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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	191

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Danson
<b>Forename:</b>	Ruth
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	17 September 1924
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Breslau, Germany

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	20 September 2016
<b>Location of Interview:</b>	London
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	2 hours 54 minutes



## REFUGEE VOICES

**Interview No.** RV191  
**NAME:** Ruth Danson  
**DATE:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
**LOCATION:** London, UK  
**INTERVIEWER:** Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

**[Part One]**

**[0:00:00]**

*[Brief discussion before interview begins: Yes, we've become more- Since we did the interview that interview was still on mini DV tapes, you know?]*

*Today's the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 and we are conducting an interview with Mrs. Ruth Danson. And we are in London. Can you tell me your name please?*

Ruth Danson.

*And when were you born?*

I was born on the 20-17<sup>th</sup> September 1924.

*And where were you born?*

In Breslau [Wroclaw, Poland].

*And what was your maiden name, please?*

Oh- Boronow...

*Boronow?*

Boronow. Yes.

*OK. Ruth, thank you very much for having agreed to be interviewed for the Refugee Voices Archive. Can you please tell me a little bit about your family background?*

My family background? Well, I mean we were- I had a brother... and- who I loved very much and he's four years older. And we lived in Breslau. My father was a dentist. And we had a very pleasant time there in Breslau. And... Klaus was playing with me with his animals on the balcony. We had a fine time there and showed me all that sort of thing... a little, little ... crabs running around and fish he had and all sorts of things.

*Real animals?*

Yes. Yes, my father was...there was- what do you call them, in German? I can't know the German now, the English now... they run... with a long tail...?

*Eichhörnchen?*

*Eichhörnchen?* Yes. What is that in English? I'm...

*Squirrels.*

Squirrels, of course! Yes, my father kept those there. He, he was quite good with rearing them. And I was thrilled about it. And... he wanted me to like animals, because we also had a dog. But... my parents were amicably divorced by then, and... so we lived in Kleinburg [Borek, suburb of Wroclaw] which was- I could cycle there quite easily. And my brother and I were there every weekend together with one of the parents. And the other weekend, either of the parents had either of us, so that we always... got on, you know, always knew what we were doing together and so on. So that was very, very nice. Can't think of anything in detail now.

**[0:02:58]**

*Tell me a bit about your parents. How did they meet, or- do you know?*

My parents? I don't know how they met. No.

*When did they get married? Do you...?*

Did I ever find out when they married? I can't really answer these questions.

*And did you- did you know your grandparents at all?*

Very – only very little. My grandmother on my mother's side. That's all. I once saw her in an old age home. That's all. Yes.

*And how old were you when they got divorced?*

Can't remember... quite young, still... Ten or twelve... something like that. I can't remember the dates.

*Don't worry about it. And so, you said so your father had a different- you lived in a different place?*

Oh yes.

*So where did your father live and where did...?*

He stayed- he had a practice. He was a dentist and he practiced in Gartenstraße. And that was a very large flat. And that's where we originally were growing up. And... what was the question again?

*Where they lived... Whether it was two separate places?*

Yes, two separate places. In Kleinburgstraße we lived... when my- when my parents divorced.

*But first you were in the Gartenstrasse?*

Yes.

*And you said the practice- was it in the flat?*

**[0:04:30]**

It was in flat. And the dining room- there was a Biedermeier room for a waiting room. And there was- at the side of the house there was the cook. And she had the room there. And they all- it was just a huge big, great big flat.

*And do you remember patients coming to the flat?*

Yes. I had to open- I was given the job of opening the doors later on when there was- when the Germans didn't allow Jewish... assistants. Actually, he called me to help him at the- at the... place you know when, when, when he was working on a patient. And let them in and then take them- take over certain duties like cleaning the instruments and so on. And that was- I felt very grown-up by then.

*And the animals, where were they kept? In that flat, or...?*

Yes, yes there was a big dog of- who was so- so old, we had to take him down in a- in a basket to go for a little walk occasionally. Because we had no garden in the gar- funny it was called Gartenstraße, but there was no garden there at all. Whereas when they divorced, when I was younger, we had a very nice little flat, just a three-bedroom flat, Mum and I. All around very, very nice. And everything was there. Piano of course that had to be there too, because she was a music teacher - a piano teacher mainly. And I was very keen on sports, so they fixed some... hooks on the- on one of the- professionally fixed - I didn't fall down, but I had to do my exercises in -on these- I don't know what they're called- rings, I think.

*Aha, yes?*

**[0:06:29]**

So, you would climb and pull- and that was my delight. And tennis also - there was a tennis court... Not in the fl- not in the garden but across the road there was the nearest tennis court. Or ice skating in the winter... if you- so then we made our- more friends. I made more friends in, in that part when went to school - still. Until then one day it was time that Hitler came to - to Germany. And I saw- I was crossing the road. And I saw- I was sort of feeling, "Oh I can't go further here, he's on his way." And everybody's doing the 'Heil Hitler'. So, I decided rather than being, you know, look badly- down upon- I, I- I lifted my right arm. And he- he drove past in an open car. And as I looked to my right, I was standing on the opposite side - I could see the burning of the synagogue. But I didn't know that yet. I just saw the flames and I

saw some smoke and then I thought, “Well, as soon as he's gone, I'd better go across the road.” It was only about three or four minutes- five minutes at the most. Because I had to warn the neighbours, the friends who lived where I've just been, to tell them that my father has been taken by the Nazis and they should be aware of it. Do whatever they have to. And also, we- my mother and I then were- at that time, one was careful what one said on the... telephone without putting a cushion on it. Well, you know, we talked about it but we put a cushion on so that nobody else could hear what we were saying.

**[0:08:29]**

*That was when you talked on the telephone?*

That's just what I was told to do and I did it. I didn't have time to think about it much. We just accepted everything that happened. I wasn't allowed out after dark...te-ta, te-ta. And so eventually my mother must have tried to save me- and my father both- to save me from all... the details that's- I wasn't included much. And I was told “One of these days” I was coming and- “Is anything happening with New York?” “We're going to America, I hear.” “Not yet.” “No, Uncle hasn't yet sent the affidavit.” But one day I came out of school and there it was. She said, “We've got the affidavit now; we can pack and go.” So, we had to take silver... That was another rule. The Jews were not allowed to have... fork and knife and anything made of silver that fitted into a basket - huge basket that was. And we both carried that to the police station. It was very bad. We felt dreadful. But no, we didn't have any nasty remarks on the way. So, we were without the silver. So what? And one can do with- you know, one can eat... as long as one gets one's life. So then, as my mother lived alone with me. She had a lot of friends also in the house. And they came up and they made lists - these famous lists that one had - to leave there and, and, and make sure every little thing was accounted for. Or how many... jackets you had... shoes... Whatever concerns a person needs to live reasonably well. And the price we had to give which we used our money up to buy- to buy what we could that lasts the longest, you know? So, all that was done by these grown-ups while I was still meant to have my sleep which was- probably I listened more than they thought.

**[0:10:39]**

*Yeah...*

And that's how the situation- the atmosphere was like that - friendly. Nothing... But just a job to do! They did it. They had to do it too. Because by and by everybody left of our friends. Is that about it? What you wanted to know?

*Yeah. Let's just go a little bit back, then we'll come back to that time.*

Yes.

*Can you just describe Breslau for us a little bit? What your memories are- The neighbourhood where you grew up? What was it like?*

Well, I personally can remember the South- the Südpark is a very famous place in Breslau now. That was my favourite. And yes, well, we went there a lot and it was green and tennis Platz [tennis court] was there. And... my brother was still alive which was- still there and he had his- was with his girlfriend. And so, I remember, "*Juppi, Juppi, fall' nicht ins Wasser!*" [laughing] Somebody said to... because he was playing around, you know. So - little things.

*Why 'Juppi'?*

Which one?

*'Juppi'?*

They called him Juppi.

*But his name was?*

Klaus. Yeah.

Aha...

*"Juppi, Juppi, fall' nicht ins Wasser!"* Cause I think he was in a little boat. They had little boats they...

*Aha, with the girlfriend.*



Yeah. These...these people there. And, and *Jahrhunderthalle* [events hall in 1913 centenary exhibition to commemorate the Napoleonic wars of liberation]- is that a name that is familiar to you? The *Jahrhunderthalle*?

*Mn-hnn...*

That was built during my lifetime there. It was- it was a very beautiful building. But otherwise, it was just like Hampstead a little bit actually.

*Mn-hn?*

But not as nice.

*Yeah.*

Not as nice...

*What about- did you ever go to synagogue?*

**[0:12:31]**

Very seldom. I, we didn't actually. We went- my grandmother was a member, so my mother took me once along and I wanted to be there with her. ...Just... funny memories...I was very young. And I had to squeeze in with her on that one seat that belonged to her mother... originally. And... I said, "Oh, I wish I was grown up and I would have a seat to myself." That's all- I was a bit... so...

*It must have been on the High Holiday when there was reserved seating...*

It probably must have been, yes.

*There were not enough seats!*

Yes- and I wasn't brought up- we weren't kosher. And people who ate kosher. And well we just were brought up to be... decent citizens I suppose. And that's all. But synagogues- until that time when I heard that that night- was finished- the synagogue had been burnt down.

*Yeah, but you didn't go. So, you were quite... assimilated.*

Yes.

*What about- what- what about- can you remember anything about your school... and your friends?*

Friends? What, in Breslau?

Yes...

I wasn't very interested in school quite frankly. We- we had friends with whom I went to school but I didn't make much of it. That was why my parents- and, you know I knew... quite a lot of people in Breslau. ...I forget the name now – I'm sorry. ...Anita...

*Lasker-Wallfisch?*

Anita Lasker, who was- who has married Wallfisch now. And of course, she was- during- that is a family I visited with my mother because they had music, the grown-ups. And she already had-she played already the... cello. And she's very famous now for having written her own book about her life and what she has had to go through... with the Nazis. And I've got somewhere in my home a photograph of that room where we invited- we were invited for coffee or tea and sat and played on the floor. Some silly old game - I don't know, but these were the kind of people we... we were together with. And...

*So, music was an important part of your life?*

**[0:15:19]**

Always music. My mother was a teacher- music teacher. And she even taught me- tried to teach me a bit. And yes, and I tried- we had a maid in this little three bedroom- three room flat. And when Mum went out, I said, "Come on I'll teach you music." She wanted to know so I sat down with her. It was nice, you know, we had this piano there and everybody had a go.

*And where did you mother teach? You said she was a music- did she have private pupils, or...?*

That was all beginning- private, yes. Before we div- they divorced - I remember now - there was- my grandmother was still alive. My father- my mother's mother. And we- we had a little play for him with music. And it was Ros- all about the ... *Rose* - What do you call that? Do you know it? '*Röslein rot, Röslein auf der Heide...*'? [poem bei Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and song by Franz Schubert]

*Yes, I do know it. Yeah...*

That is the one I played with him. And I was *das Röslein, das Röslein 'und Knabe sprach: "Ich breche dich..."* "Ich habe das jetzt vergessen im Moment, aber das- das war fantastisch. [I was the rose and the boy spoke: „I am going to pick you..." I have forgotten [the rest], but it was fantastic.]

*Did you sing or who- who played? Your brother, or...?*

No... We acted and Mum played. And that room was open from the dining room to the *Biedermeierzimmer* where we- where we were acting. And that was fantastic, yeah. Because the staff used to be- we called it '*Einbescherung*' [antiquated word for the distribution of presents at Christmas] when they used to get their presents for Christmas. That we did - yeah.

*Tell us a little bit about that. What happened – at Christmas?*

**[0:17:10]**

Well on Christmas there were tables laid out for the staff - also the dental staff, not just Ida. Ida was the cook. She was lovely. Yeah. Well... that is... That's because it was so- so she- it was like a theatre really you know because it was so big. All the doors were opened from one room to the other so they - they could watch it from- in comfort. We had a wonderful sofa. And we were coming near the piano and playing, and so on...

*And the staff got presents?*

Yes. They got presents.

*And what other music- What did your mother play? Do you remember?... What songs what did you sing, or...?*

Not anymore. I don't- I didn't think about that anymore. It was just anything and we were taken to theatre. And, and opposite there was a theatre. We went there often, and I have forgotten many words but I can- I can see myself going down... and with the others and... I know Alice Herz-Sommer is somebody you've heard of- don't you...?

*Yes.*

She's very famous now.

*Yes.*

She was introduced to me there because she was- my father and she were great friends as well... So...

*In Breslau?*

Yeah.

*But how did she- she is from- she is from Prague...*

Yeah. But they went to Prague to visit and they came to visit- she came to visit. And once he had arranged a... concert for her. He had booked a- my father he booked the hall and she played there. But I, I was very young still. So eventually when I came- became grown up and heard about her, that she was in Ausch- was it? Auschwitz, wasn't it?

*Yes, she was in Terezin.*

Terezin, yeah. And Raphi was- was very well known to me, her son. As a matter of fact, he came to practice in my house where I live now in Ridge Hill in London.

*Did he?*

Yeah. Came to practice 'cause there was nowhere- during the war it must have been – yeah.

**[0:19:38]**

*So, what sort of friends did your parents have in Breslau? What circles- who did they mix with?*

Well... I can't answer that...what did they mix with? Very nice, professional people - all sorts. Doctors or... And if he- he always had someone to recommend where I could go with this or that dis...

*I mean was it Jewish or not Jewish? Was at all mixed...?*

I don't think that made any difference to us. Human beings! ... That's the thing. Behave decently. Don't- don't- you know, that's how we were educated. If we spoke a lie, we were reprimanded; for good work, we got a little bit of pocket money. But what did he...? He went his own way. He went- actually I can't tell you much about that what he did. He had his friends. He visited me at- at my mother's for my birthday - always very nice. Came with some presents.

*And did your brother stay with your father and you stayed with your mother?*

Yes. But as I said it was- every weekend was- changed over. ...Then at the weekend - I've told you – either comes to me or we both go together. Or he's sep- or we also go alone.

*But it was- you were happy with this arrangement?*

Oh, yes. It was lovely. We had picnics and outings when it was with Mum. She even learned to bicycle, to cycle, so that we could get there quicker. It was very pleasant.

**[0:21:34]**

*And when did things change? When, in your memory, when- when did things...?*

Well, the worst thing was when Klaus decided he was old enough to study... and he wanted to study hotel business. So, he went to Nice – and that was it. I cried all- most of the time. And when we rang him up at Christmas I said- I said to my father - from my father's telephone - I said, “Oh, it's so far away.” It's so stupid, I laugh when I remember - being completely in tears because we spoke to Klaus on the telephone.

