent to Germany. By then they were already in Germany, you know. And they said "Ino you look too Jewish". If you look at his picture there, you can see. Actually he looks Turkish, not Jewish, but that is another

story. Well could be either – and they said “sorry it would put your life in danger because the odd Nazi’s lurking there would certainly not want to have you around, you know”. He had a nervous breakdown so he was in a hospital for a few months and then he was better and they wouldn’t, did not want him back in the army, because he had had a nervous breakdown. So he wrote to the American forces and said “look I might not be much good at actual fighting in that respect but I speak German, could I not help in translating”. He then became, came to where was it in Germany as a translator and eventually managed to find his parents and they came out of Concentration Camp to Westerbork where they lived for a few years. Not very long, because his father in the First World War, fighting for the Kaiser, had a lung shot away so he only had one lung and of course having been in the Concentration Camp for three years, did not do it much good. So he lived for another three years or so, but my mother in law she came out and she lived for quite a while, in fact she was still alive when my second daughter was born in 54. So that is it.

RL: How did you meet your husband?

FS: How did I?

RL: Meet him.

FS: Very good, there was in London behind Abbey Road a Jewish organisation. I don’t know if it was the AJR or what it was called, where all the refugees used to be. Now I had by then met a boyfriend in London and he was helping out at the bar, you know, serving. I came sort of for the evening to be there as well, and I started, I was asked to dance, there was dancing there as well, and I was asked by this chap to dance and he liked me obviously and he asked me out and he wanted me to ..film, it wasn’t about the film or something, I can’t remember which one it was, would I come to the pictures with him. So I remember going over to my friend Peter and said “Peter, Max has asked me to go to a film, do you mind if I go? It’s so funny because we arranged to meet somewhere and we never did meet, I missed the place, we got some misunderstanding where we were supposed to meet. The next day I got a phone call from him. That’s right, I lived in Ashbourne Terrace or Avenue, saying, well I didn’t have my own personal phone, it was my landlady’s phone, why didn’t I turn up. I said “I did why didn’t you turn up!” So we realised we had made, we had some misunderstanding so he said “let’s meet up again”. So that was it. That is how I met him.

RL: What was his name?

**Tape 2: 54 minutes 53 seconds**

FS: Max Heinz Nathan..... My first married name was Nathan. He was an only child.

RL: How long did you go out?

FS: Oh we got married within four months. You know it is funny that, after he died and when I married, I was on my own five years and when I married again, I



only knew the chap four months as well. Well I had seen him before but went out with him only for four months. Must be a lucky date for me, four months.

RL: And after marriage where did you live?

FS: In the slums in London. At first, no at first we lived in quite a nice room. I think we had one room and a living kitchen, sort of, that's right, in Exeter Road. Isn't it funny how one remembers some things and other things, I haven't got the faintest idea. We lived there and then I started to expect my daughter, we knew, they had said before hand the people "sorry we don't want you to have children here". Well it was not the right place anyway for children. We then could not afford anything. I mean my husband was alright, he was a commercial traveller by then but you did not earn a lot and you had to have a car. In those days you didn't get supplied by the firm you had to buy your own car and so what little we had went on getting an old second hand car. The only thing we could afford was somewhere in the slums in Kilburn. It is all pulled down now so bad were the slums there and that is where my daughters were born.

FS: Sorry what was the original question?

RL: That's fine, just going back to your marriage at the Register Office, was anybody else there when you married?

FS: My best man his name was Rudi Netzer and a couple Teddy and Gisella and a girl I knew from Leipzig. She unfortunately died very, very soon after. She had only been married about three or four years and had 2 boys and she died, Deutsche his name was, Teddy Deutsche, that's right. So these two, well she died as I say soon, I remember when I was in London I heard she had died and he I met him once again. The fourth, the other person Rudi Netzer, I don't quite remember how this all happened, but I have met his wife in Los Angeles when I went to visit my older daughter who used to live there, and we are still in touch. Funnily enough she is not even Jewish but it makes no difference, she in fact was one of the few people I know who went through all the whole palaver of becoming a Jewess. She is Scottish actually. The last time I was in Los Angeles, which was what, three years ago I went to see her still. In fact she met me at the station to see me off to the airport.

RL: That was your register office wedding.

FS: Yes that was my register office wedding. Then of course I got married in the synagogue in Cheetham Hill.

RL: Do you know which one it was?

FS: No I don't.

RL: What happened on that day were there people that came to that Chuppah?

FS: I am trying to remember. Now as I said before it was arranged because my father and sister who was getting married in that particular synagogue shul, had arranged it for me. I don't know if it was the same day. That I can't remember or

whether it was the day before or something but it was in that same week that I got married and I can see the synagogue hall, where I was standing, excuse me but I don't know if it is still there, could be. Do you know any synagogues on Cheetham Hill Rd?

**Tape 2: 59 minutes 37 seconds**

RL: There were quite a few. What year were you married?

FS: Good point, '48

RL: Do you want to take a drink?

FS: Good idea

RL: I think anyway this film is about to end.

**Tape 2: 59 minutes 55 seconds**

**TAPE 3**

**Tape 3: 0 minute 36 seconds**

RL: This is tape 3 with Fay Shaw. If we can go back. We have been talking about the Chuppah after your civil marriage and you have been telling me about the different places you have been living in in London and the last place you mentioned was in Kilburn.

FS: The slums yes. They are not there any more, they have all been torn down and rebuilt. Apparently they have got nice flats and things there now.

RL: How long were you there?

FS: Well I know both my daughters were born there. In fact the older one even went to the local school for a few weeks, that's right and shortly after that, yes, my mother-in-law had died and left us a little bit of money and we were able to buy our own house in Edgware. I do not think I will ever forget that feeling. Yes, that's right because the younger one was 2 and Judy must have been about 5. She started school in Kilburn and then we moved to Edgware.

RL: And how long were you there?

FS: Well I was there when my husband died in 1963. Then I was 5 years on my own, remarried in 1968 and lived with my second husband there for a year or two, I can't remember when and then we bought a house in between Bushey and Watford outside London.

RL: What children did you have?

FS: I have just got two girls but when I remarried I acquired another lovely daughter so I had three daughters.

RL: Did you, when you lived in Edgware, did you belong to any organisations or societies, you or your husband?

