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### Interview Transcript Title Page

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	157

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Hoffner
<b>Forename:</b>	Daisy
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	16 January 1924
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Berlin, Germany

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<b>Location of Interview:</b>	London
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
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**REFUGEE VOICES**

**Interview No.** RV157  
**NAME:** Daisy Hoffner  
**DATE:** 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2015  
**LOCATION:** London, UK  
**INTERVIEWER:** Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

**[Part One]**

**[0:00:00]**

*Today is the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2015, and we are conducting an interview with Daisy Hoffner.  
My name is Bea Lewkowicz, and we are in London.*

*Can you please tell me your name?*

Daisy Hoffner.

*And where were you born?*

In Berlin.

*And when were your born?*

16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1924.

*Daisy, thank you very much for having agreed to be interviewed for Refugee Voices. Could you tell us a little bit please about your family background, for the beginning?*

Well, both my parents were Berliners. They were both born in Berlin, which is quite rare nowadays. Most of the Berliners seem to come from everywhere else. And, ...well, my father was a doctor. And I was born in the Kleiststraße, in what was later West Berlin. Largely brought up by a nanny, because my mother [half laughs] wasn't really very keen on little children. And... my earliest memory is of my nanny, who died when I was four years— no I think I must have been two or three years old. And she was like my mother; she really did the — bringing me up. And then I got another one, who was Fräulein Aul, whom we called 'Aulchen'. Who became my, shall we say, second or third mother. My mother was mainly interested in going shopping on the Kurfürstendam, buying things, and exchanging them the next day. [laughs] So... My father... never wanted to belong to the Jewish Community and I think they - in German one had to officially belong to a religious... One paid something like *Kirchensteuer* or *Gemeindesteuer*. I don't know.

**[0:02:35]**

Anyway, they left the Jewish community. My mother had no say in this. My father did. And when I was six years old – ridiculous – I was taken to be baptised in the Kaiser–Wilhelm–Gedächtnis-Kirche. So I grew up, as being nothing very much; I was Jewish all right by origin and if you want to say, genetically. However, I knew nothing about being Jewish, nor had I any interest in it. In fact, I didn't even know about my Jewish origins until I was ten. When I went to the Viktoria-Luisen-Schule, the Lyzeum, in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, and we had to fill in a questionnaire proving our Aryan origins. Little difficult for me, but I didn't know. And my parents didn't dare tell me. So what happened is that my *Kinderfräulein*, Aulchen, Fräulein Aul, took me to the *Eiskonditorei*, the *Ei-Ko*, somewhere in the Uhlandstraße, and said, "I have to tell you something." And she bought me the biggest ice cream [laughing] one could find, to comfort me. And she said, "I must tell you, you're not totally Aryan, you know? You've got one Jewish grandmother." I only had one grandmother left alive. My paternal grandfather died quite a long time ago from tongue c... cancer of the tongue, and my... mother's mother committed suicide, because a lot of money was lost in the inflation, and she couldn't bear that. And my paternal...maternal grandfather died from something or other, much earlier. So, there was only this one grandmother, Oma Feller, Felizia. That was the only one who was left, and I was ...supposedly, only the offspring of one Jewish grandmother. Well, I took this to heart, but I thought I could bear one Jewish grandmother. And then this one grandmother used to take me and my cousin for coffee and a *Kirschtorte*

*mit Schokoladenboden* [cherry cake with a chocolate base], once a week, am Olivaer Platz I think it was called Café Reimann. And I had a cousin, three years older than I was, and one Sunday my cousin and I, we always went to play ‘*Hopse*’[skip]. You know, one of these games with little stones where you hop along squares. And my cousin Inge said, “Do you know, I’ve found out something.” And I said, “What have you found?” And she said, “You know, we’re really Jewish. Oma, the only one who is left alive is still a member of the *Jüdische Gemeinde*, of the Jewish Community. So shock-horror for me. I belonged to this, by now, infamous lot of people, the Jews. So I was rather lost, because I couldn’t really go back to a Jewish Youth Group movement, whatever. And I couldn’t go to the Aryan ones either, because I was jolly well “*nicht-aris*ch”. However, my bosom pal, at the Viktoria- Luisen-Schule, was Eva, Eva John, who was half-Jewish. Her mother was Jewish non-practicing, atheist, whatever you like, and her father was not Jewish. And her mother’s sister had become an ardent Quaker.

[0:07:00]

And Eva said to me, “Do you know the Quakers are starting a children’s group, for youngsters between twelve and sixteen, who are the children of parents who suffer some sort of discrimination - persecution. The children of trade-unionists, communists, little bit Jewish, you know, one Jewish grandparent, half-Jewish, or like me, genetically completely Jewish, but not of the Jewish religion.” So Eva said, “And we have a *Gruppenabend*, meeting every Monday evening in Quaker Büro . Come, we must join this.” So I did. And that became my social life, if you like. It was the only place where I could go. I was the youngest. We were from twelve to sixteen. And every Monday evening, we had this Gruppen meeting, and we would discuss. The Quakers were pacifist, of course, and there were, some of us were the children of, well, birth-right Quakers, and had trouble because the parents would not swear an oath of loyalty to the Führer, and... refused to join the party. You know. All that. We were a very mixed group. Some working class, trade union - children of trade-unionists, some of them middle class Jewish, a bit Jewish. You know- like me. But anyway, that was my life. When I was – how old was I – fourteen, fifteen, we had heard about the Kindertransport. I was by that time could no longer go to school. I was chucked out, for being Jewish. And we’d had a *Gruppenabend* again on the Monday evening and we used to be Quaker Bureau was near Bahnhof Friedrichstraße. Then, it was called I think Prinz- Louis- Ferdinand Straße [Berlin Mitte, today Planckstraße] or something like that. And we used to walk back across