*Were you very close to him?*

Terribly! Yes, yes. I still- till, till England and every- every step of the way.

*And when did he- when did he go to Nice? When? At what point did he go to Nice to study?*

I don't know the exact age when he was but must have been in a book somewhere written down- the dates. I can't tell it to you off-hand, now.

*No... But...*

He- we went to London to visit a family we knew. She took him to- was there something called [Rehborn]? Yeah?

*Yeah...*

She had something to do with it, to try and advise him which way to go. But in the end, he found his own way and he became- I can't talk about it because I have to look it up.

*OK. But in your own life, when did- you said-when did you- you said you saw Hitler coming, but before that...*

That's a long time before.

*When did things change? I mean that you- for the – for you? For your family?*

Gradually we were- we had to emigrate, we had to emigrate. We couldn't stay in Engl- in Germany. The hatred there and the fights one could see as you drove along. No. We all had to be able to get out! Somewhere. It was a very serious time. And sad to say goodbye to your friends and never see them again mostly. Sometimes if you go to America of course one eventually met each other again but...

*But in school. Did you experience any persecution in school? Do you remember?*

**[0:24:10]**

Nothing in school itself, no. No, I didn't. I was very lucky because I had very small way to go to walk or was in the house straightaway again.

*So, tell us, what do you remember about Kristallnacht? Do you remember Kristallnacht in Breslau?*

Well, that for me is only as I was in the south. I only saw that one night – November- when it was burning. When the synagogue burned.

*And that's when you saw Hitler? Was that...?*

No, I didn't see Hitler.

*Oh...*

I, I was clearing myself away with- it was in, in the south. I didn't see anybody there. Hitler- I saw when before- when he drove in, in, in Breslau. When he visited Breslau.

*I see. Not at the same time- a different...?*

Yeah. Different time, yeah.

*And how- were you scared? What was- do you remember your feeling?*

We just took it as it comes. I mean, what can you do? Gradually it sinks in that you have to leave here.

*But you must have con...*

But I was quite keen on getting out because it is an adventure for a young girl, isn't it?

*Yes.*

And I was keen to help wherever I could, practically.

*But you described- your family was quite assimilated. So how did they react suddenly to being... you know, called 'Jewish' or... you know – how...?*

Well, we had to put up with it; you couldn't spit them in the face, could you? You couldn't tell them to shut up or something. You had to just ignore it and be glad you weren't it over the head ... I think so anyway. I didn't go out so often. I wasn't supposed to go out in the evening but I once or twice- we did do. Yeah.

*And what about- you said your father couldn't employ any more people to work in the practice...*

Yeah.

*So- did he continue to have Jewish patients, or what happened to his practice?*

Well eventually he had to leave too. It was... And eventually he did.

*Yeah...*

**[0:26:20]**

*So, what about Kristallnacht? Just to come back....*

It came and it went. It was terrible! I didn't see them burn the books that I saw in- in films.

You tried to keep away from any such stuff if you don't have to.

*And what happened to your father at Kristall- in Kristallnacht?*

He was interned. He, he was taken away. And that is when I was told to run across and warn these people. It, it wasn't only one night; it was over a period... In my case, anyway.

*Yeah.*

It didn't change anything in my case.

*Yeah. And where did they take your father?*

To... What was it called? ...Buchenwald. But he didn't stay long. I think I said that, didn't I? It was only a month.

*And did you-?*

And then he came home and was told to be there. I have a card still from him – from Buchenwald. And to be there and help a bit because his cook was about to leave then. So, I- he wasn't very well physically, so I had to massage his feet. I was in his bedroom and actually brought another colleague or friend - befriended person with him and he was lying- when I



came in, he was lying in the bed next to him. And they were still the two beds together from when they were married, you know? So, I had to bring them this and that - what they needed - to be there... for what was required. It was sad – very sad. But eventually...even that got better after about a month, I think... Or so. So that we could all get ready for...

*For the emigration?*

For the emigration which was in... was it January? I wrote it down.

1939.

1939. Yes, I told you.

*But how- what did he- did he talk about Buchenwald? Did he tell you anything or did he...?*

...I heard things from- no, they didn't like to talk about it. I heard things around- from other people what was done was pretty cruel. Some of the family- I mean my cousin's father was- was also taken and- it was very unpleasant, everything. It's- it's been talked about enough, all that stuff.

*And did he- after his imprisonment, did he say, "We have to leave now..." or when- when did it become... sort of very clear that...?*

Yeah. Everybody took it by then, one thing, one day you know who you are. You do this, you do that and we're trying to get out. We waited. I came home still from school sometimes as I told you, and said, "Any visa? Any affidavit from America yet?" No. No. So, one day it was there. So, my father also had one day. So...

**[0:29:58]**

*What did they try? Do you remember, did they try- what were their different destinations and- in America? Did they have some relatives in America?*

My mother had a brother in America. My father had a... as well. They were all over the place, but... He didn't want to go further. He was glad to get here and stay in England.

*Why?*

Oh, because he liked – he liked- he had friends here... as well. But in the end, we all were in England and we did the same thing, you know. We had- he went in Gartenstraße and I was in Kleinburg; it was similar.

*And tell us a little bit about the preparation for the emigration. You said you had to make lists. You had to... what happened?*

Didn't I say, to you?

*Just a- tell us just a little bit more.*

Yes. I wasn't much involved with that because again, my mother did that with her friends. But when I saw the lists, they were- you can see them then how many clothes one is allowed and one must pay for that and that... They let you through; only then they let you through. I don't know more about it.

*And what did you personally take? Do you remember what you took on your journey?*

Nothing special. Just what one needs... ..I didn't have an instrument like my other... friend I mentioned. Can't pack a piano on your back either so... you just go.

*And did you still go to school after Kristallnacht or you were mostly at home?*

**[0:31:54]**

Yeah, mostly at home.

*So, between Kristallnacht and emigration was- you stayed at home?*

Yes, yes. Of course, I had to stay at home. My Mum was trying to find ways- queuing up everywhere to try and find... a way out. And once she said, "You must stay here because somebody might be coming. Show them this and that furniture, and..." It becomes second nature you know when you go through such a quite- big change.

*Yeah.*

We got in alright. We were very lucky and being able to go to boarding school in England... and everything fell into place, gradually.

*So, tell me a little bit about your departure. What happened when you had to leave?*

He sur- my father surprised my mother and myself... at the Hauptbahnhof [main station] in Breslau and gave me a watch as a present to leave. And I still have that watch. And we- we said goodbye at- in Breslau. And as I said, we went- Hamburg... Berlin first of all, a few days later. And when I arrived finally in London he was there. My father was there to greet us because he was able to fly. I think I told you that.

*Not yet. Not on tape.*

Oh- Yes.

*So, he flew?*

He flew as a surprise he was at... at- at the station in London to pick up- to, to greet us again. How come? I didn't realise.

*You didn't know he was coming?*

No, it was a surprise.

*Yeah. But you also didn't know that at the Hauptbahnhof? You thought you were travelling with your mother?*

Mnn.

*And where was your brother at that time? Was he already...?*

**[0:34:05]**

He had already gone. He wasn't in Breslau.

*Was he in France at the time?*

Mn-hnn.

*And what happened to the flat? Did you just close the door, or what...?*

Goodbye! I was keen to get out! Everybody was.

*You wanted to...*

Well, it had two sides to it, some people took it badly; I wasn't that bothered. I was glad to see something new. Came on that ship then.

*Tell us about the ship...*

Yeah...

*...Your journey.*

Well, that was... What was it called? Hmm?

*Ruth's daughter, Jacqueline: The SS Manhattan.*

Hmm?

*Jacqueline: SS Manhattan, of the United States Line.*

SS Manhattan of the United States Line.

*Yeah?*

So that went on further to the United States.

*And can you describe the ship? And where- where...?*

Oh, it was fantastic: huge, huge, huge! And I turned around going up the stairs and I must say I was a bit rude, but I was so fed up with Germany by then and I ...[whispering]... spit.

*Did you spit?*

I said, "Goodbye. Finished."

*When you walked onto the ship?*

As I walked up... pulled myself up - everybody in a queue - and did that naughty thing.

*Quite understandable...*

Better that way, I must admit. To lose it and to get a new life probably. And we found it was wonderful. I was full- I wrote a lot of stuff about it on a- on a letter to my father as I say who was still in Breslau at that time for a few days. Can you hear?

*We'll look- we'll hear it later. So, you had enough time to write on the ship?*

**[0:36:05]**

Oh, yes- we were there- First of all I was delighted, and we had- we went to look at our cabin. We had our own, Mummy and I - just the two of us. We knew somebody else in- on the ship who we phoned - a phone in the cabin. It was luxury!

*Who else was on...?*

Only my Mum and I and- and she had a friend who -she travelled also on her own. And we made an arrangement to meet tomorrow in breakfast. And we didn't know what was coming. But it was an enormous ship. So, I said to my Mum, "Ok here. Stay here. You stay here and I'm going around looking at the ship." And she was tired obviously. More tired than I. And I went all around. There were dance floors. There were people dancing. It hadn't taken off yet, you know? It was still standing there. And, and... Great big- and the film- and a theatre for films! I sat myself down and I saw a film there - in the English. I couldn't understand a bit...

*What film? What was it?*

I, I – I- did I, did I write it down, the film? ...Anyway, it was in English or an American...But it was a film which was running there. And then, we hadn't been able to see cinemas anymore for a long, long time. We were not allowed to see them in- in Germany...as Jews. Yeah- So then I traipsed around and I thought, "I hope I find my way back to my cabin again." And told Mummy all - or my mother - all about it. I was so... grateful. Imagine! It was like an adventure for me! Huge ship!

*Yeah...*

So eventually it took off. And I stood there and I was- I must say, it was very windy. And I enjoyed that too. And then came Ber- Berlin... – or was that already?

*No, tell us, before...*

Before...

*Were you- did you spend some time in Berlin?*

**[0:38:21]**

Yes, we had to go- Yeah, but I mean I'm now in the ship. I must have been arriving ...Can you tell me where...? Which...?

*In 1939...*

The...the place where I arrived...

*Southampton?*

Yeah... Yeah, in Southampton. I think I saw the white cliffs of Dover. May that be? As we arrived? Or maybe I've imagined- it's been mentioned and I've seen it since. I don't know, but it impressed me enormously, the...the - the coastline. Yeah, we arrived, and as a surprise my father stood there in Southampton again, to pick us up and say hello. And that was a miracle for me; how did he suddenly make it, you know?

*And did he manage- And he received your letters as well, in between?*

Yeah, must have done because I've got them. Yeah.

*So, he didn't have much time in between to...*

No. He was- as I said, we were separate and yet we were together. It's so hard to explain to you.

*Yes.*

Yes.

*Why did...?*

Because my father and mother were amicably- they discussed things reasonably so that the children shouldn't suffer, you know?

*Yeah...*

Which I appreciate so much.

*They managed. They got on.*

**[0:39:45]**

Yeah.

*But why did they separate? Why... was that?*

I don't want to know... some sort of rubbish. I don't know and we didn't talk about that; it was just a fact.

*Yeah. And why did your father not go on the boat with you?*

Well, he wasn't ready. Didn't I say? He wasn't ready with furniture and getting ready with his stuff in- in the flat in Gartenstraße. That's always the same.

*Yeah...*

Yeah.

*So, he needed a little more time...*

So, he as soon as he had the news that he could get away, of course he came away. And then he settled himself with his- he had friends in Stanmore. So, he... he knew and with them, who he introduced me to those people again. They had children my age, so I had good friends there - two boys and a girl. And also, musical. We had musical evenings there. Now that I talk about it, I remember. Lotte Kalischer was there too. Also, a friend of theirs that turned up later on in my boarding school. It was all one- one line, with it... eventually meeting up, you see.

*Yeah. Let's just go a little bit about- before you went on the boat you went to Berlin...*

Yeah...

*What did you do in Berlin... just before?*

**[0:41:06]**

Well, my mother knew... it was just another friend of my mother's... whom she visited. And she took us around. Alise was her name and she was greatly... She was very close to us, apparently. I made friends with her easily because she had a great big dog and I was amazed at that dog. She took him for a walk with us. And I felt good; I was walking in Berlin with a dog, with a... friendly surroundings. And just got- as I've said before about Berlin.

*Was it different? I mean to come from Breslau to Berlin...? What...?*

Well... big place... Yeah.

*You didn't tell us the name of your dog. What was it? Did it have a name?*

...I knew it once but... I couldn't- I couldn't remember it now.

*Not important – just speaking of dogs...*

I know it had two syllables. That was da-da... [laughing] I don't know anymore. No.

*But anyway, your friend- your mother's friend also a dog.*

Yes.

*In Berlin.*

Yeah. I'm sorry I'm so stupid that I don't remember it.

*Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it. So, it was- you had a nice time in Berlin?*

We had a very nice time. She- she was- I found a letter that I had written to her. And I said, "Alise is... very... *ist rührend zu uns* very ... is very, very kind to us." Yeah. Which is nice. It's in my handwriting written down. I think I gave it to you... Possibly.

*We haven't seen it yet. Did you keep a diary at all? Did you...? No, but you wrote a lot –*

Yeah...



*...letters.*

One of the diaries that I did actually then- but my- one of- once I had arrived in England, one of the suitcases got lost. And that was where the diaries were in. That got lost on the train in – in England one way.

*And what were your first impressions of arriving...in England?*

**[0:43:23]**

The first impression still was that we met with a friend of my Mum's sitting down to meet there when Father had gone. And coffee and cake to have something to eat with them. And my mother gets in the tube train and says, "Oh my God! My- my jack- my- I've left my coat hanging there!" It must have been a fur coat- I doubt- a winter coat- a frock coat. So off we went back again. And I thought, "Well, she's had it; we'll never find it." Sure, it was still hanging there! ...'Wouldn't happen today.

*Yeah.*

I was so impressed by that. [laughs] It's silly little things I remember.

*Yeah. What else? What else do you remember from your arrival?*

Well... So, we went... Quite frankly, that I can't remember - at all.

*But where did you go? Where did you stay?*

Well for- for a few days I still stayed in London. We had some- these people had booked a room for Mum and me. And that happened to be in Golders Green by chance. And there is one photo in existence where my mother stands also with my brother together, near there. Just before he- before the war, that was done. Just as he- to welcome us in London, he came over for a couple of days. I wish he had stayed and not gone back to France, we all wished. Because then he had a very difficult time. Was it- what do you call that walk that is...? That he did to... to...?