FS: I don't really remember. The only thing is I know I joined the synagogue in Edgware – The Reform Synagogue. They had occasional things but I don't think I belonged, I don't remember. Did I belong to anything? No because my time was taken up with my children and I helped my husband a little bit in his business, so I don't remember, although I was in touch with quite a few friends and of course when I married for the second time my second husband had quite a large family.

RL: Did you work at all after your first husband died.

FS: Yes. My first husband, I think I mentioned before, was an insurance broker and at the end or whenever it was, he had some business or some with, there was a company, an Estate Agents on the corner of our Station in, what was the station called? It wasn't called Edgware, we weren't in Edgware, and it wasn't Stanmore, do you think I remember the name. Anyway he

**Tape 3: 4 minutes 23 seconds**

worked with Estate Agents and when my husband died. Until then I was at home with the children, I helped him with his business, but I did not go out to work, but after my husband died, quite by chance, I don't know how it happened, but anyway, yes I was walking down the road and the owner of the Estate Agents, Ronald Preston came up to me and said "what are you doing with yourself?" I said "nothing much". He said "Listen we could do with somebody like you. You are good on the phone, the people take to you, you know about", what was it he said I knew about then, was it to do with antiques already. Yes must have been because I had been dabbling with antiques, "would you like to work on our phone, you know, take..". So I started to work for him. It wasn't through him but on the shopping parade there was a Jewish shop where I used to go shopping. I can see the name but I can't remember, anyway that was where I met my second husband, through that shop. Somehow or other, when they knew my first husband had died and I was still living there, they said to me, "what are you doing with yourself" and I said "nothing much", oh no, I asked them, "I need someone to help me with the housework, that's right". I had somebody before and I can't remember anyway. So they said "I know somebody has got a good one, its Julius Shaw, ask him" So she said "you know him". So I said "I think I know who you mean because he lives round the corner from me and I see him or I used to see his wife who had died, take their daughter to the station to catch a bus to go to school". So that is how I got to know my second husband. He had a costume jewellery business and I used to help him with that. Go to work with him. Kings Cross he had a place. Other than that I did not go to work as such except for Ronald Preston's, I remember I used to work from 10.00 till 2.00 or something and then to be home by the time the girls came home from school.

RL: When did you start dabbling with antiques? How did that come about?

FS: It is a long story, do you really want me to start – and I mean a long story! When I got married the first time, I lived in Chichele Road in London, which is Willesden Green station and that area. And when I got married the landlady, Mrs

Hersh, I wonder if she is still alive, anyway she made a wedding breakfast for me and to it came somebody who I know you have heard of, Eva Schloss. Eva's then boyfriend lived in the same rented a room in the same place. Eva came and I said "you know Eva I could do with you telling me something about antiques" because she by then had an antique shop in London. In Whitechurch Lane, isn't it funny, those things I remember like yesterday and I said I have inherited a few things from my first husband's parents' and I don't know what they are, you know. So she said "well bring them into me and show them to me" and that was it and then she said "why don't you come to the auction once with me, it is interesting?" So I went with her to Phillips Auction in London and the bug bit me, that's the only way I can put it and I started to get an interest in antiques and learn about it. In fact I even went to evening classes to learn about antiques. That's right that was somewhere in ....I went to evening classes and that is how I knew about it. I don't know. What else to say about that.

RL: Did you ever carry out any business?

FS: Oh yes I used to go to antique fairs. I remember we did some in very good places. I mean, what's that, Dorchester around the corner from Hyde Park we did fairs there. I only attended very upper class fairs. Not the sort of things you get these days, sort of car boot sales, definitely not. But I was always interested in it and I have always had an eye for it. I remember once she said to me "look Fay I haven't got time to go but I need to buy such and such a thing, have a look around and if you see one, bid for it". I said "what do you mean bid for it?" She said "well you know what you are doing". I can't remember what it was, I think it was this chair and something else I bought and she said "very good buys". I can't remember anyway, not, you know. I have always been interested in antiques and known about it and when my second husband was in costume jewellery he taught me a lot about jewellery and bits and pieces, although he only handled costume jewellery he obviously knew about you know silver and gold and all that, that's it.

RL: What was your second husband's background?

### **Tape 3: 10 minutes 31 seconds**

FS: How do you mean? He was born in London and his parents were from Russia. Their name, what was their name I have forgotten now but it was changed to Shaw. Sharovsky, I think it was Sharovsky, something like that, Sharovsky, Sharovsky and in during the war he was in the air force and became I don't know, a sergeant or something. Apparently he had a flare for medicine and he used to help with medical things, which he had never learned but just knew. You know how sometimes you have a gift for certain things. That was him. Other than that I think he told me about his schooling but quite honestly I don't know.

RL: We don't need all that detail really, sort of English born,

FS: English born of Russian parents. Yes. His father was a tailor.

RL: And his daughter's name, your stepdaughter?

FS: Susan.

RL: How old was she when you married?

FS: 15 or 16. He had lost his wife a year after I had lost my husband, so he had been alone for about 4 years and I had been alone for five years and I remember seeing her taking her daughter when she was well enough, she died of cancer, taking her daughter past my house because where we lived, it was like a crescent and she used to take her to the bus or to the school. She went to some private school.

RL: Where did you marry?

FS: In Edgware, at the Reform synagogue in Edgware. I am trying to remember the name of it, I should know it very well because we had the most fantastic Rabbi. I forgot his name. I can see his face. In fact he only died about 2 years ago. We married there and the funny part of it was my Best Man was my first husband's uncle because when I introduced my second husband to the family who then lived in Cannes. They thought I can see why you married him, he is such a lovely person and they just took to him as if he was their nephew, you know. His daughter is just as nice. The whole family is a lovely family.

RL: How long did you remain in Edgware after you married the second time?

FS: Not terribly long, only about, wait a minute, Jackie was still at school, about 2 or 3 years at the most, I can't exactly remember. Because, somehow I don't know, it did not seem right to live there, you know, somehow, which was stupid in a way, but

RL: Where did you move?

FS: Then we moved to just outside Bushy, to a place called Hampermill Lane and I lived there until my daughter in America was expecting a baby and I promised to come and help her, so what I did is, by then I was widowed again, I promised, yes that's right we lived there quite a while.

RL: When did your second husband die?