the Tiergarten in the evening. It was an evening meeting; some of us were working, so it was from six to eight, I think it must have been. And on that Monday evening it had been drizzling during the day, then stopped and we were walking home from the group meeting. And then one of us, one of the boys, Gert, who's now Bern- Brent in Australia. But then he was Gert Bernstein, and he was like me, of Jewish origin, but totally non-Jewish orientation. And he said, "Oh, Gott! Do you know, I forgot my raincoat?" But then he said, "No, I can't be bothered to go back. I'll go and get it tomorrow morning." Next morning, I was... as there was no more school for me I was at home. The phone went. Gert: "I'm here at the Quaker Bureau. Come quickly! They're registering us for the Kindertransport." So I got back to the Prinz-Louis-Ferdinand Straße, brought my form back and went quickly back to apply for a place. And there was a possibility of England, Holland or Sweden. You could put it down. But my father said, "Go to England. There's water in between. That's farther away from Germany. That's safer." So I put myself down for a place on a transport to England. And on the- and then, I don't know how many weeks later, Gert, who'd left his raincoat behind, got on the earlier transport, which was the very first one, I think. I think that must have been at the end of December, mid-December, I'm not too sure. Anyway, he was on that one, and I got a place on the second one, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 1939. So that's how I came to England.

**[0:11:41]**

*Thank you Daisy. So before we get on to your journey, let's just go back a little bit. If you could tell us a little bit more about your parents? Your father, what was his profession? What circles did they move? Just to give us a picture.*

Well my father worked as, what was a specialist for *Haut- und Geschlechtskrankheiten* - skin and venereal disease, I suppose. He worked from home. We lived, first of all, I was born in the Kleiststraße because when the- the war ended I think it was quite difficult to find accommodation in Berlin. I don't know, but I believe it was. Then we moved to the Kurfürstendamm 215, and I remember that very vividly, because I remember standing on the balcony overlooking the Kurfürstendamm and a group of people marching, singing, and then there was street fighting. It was the Nazis, the SA [Sturmabteilung – Storm troopers or Brownshirts] or whatever, and a group of Communists. And there were cafés down there, and there were- everybody ran. And I looked on. I couldn't look over the balustrades, but there were holes in the... brickwork. I looked through that. That is an early memory I have. And

my father of course was very unhappy that now he was Jewish, couldn't practice any more. Their best friends were the Norton's, who were, like us, Jewish, except that they never converted but also totally non-practicing. And his other best friend was Eugen Morae, who was not Jewish, and whom he knew from the *Studentenverbindung* [fraternity]. Those were friends. They didn't really have a very large circle. My mother was not exactly a house-wife. As I said before, she couldn't cook; we had the maids to do it. And to bring up children was not her scene either. So... And, they led very different lives. My mother used to be a very early riser. My father never went to bed until twelve o'clock at night, and used to go promenading *auf dem* Kurfürstendamm...when my mother was already asleep, in bed. So, how they ever managed to be married to each other, I don't know.

**[0:14:41]**

*How did they meet? Do you know how them met, or...?*

I think they met at a ball. Because my mother came from a very well-heeled family. In fact, she was an *eine Erbin* – an heiress. My father at the time was a medical student, very good looking. And... ja, I think my mother was twenty, twenty-one when they got married. They were very young. My father managed to lose all her dowry, which was ample, by investing it in German Government bonds. And during the inflation – when was that? – twenty-four, twenty-six, whenever. So that was, that was my Papa! What else shall I tell you about my parents?

*You said your earliest memory was to do with the nanny - your first nanny.*

Ja. Frau Lietze. She died. And I remember being taken to visit her in hospital. I think you know looking with hindsight now, she must have had a cancer of the colon or something like that. She was certainly a woman in her sixties, I would say.

*So you were very close to the nanny?*

Oh, that was my- that was my mother!

*And you said that you were baptised when you were six. What about- were you all baptised together? Were your parents as well, or...?*

No, I was. My parents must have been baptised before, I suppose. I don't really know!

*And after you were baptised, did they do anything Christian, or was it just a formality?*

**[0:16:35]**

My parents, never. But I went to church with Aulchen, every Sunday.

*And did you like it?*

Yes, [laughing] I did. And I said my prayers every night with Aulchen.

*Yeah. And do you remember with friends at school? Can you tell us a little bit about primary school? What school did you go to?*

I went to a private primary school - what was her name? Founded by Frau Ruban or some such name, and she ran it together with her son. I think he was called 'Wölfchen' [chuckles] - Wolfgang. And, my- I. I had a boyfriend, who was a great Nazi. [laughs] Heinz. You know we were six, seven... Yes, and then I came to the Viktoria-Luisen-Schule, but as I had learnt to write and read at a very early stage - at very early, no? Because when I was - Oh, I don't know, I must have been four or five, I begged them to teach me to read. I wanted to read. So Aulchen took me to the- I think it was called the Elefantenberg in the zoo in Berlin where I sat with my book, with a *Fibel*, and learnt to read. So when I came to the Sexta [(Latin First year in grammar school/Gymnasium, year 5)], at the Viktoria-Luisen-Schule I knew everything they were teaching in the Sexta, and I have missed one form. I went immediately into the next form. Into the- I think it was the Quinta.