**[0:45:17]**

*Across the Pyrenees?*

Across the Pyrenees he walked... to try and get to safety.

*To escape... Yeah.*

*Jacqueline: Chemin de Liberté.*

*Chemin de Liberté.* Correct, yeah.

*He crossed from France to Spain?*

That's right.

*So, he could have stayed then... in England? You said he came to England...?*

He- he surprised me. Completely again, another surprise. I was by then working? Wasn't that right? Am I jumping? When I worked for Mrs. Heinitz- when I was doing dressmaking?

*That's a bit later. Let's just stop for a second.*

Yeah.

**[audio break]**

When- where were we? When...?

*About your brother and his visit.*

Yeah. Yeah. That again. My father had arranged to give my brother the telephone num- the address where I will be. So, on his way to visit my father, for the first time, he was to pick me up at that place. And I was already working for Mrs. Heinitz in Baker Street. And it was a flat where this lady had... started to work as a- in dressmaking. Very high-class dressmaking. It's... what do you call that? The guy whom we worked for? Doesn't matter now. And...

*Jacqueline: Norman Hartnell?*

Norman Hartnell. So, I heard the doorbell - just a small flat in Baker Street! - and I said, "I'll open the door." Outside was my brother! Stayed till morning. He used to be a great big

fellow, you know, he had- he wasn't so sporty as I was. He comes in and... I could not believe it! I hung round his neck and pulled him in. Shut the door. And showed- showed everybody that he comes. "You have the day off-" said Mrs. Heinitz to me. And he brought me a present. Of course, he would never come without presents. He was so generous. And he hardly had money enough to eat. He was so thin...

**[0:47:38]**

*But this was when he came in '42; this was later. We are still at the beginning, when he just came for a visit- when you initially came to Britain. And he went back to France.*

That we- I thought we'd covered that?

*No, we're not quite there yet. We're not quite there. Because I need to know what's happened to you. You said you stayed in Golders Green first... and then? Where did you go from then?*

Well, to the boarding school. My Anna... Essinger [Anna Essinger was a German Jewish educator and was greatly influenced by the Quakers.]

*So, what was the name? Of that school?*

Bunce Court.

*Bunce Court. So now we have to discuss Bunce Court.*

Oh, I see!

*Yeah.*

Well, that's...[laughing]

*So, what can you remember...?*

All my energies to Klaus again... Yeah well what did I- I talked about the boarding school already.

*Not yet. Not on film. So, tell us a little bit about Bunce Court please.*

What would you like to know?

**[0:48:28]**

*What sort of school was it? Who went there? Were there other refugees...?*

It's very well-known.

*Well, we want to know now - from you.* [both laugh]

Well, Tante Anna as she was called – ‘TA’ - was a very capable woman. Of course, we...we didn't know anything more than ‘That's where I'm going to school.’ And Okay I wasn't that keen on school but I did it. And I was taken in and we had a conversation with her. She sounded quite nice and gave me- showed me where I should sleep. I will have one room with four people together. And... Hanna Bergers or ‘HB’ - one of two Hanna-s there - she was my house mother, and I had to do what she says. “Lights out” and “You'll have to fit in. There's your bed.” And... finished. So, we started. And it was also so nice there, because... well, it's so well-known that school. The classrooms were outside. Well, Lothar Baruch... in my class- was in my class. Several- some other people that are well-known now. It's hard to explain.

*Other refugees were there.*

Oh yes. Everyone had their story and very gifted people. What was the name of the...?

*Jacqueline: Gerhard Hoffnung.*

Yeah. Gerhard Hoffnung and Frank Auerbach. And another one was so famous.

*Jacqueline: Well, Lothar Baruch is now Professor Leslie Brent.*

Yeah, Leslie Brent is now his name. But he wrote his own book...

**[0:50:25]**

*And were they in your class?*

That that was in my class, yes. He was in my class and one more...

*And how did you feel about being sent to a boarding school? Were you ready?*

Well, it was very overpowering the whole thing. I was homesick actually, in the beginning. Yes. But... I was so spoiled by friends of my father's; they sent me presents. And all these children had no parents. And no nothing. And lost everything - their parents, their brothers and sisters and must've been told by then maybe that they were not alive anymore. So, I really felt a little bit out of place in my own self. And I felt... When there were birthdays, I was very generous and gave everything away with them - shared everything. But... But they didn't take it badly that I had my parents. But that, that bothered me more than them. You understand?

*Yeah... yeah...*

So, everything- I just did what I was told there and joined in the fun. And we had morning-early morning exercises in the streets outside. And... a lot of music was again- we had- we cleaned our own house. We didn't have staff. That was a very good arrangement. She had two sisters, Anna Essinger, and they all worked there.

*What were they called? [Klara and Paula]*

I've got it all written down, but not in my head - I'm sorry - anymore.

*Because I know it came from Germany, that school.*

Yes, from Ulm.

*From Ulm?*

Yes.

*Was it a progressive school? What...?*

Very. Yes...

*What was different to let's say a normal English school?*

Everything. [laughs] They just started- when it comes to breakfast or any meal we sat around the tables. We've had... our hands were... touched each other. And that meant that is now

the beginning you know of the week- of the, of the meal. And there was a saying: “*Kinder... Kinder... Liebt euch und wenn das nicht geh-...*” What was famous saying of hers, of Anna Essinger? *Geduld, Kinder liebt euch...* [children, you shall love it each other and if that isn’t possible, then tolerate each other] *so war das immer* [that’s how it always was] ... just before we started. No German was spoken. That was not allowed.

*But hand in hand?*

Hand in hand, yes.

*Like a blessing?*

Yes, something like that...

**[0:53:29]**

*And what was it - Kinder liebt euch...?*

Yeah... *Wenn das...duldet oder duldet...duldet euch, wenn das nicht geht...Duldet euch. Aber das, das hat sich ein bisschen gereimt. Es tut mir leid, ich hab’s vergessen. [tolerate each other, if that isn’t possible. But it rhymed a little bit. I am sorry, I have forgotten.]*

*Bea: Das ist besser als nichts! Liebt Euch, wenn das nicht geht – duldet Euch. It also sounds quite good to me.*

That rhymes, it’s near enough right. I've got it at home somewhere printed in... so many places.

*Yes. But what about the content? What about the subjects? Do you remember anything? What things were taught to you?*

Oh, well, the language. We had very nice staff. Could do what we liked. Homework every day. And I had always these many letters! I was always busy writing, writing, ‘Mu-Va’, ‘Va-Mu’. And then hearing about Klaus. Trying to find out more about him. And in between I was- we had an open day, and so my father was allowed to come and visit, which was also two-sided because nobody else had a father that could come and visit. And they- they had built the year before I came, they had built an open-air theatre in Bunce Court gardens. And

there Lotte Kalischer [(Lo-Ka), taught music, violin, piano] did a lot and there were... Theatre was there and everything.

**[0:55:14]**

*Did you play?*

No, I didn't.

*You didn't like it?*

I would have...No it wasn't any time. You know, we all had different duties, and... I don't think I played there to other people.

*Tell us about the 'Mu-Va' and 'Va-Mu'. What is that?*

The letters I wrote to my parents.

*Yes... So how did you address them?*

Mu-Va.

*And why?*

So- so that they should feel one is more- If I wrote more to one- they should share the letters. Pass them on to Va – Vati. It's for Mutti and Va– and pass the other one on to Mutti, so they both knew the same and no nonsense. Just to be fair to them I suppose. I don't know. It came- I was surprised when I saw it years later. But it was- my letters were quite interesting to me to read now. But I forget so quickly now.

*Yeah...yeah.*

Ninety-two! [laughs] It takes its – takes its- it's not nice. ...Could be worse.

*Well, you're doing very- I think you're doing very well.*

Yeah. Could be worse.

*I think you are- I have some more questions about Bunce Court, but I think we're going to take a break now.*

Thank you. Yes.

**[audio break]**

**[0:56:30]**

Oh god, I wish I had...

*We have- we are resuming the interview.*

Oh yes.

*And we were talking about Bunce Court...*

Yes.

*So, what was it like? Did you have any English when you arrived?*

Very little bit, only.

*And how did you manage to learn English?*

I... [laughing] What little I knew- well I learned it quite well in the end; I had a very good English teacher. ...We were made to write essays gradually... and I became actually very good in that. So, he remarked- n my first- on my reports it came out that I was very good. Because I actually started with my father wanting to know what I write about this week. He was terribly nice and being very involved with all this sort of thing. He had given me before I left a very- fairly big list of typed out books that I ought to know about and- or to read. That's English as well as German, but mostly German. And of course, at that age you don't take much notice of that. But I've still got that, or until recently I still- I don't know quite where but I still think I know where it is, that list. Anyway, so when I said that 'Wormy' had – 'Wormy' we called him... the... English teacher. Wormleighton was his name. 'Wormy' we called him. And... he gave me more and more and better and better results. And did my...



finishing test... and finishing a report- when I had finished the exams, he remarked on every... every... title I chose was very, very good. So, I was pleased and he was pleased.

**[0:58:33]**

*So what books were on that list? Do you remember, on that list your father gave you?*

No, no not now- I can't remember. But I mean... I can't remember that all now.

*Yeah... And in Bunce Court, what- did you stay there or during the holidays did you go- Where did you go in the holidays?*

...Sometimes I was invited to London... And sometimes I tried to get my mother and me... Where did we go for holidays? We were always... in the area we usually stayed because the war had started, you see? And one didn't wish to go to London particularly, so it was...

*Yeah. So, tell us, while you were in Bunce Court what happened to your mother and to your father?*

**[0:59:34]**

While I was in Bunce Court... He by then had... had I talked to you about making dentures? Because he wasn't allowed to become a dentist as a Jew? Did I speak to you about that?

*Not yet, no.*

Well in Kilburn- first of all he married for the second time, which was a big- a big surprise for me and wasn't very easily explained to my mother, which I had to do. My job. He gave it to me, which I didn't like and she didn't like either. So that was a difficult period but we got over that as well. So, my father... had a dental... not a practice, but he was involved with people who were coming for dentures. So, he knew about that. And she worked with him, whatever it was. And once I came to visit... when- him. Because I was already in London. And suddenly the air raid started. And it was in the middle of the day which was- usually- it wasn't usually in the daytime but it was also daytime. And I said, "I've had enough of this. I'm leaving today to go to Wem which was in Shrop- Shropshire. And it's just about time to leave. I was lucky I could escape, because there was quite a lot of damage. Nothing to them, but the glass had fallen in. And she was just cooking lunch in the background. That, that I

remember very vividly that day. And of course, I got- I don't know from which station but the station to Shropshire. There were all soldiers in there and all sorts of things happening. And I found myself a little seat. And I was really, really glad to get out of it. You could hear the bombs falling right, left and centre. I was lucky...

*Mn-hnn.*

Lucky. Because I had my luggage with me ready to go to Mum after Daddy. You understand me?

*Yeah.*

Yeah.

*And by then the- it was evacuated the Bunce Court, wasn't it?*

Yes, well then Bunce Court had long- had left... Kent and we were installed in Shropshire. Beautiful Bunce Court.

*And did you like it, the next location?*

Oh, it was beautiful! Beautiful there...yeah. Also, because I didn't stay very long in Kent.

*So, most of your time was in Shropshire?*

I think it was mostly that. I haven't looked up the dates and...be a long...so...

**[1:02:20]**

*So, your dad set up this- the denture business...*

Yeah.

*And what did your mother do?*

Well, that was when she- after she was interned and... left- left after about a month. They didn't stay there very long. I had been running around- I was there already, in Bunce Court- I had been running around, looking, maybe somebody would take her in as something that she

could... live there, that she could be near me, you see? Didn't have to go to London. And that didn't need to come to anything, because she herself found herself a job the minute she arrived in W-E-M, in Wem. She went from shop to shop to ask is there any vacancy for her. Mnn? And as it was, she went into - what was it called? - a hotel. But it was... what shall I call that? It's also a pub- public house - public house and hotel. And then - the owners of that house, had need for somebody to look after their - was it? – five-year-old daughter. And Mum was extremely good with little children. And she had a lot to offer these children. And had already by then got a job- no she had no job yet, in... in... So, she took that job for a few weeks. There were many soldiers coming there and wanting drinks and she was upstairs in another room with this girl and so on, and came up to visit Anna Essinger, my schoolmistress - the headmaster. Had a word with her, if there was a job for her in her school. First of all to better herself. No there wasn't one because you see there were these- there was already- These were all taken, these jobs. And to be German and to be allowed into a totally English environment, would have seemed a little bit odd. So, she came out again and she says, “Nothing doing. They have got somebody.” I said, “Mum, have- I’ll wait for you here...” It must have been the next day. “I will go over and I’ll wait for you. There’s a red letterbox there, I’ll stand now. Go in, ask again. Put it in a different way and see if you can't... change it somehow and explain that you don't want to take the job away from the existing teachers.”

**[1:05:04]**

Well somehow or other I must have waited at least half an hour. This was a summer's day. And she came out - and smiled. And walked in that way as one does when one is successful. In other words, Miss Freeman had taken a great, great liking to her. Had asked all her staff separately whether they would mind Käthe Boronow, from Breslau, with Ruth, Ruth in-enrolled in, in Bunce Court, who- which they knew about. Which is higher up. And she said-made arrangements that she could live there. They would give her- yeah, she could live there somehow. It was very difficult to explain that now, at which stage that was, that she got a room to herself... which was...for, for horses as stable. But in a nice part of the garden. A huge, huge garden - front garden, side... just fantastic. And that's where she stayed for seventeen years.

*In that...?*

In that hotel- in that surroundings. Klaus- I mean that- from then on it was Käthe. Everybody wanted to go to Käthe for their holidays, for their days off. Come from anywhere - they were bombed in London - go to Käthe. [to her nephew?] Klaus- your mother. You were- your mother came as well with Klaus, and they sit- they sat outside. She made it so cosy there she came out. And this stable with the horse was a little bit- of course re-worked a little bit so that she had some running water as well. They even got a piano into that room. You know- you've seen it, no? You never saw it. He wasn't born yet. So. That was the highlight of my life actually. Because she was for- how many years did I say?

*Seventeen.*

Yeah. Until she retired... because of her age - by then. And... she also gave concerts. I've got printed... announcements for 'Wem Music Society - Käthe Boronow - so and so, such and such a date'. Isn't that lovely?