FS: Properly 20 years ago. I have got the date exactly written down, I can't remember. Yes I think in 1983 that's right, in 83 he died and my daughter in America, she was expecting a baby. She had 2 or 3 miscarriages before and I said "Well I'll tell you what when you are due for the next one, I will come and help you". So what I did in fact, I sold up my house in England, moved all my furniture to America, bought a place there and used to spend the summer months in England, 6 months and the Winter months in America in Los Angeles, just outside Los Angeles which was very nice. I have got a lovely nice son-in-law there, he is an absolute darling. Well when I went over there and no and when I was due to go over there to visit her when she was expecting the baby, I get a phone call one night "mum, the baby has been born

**Tape 3: 15 minutes 49 seconds**

early and they don't expect him to live, so I went over right away and by the time I got there he had died. He lived 13 hours and they told her at the time she mustn't try

for any more because she has already had 3 or 4 ectopic pregnancies and if she tried again she would not only lose the baby but she herself would lose her life. So they have no children. So I moved back again with all my stuff. I moved back because when I was over there in the summer months in England I had what you call a granny flat with my daughter who lived outside Buckingham in a small, little place called Radcliff and I moved into Gayhurst which is a little place just outside Milton Keynes, which was within ten minutes, a quarter of an hour's drive from where my daughter lives and that's it.

RL: When did you move up to Otley?

FS: I moved up to Otley. Well my daughter's ex-husband was born in Leeds and he has not had what you call proper jobs. In fact he helped in her businesses. In a way he worked for her. She had by that time 5 shops, I think, 5 dress shops called "Little Women" because we are all little and they moved up, yes the business went bust. When was the stock exchange crash? 88 or 89 or 98 wasn't it or no Anyway when the stock exchange crashed, businesses went completely dead, so she said rather than being made bankrupt "I'll sell it" you know what I've got and we will start a family. That is when she started a family. And then eventually well he did not have a job anymore, when she did because he worked for her, sort of thing, and then eventually they moved to Horsforth. That is where his parents are and daughter. A lovely big house there and believe it or not she again started a business because he never had a job to earn any decent wage, he didn't know what that was like. Anyway she started with a shop in York and had one or 2 others and again, you wouldn't believe it, the second stock exchange crash came and by then she already had 2 children. She said "I can't go through this all again I'm going to give this up" and she sold up. While she lived in Horsforth they had a nanny staying with them and her dear husband started an affair with the nanny. Whenever she was away on business buying for the shops and all that, anyway he left her then for the nanny, he has got 2 more boys with them so he has got 5 sons. He is not a bad person, he is just a weak, weak. You can't dislike him, he has a lot of charm and I can see why she fell for him. What else can I tell you. I moved up while they were still in Horsforth because with her other shop, she started again she could do with the help with the boys, having 3 boys by then and running a business sort of single handed, it was a little bit too much and she knew I knew about clothing and all that so I moved up. Funnily enough by then he was working at an Estate Agents and I said "I don't ever want to live here but" this is very funny "If I live anywhere up this way, I want to live in Ilkley. Why? Because they have got you know the shops, what are they called. I can't remember the name now, I can see it in front of me there a typical continental shop. They have got one in York and they've got one in, Betty's - have you heard of Betty's. And to me that was that background if you know what I mean. So I said "I will move to Ilkley". That's right he worked for Bakers the Estate Agent at the time and he said "make up your mind where you want to move but why don't you first of all rent a place for a short time and then you will see if you like it. So I rented a place and the lady below me was an absolute nervous wreck and she could not stand anything, no noise, no nothing or this and that and she made ones life, when my grandsons came to visit me if they just said boo, she got upset. I can understand it because she was near a nervous breakdown which she afterwards had. So I said "Well I won't live in Ilkeley even though I like Betty's" and I started to look for another place and I eventually found this. And because it is in

an old house and always having liked antiques and old things, it was the sort of thing I went for.

RL: How long have you been here?

FS: 7 years I think, over 7 years.

RL: Just going back a little with your daughters, what kind of education did they have?

FS: They both went to University. Jackie did biochemistry at UMIST in Manchester and Judy did languages at Owens the main Manchester University. Neither of them finished their course. Jackie had glandular fever when she was in her last year there oh no at the end of the second

**Tape 3: 22 minutes 41 seconds**

year and when she took her end of year test, they expected her to have A's in everything because she was like her father, brilliant. Too high an IQ and the Professor said "Jackie I would like you to resit." But at that time when you had to resit an exam, you had to wait a year, you couldn't do it like that. So she took a job for a year and never went back. She liked the business world. Hence you know all her businesses afterwards. That's what she likes, so that was her. And then my other daughter, in those days when you learned languages, you had to have 6 months in the language you were studying. She was studying French, English, Spanish, that's right those three and she went on a holiday to Italy, I think and she met a guy there, one of the head designers of one of the fashion houses and they fell in love and she decided she isn't going to come back for the third, the last year. So that was that but considering that, she has done very well.

RL: Is that the man she married?

FS: No, no, no, no she, that romance did not go anywhere, you know and I always remember her one day walking out of school, walking out of the house and waving to me and turning back and saying "mum, I bet you there aren't many parents who have two fairly clever daughters who did not want to bother with their degrees. I always I can still see her saying that. So whatever they, they've done alright. Jackie who was studying biochemistry, funnily enough she is working now, although she is about to finish there at the Wharfedale Environmental Society because they saw she had the background, the right background to do with that sort of thing, you know but she is leaving there now as well.

RL: Who did they eventually marry, the 2 girls?

FS: Well Jackie married this boy from Leeds who when she lived in Manchester when she had her first job, yes he came down to, I don't know quite how it went, he came to see her at her place. I think she was letting a room at that time at her flat or her semi where she lived in London and he came to rent a room and eventually, you know, they got married. That is how she met him.

RL: What is his surname?

FS: His surname is Lawson and he had already been married once before. She should have known better. After 6 months his wife threw him out. He probably was the same then as it turned out, but he is not a bad person he is just weak. That's it weak and selfish to a certain extent. I mean he loves his kids. Although I always say, how can you leave 3 boys if you love your kids. The marriage, I had no idea there was anything wrong. When they were together they seemed all right. Like marriages they had arguments, rows but anyway that is that.

RL: And your other daughter who did she marry?