**[0:18:36]**

*So you seem to have a very good memory. Do you remember 1933? Do you remember when Hitler came to power, actually?*



Sorry?

*Do you remember 1933? Do you remember when Hitler came to power? Do you have any memories?*

Yes. Yes.

*Can you share them with us?*

Yes. I remember when Hitler came to power because for some reason I was out in the street with my father, and there was a gate, or door being being banged, and my father said, "Hah-hah. That's the ridiculous Hitler coming to power." He didn't take it seriously. He thought the whole giggle couldn't last more than six months. Yes, I remember that.

*But at that point you didn't feel that you personally were in danger at all?*

**[0:19:26]**

No, nothing...nothing. And I remember later, when they started...that must have been after Kristallnacht you know, when I got up in the morning, they said that they had been in the house. You know, of course we lived in a flat. Like every- People didn't live in houses in Berlin. And, and that they had come, that the Gestapo had come, and that they were all, you know, my Aulchen and my parents were terrified. I slept; I knew nothing. And they walked- but they went upstairs. And they did not come for my father. And the reason, as we found later was, because my father had already received orders to get out of Germany. By that time, we were *staatenlos*. Because my father, in spite of being born in Berlin, was not - was a naturalised German. My mother was ...long way back you know, from Ostpreußen. But my father, my father's parents were born in Poland. I'm not quite sure where- ja, I do know. My, my, my grandmother Oma Feller was born either in Sabiaca or in Jarocin/Javocin in Wroclaw; she lived in one and later, and was born in the other. And there again, my father's parents were very ill-matched, because my gran, Oma Felizia was a very cultured, educated woman. Spoke good French. Spoke excellent German. However, her father, they had silk factories, and her father was a- liked the good life. So he used to go to the World Fair in Paris

– regularly - and lost all the money. Now he was left. He had two daughters, my Oma Felizia, and her sister Bronislava, and a son. But for the daughters there was no dowry left, so he had to get them married off to whomever will have them. So my Oma Felizia was married to my Opa Emanuel, who didn't speak...whose father was a *Draufgänger* [daredevil], as far as I know, and who completely ruled off his family, and wanted nothing to do with it.

*But do you remember your Oma Felizia? Did you go and visit her? Were you close to her?*

**[0:22:32]**

My Oma Felizia, yes, oh, yes. In fact, my aunt, my father's sister, with whom he ended up by not being on speaking terms, lived at Feliz...Oma Feller's because her husband, uncle Hans, had died. Now that's another story, because in fact Uncle Hans had joined the Nazi party. His real name was Hans Kohn, but he called himself Hans Kolson. And when he died, from kidney ...kidney problems, to the Jewish family's horror, a delegation from the Nazi Party [laughing incredulously] arrived at the funeral...for *Genossen* Hans Kolson! So there you are.

*So that was...so she lived- Where did she live, your Oma?*

Am Olivaer Platz, Bayerische Straße Nummer 6. And I still remember the phone Nummer: Olivaer 14-33.

*That's amazing that you remember that. But, so you said, as you didn't know that she was Jewish. So did she not talk about anything? For you, as a child, there were no obvious signs to signify that...?*

Nothing...nothing. I was happy with my Quaker *Gruppe*, ...with whom I stayed in touch.

*So in which year - when did you join the Quaker group?*

I was twelve.

*Ok, so, 1936.*

1936. Ja.

*So when, when you had this conversation with your nanny in the ice-cream shop, when was that?*

Before...

*And was it because- Did you want to join a youth group?*

Well, I would have liked to join the B- BDM or the VA.

*What's the 'Vau-A' for?*

*'Verein der Auslandsdeutschen', nicht? Something like that.*

*Yeah, and for that you needed the proof, the Aryan...*

Ja. Ja.

**[0:24:55]**

*So at the point where you joined the...the Quakers you were still in the- but you were still in the gymnasium... at that point?*

Ja. Because that was my bosom pal Eva – Eva John, ja... who got me into it.

*Yeah. And then, do you remember actually you said that Kristallnacht that they came. Do you have any other memories of Kristallnacht itself?*

Yes. Of going to school the next morning, to the Viktoria–Luisen-Schule. By that time, we had moved to the Uhlandstraße from the Kurfürstendamm. And I walked down the – I think it's called – the Berliner Straße...I forget. I used to either take the tram *Nummer Sieben* – I remember it was *Nummer Sieben* - or walk down. You know, quite a walk along the – is it the Berliner Straße...Uhlandstraße...I don't know. Ja. And there was a syn – I passed a

synagogue, which must have been near the Hohenzollerndamm, and it was... burning. And I stopped for a moment. And a few people around me shook their heads, but nobody said anything. You know, one just looked. Ja. And then Aulchen, Fräulein Aul, told me that they had watched from their balcony. You know, she had seen, there was an old Jewish shoemaker opposite, and a group of these louts, these Nazi louts, was using him as a football, kicking him, in the street. Ja.

*And what was her political affiliation? Do you know?*

Hm?

*Frau Aul, what was her political affiliation? Did she mention anything? Your nanny?*

My nanny. Well, my nanny was of course totally devoted... to the family. And... she had no family, at all. And she'd been with a Jewish family before, in Hamburg. And that was also a dysfunctional family, but that's another story. And ja, she stayed with us... until we emigrated. And in fact she looked after my Oma Feller, after we had left. Because I later got my parents out... through the Quakers.