**[1:07:30]**

*So, did she start teaching at the school in Wem?*

Yes, immediately. She had nothing but success. Everybody loved her. She herself showed them when Miss Freeman had a birthday: "We give her a surprise." She came- that was her blossoming time, really. She came to life there. And by that time, I was going backwards and forwards to London... where I... lived... and worked. And that's when I said... they sent... the tops of dresses that I was making you know, little pleats here and little pleats there. And that was when - I told you that they came by post. Does that make sense?

*Mn-hnn.*

Yeah.

*So first of all, did you do a dressmaking course at Bunce Court]?*

Yes, I did a dressmaking course. Yeah. In Shrewsbury, that was taken. We learnt it in Bunce Court. One or two friends of mine- Hanni Salomon was a friend of mine at the time... and we did the same course. She was very capable - much more capable actually, than I. She- I think

she made me my wedding dress, very kindly. We- so that was- yeah- what did you want to know?

**[1:08:46]**

*No, when you- When did you start to become a dressmaker? Did you study to become a dressmaker?*

Yes, I did. I did take an exam.

*After you finished school?*

Yes, it was... in Shrewsbury. Is that- is still Shropshire. So, it was before I left to go Shrop- And then went to London because I wanted to best- I think- But it wasn't bettering myself... It was... Perhaps I wanted to...Oh, I don't know quite. And then I went to London and, and had a flat there.

*So, when did you move to London? In 1943, or...?*

[To her daughter:] Any idea?

*Jacqueline:* Somewhere probably between '42 and '43. I'm not certain.

*But when you moved to London your mother was in...?*

She was safe. And that's why I say... when it became too difficult in London... she offered me to come and stay there and get the work from Miss -Mrs. Heinitz. Yeah, because Klaus had come, hadn't he? And Mrs. Heinitz had let me in. I think that makes sense now.

*Jacqueline:* Yes, he- he met you at Mrs. Heinitz's.

**[1:10:14]**

*So, you started working for Mrs. Heinitz?*

Yes... yes.

*And where did you stay when you worked? Did you have a room somewhere?*

Yes, I had actually lived in Swiss Cottage. There was... there was a sort of area where people like myself would be... quite- quite well-known at the time. I don't remember the names, but I could show you the house roughly.

*Was it a hostel?*

Yes, something like a hostel. Yes.

*Were there other refugees in that...?*

Yes, yes - yes. It was famous there. So, I was told to go there, and I went. My father wasn't far - around the corner more or less, two or three corners. So that- that must have been done through him. I don't remember it at all but it was a very happy time there.

*And did you want to become a dressmaker, or...?*

No, I- yeah, I did originally cause I'm good with my fingers and I liked it. It was one nice way of- not too difficult, you know? Because to go to university was not- I didn't have enough *Grips* [brains] [laughs] ...I like that word.

I told you the other day... that you need *Grips* And, I didn't fancy that at all. So... I went and, and Hanni and I we went up there and had that- No, then- yes, and then again Mrs. Heinitz was a recommendation through my father. He had heard from his friends that there is such a person. And I should at least make an inquiry which I did. And I was working there for a long time. They were all musical people there. And then comes this story that I was taken to... [to her daughter] What is that, your favourite story?

**[1:12:02]**

*Jacqueline:* Norman Hartnell.

Norman Hartnell. She- Mrs. Heinitz had three children and one grandchild so that was the- she said, "Well, Ruth, you'll have to come with me to Norman Hartnell. Because they're asking- they're saying something with the hem isn't all right. And that must've been when they worked on the Queen's dresses. Or- or Princess Margaret or somebody like that. But anyway - royalty. I didn't even notice what that was such a thing, you know. I went along

with Mrs. Heinitz and walked up there. And bent down a bit and straightened the hem. So...  
But it was nice. Different.

*So, who did you meet? Which royalty?*

I didn't meet the royalty. It might have been somebody like- I wasn't introduced. And I didn't ask; I just- just got on with it. I didn't ask. It wasn't so important to me just to go out and be chosen to go with her to a 'special customer'. That's what she said we had.

*Aha...*

Yeah... Yeah, it probably wasn't even talked about.

*Right...*

Possibly. Couldn't it be? Yeah.

*Something you just mentioned, we haven't discussed, was your parents' internment. Were they both interned?*

Yes.

*Can you tell us a little bit about the...?*

There's nothing much. We were just- well my father I've mentioned before, where I wasn't in touch while he was interned. Buchenwald he was, wasn't he?

*No, we are now in England. We are now- I meant, was he interned on the Isle of Man?*

Yeah.

*British...*

Yeah.

*Yeah...*

Well, it wasn't very long. ...And my mother was... I've just said it, where she was.

*Jacqueline:* He came out and went into the Pioneer Corps. And then she came out she came to Wem, where you were.

[1:13:59]

Yeah.

*But where they interned separately? They were not together?*

No, no, no.

No.

No, no, no.

*So how long was she- she was interned as well?*

About four weeks. Our- our cook from... from... our school, Bunce Court. Our cook was German. She was interned. And somebody you probably know, Tilde Weill, took over. She was in the school... and she took over the cooking. So that was- these were difficult years but as nothing... I'm only speaking of myself, actually.

*Yes. No, I just- I'm just...*

I once said to somebody who looked my age or so about my size "*Mit welchem Kindertransport... bist du denn gekommen?*" [Which Kindertransport were you on?"] Do you understand what I'm saying? And she happened to be the wife of our religion teacher. She wasn't a child at all, but she was such a nice person. [laughs] She was standing there. We were warming ourselves because there was one radiator.

*Where, in Bunce Court?*

Yes.

*Ah, there was a religious teacher?*

Yes!



*What did- what did- Jewish religion?*

Yes, of course.

*But was it run as a Jewish school?*

No...

*No.*

No, we also had Christian people in Germany- from Germany was- were there. She made a point of that.

*But there was a Jewish religion class?*

**[1:15:37]**

Yeah.

*Yeah. You- can you remember, how did your mother talk about her internment time? Was it a terrible thing for her or was it something she accepted?*

Well, at first... No, she never- she would never even write anything negative to me, or to worry me or anything. But what I heard from Mrs. Gretel Heidt, our cook, who also met my mother there. So, I heard through her that she was very popular... and that she gave little concerts as I said before. And that later on, after the internment, she still was- she was- well I've told you that. That... she had concerts- she gave concerts as well.

*And which, which - which camp? Do you know which camp she was in on the Isle of Man?*

Well, we once traced it, didn't we, where she was?

*Jacqueline:* I think if I'm (not) right she was in Douglas? Was that it?

*Douglas, yes?*

For women?

*Yeah - possible.*

I had the address somewhere at home but I didn't bring that here.

*And she performed? ...She performed there?*

In, in- yes, she did. And she also did... encourage other people to... to sing in choirs.

*Aha...*

Not only piano.

*And do you know what she performed there? Did she ever tell you?*

Well, I can let you know when I look up the programs if I find them. But I have been quite busy with other things...

*And did she mention any other musician on the Isle of Man? Did she meet any other musicians?*

No- no she didn't say. She just- well, all right- listen, they only had, I think, so much to write, if I remember rightly. So much place – as long as we were in touch. It wasn't- she never talked about it in a bad way. They were actually very- housed very well. I wanted to go there once with Jakey but... it never came to it. It doesn't really matter because I know she was not unhappy there. She was with people who- same-minded.

**[1:17:55]**

*Do you have correspondence from that time? Did she write to you, from internment?*

Yes: "I'm alright. Klaus – any news from Klaus?", she asked. And... she tried to cheer me up with all of what she was doing was positive. So... so- nice to know! But better to know that she's out and then I was lucky to get her to work for Mrs. – Miss Freeman. She was not married. She was not Tante Anna.

*So, she came to Bunce Court after she was released from her internment -, your mother?*

It wasn't Bunce Court, was it?

*Jacqueline:* She came to Wem.

*To Wem?*

Yes.

*Yes.*

*Jacqueline:* Yes. It was a school where Bunce Court had evacuated to for a while.

I didn't mention the name of the school - for girls only-

*Grave School?*

Grove School.

*Grove School. Right. But they...*

I tend to mix that sometimes. Excuse me if I do, but I think I did say the right word first.

*Yes, Grove School. So, Bunce Court evacuated to Grove School.*

Yes, Grove School. As I said I have photographs of that school with a lot of... pictures of my mum- mother at that age and me at that age, because as I said she included me and that little girl that she was- that my mother was mainly... in, in charge of for the first few years. She took her along.

*She kept that job?*

Yeah... yeah.

*So, was it a good- a relief for you that your mother had...?*

**[1:19:28]**

Oh, yes! It was- As I said also before, the people from London were only too pleased to get an invitation from Käthe... Get- get out of the bombing. By then it was at its worst, whenever that was. That was the time when she was luckily settled by herself. She found that job was- I mean I pointed out that "there is this boarding school that you might like to see if you can't get a job in Wem High Street". Just shops. Yeah. That's luck! A bit of luck came into it.

Then her charm! She was extremely charming. So, she gave concerts and the kids loved her. I've got a- no end of film- I was photo- photographing a lot in those days 'cause I had a little old camera- new- newish... that- they had a name. Again, one syllable only. These cameras... The first cameras one used to have.

*Jacqueline:* Box Brownie?

Box- box camera. I think it was called. Thank you. She's.... [speaking about her daughter] I can rely on my... memories there.

*Yeah.*

Isn't it nice? That is nice for me...

*Very nice.*

...I can tell you. So that was a very nice period.

*And then when you came to London and then Klaus came...*

Yes...

*...from France. So, can you tell us just very briefly what had happened to Klaus in that time- In the meantime?*

He was looking for work. Mum tried to find him something. She had almost found something. Then there was the matter of the name. We didn't want- to talk about that I don't think - Boronow.

*Yes, we can talk about it.*

Yeah?

*Yeah.*

'Boswell'... he was called.

*He changed his name?*

Yeah- in order to get a reasonable job for his...

*He felt?*

He felt he - he could manage most things I believe, in what is- all this belonging to catering. So, there is a famous firm that without my notes, I don't remember what that was called.

*Jacqueline:* Bernie Inns...

Bernie Inns International wasn't it. And he went as far as...

*Jacqueline:* Japan.

Japan... where he was on the front page one- I think the boys were already born then, weren't they? You were born.

*Ruth's nephew, Peter:* Yes, that was quite some time after, after he met you at Baker Street with his suitcase, do you remember? And surprised you?

[1:22:23]

Yes.

*Peter:* Do you remember?

Yes, I do.

*Peter:* Yeah. That was a- that was a big moment – wasn't it - for you?

Yes, that was a big moment. But I didn't talk about that. But when he was- when he was able to help the Queen...?

*Peter:* Yeah, the independence celebrations, wasn't it? In- in Africa. Nigerian government.

Nigeria. And so, he had a tremendous job and sent to feed thous- hundreds of people. And I think- didn't that- "Oh, Bozzy is here. He's so quick! How did you get here?" Wasn't that said about him?

*Peter:* Yes, I think so.

*Jacqueline:* The Queen said it...

No... Philip. Philip her husband said, "Oh, Bozzy's here." "You chasing us?", or something similar. A joke anyway, because Klaus was so busy getting it organised. My goodness me, so many royalty at that table. So, it was a high - high position he had. And we were all so proud of him and for him. And the- and the boys, you too, weren't you?

*Peter:* Absolutely.

You were little.

*Peter:* We were very little.

No not that little, but anyway.

*But what had happened to him in those two years, until he came here? Where was he?*

Our Klaus?

*Yeah. Where was Klaus between '39 and 42?*

**[1:23:50]**

*Peter:* Spain...

Do you know?

*Peter:* Spain...

Which one?

*Peter:* Do you remember he was in prison in Spain?

Oh yes of course... in Spain. He was in prison there.

*OK, and he- he came from Spain.*

And then he did that walk through the Pyrenees. Wasn't that right?

*From France...*

*Peter:* France to Spain.

From France- oh that was from France to Spain. And there he was in prison.

*Yes. And then he came to England?*

And there again, he was similar was this doctor he- he tried to help. He pretended he was half a doctor, so he helped other prisoners. And so he was better treated and had a better cell to, to - to be imprisoned in, as it were. It was unbelievably difficult to explain as one hasn't seen it oneself. And one didn't want to always talk about it on his- for his behalf it wasn't nice to keep on.

*Yeah.*

But it was nice to... ..we were always being treated by him, actually. He- he knew everybody, you know: "I can get in there for free. You don't need..." When he- when the Festival of Britain was celebrated, he was given the job of the restaurant! Complete master- he was the boss there. So... he showed- he let me in to see the... first time the inside of the thea- of the what was it? The theatre.

*Jacqueline:* Festival Hall...

Festival Hall. Festival Hall. And showed me, "That over there is the private box of the Queen!" ...Nice to know. It was- I felt so privileged to walk in there – never had to pay anything. I was taken care of Bozzy. And it was really a nice time then. He helped me to get my first car- our first car. Nobody- what was that name, that white car?

*Jacqueline:* Mini.

A Mini. They were hard to get at first. But Klaus got everything; he got the turkey for Christmas and he got the Mini for Ruth and Charles. And where we didn't get anywhere, we called Klaus and he was always ready to help. So I was lucky. ...It wasn't a bad thing, was it, my...?

**[1:26:14]**

*So, you were very happy to see him when he came...*

Every-

*...and surprised you?*

Yes... Very. Who wouldn't be? Did I tell you I paid his fare? Yes, I must have done.

*No, tell us the story. ... Tell us the story.*

The story? That time when he came to- as a surprise to Mrs. Heinitz? And, and fetched me and I was given the day off? I said, "Come along. We're going on number 2 bus now, and you'll let me pay and I'll be responsible for you." My goodness that was the first time in my life where I could do something for him for a change. Tuppence! If I'm not mistaken but I think I was right. Tuppence.

*So, you...*

To- to- to Swiss Cottage, where we then walked up to Daddy- my, my father- his fa- our father. And then four- then three of us were together- four of us actually, because he married again. In my case, that was. So...

*And where- Where did he live in Swiss Cottage, your father?*

He just took a room somewhere. Nothing special. He didn't stay there long because he then found a place in Kilburn. And then he had that shop, you remember.

*The dentures?*

For the dentures, yeah. That, the he...

*That area of Swiss Cottage, there were many refugees.*

Yes, there were.

*Can you describe? Do you remember this area at all?*



Well, there was Cosmo. Everybody went to Cosmo and it is still in existence I believe? It's not anymore. But there is a placard up there. Everything- even when the children were- when the kids came along - cousins or whatever - we had something to celebrate: Cosmo's! Always!