FS: She married, she married, how did she meet him. She first, when she finished University when she would not go back, she worked for, as a sort of reception type/usherette or whatever you call it at the Hilton Hotel in London, opposite Hyde Park. A Venezuelan boy came in who, he liked her so much he said right if you are not interested in me, why don't you come and spend 6 months in Venezuela. My uncle is an Ambassador to the, I think to Australia or Australian ambassador or something like that. You will have no problems staying there. So she went to Venezuela. She met a chap there who was a psychiatrist on the television in Venezuela but he was married. He was waiting for his divorce to come through. He fell in love with her, she fell in love with him but towards the end she was just, you know, was not prepared to go on with the whole thing but because of the connections, and she always wanted to have a visit to America, she asked her ex-friend's uncle, whoever he was or father "could he get her a" you had to have a visa to go to America, you couldn't just go anywhere first, so he said "yes", and she went and after four weeks, she decided she would stay there. So I don't know what happened with her stuff, how she got it over anyway. She managed to get a job at the Australian Embassy, that's right because he was in and she met her husband, but she did not know anyone in Los Angeles and one evening she went to a restaurant come pub or wine bar,

**Tape 3: 28 minutes 42 seconds**

whatever to have something to eat and her husband was sitting at the other end of the bar and that was it. They fell in love practically on sight and within four months, how long, within four months they were living together and they got married whenever. And that was that.

RL: What is his name?

FS: He is adorable. Her name is I have got to think, Elam, his name is Michael Elam a lovely person.

RL: Where was he from originally?

FS: His background is Portuguese. Funnily enough when I went on holiday to Spain and I did a combined tour of Spain and Portugal and they came over to meet me at the same time. No before that actually and they had been to Portugal and they said "well we like Spain but not that keen on Portugal. But I loved Portugal. I have been there on a holiday. So there we are. What do I like about Portugal? Do you know what my favourite drink is? Port! It is good for you anyway.



RL: Did the girls belong to any clubs or organisations when they were younger?

FS: Good point. They were in what do you call the scouts for girls, what's it called?

RL: Guides

FS: They were in the guides, certainly the younger one was. I can't remember. I remember at school, they were both very musical. Now I know they went tap dancing, not tap dancing to a dance class sort of thing in London. I don't know, I cannot remember it was a long, long time ago. No I don't remember .....At that age they were at school and they were both doing extremely well at school and they had lots of friends at school.

RL: Were they interested in your background, in your story? Did you ever speak to them about it?

FS: Yes. The only thing is, the younger one especially, she can't remember her father at all because she was 8 when he died. So somehow she says Mum "I can't put it into place. It doesn't", you know but she knows otherwise my background and even I said to Judy the other day on the phone when we spoke Jackie says she does not remember her father at all. It was only recently she was saying it again. She says "I remember one or two little incidents but I don't remember a lot" and she was 11 years old when he died so, you know and these sort of things. May be the same as me, anything that hurt me a lot I try and push in the background. The things you cannot do anything about, that is how it is.

RL: Are they involved in any Jewish activities, either of them?

FS: Well neither of their husband's are Jewish, so no not really. The funny part as I said, with my grandsons, is that one of the three wants to be Barmitzvah, and before that when she was still married to her husband, he had no objections to anything, you know with that, I mean he, he is very, he's perfectly alright like that you know. But no I don't remember now. The trouble with my daughter at the moment, the one here in Otley, she helps everybody. She is just in a way like my second husband was. She is forever looking after people, who need help and even her present boyfriend, whatever you want to call him, they don't live together because he has got his own place and has a daughter living there, so and her house here isn't big enough to have more than the three of them with three children living there. But he again, he needs help. He has had an accident. He has had trouble and that's her. She never has a husband who will do things for her. She is always doing things for other people. That's my daughter here and the one in America, her husband, they are retired because they did very well in business and all that. Because you know what she turns up to? Rebuilding houses which had been not

**Tape 3: 34 minutes 6 seconds**

Demolished but damaged through earthquakes. She just had a knack for it. Because she happened to have work for somebody in Los Angeles, who had bought these old buildings and did that sort of thing and it just came naturally to her, so that is how she

worked in America. She did extremely well and her husband, who was very good in computers and all that, so they did not have to worry about money, so they retired two years ago. They decided, who are we working for. We have no children, let's enjoy at least each other. So he decided, he has always been interested in scuba diving, anything to do with the sea because having lived in Los Angeles you are near the sea all the time. He now is a life saver for anybody, you know and they now have moved to Hawaii and are having a place built there. My 3 grandsons are over there practically every year on holiday and they have a lovely time. And as I say my son-in-law is a really good person as well. The other day Judy, my daughter was saying she said he was very pleased with himself today, he managed to save somebody's life, who, what do you call these thingamajigs that come off when you dive.... The whole thing, where you breathe had come off and that chap, he was practically dead and he managed to get it back onto him again and you know pumped his and did what had to be done and got him back to life. |So he said it has made everything worth-while. So that is the sort of person he is. He is a lovely person. The boys adore him, my, his nephews. That is it.

RL: Coming on to Israel, have you visited Israel at all?

FS: Yes I have visited Israel because I have distant relatives in Israel. I have got in one of the papers there, I don't know if I've taken it out to show you. There is a chap called Rubin Mendzigursky who came over. He is one of those Mendzigursky's, I think I mentioned that my father had a nephew who came over first with the whole family and he eventually went to Israel and he is at the moment, I don't know if he is still alive. I last had contact about 3 years ago., anyway. He looks after a cemetery for fallen fighters in Israel and to keep that cemetery going, it's you know Sieff of Marks and Spencer, he is the one who pays for it. That's in the paper, I read that so that is Mendzigursky, Rubin Mendzigursky. I remember him. I have got a photo of him as a child on one of the pictures. He had a brother and a sister. I think his sister died because I was in touch with her about 6 years ago. We wrote and then I didn't hear again and I seem to remember, I don't know, somehow having heard that she had passed away. So that is the Mendzigurskys in Israel.

RL: When did you first visit?

FS: After I lost my first husband, that's right I took the children to Hertzlia. Do you know I can still see the hotel, a lovely place, lovely swimming pool, they loved it there and we stayed 3 or 4 weeks there and then I went the second time because my step-daughter went not hachsharah went on to... what is it called? when you go for training for Kibbutz. Anyway I can't remember now, what's it called, dear me remembering these sorts of things, anyway she went there and we went I and my second husband went or my second husband and I went to visit her before she got married. Now she has got a daughter, of she is 26 or so. So it was before, it must be 30 years ago. I mean he's been dead about 20 years. It's probably about 30 years ago. I went the second time with my husband to visit there and she took us all over right up north somewhere, where she was. What's the big town up north?

RL: Tiberius?