*Yeah. So then let's go back to the Kristallnacht '38 and that evening when your friend forgot the raincoat. When was that?*

Well it was before the first Kindertransport left. I think it was when they had really decided to organise. Do you know, I'm bad about dates.

*In '38, it was in...?*

**[0:28:20]**

It would have been in '38, yes. Yes.

*But they didn't- As you said, your father was de-nationalised, that he was not German. So was emigration on the cards? Was it discussed at home?*

Oh, yes, very much. Very much. Because their best friends, the Norton's, had gone to New York and said, "Why don't you come with us?" But my father was one of those who said, "Why should I go? This house painter should go." You know? But then it became quite obvious that there was no staying. And the Norton's got my parents an affidavit; they got a guarantor for them in the States. This affidavit would have been quite inadequate actually, but nevertheless it was an affidavit. And it helped to get a later, when I managed to get them sponsors here, to get permission you know, a transit – temporary permission - to come to England. And... so my parents thought it would be a good idea to send me, to let me take up my place on the Kindertransport. And they would then follow when their quota number became due. Because of course they were both German quota, as they were both born in Berlin, including my father. My father, during the 1914-1918 war was first of all in the Austrian Army as a doctor, and later in the German Army.

*Did he talk about that? His experiences in the First World War?*

Yes, because my- my mother used to tell me a lot about that time, because – it's peculiar. She went with him, because he was in a *Lazarett*. He was not in a field *Lazarett* for a start; he was somewhere in the Sudetenland. In Olmau - Olmütz, and my mother joined my father in Olmütz. I have pictures there; there's one lying downstairs, I think. And then... where did they go? In Blankenburg am Harz, they were. With the Austrian Army he was in Olmütz which would later have been Czechoslovakia, and then with the German Army in Blankenburg am Harz.

But my mother didn't talk about any sort of hardship you know. They were all right. And of course my father was a great German patriot.

**[0:31:23]**

*And that's why he didn't want to leave? He didn't want to go.*

Of course not. They were Germans.

*But by the time you had the opportunity, with the Kindertransport...*

Well, yes, because my mother - who was very sensible about these things - said, "Look, this is a matter of life and death now. Let the child go, and we'll do our best to follow. We will follow."

*But do you think- so, without the raincoat, the Quakers didn't tell you about it, or, what happened?*

Inefficiency, I'm afraid. They were registering all sorts of people for the transport, but they forgot about their own children. Their own *Kindergruppe* lot. I don't know what would have happened. Probably Gert and I would have got a place on a later transport. I don't know.

*Mnn. And was there, you mentioned before. So, was there a - a special quota as the non-Aryan?*

Well I understood...who, from or why, I don't know. I understood that each transport had in fact a quota for a few people who were not of the Jewish religion. The '*nicht-arischen Christen*'. Ja. I don't know where I got this information from. But somebody told me.

**[0:32:50]**

*So tell us a little bit more, please, about that time. So you went back, and you managed to get your name on it. Then what happened exactly?*

Then there was a letter, saying, "You have been accepted for a Kindertransport, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November '39. Be at the..." - I used to think it was Lehrter Bahnhof but it wasn't, it was Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, I think, at some ghastly hour, I think five or six in the morning. "...And you will go to England." So, I remember I was- All night I cried. I didn't want to go. I was very, very unhappy. But- and my grandmother Feller said, "What a thing to do. One doesn't send a child away." She was a very cultured, educated and very simple woman. Nice woman, but... But my mother said, "No, no, no." So...they told me, "Look we'll come. We'll follow. We've got an affidavit. You go. Make sure that you get a place at a school that you can complete your education, and it will be all right." Nevertheless, of course, it was... pretty awful.

*What did you pack? Do you remember what you could take?*

Hmm?

*What did you pack? What could you take?*

One suitcase which one could carry. And I remember my *Kinderfräulein* Aulchen, made me take a hat... which later caused me annoyance. But she made me take a hat, because- to look decent, you know. So I packed a hat.

*And what else did you pack?*

I think just night things, and warm winter clothes. This was January. And I believe, one toy. A teddy or something. I think one of my favourite dolls. Something like that, but you know I'm no longer sure about that. I was fourteen by then, in fact, nearly fifteen. I suppose plenty of underwear. Pyjamas.

*And who took you to the station? Both?*

Hm?

*Who took you to the station?*

**[0:35:45]**

My parents and Aulchen. They- they came. ...And I remember standing there. And there were all these children. Some very little ones. I think some must have been five, six years old. And the railway personnel, the young ones, the young railway porters, just carrying on. But some of the older ones shaking their heads saying "This can't be right." "*Das kann nicht richtig sein.*" I remember that; they really did. And this train coming in, with some carriages reserved... for the transport. ...And me getting on this train. And to my shock horror, there was a group of... youngsters going on a... *sherut* for agricultural training in England with a view to going on to what was then Palestine. And they were very happy. They were shouting, "Hello! Hello! "Lehtraot Ba'aretz. Shalom, shalom!" And I, with by background thought,

“What is this? What on earth is this?” And, but again, in my compartment was another girl, Marie-Luise Adler. And Marie-Luise Adler, I found her quite *unsympathisch* but nevertheless, at least she wasn't Jewish. And I could talk to her, because she was as much taken aback by this 'Lehitraot ba'aretz' as I was. And then there were rumours, that we would be going to a holiday- to a camp in England and in fact the *nicht-arischen Christen*, like me, had had a Christmas tree. So it must have been before the twenty-fourth. And that...the Jewish lot tried to beat them up. I think this is portably true.