*You did go?*

Yes!

*And where did you go? To the restaurant or to the bar? To that café?*

On the right-hand side was the restaurant when you come from...

*You went to the restaurant?*

Yes. ...there were others, but really, we stuck to... Cosmo. Also, with the Boswells when they came, we- we did go and introduce them. Whether they were with or without children, I don't know now. But they were there.

*And what food- what did you like to eat there, in the Cosmo?*

Everything- anything that, that was there. Just continental! It tasted different and...

*Such as? Give us an example...*

**[1:28:36]**

Schnitzel! [laughs]

*What else?*

Well, *Spargel* wasn't so- so good because it was local *Spargel*. [laughs] *Spargel* you must eat in Germany.

*Yeah, asparagus.*

Asparagus, yes. So...

*What else? Anything else you remember?*

*Bratkartoffeln* [Fried Potatoes] ... you know?

*Yeah...*

You know it. Anything...Schnitzel, it comes in chicken.

*Yeah. So, you used to go there a lot? Also, in later years?*

A lot, a lot. A lot. Anybody who wanted to see us said, "Do you want to come to me, or shall we go out?" Because we all had a little bit more money by then to spend on ourselves. I wasn't married yet. But even when I was married, it was always to Cosmo.

*You didn't go to the other places? The Dorice or...?*

Oh, well. Oh... no I didn't- I just stuck- I don't like to hop about from my- I liked it there, and if I like it somewhere, I stay there. Unless there's someone else that takes me and then that's fine. And what else was in Swiss Cottage? Everything happened in Swiss Cottage. And... well... it was my home, really, more than anything. It was a mixture between town and country because it was very near to the Heath. You know? It is very near to the Heath.

*Yes. Did you go for walks there?*

**[1:30:15]**

Yes, we did go when I was married. I was living even- well, before I was married, I lived in Hampstead myself, by then. That was my independent time. And met Charles at that time and we went- there was a- there's a swimming pool there. One can go swimming there. Well, it was our- our life there for a long time. Concerts -I got free from Charles. And food and everything else that was happening in- in town – what was it called? - the Festival Hall. We took visitors who came from in Engl- England or wherever, from- from abroad. "What shall we do with them?" "What will we show them? Oh, we take them to this place. The new one... the Festival Hall." Yes, that was quite nice for them and for us to see their joy. Especially Charles's family who had emigrated to America. The nephew -I told you who lived in this house, who got a job as a medical person- he was... so that they came on several occasions.

*Did you join any other youth organization?*

I went to Anna Freud in the end and I answered an- an advert. And I spent seven- seven years I think, or ten years there. I was fed up with dressmaking by then. Can't blame me. And I wanted something else so I learned typing. And I saw an advertisement in the paper which gave us school holidays - seven weeks. The pay was good. I had to have an interview. I was good... enough... for what she wanted. Three of us were in one room in Anna Freud's home. And I was made for the next few years. Liv-loving it there.

*And what did you do for the Anna Freud...?*

**[1:32:28]**

Reports for Anna Freud's- for- for the students who came to learn on real little people who were brought there for treatment. And we were given the reports and we- it was then typing, or still what- there were various typewriters. And three of us had... this wonderful, that these rooms were excellent where- her house was opposite. It's opposite. And...

*Where was it? In...*

In Swiss Cottage

*...Maresfield Gardens?*

Yes, Maresfield Gardens.

*Maresfield Gardens.*

It's Swiss Cottage, isn't it?

*Yes.*

And that was my second home. Then I went to Cosmo, and there was that and there was this... And not far from the hospital, because once I fell over and broke- had a very bad injury. And all sorts of things happened there. I was stung by bees and I was terrible condition, so... And all these things happened! And the war was on or off. It was just- was it still war? I don't think so.

*No...*

No, no more. No. The time when the war was on and we had lunch break from... from what was that street where I was staying?

*Jacqueline:* Baker Street.

Baker Street. If we knew the right way, we could make it to Soho... Soho? Soho?

*Soho.*

And there were some shops where you needed less coupons, if any, for meat. Or for anything we wanted. So, we rushed there and we were- when we rushed one way the house was standing. In the meantime, we heard some bombings, and the house was just... bricks and mortar. And so, we- that's how one lived at one time. But I only lived like that for a very, very short time.

*Yeah.*

Luckily.

*When you started working for Anna Freud Centre...*

Yes.

*...did you- did you meet some of the children- the nursery? Were you involved...?*

**[1:34:26]**

I was sometimes seeing them. Yes, but mostly I just saw the reports... or...

*So, what sort of reports were they? The reports on the children, or the report...?*

Yes. And the case. That was private, and that was held private. And I was trusted. And there was a manageress there who liked me very much. By that time Jaqui had found out where I was. She even invited her for our fiftieth wedding anniversary that girl. Yeah. That- these days things- and I'm still in touch with the daughter... of the second person. The first person died. Then came Nancy. She died. In my- loads of photographs. And I've just- just- she died last month, so... the daughter and I we are in touch with each other...about it.

*No, I wonder whether you remember because we actually interviewed somebody who- Post-war there was a group of six children brought from a concentration camp. And Anna Freud Centre...*

Oh! Via America?

*There was...*

She had a lot of Americans.

*They were supposed to go to America...*

Yes...

*But they had a one-year rehabilitation here... And they were- they were brought- they went to Windemere. Six children and they- they sent two sist- two- two people from the Anna Freud Centre worked with the children. Have you heard about that?*

No, I haven't done that.

*No.*

No, no. ...I was on good terms with Anna Freud and she was a wonderful person and...I...

*So, the children you had, they were not survivors?*

I personally didn't have... the children. No.

**[1:36:21]**

*No.*

I got the reports...

*Yes.*

And I went by them. And my day was divided so that we were eating downstairs in a different place, you see? We could- we could use the kitchen and free- at weekends we could even visit. Sometimes we could make an arrangement to see. It's now a museum completely.

Yeah. It was- I was still there before these rooms became a museum. I've seen the museum often and it's very interesting.

*And what was she like, Anna Freud?*

She was delightful. I, I must admit I was there when she was very ill at the end. And I saw her in hospital and I didn't make myself known anymore because she wouldn't have liked that. We were allowed to choose books before we left. And I've got one - one or two from her here. And- about the Freuds. Yes, it's very exciting because one ... both of the girls I worked with were not German. I was German...

*Yeah.*

...In that room. So, I was- and one of the girls, she was actually very artistic. So, she was able to hang her pictures. Oh, you want to say something?

*Jacqueline:* No, sorry, I was just saying her picture is right there.

Which one? The painting of, of...? Oh, yes that one is – where? Oh, it's here.

*Yeah, we can look at it later...*

That is from... from... the, the one lady I was- Adele. Adele and Nancy. This was Adele. She gave me that just like that on her birthday one day. She was in- in the exhibition: "You can have..." ...paintings.

*And were- were you interested in this topic of child psychology?*

Yes, very much.

*You were?*

You know....

*Why?*

Yes, yes, I'm interested in, in illnesses- in, in, in such illnesses, yes. Because I have children of my own- of our own.

[1:38:37]

*And how did the end- when the war ended, how did it affect you? Did it affect you in any way?*

Yes, I went out at night. Like Princess... Margaret and Elizabeth- were then princesses still. But you know that...

*Jacqueline: Where you were on VE Day.*

What's that?

*Jacqueline: Did you go to Trafalgar Square on VE Day?*

Yes.

*Did you?*

Oh, yes!

*So why don't you tell us about that. What happened on VE Day?*

Well, it was like you see in the newspaper; the same thing happened exactly as it is. And I took part in it.

*Do you remember it?*

Oh yes! Who doesn't?

*And what- what was it like?*

Exciting! Just surrounding yourself around and talking to everybody and just lovely! Seeing the Queen and...

*At that point, did you have any surviving relatives in Germany?*

Well, then we started looking around. My father did that again. And he did find that Ida, our cook - his cook - had survived. So, we wrote to her. And... I personally was very pleased, but I didn't want to go back. But they had already- Jaqui and Chubos came to see and she heard

all my Breslau stories and we went through with her... apparently so well that she could imagine it completely when she was there. I think you went with Stefanie, did you? Stefanie's the daughter of my cousin who also lived in Breslau. She's also a musician and... finished and does a lot of concerts – nothing but concerts. She's already... the third generation cause her child is also very- doing it. So, I'm delighted for her. Inge is the oldest – yes. So- still alive. So, what was your question? Was Jaqui and Walter in...?

*We were talking about how the- how the- whether you had any surviving family in Germany...*

No...

*No.*

**[1:40:53]**

No. We made it. It was very few people that were going out at that right age, no. No- no I just wouldn't want to be going back. But she was told so much by me, that she actually saw the... the house number... where my father was mentioned as a dentist. And, and the old sort of frame- it wasn't there anymore but she could see that it was there as I had explained. Yeah.

*But you personally, you didn't want to go to Germany?*

I don't want to go.

*Have you ever been back to Germany?*

No! Germany?

*Jacqueline: Berlin...*

Oh, yes. Not to Breslau.

*Aha, right...*

I'm- 'B'- it starts with 'B'. I'm a bit nuts. [laughs]

*Right. You've been- you've been to Germany, but you never went- you didn't want to go back to Breslau.*



No, I didn't want- Jaqui wants me to go, but we worked it out so much on maps and this Polish- this Polish language I can't make. It's, it's unnecessary. I had my life there. I liked what I had. What do I want to see a different... shop isn't there anymore which I'm looking for. I can't show her anything that I was connected with, because it was really bombed very badly. Although she brought me a book about it which is very interesting to some people who visit us now. It's down here. Well how it was then and how it is now. It's a very, very good book. But sometimes I've had enough of it, you know?

*Yeah...*

Much as I'd like to be now a German citizen again for other- for various strange reasons. [laughing] But I was so lucky; I thank God every day for the life. However hard it might seem, or pain, I haven't got it bad. I had cancer once, but that was removed. I'm fit as a fiddle I could say, for my age, couldn't I?

*Sure you can.*

**[1:42:59]**

So that is something I can really- to be glad about and to appreciate. One doesn't appreciate it enough. That is what I learned from Gigi- from Alice Herz-Sommer, our good friend or was. She came here in this room as I said to you before and we- she even brought other people along and they did violin and piano here together. Because this piano was better than hers. She's only got a smaller one in her flat. So, it was lovely! We- I had a lovely life!

*You kept in touch with Alice Sommer- or Herz-Sommer?*

Oh yes! I was there the day before still, when she was already not so well. Oh yes! I phoned her.

*Through your father, that...?*

Originally, yes.

*But you...*

But then she was very interested in our family. She made the original approaches.

*Because she came- she 's-she lived in Israel. She came on the...*

She was a time in Israel, but she's Czech.

*Yes.*

Yes, and Raphi was sitting here. He didn't know where to go to practice. I said, "Come here and sit here and practice." What did he do? He practiced. Left. Left the newspaper here. I looked at it. And from that newspaper I found a room for my mother not far from here, who could come ...when she retired. That was the time when she retired, so she retired three streets away from here. When the kids- when Jaqui was still going to school. So, I- we just worked around friends. You need friends in life!

*Yeah.*

Good friends are what you need. And be interested in the people. Don't just sit there and say, "Come for tea..." and that. Just be a friend to them! Don't you agree?

*I agree.*

I don't always succeed but I try. And that's all I can say. Very lucky...

*So, tell us a little bit how you met your husband...*

**[1:45:12]**

[laughs] Again, it's not my own doing except that I was invited by- my father, again... had told some friends that Ruth - whatever they talk about back when you're that age - would benefit- 'You have a party, why don't you invite her too?' Mnn? So, I got a phone call. I thought I told you that. When I was manageress at said Mrs. Heinitz, she gave me the key. I was allowed to come in first and let everybody in. That sort of... so I had a key. And so, I had the phone and I answered, "It's Mrs. Heinitz's here." "Is there a Ruth Boronow?" "Yes, speaking" – sort of thing. And then they said, "I've got an invitation for you from so-and-so. Would you like to accept?" And of all things, I said, "Yes!" I never said 'yes' without knowing, but it was from my father. So, I said, "Well, if it's from my father, I have to give him a reason why not. So, I might as well say 'yes' - and find out later." So that's how it happened. It was in... *'ist egal'* [doesn't matter]. Doesn't matter where it was. And I appeared,

rang the bell, went in... was welcomed in. It was a room about that size. And I looked at these...these people and said, "These two: I wonder who it is they're talking about. Him or Fritz." Fritz was a friend of Charles. And eventually turned out... that the party was finished... and it was the time of going home. And as it was near Kilburn, and we-I lived in Hampstead... Fritz wasn't all too keen to take me home, but Charles says- they both asked each other, "Who is going to take her home?" Because we were bundled out, you see? "I- I won't," Fritz said. And so, it was left to Charlie to take me home. And we're sitting in this room now... where we finally let Fritz live- it was his room then. We needed another lodger. A lodger, if mother-in-law had gone to- she was gone... Eve- to Evie- to America, to help there because Evie was ill and not expected to live for long.

[1:47:57]

*Is that her sister?*

That is her... That was her daughter, wasn't it?

*Jacqueline: Half-sister of Daddy.*

*Half-sister of Daddy...*

Half-sister, of course! Evie...

*Yes?*

Yeah...

*So, Fritz lived in this room?*

We let that to him, yeah. It was a lovely sunny room... and said, "Well we've got the rest of the house." And we made a few changes and when mother-in-law...

*But you were talking about Charles taking you home...*

Home, yes.

*And where was it? Where did you live in Hampstead?*

Well, a nice place. I had a flat in Lyndhurst Road. That was my- the only thing I think I did on my own. Because I passed it one day and it said, 'For Let'- 'to Sale'- 'To Sell'. And it was right opposite my cousin, the one I showed you with the heart the old one now- who's old. And I said, "Well that would be nice to live but I can't afford to buy it. But! I could let it to one or two of the girls I work with. Ah! So... I went to the estate agent and asked them, "Would you also be prepared to let it, if I find the right- some people- Three people?" And then that battle started; who comes and then my father got mixed up again with it. He said, "Oh Käthe doesn't need to have a room there for the whole year. She can come and share yours in the holidays." Because she comes from Wem on her yearly holi- big- the big holidays, the summer holidays mainly. And so it happened that he su-suggested I should take Hortense. Now Hortense did not mean much to me anymore, because I was so young when she met me- when my father was still a dentist. And... he once had- she was his patient. And she came alone and I opened the door for her. And I was four years younger than she was so I must have been about six and she might have been ten. Ahh... So? I said, "Hortense? Who is Hortense?" He said, "Well- well, she, she needs something and your mother doesn't. Your mother can share the room and that's what I suggest." So, I followed his advice and she became my best friend... longest friend and dear friend to me ever since. She came and there were other things happening there as you can imagine. And Mum was very happy and Charles was also happy because his piano could be stored in one of the rooms there. I had enough room... for a bigger piano than this. So, everybody was happy.