FS: No, no I have been to Tiberius because we took a tour all over as well and I've been to the Dead Sea, swimming in it, I thought it was fantastic. I can't remember all the details. I can still see the hotel at Herzlia the first time I went but the second time oh yes we stayed at a very well-known beach place. I can see it but I cannot remember the name, never mind

RL: How do you feel towards Israel?

FS: Do you mean what is going on now?

RL: Just in general, towards the country. How did you feel when you went there for the first time?

**Tape 3: 40 minutes 10 seconds**

FS: Well to start with, well the first time I loved it, that's why I have always wanted to go back again, but I have, my sister the one who died, has 2 sons and the second one has a, now what is that illness called, when you, I cannot remember and I know exactly what it is called, you know when you can't remember where you've been or who you are?

RL: Amnesia

FS: No.....he's schizophrenic, he's schizophrenic. He joined the army in Israel because over here he once was, I don't know what it was, I can't remember what it was. I mean he is a very, very clever person, he has a PhD in mathematics at Surrey University. I mean when you get that you aren't stupid. But once when I went there I wanted to find him but I could not find him. So Israel to me has always been something I want to keep in touch with to know how he is. Otherwise with things going on there now, you mean, how do I feel about it?

RL: It is really to know how you felt towards Israel as a place?

FS: Well having relations there, I've also and I've got the photo. I don't know if I put it out there, my father had a sister Lotte. When I went there the first time, I tried to find her and I believe I had an address was it in Tel Aviv or somewhere else, I've forgotten all the different places there and I found where she was, they were away on holiday and never managed to get in touch with her, so I know she had a son and I have got his wedding photo when he got married. That is how far I got, so somehow to me Israel is family you know, I have so many contacts there because of that.

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

FS: Well I was born in Germany and for instance my being so pedantic and tidy that is a typical German character so far as I am concerned, so I was probably taught that by my mother anyway, who was like that, certainly not my father.....How do you mean education wise or?

RL: In terms of nationality.

FS: Oh sorry in terms of nationality. Well I am British I mean as far as I am concerned. I have spent most of my life here, except for 15 years, in England so I suppose in a way I am English. Although the way things are in England now they have changed to how they were when I first arrived. You know things have changed so much.

RL: Can you elaborate on what you mean?

FS: What I mean is, all the crime now and the noise and all that. I don't know if it is a typical English thing but it is not what I. English, English people were gentlemen, they were ladies and I am afraid you don't get the impression anymore as the whole now, well I don't anyway. It doesn't mean I haven't met, I am still meeting some very, very nice people but I don't know. But I still like England and many times, I think the only reason I would move from England is because I like to live somewhere, because of my arthritis and all that, where it is nice and warm, you know. For my physical well being I would like to live somewhere where it is nice and warm and that is why I wanted to live in America at the time, in Los Angeles because the weather was exactly what I like. My daughter in America, now in Hawaii, not just America, likes the heat and the one here does not like the heat. Having said that she is buying a house in Turkey or having something built, why because this comes back the genes. I don't know if I should bring this in but I am quite sure that if you look at her father, he looks Turkish and looking at his grandmother on the photos, she looks Turkish. When I went with my daughter, when was it, in April this year, she says "Mum I am interested in buying something over there". She has been there umpteen times and again it must be fate in a way because when she started University at UMIST, the first person she met was a girl from Istanbul. They have been friends ever since. They have visited each other umpteen times, she has taken to Turkey like in a natural way, do you know what I mean? I am quite sure that my husband's grandparents whatever are from Turkey. I think it's in the genes. I don't know if

**Tape 3: 46 minutes 7 seconds**

you can explain it that way, but that's how it feels to me, maybe I am being stupid. So she wants to live there eventually. I know she will eventually go there for good. At the moment she can't because by the time the boys, well they all three go to university, get out of university, she obviously can't live there for good but all her holidays, 95% of them are spent in Turkey and the other place she likes is Amsterdam.

RL: Coming back to your sense of identity, would you say you have any kind of Continental identity?

FS: I don't know if you would call it continental. All I can say is since I have been going to synagogue more because of my grandson's wish to be barmitzvahed, I have, I wouldn't say continental, Jewish identity has come back, much more so. I feel at home when I am in the synagogue. Whether it's because it brings back my parents, my life in Germany, I don't know, but that is how I feel. I don't know if that answers your question.

RL: Do you feel different to the British?

FS: Well in some ways I feel British and in some ways I just feel typically Jewish and I suppose that is the only way I could put it. I suppose when you listen to the radio and hear all this anti-Semitism even on the radio here, you know, I think, oh boy what is going on so obviously that is when I feel Jewish but when I hear somebody say something bad about England, I feel English, I feel British! So I am a split personality.

RL: Do you feel at home here?

FS: Oh yes, oh yes definitely. You mean in England as a whole. Oh yes, I mean ...I have grown up and most of my life has been spent here.

RL: Have you ever come across any anti-Semitism here?

FS: I haven't but I asked the boys, the twins who are at Bradford Grammar School and especially Ben who looks much more Jewish than the other one, he said "oh yes," So if they start on me, I feel I want to hit them. I said "the best thing with things like this is you ignore them. They don't exist as far as you are concerned". He said "what if they hit me?" So I said "Well, I don't know". I don't think they hit but they push, they shove; you know how kids can be like that. Before, when he won his scholarship to Bradford Grammar school, I went to see the headmaster there and I said "look I know that you have a lot of Asian pupils here which you know fine, I am sure they are lovely and this and that, but I am going, the one boy has won a grant anyway but the other one I want to help him to come to this school, which means I have to pay fees and the ex father-in-law will split, pay for him but I think he is not going to be happy there because of anti-Semitism, can you tell me now before I definitely, enrol him as well, you know. The other one was going anyway and I was worried about it. So he said "Mrs. Shaw we have no anti-Semitism here." I've not, they have very few Jews in the whole school anyway so he says it wouldn't probably arise because of that in any case but apart from that I personally used to be teaching at Manchester Grammar School and I think he was second in charge there and he said "being headmaster here at this school, I have met a lot of Jewish people at Manchester and do you know where I spend my holidays? in New York with my Jewish friends". So that gave me a good enough answer so whatever would happen, you know, it would be all right. Whenever I go to, whatever these formal evenings they have, he always comes over and says "hello Fay – how are you today?" You know, so I think they are all right. So that goes for anti-Semitism as a whole. I personally, no I don't think I have, I haven't noticed anyway. But as I say you listen to the radio and it makes you wonder doesn't it?