*That was on the train, those rumours?*

No, at the camp that we were going to be left at – Dovercourt. At Dovercourt.

*Yes. But let's stick a little bit more with the journey. So your parents and Aulchen they brought you there.*

So my parents and Aulchen had taken us, and then we boarded the train. And you know this was, as I said Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, but everybody, all the parents or anybody who had accompanied children, rushed off to take the S-Bahn zum Bahnhof Zoo, because the train would come through Bahnhof Zoo - you know from Friedrichstraße to Bahnhof Zoo - to wave once more. Dreadful, huh? Dreadful!

*And did you see your parents again then? Did you manage?*

I think I- So I waved, but – ja...ja.

**[0:39:18]**

And then I remember when we crossed the border into Holland. And I looked out of the window and the Swastika flag - the Nazi flag - receded. And I thought, “Oh, my God. Now I am a *Flüchtlingskind* [refugee child]” Look at that. I've left Germany. And then we came to the first station. And the Dutch, the train stopped, and the Dutch... there were a lot of Dutch women came and brought big...canisters or something with hot soup or cocoa. You know, I think it may have been cocoa or it may have been soup, but anyway, and said, “Welcome” to us. And I thought, “Marvellous. But oh, how awful to be a *Flüchtlingskind*.” And ja. I think I



don't remember what it was- We boarded this ship... at Harwich. And it was a dreadful crossing. I was in a cabin with another girl who was above me, and she was seasick all night. And I think we must have arrived at about five o'clock in the morning. Or maybe it was later, but it was dark, cold, foggy. And I remember lining up on deck to be examined by the doctor, and the "breathe in, breathe out". That was to make sure that we had no TB. And you know I've told this story often, but the first person I saw in England was a little- a young boy with a cow, grazing in a field when we had landed in Harwich. And I thought, "My God, that cow speaks English. If I want to talk to that cow, I have to speak English."

*Did you speak any English at that point?*

Yes, quite a lot. Because though this contact with the Quakers, we had an American family and an English family as the Quaker representatives at the bureau in Berlin. And of course we used to visit; you know, our *Gruppe* was invited. And also I had private lessons, and there was English at school. We started at the Viktoria-Luisen-Schule with French, but we went to on English. And I'd already had some English. Yes, I knew quite a bit.

*But nevertheless you thought, "This cow speaks English and you need to..."*

**[0:42:25]**

A cow that should speak English?

*Yeah. So the train travelled through the English countryside to...*

Not much, because look, we were at Dovercourt which is very close to Harwich. We had a bus; we had to get on a bus and then we went- It was a Butlin's holiday camp! Freezing!

*So tell us a little bit about your arrival in Dovercourt.*

Well the first thing was that it was freezing. And that the water froze in the tooth marks in the wash basins. And of course again, I must have been a Friday night, because there was a Shabbat evening. With a rabbi. And I had never seen anything like it. And some of- I saw I seem to remember now, some of the boys doing this, davening, and I'd never seen that either

and I really thought that “What am I doing here? What is this?” And then we were divided; we were sent, groups, you know. This age group. Boys. That age: girls. That age. And I had the misfortune to be in a group that was run by a woman called Zipporah who came from Israel, with her husband, who was a painter. And they lived you know across here in Belsize Park Gardens. You probably know who I’m talking about. No? Ja. There was this Zipporah who was Israeli. And...the next morning after we had arrived, we had to fill in questionnaires. What did we intend to do in England? What were our... plans? What was our situation? And of course I filled in that I wanted to go to school. But there was also a question of course the question of are you Orthodox? You know, religious affiliation. So, mine...ja. Hmm. So Zipporah, when she saw my questionnaire, said, “Oh, that’s very interesting. So you don’t want to be Jewish, and you want to go to school, do you? Well I shall do my utmost that you don’t get to a school. You’ll do an apprenticeship like everybody else.” So that was lovely, you know... charming. I have re-met Zipporah later, not in person but...she died. I’ve never forgotten or forgiven this woman. To get hold of a - OK, nearly fifteen but - fourteen-year-old girl and to want to take it out on her that I didn’t want to be Jewish and go to Israel. So...every Sunday, we had what we used to call ‘Cattle Market’ - *Viehmarkt* – one used to assemble in the dining hall. And people came from all over England to select a child that they’d like to take home. Now...I had been told that I would go to a Quaker family. And when I arrived, one of the first things was that I heard my name called over the loudspeaker. Mona Daisy Elsa Maria Yvonne Evelyn Holzapfel to come to the office. So I went to the office and there were two Quaker ladies. And they said, “Well you know the Berliners have told us that you were coming, and you are to go to a Quaker family in Croydon. Clifford Connolly. So that’s where you will be.” Fine. Good. However, that’s not where I ended up, because the committee ignored this completely, but had had a request from a village doctor in Dorset, in Milton Abbas, who was by my standards quite old - all of twenty-seven and his wife, twenty-six - and they were expecting a baby. And you know a girl of nearly fifteen, and on top of it no problems about Jewishness you know, food problems, and going to church - this was ideal. So, that’s where I was to go. So, I was taken to the station, with another little group of children from the camp who were also going to the West Country. Going to Dorset. And somebody- There were people escorting these groups, but as far as I remember, the one who did, he was Jewish. But he could go and escort us on the condition that he came back to Germany. And they probably had his family as hostage. I don’t know. But he took us.