**[1:50:49]**

*And what was Charles doing when you met him at that time?*

When I met him, he was in a lift one day and said a very famous singer had died. Who was it?

*Jacqueline:* Caruso.

Caruso. I said, "So what?" [laughs]

*Jacqueline:* He was an opera singer.

Opera- he was an opera singer. What did he say?

*He was an opera singer?*

*Jacqueline:* Daddy was an opera singer.

Yeah, he was an opera singer. He- all the record- recordings that we have here in this house, there's no bounds- there's no end to them. I can't bring myself to, to sell or give away because they all have a story! I had- yes, where were we?

*Jacqueline:* Daddy was a student. I think he was still a student, was he, when you met him? Music student, or was he already in the opera by then?

Oh, he was already finished with student! He's- the Royal Academy of Music. He told me all that.

*Yeah.*

He was already ready to... move me [whispering] as a possible wife.

*Yes.*

That was mentioned. And that's where we married... two years later... in the Hampstead Town Hall. Because then this was difficult because of who's going where. I had this big flat- this big room. I have lovely pictures of it to remind me. Klaus was able to prevent- to provide the goodies, which were hard to get, still. Glasses were alright cause... this house was full of these nice glasses. I mean they- they laid a lovely table for me there. And we had all sorts of friends there. And then we went on a honeymoon - it was winter - for a few days. And then life here started... very nice.

*Mn-hnn. And...*

So, is that what you wanted to know?

*Not quite finished... Not quite finished. And did he have family, Charles? Did he have...?*

Well, that... They're all here around us on photographs.

**[1:52:51]**

*Yes. So, who- who was he here with? He'd come- was he was his mother, Charles?*

He- his mother was still living here. And I said, "I'm only coming..." - because I had a flat, don't forget. So, I said, "No it's not so easy with coming to you. I'd like- like peace and quiet. And I want her... not to lose you. So, I suppose my only way is to come to you, here. But I'd like my own kitchen." I heard that's the right thing to do. I felt it and I heard it - or felt it first and heard it then.

*Yes?*

And that worked because I have the- one of the rooms upstairs was made into a kitchen. And... that worked very well, because as we all grew older and needs changed, then I was sometimes down here helping mother-in-law, you see? And then she became ill and we had to look after her here. And then again, this is now as it is still, the old kitchen and you- you went downstairs – you haven't seen downstairs yet. But it's- it's comfortable enough now. It's a big one- big house. But in the meantime, I had one or two lodgers. Not only Fritz. I had also someone upstairs. So, we were careful with money. We had to be.

*Yeah.*

*Jacqueline:* And there was Evie and Irvin.

Evie and Irvin... yeah. What about...?

*Jacqueline:* Living in this house. My- Daddy's half-sister and her husband lived here before you two moved in.

Yes... I'm trying to think of the children now, who there's a photo of upstairs.

*Jacqueline:* Anthony and Carol.

Anthony and Carol. They were growing up and they left out of this house on the porch there. And... I remember that we were- there was- I don't know what you want me to say there...

*Jacqueline:* Whatever you want to say... about it.

Well, I was still not very able to take it all in, how it will finish. It was all in a muddle, you know?

*Yeah... But you were working?*

**[1:55:10]**

I was working right through, yes. It- we- we all lived our lives according... needs. They did their stuff for America. They had their little children. The mother-in-law I knew least. The mother-in-law I knew least. And she wasn't easy- not like my mother. Different approach which I have to learn- I had to learn a bit, to be...

*In which way?*

She meant well... She didn't- she... she offered me, when I expected a baby... or I'd- well, when Jaqui was here, would I like- or even before she thought I would, for the next generation, that's how it was – would I like Daddy's... first... what he wore as- as a – I don't know what you call it.

*Baby gown.*

Baby gown... and I was honestly- I had trouble to find room for myself. So- so that was upsetting me later that I said, "No thank you." But she asked me a question; she didn't say, "Here it is." She was very nice ...really nice woman.

*And she was a refugee herself?*

Yes. And she lost her husband, who was a doctor.

*And she was from Berlin?*

Yes.

*And what was her name?*

...

*Jacqueline: Marga Neufeld...*

Marga Neufeld.

*Jacqueline:* ...and she was a concert pianist – [Arthur] Schnabel's first pupil.

She was a professional... pianist. Marga Neufeld. That's the picture.

*We're going to look at the picture later.*

And she was playing tennis with Schnabel- her- and was his first pupil. Put that in your cup and smoke it- hat and smoke it, or whatever...

*Ok...*

It is full of people who became something for a period of time, isn't it now? And it mostly centres around music.

**[1:57:27]**

*Yes. So, do you think- was it a coincidence that you married somebody who was very musical, or...?*

No. It wasn't[was] to be.

*It was meant to be?*

...Definitely. That flew into my hands... That was a special... Not that I didn't have my say as well. [laughing] I once got quite cross. Jaqui reminded me. I pushed him in the... no, it was just stupid. Just playing about. I pushed him in the bath. He was sitting on top and I said, "Go away." He dropped in there. I don't think we should film that - just remembering it. No, it was a- it was a serious... he took me everywhere and we- every country you can imagine, it was- he was there. And it was lovely.

*You went to many concerts together?*

Mnn. He always explained. Then when Jaqui was born and she was also beginning to develop and it was so lovely to see her making progress together. It was just perfect.



*Tell us about your- your children. You adopted two children?*

Yes... there is Jacqueline I adopted and there were- there was another one. And...

*How old were they when you adopted them? How old... was Jaqui when you adopted her?*

She was booked in her mother's stomach, I always say. She was not born yet. I was told where- home to contact. And she was in a nursing home. Reliable parents. We heard- my father again was at work. And... I had to tell my parents that we can't have kids so they... this is what happened, and I've... they- both the mothers stood on the- outside here, when I came with her. When Daddy and I came with her on the arm, ooh, they stood there. And there was so much love piled- thrown around here for her. As it was. Kids- it's kids and music.

*What did they- what did...?*

The atmosphere here was just right, you know? ...What- what did you say?

*What did they think of adoption? Were they supporting?*

**[1:59:58]**

Oh yes!

*Yes?*

It's the sensible thing to do, isn't it? Someone wants care. You hear; you make inquiries. I didn't, 'cause I didn't know actually how one does that. Or how I would have known that. And I was lucky enough to have parents who are caring. So... That... comes down the generations.

*Yes. And what was it- what did you want to transmit in your... education or...?*

It just happened naturally! We were happy together he and I and she sucked it up by herself she- she's telling me now things I didn't even know we did, that has made an impression on her. Which is nice. Should be, but the world isn't like that. The outside world doesn't work like that.

**[2:00:48]**

*And did you talk about your past to your daughter? Did you talk about...?*

Whatever they wanted, yes. Everything. You know I did- she wanted to go to Breslau to find out in her- by herself. She was so keen. Maybe she's special, but that isn't always the case.

*And in terms of your identity, what sort of identity did you want to transmit, or...?*

I had- the biggest respect was just to be nice to each other and live a nice good life together. Finished. The rest follows, doesn't it? "Do you want to do so and so?" "No." "Why not?" "So and so." "Oh, well you're actually right." Or, "Do you want to do so and so?" "Oh yes. What a good idea. Let's do it. Can we?" "When?" Get diary out, in, out. That's how it should- But slowly, you know? You're not going to waste your time.

*What about being Jewish? Did that come into your...?*

Jewish? That is the only sign. [indicating?] If people want to know if this is a Jewish house they need to look up. We brought it with us from Israel. Charles and I put it up there or he went alone and picked it up. He did several other journeys there. Yes!

*So, it didn't become...*

Nothing!

*...important?*

It's - no. I can't remember anything Jewish ever happening. He played- he sang in the- what?

*Jacqueline:* Sorry. Go on...

No, no – what?

*Jacqueline:* Go on...

He sang in the choir- in the- on the, but he got paid for that.

*Jacqueline:* In a synagogue.

Synagogue.

*He sang in the synagogue?*

Yes, he-

*Which synagogue?*

Well...

*Jacqueline:* I think- was it Hodford Road? Or one of those- oh, sorry, Alyth Gardens.

*Alyth, mn-hnn. He was in a choir in Alyth?*

Yeah.

*But that was- that was it. Not- nothing more?*

*Jacqueline:* He did do the Seder evening in- and at Passover a couple of times.

Here in home? Yeah?

*Jacqueline:* We had Hebrew lessons...

*So little bits and pieces.*

**[2:02:43]**

Yeah. We just- we have quite a lot of books down there. If they're interested, one can look them up. I forget myself. I've got some in that corner. I know where things are all- up to today, I knew where things are. At the moment I'm- everything...

*Jacqueline:* Was your circle with Jewish refugees?

I beg your pardon?

*Jacqueline:* Our community with Jewish refugees?

*Your community. What community- what friends did you have... here in England?*

In England?

*Yeah. Charles and you. What friends... What...?*

Well, I didn't go by the religion. I went by who they are! I really can't go by religion. In fact, ... I- I happen to have very excellent neighbours. We're fine in not religious. Next door neighbours are very nice but they're Chinese. Three houses down there are some more Jews but I'm- I'm not going by Jews; either they fit in or they don't fit in. Accordingly, I like them in my house or accept invitations. I mean, take for instance a very nice Jewish family lives opposite – I think Rina, they are French? And she has one daughter. And she was loving to have a daughter and it was such a feeling in me that I thought she makes a good job of her and I did ask. Recently she comes over and she says- we talk and I say, "We're going to a concert." "Oh, I wish I could take..." I forget her name now. She's how old? Ten or twelve by now.

*Jacqueline:* She just had her Bat Mitzvah two years ago.

It's thirteen? Bat Mitzvah?

*Fourteen she would be now.*

Fourteen. Yeah. And she- for once asked something of me. Usually, she... brings me all sorts of presents in the Jewish holidays. And she says if only she would know something more about music. I can't give her that. They're French, actually, these people. And we'd arranged that we were taking her for the first time in a few days now to a concert where Stephanie plays. Stephanie's my cousin's daughter. So, she's coming as well, now she asked. Didn't she ask for a ticket for herself?

*Jacqueline:* Jenny's playing. Your cousin's granddaughter.

My cousin's granddaughter is playing. So, she is nearer the girl's age and that pleased her. Am I making myself clear?

*Yes, very clear. So, in terms...*

Thank you- with your help.

*In terms of your heritage, what is important for you... of your, let's say, continental heritage?*

I don't know the word for that. I'm satisfied and happy that I was- the way I was brought up. I have lovely memories, as I said before. Nothing more, I don't think.

*And how would you define yourself today in terms of your identity?*

[laughs] I put up with myself actually! I'm cross with myself very often, I say, "Oh, shut up don't moan, you- nothing to moan about. One more moan and you go out of here." [laughing] I'm alone! I can say what I like.

**[2:06:08]**

*You can tell yourself off?*

Yeah definitely.

*But do you feel British, or do you feel...how- How...?*

I feel angry that they don't give us back what we wanted - British. I like Britain. I'm very pleased to be British, yes. And not French or American. Ugh, no. I wouldn't like that. No. Very, very pleased with being British.

*Jacqueline:* But you're partly German as well.

Up to a point.

*Jacqueline:* Ok...

I can't- can't get rid of- when I think deeply about it, that they let themselves go that far. That's a bit much. But we can't judge that anymore and it's finished with. Done. History - we must put up with it and make the best of it and hope it doesn't spread all over.

*And where- where's your home? Where...?*

Here. Here I am at home and when I go to Jaqui, I'm at home there too. She makes me feel at home.

*How do you think did your experience shape your later life? Your experience of...?*

I dare not think about it; I hope I don't suffer any pain and go - like that. But who doesn't? We have to put up with it. And we must do what we can now, to not do a stupid thing like running yourself silly. You know, doing too much of one thing. If you want to do exercises do them, but not every - every day, definitely.

**[2:07:48]**

*But I meant do you think that the experience your- of mi- of emigration and of uprooting, of persecution. Do you think that shaped your later life?*

I daresay. Yes! Oh, I've got a much wider outlook. I wouldn't have gone to all these places with Daddy. I wouldn't have had Charles. Who would I have had? Klaus was gone- to give me. I had some- some of his friends I was in contact with and that would have been maybe something. But who would I have found? I was a sporty kind of person. And anybody... I had lots of boyfriends in those days, you know. That starts when you are that age. But that's about all. I'm, I'm happy here in England. I like England very much.

*So, you think your life would have been different if you hadn't been forced to emigrate? To come...?*

Without doubt. Can't help it. Somebody is coming- is it tomorrow or the day after?

*Jacqueline:* Friday. Yeah. ...Next Friday.

I've asked her to come. She's neither Jewish nor is she- she's a human being whom I met by chance so many years ago. Where was it- in Brent Cross was it? Brent Cross was already built... and I overheard some German spoken behind me. I had someone with me. Hadn't a car yet. Or did I? Doesn't matter. I said to- I heard her say, "I don't know where to live. I've got this to do, that to do..." - in German. And I turned around and I said, "Do I hear you speaking German? Can I help you?" Because I heard she needed *Unterkunft* [accommodation] you know... So, I said, "Do you know, we are go- I'm Ruth Danson and this is..." were you with me or was I alone?

*Jacqueline:* You were alone.

**[2:10:00]**

Alone. “I’m Ruth Danson. I’m married... quite near here...” – I pointed my finger in that direction. “You can walk it in fifteen to twenty minutes or take a bus. Why don’t you- I could tell you the house will be free from so-and-so to so-and-so...”, which was about a fortnight. “Come in if you- if you feel like it come along. I’ll show you.” I hadn’t even asked Charles’s permission or anything. And... she became... a friend! For life! She was here. I shouted loudly. The parents said to the girl on the phone, “Make sure who they are. That seems odd that they allow you...” That doesn’t seem right. You know, you would say that wouldn’t you? And especially being Jewish which they could see I was. Even if we didn’t talk about it. So, a big, big friendship developed over the years. And she’s become a very- she lives in Ireland with her husband and children. And we both like her a lot. And I’ve got a book called “*Der Geschichte der Menschheit*” [The history of mankind] which when those days when I inherited it from Eva and Charles’s lot - it was standing here. I thought, “I can’t read that.” I wasn’t interested yet in speaking in German. I couldn’t even understand half of it. But now if we’d only be given the time, it is so interesting that book! So, I’ve offered it to her when she last came. It was maybe last year or two years ago. I said, “Do you think- I can give you that. You can take it.” She was so pleased.