RL: Who do you feel most comfortable with, Jewish people or non-Jewish people, or refugees or what sort of person?

### **Tape 3: 51 minutes 20 seconds**

FS: The most comfortable, Jewish refugees because they are of the same background. I have nothing against English Jews, don't get me wrong, but it is not quite the same feeling, because of our upbringing. It is slightly different. That doesn't say I don't like them it is just that when you say who do I feel at home, Jewish refugees. That is why I belong to the Holocaust Association, the AJR because that is

where I get those contacts from. I belonged to the AJR when I lived in London years ago. And do you know I still remember, you know where the new headquarters are for the AJR now, in Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, I had a flat opposite. When my first husband died, before I remarried, I bought a flat there and was going to move into there and I think I lived for a few weeks in there and then I married again and moved away. Funny how life goes isn't it, you never know.

RL: What was your connection with AJR when you first joined? What did that consist of?

FS: My first husband belonged to, what was it called AJEX is it of ex-servicemen and I think somehow, whether they sent me literature automatically, I can't remember, but the contact, I remember faintly came through that came through that. I don't exactly remember why and how but I don't know whether we were automatically informed about AJR or what, I don't know but I seem to have got, I remember getting the papers from AJEX after my husband had died already.

RL: Did AJR have meetings in those days. Did you gather together?

FS: I don't remember, I really don't know.

RL: What does it mean, "belonging to AJR"? Or what did that entail, what did that give you?

FS: In a way, it brings my youth back, Jewish people, Jewish refugees like I am.

RL: Did you meet together, this is what I am saying, did you have meetings?

FS: I don't remember, because as you see living for 6 months in LA and coming back, I did not have the normal type of routine, I would call it. Once my daughter moved to Buckinghamshire I also when I eventually moved up to, no, I don't remember, quite honestly, and yet, I am just trying to think.....No I can't remember the details sorry.

RL: The meetings that you are having now, you know you mentioned one in the synagogue in Leeds

FS: You mean the one yesterday.

RL: When did these start, these meetings?

FS: Well that was through the Holocaust Association that meeting. You know Trude Silman is the chairman for the Leeds branch. I assume it must have been through the Sinai Synagogue where I have been going for years and years, you know, even when the boys were younger. Possibly found the contact there. I can't remember always the exact details when and how, you know but I have been going to those meetings. As I said I met this Martin Kappell through the AJR leaflet when I saw his name in Leeds and whether it was he who said "do you go to the meetings?" – I can't remember whether I told him or he told me, I can't remember which way round it was.

RL: How many years have they been taking place?

FS: What the Holocaust Association Meetings? I don't know. They meet normally they meet at what in Leeds is called the centre for old people, the Queenshill Centre, I think it's called for old people, retired people. We meet there. I should think for the last 3 or 4 years, possibly before, I don't know. I can't tell you exactly how long. I lose touch with the years, and I don't count them anymore.

**Tape 3: 56 minutes 31 seconds**

RL: How many people do they get?

FS: What to the meetings? I think it differs on the subject. We have got a room about twice this size and sometimes all the seats are taken. In fact you get, I think most of the members who belong to the association come providing they are not away, you know.

RL: How often do you meet?

FS: It is usually once a month.

RL: Don't get up because you have got the microphone.

FS: Can you see that pink paper there, that is my .....

RL: Before that did you ever, ever gather together with other refugees, before the Leeds group started? Did you go to the Kindertransport re-unions?

FS: Well I have been to the ones in London; I went to the first one. I have even got my satchel somewhere. I have been to every Kindertransport re-union. The first one was in Harrow. That is where I met my old school friend again, Ann Barth

RL: How was that, can you tell me a little bit about that?

FS: Well it is fascinating; to come across people you haven't met for years. I even met there at the time at our table, a girl who I knew in Leipzig, Ann Barth, who lived in Israel. She died about 3 years ago I heard. She lived in this, what's the artist village called in Israel, a well known place where they have a lot of artists, anyway. No, it was fascinating that meeting. The other meeting I went to one 3 years ago, there was one I would say about 3 years ago and I remember sitting at the table and that's where I met somebody, who knew you know I told you about this Rubin Mendzigursky, who was the one who looks after the cemetery, I met somebody who knew him, you know it's so funny at the same table. There were quite a few other people there I knew. I suppose one of the reasons one also like to go to those places, one does meet people one has not seen for years and years. I told you about the friend I met yesterday even. She was a young girl.

RL: Have you developed any close friendships with non-Jewish people here?

FS: Well I used to belong to the U3A, the University of the Third Age. When you get to it you might find it interesting. It first started in Milton Keynes. Now I lived 10 minutes drive from Milton Keynes at the time and I went to the University, the Open University for a lecture and somehow or other, I don't know, came across the U3A there and I joined it was it in Buckingham or in Milton Keynes, in Milton Keynes I think.

RL: I was asking you about non-Jewish friendships but actually this film is about to run out, so we will maybe start a new roll, okay.

**Tape 3: 60 minutes 0 second**

**TAPE 4**

**Tape 4: 0 minute 30 seconds**

RL: This is the interview with Fay Shaw and it is Tape 4. So you were just telling me about this group.

**Tape 4: 0 minute 41 seconds**

FS: Well I came across them in Milton Keynes, The University of the Third Age and I came across them because I went to the Open University and I can't quite remember the exact how it worked but I now belong until recently to the U3A in Ilkley, where I went to various lectures but nowhere there are there any Jewish people. I am the only one and I don't know how many Jewish people there are in Ilkley altogether, hardly any at all. I suppose that is what I miss but there you are, you can't have everything in life, so there. But I have made one or two good friends. Coming back to the U3A. I run a, I used to run a, well I still do to a certain extent, a little scrabble group, we call it Scrabble for Fun to keep our brains working and I have met one particular person there who is a lovely person, we are quite friendly but we don't see each other except for when we play scrabble because she had got family commitments and quite by chance, I have mentioned this before, I work for Oxfam, I worked for Oxfam when I lived in Buckinghamshire. Quite by chance I started to work there, I looked at one of their shop windows and I said "You've got a price" in Buckingham, "You have got a thing there priced at £1.99, it is worth about £30". I said "I know you are supposed to sell bargains but you don't have to give them away!" So I went in and told them and they said "why don't you work for us, you seem to know a lot about these things" Well I did have experience with antiques and old things so that was how I started to work there. Sorry how did I come up with that?