**[0:48:14]**

And I ended up in Milton Abbas, with this very old doctor Basil Gaster, and his wife, Helen. So, when I arrived, and they wanted to introduce me to the duties, [laughs] of a nanny, they realised that I couldn't tell one end of a baby from another. And what's more, my father was a doctor. So they said, 'No, no. In that case you can't be a servant here. You go to school.' And they found me a place at the Dorchester School for Girls. And I ended up living with them, and going to school.

*Did you have a say in the matter at all whether you went to Croydon or was it all decided for you?*

**[0:49:16]**

It was all decided for me. But I wrote to the Connolly's in Croydon, but that was later. And... Getting a place at school, there was a little problem, because there - was it in Swanage? No, in Yeovil, nearby. And there was a boarding school for girls, for the children of ex- not ex - of... India Army officers. So you can imagine the school, the atmosphere at that school. Anyway, that school said, yes, they would take me, the boarding school. So we were to go for an interview with the Headmistress. So Basil - Doctor Gaster - took me, but I was to dress decently. And I took my hat. And he said, "Don't wear that hat." I said, "Oh?" Because after all, Aulchen had said... the opposite. I said, "Oh?" He said, "It makes you look too Jewish." That was nice, wasn't it? Well, I went without the hat for the interview. And I was offered a place, and then I said "Please do not send me to that school. Please!" You know, these prissy little girls. So then PC Ruegg who was the Headmistress at the Dorchester County School for Girls, offered me a place. And I went and that was fine. And it wasn't a boarding school, and I could continue to live with Basil and Helen in Milton Abbas and cycle to school in Dorchester every day. Which is where I then met my friend Louise, who was put in charge of me. And then my mother wrote and said, "Look, things are getting completely impossible here, and this is really a matter of life and death. Please try and get us a Visa to come to England to wait until our quota for America is up." So I wrote a letter to the Connolly's and I said, "You know you were going to have me, and that didn't work out. Will you help my parents?" And they did. And not only that, but I told Basil, Doctor Gaster. And you know, I used to love going on his round with him. He had seven villages, and we used to

go and visit the various ...gentleman farmers. And I was a sensation because foreigners in deepest Dorset...pretty unheard of. Very unlikely. And. So when I told them about this business with my parents, the farmers got together and they provided a cottage with a lovely vegetable garden and a well. And no running water...[laughing]...for my parents. My mother! [laughs] With a garden with a well, and no running water.... anyway. As the Connolly's had guaranteed, my parents didn't have to move to this cottage. But they went to board with Colonel and Mrs. Smith in Milton Abbas. He was Canadian, retired. They had a cottage. You know Milton Abbey is a National Trust property. It's a very beautiful village, and they couldn't just build what they wanted. All the houses were thatched. And the only brick and straw house was the one I lived in with the village doctor. And it's a beautiful Abbey, where I was later confirmed. Fantastic grounds, and also amongst other things run by Father Maylard who was very High Church - practically Catholic - and who also had the loony asylum there.

**[0:54:20]**

*So would you say you found your feet quite...quickly?*

I was very happy. All I wanted to be was an English school girl. I was very happy. And then the Gasters decided that I should be confirmed. I should have my Confirmation. So I had to go to instruction with Father Maylard who wanted me to go to confession. Now slowly this, with my Quaker principles, didn't quite work.

*So they weren't Quakers?*

No, they weren't. They were church-going, very church-going. Every Sunday we went. Very church-going. Church of England. Ja. So, well I did go to my instruction classes but I began to be more and more doubtful. And when Father Maylard suggested I should come to confession I said, "No," you know? No. No! I wouldn't. And the great day came, and I had the standard white dress I suppose and I still have a Old and New Testament upstairs, with a dedication from Helen Gaster to Daisy Holzapfel, on her Confirmation, such and such a date, 1939. Still got that upstairs. That was the usual. I was there, together with Enid Steptoe whose father ran the village shop in Milton Abbas and one or two other girls from nearby. And we had to speak the Creed. You know, I believe in Jesus Christ, et cetera, et cetera. And

I thought, no what, I can't really do that. No. What is this? I do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and this is not at all what I, shall we say, learnt or practiced at Quaker meetings! So I stood there, and I mumbled this but I didn't speak it. And then a few weeks later, we were supposed to go to take the sacraments and to make this baptism, this Confirmation really valid, you know. Until you went and had the bread and wine, and knelt and ...things. I said no. I didn't go.

*And how did they take it, the family?*

**[0:57:27]**

I just...And the Gasters, you know, all credit, Basil and Helen. They said, "All right, if that's what you feel, and that's what you want." Because I said, "Look, no...No." So that was the end of my activities in the Church of England.

*But the Gasters sound like they were quite supportive of you?*

The Gasters... Yes, yes...yes.

*And did they have the baby in the meantime?*

They had the baby.

*And did you have some duties in the house, or...?*

Nothing, absolutely nothing. She couldn't cook to save her life. The food was appalling.

*But you were treated like a family member?*

Ja. Ja. We used to go and visit his father, who was the village doctor in Milburn St. Andrews, or in one of the other villages there, or near Yeovil. We used to go on Sundays also to visit; ja, I was family, remember. And he had a younger brother who was at St. Thomas's in London – Rollo. And Rollo used to come to Milton Abbas sometimes at weekends. And I

went trout fishing with Rollo. I learnt how to cast... a rod. Rollo taught me trout fishing. No, I thought it was marvellous!