*Is she German?*

Yeah –

*Yeah.*

Very much. And, and when- was it she who wrote in my book that she was so surprised to get the Jewish person to, to, to make such an offer. She was so surprised. It changed her mind altogether, what- what people can do. And so...

*And Ruth, how do you feel about Germany today?*

**[2:12:23]**

I don’t know enough about it, the policy. I can’t follow now, it’s so quick everything. It’s- I feel she- she [Angela Merkel] promised a lot. Everybody can come in. That must be taken a bit step by step like our new prime minister – what’s her name now? The prime minister?

*Theresa May.*

Theresa- yeah, Theresa May takes her time... and then she comes up with- I think, don't you? ...It's difficult to judge! I mean, who am I to judge what's to come? Everybody's shooting everybody else. Everybody is a crook. It's true! You can't trust! My feeling, if you ask me... I'm not very intel- I mean I've got a reasonable intelligence, but I'm not *gebildet* [an intellectual]- what one calls. I haven't studied anything. I can only think I don't want to hear this now. Can't be disturbed. Because I can't help it... singlehanded. And I'm too old to start something like so many people do now, little groups of helping.

*And what do you feel about let's say your...your, your daughter trying to get German citizenship? How do you feel about that?*

I'm- I'm amazed! We talk about it nearly every day. But there are such a lot of hindrances for us - for her. We talked at table today.

*Yeah...*

I haven't an answer. I don't know the laws enough about it what- who has the right to say this and that and the other. Why should we have it so quiet, so beautiful they said this morning or last night. There is the peace and quiet in the street! There is never a noise here. It's wonderful! And... I don't know. I haven't got an answer for future any more than anyone else.

**[2:14:18]**

*And when did you become naturalised?*

Naturalised? Naturalised?

*British.*

British. I've forgotten. I've got it upstairs somewhere.

*Was that important for you and Charles to become British?*

Yeah, one wants to be something! One doesn't just want to be thrown out of one country and then not- and then contribute to it in whatever way one does. I mean, we didn't take from them. We supplied our own strength, or his- he, particularly, gave pleasure to so many people. And... he was recognized. I was recognized in one way but I made more friends and a



lot of- and I- I had all these good reports from my bosses. So, I was doing all right. ...that... They take time. You can't just jump in to something. I mean, you've got you think about it a bit before you act. But now I've come to a point when I've dragged out all of the past and I've mixed up all the- I haven't got a good way of storing it and, and finding the right bits of paper and stuff...

*It's getting more difficult...*

It is – extremely. Because... one grabs hold of it and - in my case - and then don't want to let it go. Because it's quite interesting. Everything is interesting to read from whatever side one has it.

*Yeah. Ruth, have you got a message for somebody who might watch this interview? ...In the future?*

A message for someone else?

*Yep.*

I can't...

*...Who might watch this... based on your experiences.*

Well, like I said; you've got to be less greedy. Produce something and learn something. Be clever in one way or the other to do- do some- do some good somewhere... whatever little bit. Not only think of yourself. I don't know another word for it. Is there something else I'm talking to you about sometimes? I don't know.

**[2:16:38]**

*Jacqueline:* Be thankful for what you've got, as you said.

As I said...

*Jacqueline:* As you certainly are...

Yeah. And respect other people's views if you- before you make up your mind find out why. ...Blue scarf?

*What about the blue scarf?*

Someone we know... under that name. We're watching! We're not making any comments on it. One thinks one is let down in one way or she- someone is getting a bit greedy. It's not necessarily so. If someone is nowadays not at home to read an email, or didn't make it because there was a delay in the train, one can't immediately say, "That person is no good." Wouldn't you agree?

*Mnn.*

And appreciate what you've had, for goodness' sake... if you've had a good life. If you haven't, well, whose fault was it? And make better. Oh, for goodness' sake I couldn't look into the future like you ask me to. Otherwise, I had to...

*Ruth, is there anything else you'd like to add which we haven't discussed? Is there anything else?*

Well, I admire how you set about all this at the AJR. Eva next door is one of your... one- is Eva Sternmann. She's now retired and she speaks very happily about- it's very useful, she makes herself. Well, I hope it goes on for a long time for all of you, that you enjoy what you're doing. No good to work and saying, "Oh...I got to work." That happens too.

**[2:18:35]**

*Yes... yes. No, we enjoy what we're doing.*

Yeah...

*A great privilege.*

I think so.

*Ruth, I just wanted to- because we talked about Kristallnacht before...*

Yes...

*And there was a bit of a confusion between Kristallnacht and the visit of Hitler to Breslau. Do you remember? So shall we just talk about it at the end again... because you remembered that Hitler came to...*

Oh, I see. Yes, I mixed up something.

*Yeah. So maybe just separately if you could just...? And we can finish with that.*

Yeah. I think Kristallnacht was not the same when Hitler drove through our Breslau. That was not on the same day.

*No, it must have been earlier. Hitler was earlier...*

Yes, in Breslau. That must be a date...

*We think it was 1937.*

Ah, that's it.

*And what can you- what do you remember from that visit?*

That is- from his visit?

Yes...

**[2:19:28]**

I didn't even know he was in Breslau. When I... woke up in the morning, I made an arrangement to go to these people to whom my mother always sends me, that my father is... has been taken... no? I went as a friend... or just to chat. I can't remember. But I went to these people. They were friends of Mum's and Dad's and me. The children were- we must have made some- some arrangement. And then... I came... across the road- you don't think it was that day that Hitler came to- to... when was he in...in Breslau?

*One was- is Kristallnacht, which is November 1938.*

November...

*Other one is- probably we think in '37.*

Yeah.

*But the one- one is with the synagogue burning and the other one...*

Yeah, well I only went- I only saw this guy once. And I was in the middle of crossing the road from that direction where they- these people lived and was on my way home. It was evening. And- and turned around and- “What are they all doing ‘*Heil Hitler*’ for?” And there I see – not very far away like the hills from here. “Oh, I better stay here and watch this now or rather interested in seeing what's going on.” So, then I thought, “Oh, you must lift up your arm as well.” And by that time, he'd already- one could already- I could see him. I didn't know anyone in that crowd and they didn't look at me, cause they all looked at Hitler. And then it was gone. And then I marched back home, which was only two minutes round the corner- like here, the corner. And I told Mum about it. And the other thing was... When it was...

*Sorry to interrupt you. What did your mum say when you came home?*

**[2:21:30]**

“Well, I'm glad you are here.” And... some things we said; there was nothing special. It's just... one wants to keep away from everything, you see?

*Yeah.*

And then about the cushions... I told you, that we always laid the cushions on top of the phone when there was sort of something and we had... to listen.

*You were worried that somebody else might listen?*

Yes, that somebody was- might listen although it was, was... on the thing. That was the main thing.

*And Kristallnacht: you saw the synagogue burn?*

Yes... that I did. But I didn't know it was the synagogue till somebody then told me, "That is what's happening. And your father is being taken in now." It was all must have been within days or hours. It must have been some days in between.

*And where were you when you saw that- when you saw...?*

On that same spot unfortunately...

*Aha.*

...where it was also, with the same spot. You see?

*That's why maybe it was confusing...*

... if you go twice to catch a train here, you don't just remember exactly...

*Mn-hnn.*

But it was. There were many moments where- when Hitler was in power, that you were not comfortable. Like you were sitting in a pram - in a pram! - in a tram. It was evening and you could see fights outside. Well, I took that as being fights, but of course now I know it was a Jew underneath, you know? Must've been, 'cause we didn't talk about it at home.

*No. And you said you couldn't go to the cinema?*

Cinema? No - no way.

*Or probably the park. Could you go to the park? Continue to...?*

Well, that was in Czechoslovakia the case that you know "*unerwünscht*" [unwanted]... I don't see- I saw that yet. Not in my life I didn't see. I saw it in other people's photographs. It could have gone. ...For me it was a pity. I cycled, you see? For me it was a pity... that I couldn't go to the cinema. Because I loved the cinema, and saw all the more and then had that ship. I sat there and I had heard English. I had learnt a little English.

**[2:24:01]**

*Did you remember what films you saw in Breslau? Do you remember anything you saw - in the cinema?*

No. But somewhere I had written out the film that they were giving on that night in the sh- in the- in the ship. It doesn't matter.

*Jacqueline:* In your letter?

Which what? In my letter?

*Ah, OK. We're going to look at the letter. OK Ruth. Thank you very much just for- it's very difficult...*

Wasn't that too long?

No, it was excellent. Is there anything else you'd like to add which I haven't asked you?

Anything else you can think of? The time is now...

*Jacqueline:* What about going to the Leon- Levys? You didn't mention that... You were sent out on Kristallnacht...

Well, I left that alone now because I rather messed it up- when one did that, sort of thing. If one knew... "go and...", "go and tell them..." or "go and do that". These little- it's not worth talking about. I think keep it like two different...yeah. Did- they were very, very- where did they go? They didn't go to America; they had to go somewhere else, so one lost touch. I lost touch with them.

*Who were they? Family friends?*

Yes.

*And what were they called?*

Leon-Levy.

*Leon...*

Might they be Jewish? [laughs] Leon- Levys, yes. Lovely people, all. Yeah...

*OK, Ruth. I would say thank you very, very much for this interview.*

Wasn't it terribly long?

*No, it wasn't terribly long...*

So sorry to keep you...

*...It was excellent. And what we're going to do now is... we're going to have your daughter and nephew come in and then we're going to look at some of your photographs and documents.*

Oh – oh, good. Can I do anything to say - without showing off - that she's so wonderful. But I think I rather swallow that.

*I think you can say it and you are saying it. And we're still filming at the moment, so...*

She's really so good to me. I always try- terribly nice to have that. If I didn't have it I really would have lost out, wouldn't I? I would have to go one of those homes. You're not filming that. Please! We're finished now, she said.

*Cameraman: Very good.*

**[2:26:30]**

**[Interview addition with Jacqueline, Ruth's daughter and Peter, her nephew, son of Klaus]**

**[2:26:40]**

Ready?

[general talk around preparation to start]

*Ruth, could I please ask you to introduce everyone in this room?*

The lady on my left is my lovely daughter Jacqueline Ann Danson. And the gentleman on my right is my lovely nephew, Peter Boswell.

*Thank you. So, I'd like to ask you both, Jacqueline and Peter - you've been listening in to the interviews - is there any- anything you would like to comment on or add to your aunt's or to your mother's story? ...Jacqueline, would you like to start?*

*Jacqueline:* Sure. I would first of all like to say how proud I am to be part of your community. And I would also like to say that for all of the dreadful events of the war... something good has come of it, because I would not be your child if it were not for that.

That's true.

*Jacqueline:* And so, I'm very grateful for that and I'm very grateful for my... being completely as if I were a biological child, of being brought in to your wonderful community which is a huge privilege. And... to add to what you were saying about our view of German and Germany, I very much consider myself part German and that's because of the wonderful aspects of Germany that- they weren't all wonderful. But there's the culture, the food and the language. And you've brought me up with those, and they're part of who I am and I'm very proud of that.

Thank you...

*Jacqueline:* Proud to be the daughter- adopted daughter. The same feeling the same as a biological daughter...

Thank you.

*Jacqueline:* ...of German-Jewish parents and wonderful people such as you and Daddy. So, no- thank you to you. I'm so pleased I chose you.

Thank you. Thank you. That's good.

*Thank you, Jacqueline.*

*Jacqueline:* Thank you.

*Peter:* Am I going on?

*Yes - Peter.*



[2:28:33]

*Peter:* Well, I'm- I'm delighted to be here as well and I think from my point of view I'm particularly pleased because there was unfortunately something of a gap when we sort of lost touch for some years. And it's wonderful to sort of have corrected that. And at the same time, it's also very clear hearing what Ruth's been saying about how important Klaus was to her in her life. And... of course we lost Klaus in 1974. And you know he- he- I'm pretty confident that he would be- he could be up there right now....

Yes – he would love it.

*Peter:* ...chipping in with witty comments I'm certain. And, and it's, it's lovely to hear from Ruth aspects of Klaus's life that we had- I had no, no idea of. So, this, this has been a- it's been a wonderful experience and I'm delighted that we have been able to tease Ruth into taking part.

Thank you. Without you it would have been not so easy, believe me.

*Peter, maybe just tell us briefly what happened to your... father.*

*Peter:* Yes, very briefly... Klaus – sorry, I'm a bit emotional –

Yes, me too.

*Peter:* Klaus was- was, was dispatched to... hotel school in the south France by his father who obviously had the foresight to see what was coming. And he spent a- a couple of years working in Juan-les-Pins... I believe and perhaps Nice as well. ...Pretty uncomfortable way of life. He... didn't find it very easy but he, he started the- that's how he started in the catering business. The war started and he was interned as an enemy alien by the... by the French authorities. And during the course of the early part of the war was effectively interned, after which the fall of France took place. And shortly after that he again - probably getting the inspiration from his father - could kind of see what was coming and escaped across the Pyrenees in a very arduous walk into Spain, where he was then interned for two years in the infamous Miranda prison camp in northern Spain near Burgos. And after a great deal of effort by his father and his family, he was able to be repatriated and the family was reunited. And we then heard that wonderful moment... when he surprised Ruth by arriving at her place of

work near Baker Street with a suitcase and... looking for bus fare home – which you were able to provide!

[2:30:58]

Yes, I was!

*Jacqueline:* And bearing nylon stockings which was rather a luxury in the war years.

*Yeah...*

*Peter:* So - yeah.

Thank you.

*Thank you very much. Ruth, is there anything you'd like to say to your daughter or to your nephew?*

Thank you all! Not only my daughter and my Peter here, my nephew. Also, for you, that you took this enormous trouble to take my story to the AJR. I really think that is fantastic.

*Jacqueline:* And if I might just expand on that- sorry, just to add one more comment. When I said that I was very proud to be part of your - your community, I actually meant the German and, and European Jewish community as well.

Ah yes.

*Jacqueline:* I know that we're secular Jews, but I was in that AJR seminar the other day and I was filled with pride to be associated with such people - filled with pride. Thank you for making that possible.