RL: You were telling me the different groups you belonged to, scrabble group and Oxfam, so are you still involved with Oxfam?

FS: Oh yes, I worked last week. The funny part you say about friends, I haven't made many friends from the area as such because I mean I go to my daughter's, I fetch the boys from the station, from school and I get very tired in the evenings. You know I wake early, I like go to bed late, so there isn't any time but I do find that Oxfam, I find it interesting because at Oxfam you have people coming from all over because Otley is known for its charity shops. They come from all over Yorkshire to



buy at the charity shops and when they come in I find it extremely interesting and one person I work with quite by chance, happens to be, I don't know what she calls herself but the local church here, she takes the services and all that when the Vicar isn't about, is away and I have become very friendly with her in as far as she is a very busy lady. She came over the other day and she said she would like to come again. You know, somehow we I suppose we struck a note somehow or other. I don't know how else to put it. So with her I feel at home. I don't know why. And then this other friend who I play scrabble with but she is in Ilkley and she is so busy. I mean once we met, last year on my birthday she said Fay "I will take you out for lunch. It's your birthday", you know but other than that she is so busy.

RL: Is there anything else you are involved in?

FRS: I haven't gone back to the U3A this year because the one class I wanted to join, the one I went to last year was philosophy and that is what I am interested in, but by the time I came to, wanted to join it, they I'm sorry Fay they are full up with an enormous waiting list. I said "okay fine", so I decided what was the point in joining if the one thing I want to do I can't go to anyway. I did used to go last year to a musical group there but the person I, who gave me played the tapes, the records whatever, there were a lot of them were about Church music and I got to the stage when I thought ok I sometimes listen to the programme when they've got nice music on you know or I don't know if you have heard of Aled Jones, Aled Jones that very good singer, when he is on I love to listen to him whatever he sings, you know. But I got to the stage where I did not want to hear any more Church Music so I stopped going to that as well. So that's it.

RL: How do you feel towards Germany?

FS: I can always hear a song the Nazi's used to sing Heute haben wir Deutschland, morgan die ganze welt. Today we have Germany tomorrow we have the rest of the World and I don't think they have changed all that much. I maintain every country has a character. The Germans will, their character will never change. That doesn't mean they are all bad or they are all nasty.

**Tape 4: 6 minutes 17 seconds**

But there is a certain way the Germans are. I mean you know the joke people make when you go to the seaside place, and who is in the first deckchair, the Germans. They have to be there, it is them the important ones. Otherwise there are some very good German people. If it wasn't for my first husband's, they had a man and his wife, who were their servants, you know in the flat, they had a big place. It was they who kept in touch with the Red Cross and sent food parcels to my in laws at concentration camp. You could do that at Theresienstadt. So there are lots of good people there as well. I always remember when I once gave a talk, you know I give these talks at schools and there was one little boy of about 11 and he said Fay "what would you do if you saw a man, met a man of about 60, would you want to hit him or something". I said "well first of all I would have to see and I think I am a fairly good judge of expressions and all that, what sort of person he is and I would ask him, and there is one other thing". He also said what he might have done during the war. I said "Well at 60 or 60 odd he would have been a child and he will have had to join the Hitler Youth, whether he liked it or not, you had to, so you have to wait and see, what

people, how they how they behave and turn out and that is how I feel about the Germans in general. I don't know if that sums it up rightly, but that is how I feel.

RL: Have you ever returned to Germany?

FS: I went when my in-laws came out of Theresienstadt – they were eventually booked into an old Jewish Old Aged Home in Wurzburg and I went to see them with both children until they died, you know. I once, I took my 2 girls to Italy for a holiday and I had booked a tour to, I thought only to Italy, Switzerland but they also took us to see a place in Germany. I went I mean I was on a tour you know. Other than that I don't want to go back.

RL: How did you feel when you went back to see?

FS: My in-laws. Well I looked behind me all the time. I didn't trust the Germans. I think that is the sort of feeling, that's exactly how I feel, I can't trust them even now. I don't want to go back. We spoke yesterday on this discussion we had you know. There was one of the groups that were talking about this, "would you return to Germany" and I said "no. I don't even, what do". It was "do you want to go back to where you lived or were born?" I said "What do I want to go back to Leipzig for, there is nobody alive there who was close to me, they have all been killed, my family has been killed, lots of their friends also. What am I going back for? I can't even say I want to visit graves, I haven't any to visit there". No I don't want to go to Germany. There are other nicer places to see where I feel more at peace and at home. I like Portugal very much, I find that. And of course anti-Semitism you get all over the world, especially these days.

RL: How, when did you start giving talks to schools, you mentioned giving talks?

FS: Well the Landau papers, have you heard of it? If you take the booklet you will read it. I was reading a paper. The local evening paper, there was a picture of 3 or 4 people sitting on a bench. The next day it said, if there is anybody in Otley, who is either from Berlin or knows about Berlin or that, we would be obliged if they or we would be delighted or whatever if they got in touch with us because we are thinking of writing an operetta between the 1930's until the war. How the relationships were between Jewish and non-Jewish friends. So I phoned Rachel Hertzberg, have you heard of her? I phoned her and I said to her "I am not from Berlin but my first husband came from Berlin and I have a little bit of knowledge and I said I suppose the same would be in Berlin as in Leipzig. I mean Leipzig was a large, is a large city, you know, so we got in touch and she came over here and she took loads of photos and then they had arranged that the Landau papers, when they had finished writing the operetta. She was what do you call, librettist and what's his name Sam Pachter, he wrote the music, who by the way is a very well known, has a lot to do with the Leeds Opera Company and all those. He has taught at Leeds University using all that, he is a very nice person. Oh and the funny part was, I must mention this, when I saw the name Sam Pachter. I said "Pachter, I knew

**Tape 4: 11 minutes 58 seconds**

Pachter's in Leipzig". It was so funny and you know, I had this one girlfriend who I met at the first re-union, her sister married somebody called Pachter from Leipzig, I

mean it is such a small world isn't it, anyway. Sorry what was the exact question you asked me?

RL: I am just trying to remember. I asked you about talking in schools

FS: Oh yes, yes. She is the one who started, who took the photos of all the people who are in the booklet when you have a look, all these Jewish people, they are all from Berlin except me and to hear their background and their stories. I do not know whether she exactly or whether Trude Silman or who started the actual circle of it, I don't know or whether John Chillag, what's his name, Chillag, that's his name, whether he started it but all I know I was approached one day, "would I to come to", I think the first one was "Shakespeare School in Leeds and give a talk "and I was in the papers afterwards, speaking to refugees in general about the holocaust and that is how it started and since then I have been to Morley School and I was called back again last year and 4 times I have spoken up till now and I have just been warned, excuse me, that when the school starts up, I will soon be asked again.