*And you said most people hadn't met any foreigners at that point. What was the reaction to you and was there...? How do you remember that?*

**[0:59:10]**

Well one, on the whole, very friendly, very nice. I got invited everywhere. I became best friends with the Head Girl at school, Nancy. And went and stayed the night with her family. That was fine... Ja. They accepted me. The only trouble was when Helen - she was from Cambridge - her mother came to stay. Basil's mother-in-law. And of course I was introduced - the German refugee child. And we started talking a little bit about the situation. And she was extremely pro Chamberlain's peace efforts. And you know, and that this was all war-mongering, this talk. Hitler would do nothing. And I said, "Look I have to disagree, because you say the Germans won't go to war, but you know we had air-raid practice." Well we did! We used to practice going to the air-raid shelters. But she said that was just my personal grievance. I objected to being discriminated against, that I was taking my revenge by giving Hitler a bad name. So that was not pleasant. But then my parents came. Then the visa came through, with the Connolly guarantee...

**[1:01:10]**

*Which was when, basically?*

About six weeks before the war broke out. At the last – really at the last moment.

*And when did they arrive?*

When they...?

*When did they arrive in England?*

Southampton. They came first class, on one of those boats that go on to America. And they came to Southampton, and Basil and Helen and I went to meet them. [half-laughs] And my dear Papa put his foot in it right away. He was tact personified, honestly, by in the evening saying to Basil when we started to talk about Christianity or this or that, whether Basil was aware of the fact that really Jesus was the illegitimate child of a Roman soldier. [laughs] And Basil said to me, “What’s the matter with your father?” And I said, “Just ignore him.”

*So did they stay with you for a little bit? No...*

No. They stayed with Colonel and Mrs. Smith, the Canadian Colonel, in a cottage in one of the standard thatched cottages in Milton Abbas, with the loo at the other end of the garden. That’s where they stayed, and the Connolly’s paid for that. They were involved, you see. And Connolly paid every week, every month, paid!

**[1:03:08]**

*That’s amazing. But they were Quakers, the Connolly’s?*

She was, and he was an Attender – what’s called an Attender. Which like me, you never join, but...ja. But my mother was going mad in the village there. And my father journeyed to London, and went to the Refugee Committee here. And they decided to move. And then they went and got a room in a boarding house, in Fawley Road, West Hampstead. She, Frau Wagner... [phone rings, interruption]

*Yes, we were talking about...Frau Wagner, West Hampstead, when they moved into the boarding house.*

Yes, 14 Fawley Road, which was then a refugee boarding house. She had three: one in Froggnal, one in Crediton Hill and one in Fawley Road. And my parents ended up in 14 Fawley Road. I stayed on, and went to live with the Head Mistress, PC Ruegg. A good *Innerschweiz\_Name* [Central Swiss name]. She used to say Switzerland was her spiritual home. She was as English... as you can imagine, but her ancestors had come from Switzerland in 1600-and-something.

*So how long did your parents stay in Milton Abbas, for a couple of months or... ?*

With the Smiths? [laughing] Ja...Yes. Because they were also involved, and you can imagine the food. And my mother used to say to me, “Can you imagine? Have you seen the black under Mrs. Smith’s fingernails?”

*So they didn’t like it that much.*

No. So they got a flat, above the newsagent in Dorchester High Street. And then when I had to leave Dorset, because it was a protected area, and I reached the dangerous age of sixteen, when I would certainly spy on behalf of the Germans, I had to get out. And I came to Frau Wagner at 14 Fawley Road, and shared the room with five others who were nurses. I was again the youngest, and who had all been kicked out because of this ‘enemy alien protected area’ business.

**[1:05:55]**

*Just to go back a little bit, Daisy. You talked about Louise in that school? Tell us a little bit about it– So there was one girl who was made responsible for you, or what happened?*

Yes, so when PC Ruegg, who was quite a character, offered me the place in school she called. I was going to be in ‘Roof?? 6’ I think it was called. She called one of the girls from Roof?? 6, to her office and said, “Now look, this German girl Daisy will be coming. Will you look after her?” So this girl, Louise, who was then called not Louise...

*What was she called?*

Shall I tell it now, because whilst she was alive... Muriel.

*She was called Muriel, yes?*

Actually it was one of her names. She was- I think she was Louise Muriel and a third name. She had three Christian names, but everybody knew her as- She was Muriel Taylor... which I faithfully never told anybody when she was alive.



*Yes?*

And – and she was called, because in fact she didn't live far from where we lived in the High Street. And I used to walk home from school with her, every day. And she was very keen to learn German. Why, I don't know. So I said I would give her German lessons. And... a boy used to follow us on his bike, when we went home – came home from school. And later, when I re-met her after twenty or thirty, or God, how many years, she said, "You remember the boy who used to follow us around on his bike? That became my husband." She married him, and duly divorced him later. So, that was Louise. And I always remembered Louise because when I first came to Milton Abbas, and froze - you know these unheated bedrooms, from central heating in Berlin! And where the water froze in the morning. And Louise used to say to me, "No, I like that. You know, it's so nice and cosy when one then gets warm in bed." Ja.

**[1:08:52]**

*So you became friends?*

Oh, yes, that was my...