Thank you.

*OK. So, all of you, thank you very much for taking part in this.*

Thank you all.

*Peter:* Yes. Thank you.

*Jacqueline:* Thank you.

Thank you.

**[End of interview]**

**[2:32:20]**

**[2:32:24]**

**[Start of photographs and documents]**

### **Document 1**

*Ruth, I'm going to ask you please to read the letter you wrote from The SS Manhattan on your journey to England which you wrote to your father. Could you please read it?*

Yes, will do.

This says here, "United States Line, Lines on board SS Manhattan." "*Lieber Vati! Eben kam Dein Brief, lieber Brief, es war am 21.3.1939 geschrieben. Herzlichen Dank dafür. Ich habe so viele neue Eindrücke auf dem Schiff gesammelt, dass ich gar nicht weiß, was ich zuerst schildern soll. Also, wir fahren von Berlin um 8 Uhr früh weg und kam um, um 1/2 12 in Hamburg an. Unterwegs lernten wir noch eine sehr nette Dame kennen, welche auch mit der „Manhattan“ aber bis Amerika fährt. Mit ihr zusammen nahmen wir eine Tasse - Taxe und fahren zur United States Lines nur wir - wo wir über eine Stunde zubrachten. Wir mussten Billetts holen, Koffer zum Zoll abfertigen, Bordgeld leider nur für Mutti einzahlen + dazu eine unendliche Fülle. Dann gingen wir Mittag Essen und um 1/2 6 mussten wir uns wieder bei der U.S.L. einfinden. Dort warteten wir wieder so einige Zeit bis endlich ein Autobus vorfuhr, der die ... blau behoste und bejackte Fahr...stuhl...führer und Auskunftgeber. Also das waren Fahrstuhlführer und Auskunftgeber. Wir ließen uns unsere Kabinenummer B35 geben und gingen b...beziehungsweise fahren mit dem Elevator rauf auf B Deck. Dort ließen wir uns das Zimmer zeigen. Wie üblich! Leider eine Innenkabine und es ist sehr heiß- ob den ganzen Tag und Nacht lass ich – aber den ganzen Tag und Nacht lasse ich den, lasse ich den Ventilator mit riesigem Getöse laufen. Heute weiß ich die Einzelheiten nicht mehr ganz genau, aber alles das, was ich hier höre und sehe, lässt sich elend schlecht schreiben. Gleich am ersten Abend*

*waren wir im Kino- erst Mickey Mouse, dann Ice Foll...ies, Ice Follies mit Joan Crawford- natürlich Englisch. Der letzte Teil -über eine halbe Stunde- war ein unglaublich guter Farbenfilm. Ich habe mir schon den Gym...nastikram, Schwimmbad, das, das Gymnastik..., die Gymnastik, Schwimmbad und Tennisplatz, Kinderzimmer, Läden, Rauchsalon, Tanzdiele – mit Jazzkapelle- und alle möglichen Schlupfwinkel angesehen. Im Sommer – ne – im Zimmer haben wir Telefon an, also Elli Fein ist auch an Bord. Sie fährt ebenfalls bis Southampton. Heute früh klingelte es. Ich ging ans Telefon: “Hallo? Good morning! How do you do? Yes, at a quarter to ten we will meet us in the dining room. Good-bye! Auch war ich gestern an der Grenze zum Seekrankwerden, aber ich ging an Deck. Die Luft wirkte Wunder. Ich erholte mich zwar, aber ich ging bis vorne an die Spitze, wo ein enormer Sturm war. Und als ich runterkam, hatte ich große Kopfschmerzen. Dagegen nahm ich Pyramidon und auch dieses verschwand auf Wunsch. Also heute sind wir nun im Hafen von Le Havre. Ich gehe mit Mutti, wenn es nichts kostet, von Schiff. Wir haben zwölf Stunden Aufenthalt. Jetzt ist es zehn Uhr. Um zehn Uhr abends geht das Schiff erst wieder los. Ich werfe diesen Brief vor Mittag in Le Havre ein, den Brief an Klaus auch. Ich bin gerade auf der Post in Le Havre. Muss den Brief einwerfen, von Le Havre mehr – Kuss Deine Ruth*

Translation of Ruth’s letter to her father:

Dear Daddy!

I have just received your lovely letter from 21.3.1939. Thanks so much! I have had so many new impressions on the ship that I don’t know where to start. Well, we left Berlin at 8 o’clock in the morning and arrived in Hamburg at 11.30. On the way we met a very nice lady, who will also travel on the “Manhattan” – however to America. Together with her we took a cab and went to United States Lines, where we spent a bit more than an hour. We had to get tickets, check in suitcase at customs, pay a fee for Mummy only and a lot of other things. Then we had lunch and at half past 5 we had to be back at the U.S.L. There we had to wait again until a bus came, ...the lift attendant and informant – dressed in navy trousers and jacket... We received our cabin number B 35 and took the elevator up to B deck. There we were shown to our room. As usual! What a pity, only an interior cabin and it is very hot – ... but the whole day and night I let the fan on which makes a lot of noise. Today I cannot remember all the details, but it is hard to describe everything I hear and see. Right on the first evening we went to the cinema – first Mickey Mouse and then “Ice follies” with Joan Crawford – of course in English. The last part – more than half an hour long – was an unbelievably good colour film. I have discovered the gym, the pool, the tennis court, the

children's room, shops, smoking room, dance area – with jazz band – and all other kinds of nooks. We have a telephone in our room and Elli Fein is also on board. She will travel to Southampton as well. This morning [the phone] rang. I picked up: "Hello? Good morning! How do you do? Yes, at a quarter to ten we will meet in the dining room. Good-bye! Also, I was on the verge to sea sickness yesterday, but I went on deck. The fresh air helped tremendously. I recovered indeed, but I went to the front of the ship, where it was stormy. When I came back downstairs, I had a bad headache. I took Pyramidon and then the headache disappeared as I had hoped. Well, today we are in the harbour of Le Havre. If it is free of charge, then Mummy and I will go ashore. We have 12 hours ashore. Now it is 10 o'clock. At ten o'clock in the evening the ship will leave. I will post this letter before noon in Le Havre, and the letter for Klaus, too. I am right now at the post office in Le Havre. I have to post the letter. Soon more about Le Havre – Kiss, yours Ruth

*Bea: And Ruth, what is the date of the letter?*

The letter was- I mentioned it. It was the *einundzwanzigster März- der einundzwanzig drei neunzehnneununddreißig...-Anfang März, ich bin geboren 24, 34... Vierzehn Jahre.* [21<sup>st</sup> March 1939, beginning of March, I was born 24...34...fourteen years]

*Bea: Vierzehn Jahre?*

Ja.

*Bea: Vierzehn*

*Noch sehr kindlich... [Still very naive] Es wird doch hoffentlich nicht aufgenommen?!  
Nein...*

*Bea: Danke.*

*Das gibt's nicht – das ist gemein. [laughs] Oh, Gott...*

*Bea: OK... It's perfect.*

*So sieht's aus...Die arme Königin, die muss das immer mitmachen.*

**[2:40:10]**

*Show it again – to the camera.*

**Photo 1**

The photograph we're looking at now are of my great grandparents and they're called – I've got it here - Dr. Samuel Karfunkel and Gottliebe Karfunkel geborene [née] Harder.

**Photo 2**

Now? This photograph shows the grandparents of Charles in 1924.

**Photo 3**

On this photo we see Eugen Boronow – *Vati*. '*Vati*'s 'father'. That is my grandfather. And lower down you see *Oma Franner*... and *Oma Liesl* with us two children Ruth and- *und Klaus und mein Vater und meine Mutter. Ne- nicht mein Vater, der hat's anscheinend genommen. So also falsch. Ich kann das nicht lesen von der Seite.* [...and Klaus and my father and my mother. No, not my father, looks like he took the photo. Wrong. I can't read it on that side] Franner is Mutti's... 'mother'. *Oma Franner*. Franner is Mutti's mother.

*When was it taken? 19...26 maybe? '27?*

It doesn't say. But I am looking very young. It must have been... four... '24... '25, '26 probably. Between 'six and 'seven. Yes, that's probably right. Yeah, you see..

**Photo 4**

That is my whole family from my mother's side. Klaus is sit- I'm starting from there, where Klaus sits. That is my brother. Then- and I'm sitting on the right in the- next to Inge with- we both hold dolls. Let's say the first on the left is Klaus. Then comes Peter. Then comes Grandma. Then Grandma- *Oma Franner*... *Oma- Oma Liesl*, that is. Then comes... forgotten his name now. The youngest one. Then comes I and then Inge with- and then on the other side is Eva and... her brother. My, my older cousins. I have forgotten his name now.

*Where was...?*

[2:42:52]

It's written at the back; I can't find it.

*Where was it taken? In Breslau?*

Yes.

*And when, roughly?*

Well... By the look of us with dolls, I don't know... If it doesn't say it behind there, I don't know. We have to guess.

*OK. In the thirties.*

*'Prinz' heißt der Hund. Wann muss ich reden? [The dog's name was 'Prinz'. When shall I speak?]*

*Bea: Now, please.*

### **Photo 5**

*Ja wann das denn, welches Jahr? Was wird das sein?*

Bea: Wissen wir nicht.

*Das ist mein Vater in Breslau mit seinem Hund, 'Prinz – genannt. Soll ich das sagen?*

*Bea: Ja.]*

Also bitteschön... sieht der nicht nett aus, der Klaus?

*We are talking about this picture with your nanny. Who is on the picture please?*

*Darf ich nochmal sehen, was Nanny? Nanny? Unsere, unsere... [Can I see that again? Nanny?]]*

*In English. In English please...*

Our help in the house. Our cleaner. Our maid. Our maid. What was she called? Is it here?

*Steht das hier? [Is that written here?]*

Anyway- with her son? Is that her son?

I can't see it from here now. Must come a bit nearer. Because they're so similar. This one is...

*No, the right one. The right one.*

**[2:44:28]**

Yes, it's her son.

*And who else is on the picture?*

Klaus, *ich* [I] *und unser-* our maid.

*And where is it?*

On our balcony.

*And what's the year? It says it? Does it?*

Thirty-six [1936] in *Mai*.

*In Breslau?*

Yeah.

*Thank you.*

### **Photo 6**

*Auf diesem Bild sehe ich Klaus und mich auf der Gartenstraße 48, 84, 48... in meines Vaters Haus..... in the flat of my father. And it shows Klaus und Ruth. That's all!*

### **Photo 7**

*Your mother...*



This this is my mother, sitting very comfortably in her deckchair in Kleinburgstraße 13 *auf dem Balkon und...strickt?* [sitting on the balcony knitting]

### **Photo 8**

*Yes, please.*

This photograph with me and my doll. That was a very wonderful doll. The hair was my mother's originally and it was then put on to this doll. It was made into a wig. And I went for walks with her in prams and people thought it was a baby.

*And when was it taken? How old were you? Maybe 1928, '29?*

Yeah, roughly like that.

[2:46:28]

### **Photo 9**

*Yes please. Thank you, Ruth.*

Yeah. This picture shows Leni *und* Ruth- and Ruth on the boat that- on the river Oder. In 1937. For Whitsun- At Whitsun time. On holiday.

### **Photo 10**

This is me parading my new outfit, just before we emigrated. And it has been taken in the winter in the snow in the back garden of our flat in... Breslau.

### **Photo 11**

This is myself... arriving- a passport photograph. Arriving in England.

### **Photo 12**

*Yes, please Ruth.*

This shows my mother Kate and Ruth in 1939, in Hyde Park. Outside Hyde Park. Thank you.

**Photo 13**

*Is this the reunion, in London?*

In June 1939. A brief spell of being together before the war... in, in- Klaus, Mutti and Ruth. That's all of us. Three of us, for a brief period. He's now going back again to France. And then the war will break out and we won't see him for years.

Is that all right?

[brief comments: organising photos]

[2:48:37]

**Photo 14**

*Yes please.*

This photograph shows the house, Bunce Court, from the garden side.

**Photo 15**

So, this one is... ..This one is Ursel, Hanni Salomon, Erika Loebel, Ruth Boronow, Dudu, Lore Feibuss in the Bluebell Wood, 1939. In Bunce Court.

**Photo 16**

This one shows... which one is it you're doing?

This one shows Kenways having a very cosy lunch on- at the weekend. That's all.

*Which year? 1939?*

*Das...* Yes, I think so. Yes. Yes -1939.

**Photo 17**

This picture is my mother with her pupils, coming back from the examination in 1942.

Whether they have passed... their piano certificates. And they usually came back every year. None had usually missed anything, so they were all very nice. That is a lovely photo. I like that.

**Photo 18**

This photograph shows me working in the workroom; 'war work' it was called. Ruth in Bruton Street in 1945. My whole group of people who were sewing for... for the war.

*And where are you?*

I'm sitting on the very left of the picture, as you look at it... and... that's it. And Mrs. Heinzitz is in the middle standing up. She owns all that area. She, she, she had- that was her business.

[2:50:58]

**Photo 19**

This is- this is lovely big Lyndhurst Road flat of mine, and it shows Ruth on the left. Then Kay... and my mother and Franzel, the wife of Klaus's son Peter.

**Photo 20**

This is taken on my wedding day, in 1949. Hampstead Town Hall in December 17<sup>th</sup>. Our- our wedding.

**Photo 21**

1950. Charles as Rodolfo in '*La Bohème*'.

**Photo 22**

This is myself and Charles and Helen and Jaqui. What was it? What was it? What year was it?

*Does it say?*

2005. ...2005.

It must have been- I don't know what was the occasion. Maybe it was Jaqui's...

*With your daughters.*

Yeah, maybe it was Jaqui's birthday or something.

*Cameraman: 28<sup>th</sup> of December.*

Yeah. That was Jaqui's birthday.

## **Document 2**

Oh. This is a postcard from Buchenwald. This is seven - twelve -1938 from my father.

## **Document 3 – reverse side of postcard**

That is the standard package they usually wrote. "We are well..." and "Thank you very much." And, "Don't worry about me." "Hopefully you are alright." Sends his love. My father.

*Ruth, thank you very, very much for sharing your photographs and your story and this postcard with us. And I hope it wasn't too exhausting.*

And I can't thank you enough for coming and taking such fantastic care of me and Jaqui and everything. And explaining. And it just... it's just overwhelms me. And thank you, thank you very much. If you do this sort of work, it is gold. Thank you.

*Thank you.*

**[End of photos and documents]**

**[2:54:35]**