RL: And how did you find it went?

FS: The kids are delightful but it is very funny, out of a class, there is always usually two classes, you know, 40 – 50 children. There are about ten or twelve who ask "can I know this and can I know that?" and they are really interested, most of them but some in particular and they are all, they are fascinated, when I went the second time to Morley school, when I arrived, since then that booklet had come out, which has been sent to every school in Leeds. It will tell you on the index there. And the classes must have just finished and there were about forty girls coming over to me and hugging me, "Fay, Fay, it is lovely to see you, we are so pleased to see you, we enjoyed your talk and you know, so obviously they looked forward to it. They would not have called me back if they had not though it was and you know children should know about these things. It is one way of them learning history.

RL: How old are the children?

FS They are 10 to 11 till the end of the primary before they start the next.

RL: Are there a group of people who go round the schools?

FS: Yes, John Chillag goes as well, and I think, I don't know if Trude Silman herself goes. There are three or four of us, who did go, I don't know if they still go. Heinz Skyte used to go but I think his wife has not been well enough so I don't know who goes now to be quite honest.

RL: Have you done any other interviews besides this one? Have you done your life story before?

FS: Yes, I don't know about my whole life story. Oh I can't get up, can I? It's over there. Daniel, oh what's his name from the Leeds local radio station has been interviewing various people. He has interviewed Muschi, Thea and I met him at a dinner in Leeds and he said can he come and see me and he want to take a few pictures and you know record my life story and bits and pieces and I remember saying

to him “what time are you coming”, well such and such a time. I said “Well how long is it going to take”. He said “10 minutes”. Well he was here an hour and a half, so that was that!

RL: Did that go out on the local radio programme?

FS: Well no, they are for the archives and it is going into the, it's part of the, I don't know if they call them history lessons and things that children will be taught or shown over the next few years, so I suppose you would call that archives. Yes that's got all the details over there. When we finish this, I will show you what I am talking about. Anybody else? Not about my life. Once in America but that is not quite the same thing, in Los Angeles, we had an evening also a Refugees meeting. I can't quite remember what they called it. I belonged to that group over

**Tape 4: 17 minutes 14 seconds**

there as well in Los Angeles when I used to go there all the time and we had a meeting and I remember sitting in a room and next to me, as it happens, was a Los Angeles reporter and he asked me, “could I ask a few things about your background”. Well I told him where I came from and all this and that. That was that. The next morning at 9.00 o'clock in the morning the phone goes. “Fella, there is only one Fella Mendzsigursky. This is Ursel Gross”, a school friend of mine, so that was you know, “the things you said about your life, I know what you said, I remember all these bits and pieces”, so that's, I have got an extra out of that from the Los Angeles Times as well. I have had some funny things happening to me.

RL: Are there any other stories or parts of your life that we have not touched on that you would like to tell me about?

FS: I mean things that are important to me might be utterly boring to somebody else. I don't know. Nothing much which would be of general interest, if you know what I mean, No I can't think of anything else.

RL: Have you got any kind of message that you would like to finish with?

FS: Well all I know is that when I told you I knew Anne Frank's, would have been her Step Sister. Did I mention that by the way. I told you that when I had my wedding breakfast, Eva Schloss, her mother married Otto Frank, Why am I telling you all this now?

RL: I asked if you had any message

FS: Oh yes, we had in York about 3 years ago, we had an Anne Frank exhibition with all the background and as my friend Rosie Shatzberger lives near York anyway she said “Fay would you come and volunteer and show the pupils round it”. It was mainly for schools, you know and I did and at the end I was interviewed by York BBC or whatever they call themselves and at the end I told them, you know they asked me various questions, I have got the tape for that, and at the end they said “have you got any message”, or “what have you got to say”, I said “I am sorry to say but we never seem to learn”. And that is how I feel. We don't seem to learn we human beings, not just Jewish, I mean just Jewish people, I mean human beings from all over

the World. We don't learn from our mistakes we go and do the same stupid things again, I don't know including me. That's it I suppose. That's it

RL: Thank you very much

FS: Don't thank me; it is somehow a relief in one way to talk about these things because you know people in general I don't say much about these things, so, anyway.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

FS: This is my father Peisach Mendzigursky. It was taken about 1938 and it is, these are a passport but it is called a Fremdenpass which means that it is not a German one. It was taken in about 1938 in Leipzig.

This is a photo of my mother taken about 1922 to 23 at her finishing school at Heilbronn Neckar, Germany. Her name Frieda at the time, at the time it was Frieda Weiner.

This is me taken when I was a year old, Fella Mendzigursky with my favourite doll. In Leipzig about 1922, 1923, sorry I should have said taken 1925

This is a picture of myself on the right, my younger sister Margot on the left and Chaya a friend of ours. With whom we used to go to Nuremberg to visit my grandmother. What date was it? It would have been about 1936 something like that.

This is my Kinderausweis, which is like a, sort of travel visa, which I brought over the England. It was taken on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1938 or 39 in Leipzig. We had to have that to be able to leave the country.

### **Tape 4: 23 minutes 24 seconds**

This is a letter we wrote through the Red Cross to my mother, who was still in Leipzig with my little sister. We were saying on it that we were worried about her, why hasn't she written to us and on the back she wrote back saying why are you not writing to us? We are worried about you and it was in August 19<sup>th</sup> 1940 when we sent that, so I know she was still alive then in Leipzig.

This is reverse of the letter that my mother sent back to me in 1941.

This is a picture of Young Austria, I am the third on the left and it was taken roughly about 1941/42 in Manchester.

This is taken in front of Willesden Green Register Office where I was married in 1948 on the right hand side was my best man Rudi Netzer, then myself, then my late husband Max Heinz Nathan. The other two people have died a long time ago.

This was taken at a surprise birthday party in 1994 which my daughters made for me. My daughter on the right is Judy and I am in the centre and on the left is Jackie and at the back is my son in law Michael Elam. It was taken in London.

This is a photo of my three grandchildren taken in Leeds about 1996. In the middle at the back is the older one that's Samuel Max after his grandfather Max. On the right is Joshua and on the left is Ben.

**Tape 4: 26 minutes 27 seconds**