*Friend.*

Ja. And I saw her once more, because when I then had to get out and came to live chez Frau Wagner in Fawley Road, the girls from Dorchester, a little group, came to London. I don't know what they were doing here. They came for the day, and we met in town. But then all contact was lost. Completely lost, including Louise. And as you know, I often talked about it: "I wonder what has happened to her." And I used to show Charles the photographs of her and me, me in the school uniform.

*We'll come back to it at the end. Were you upset when you had to, when you were forced to leave?*

I was terribly upset! Do you know, I was at school in Dorchester! What was I going to do in London? Hmm!

*Were you- tribunal? Do you remember? Did you have to go to the police station?*

Yes, when I was sixteen, ja. Ja. 'Cause of course in this refugee boarding house, everybody was either German or Austrian. And the first street I saw in London was West End Lane. And my mother said, "Look at this. Isn't it hideous? *Schau Dir diese schreckliche Straße an!*" Ja.

*Mnn. And what did the- Until then you said you were staying with the Headmistress, or with the family, at that point?*

At that point I had been – neither. At that point, they had taken a furnished room for me, in a family - a Dorchester family - that rented out a room. And he worked for the gas company in Dorset. And I had a furnished room which the Connolly's paid, I think. It must have been...I don't know...

*What happened to the Gasters? Did they move away? Or why did you have to leave them?*

Well then...that was before I was sixteen.

*Yes.*

Why did I not stay with the Gasters? Because they weren't really in Dorchester; I went to school in Dorchester. Then with the Headmistress, you know it was not very... Why did I not go on staying with PC Ruegg? Well, I was jolly glad that I didn't, I can tell you that. Because she had a ghastly black dog - a spaniel - who used to go licking one's legs and who could do whatever he liked. And she used to bring him to school. And all the girls hated this dog because he used to be allowed to come into the showers, when we were having showers. This dog would licking - was licking all of us - and PC Ruegg thought that was marvellous. I've re-met her in London much later... Louise and I did. Ja.

*So you arrived in, in London and what were your impressions when you came?*

**[1:12:29]**

Awful. Ugly. And also this again in this refugee boarding house, you know they had Friday evenings. But then my father was interned. And I don't know when that happened. But during the day, all the... the males used to go walking in Hyde Park. But that must have been soon after I came. And then I, I got some training. And I think that, the Refugee Committee paid for. Shorthand typing at the Breck School in Finchley Road. And then I got jobs. My first job with a Trade Union, as a shorthand typist.

*So had you finished your schooling?*

Well, I was sixteen. I took Matric. I sat for my exam, with the flying bombs all over the place. And I remember, we sat one of the papers in Battersea. And as I came out of the examination hall, we sat with gas masks with us. And with these raids all the time. And as I came out there was an air-raid, and everyone threw themselves on the ground. And then... I lived— where did we live – first we were in Fawley Road. Yes, I think we're still in Fawley Road. And then I got a job, as I said, working with a Trade Union. And then later with Leo Bacharach, who was a leather merchant in Belsize Grove.

*What were your ambitions at that time? What did you think you wanted to do?*

My father had said, "You must go to university. You must study." And the thing was to go to university and to study as soon as it was possible.

*And your father, could he work at the time?*

**[1:14:57]**

My father did all the internment camps there were. Because he was in Sutton Coldfield, he was in Epsom... Because my father again being my father, you could make applications for release. And you know - typical - the Brits wouldn't admit that they were in fact they had been silly, and these people were not spies. But you had to apply under all sorts of paragraphs. Health, important profession that you could help with the war effort: things like that. Well my father said my mother and I didn't do enough to get him out, and he applied

under every single paragraph, result being that his papers went from Desk A, to Desk B, to Desk C. [half-laughing] He was one of the ...last ones to be released.

*So how long did he spend?*

He was quite a while; quite a while he did the race-courses.

*So which internments? Where was he? Do you remember?*

I think he came out from Lingfield... but I'm not sure. It's probably all here in the house, because Charles collected all these documents. And when he died, I just – you should see the mess – I couldn't be bothered. And Sebastian and Michelle don't want to be bothered. So...

*But was he on the Isle of Mann or...?*

I don't think he ever went to the Isle of Mann but something very close to the Isle of Mann, on the mainland...

*Right?*

... but very close. And then in protest he grew a beard, I think. ...Impossible.

*And how was he? Was he bitter about it when he came back or was he...?*

Yes.

*He was?*

Yes. He was very angry. Yes.

*Because for some people the internment was not such a bad experience.*

Well he... And then soon after, he got permission to work as a locum for doctors who were away in the Army on war service. And then he had a job in Nottingham, a job in Rugby. And he ended up his last job was here in Essex... near Loughton somewhere.

*So he could work?*

**[1:17:39]**

That was- well, he looked after the practice for these doctors. And he was supposed to be able to drive. And he'd never driven a car in his life. So he took [laughing] one or two lessons... and then drove. Ja. And my mother and I stayed in London, and moved from Frau Wagner's refugee boarding house, to Frau Israel in Canfield Gardens. And my father used to come sometimes at the weekends, until he got permission to work independently. And then with the help of Clifford Connolly, he bought the practice in Islington, where he'd done the very last locum. That doctor sold his practice and my father bought it, as I said, with Clifford Connolly's help. And then he worked as a GP in Number 2, Hemingford Road, Islington.

*That was very lucky, because not all the doctors were allowed to work.*

No, I don't know...ja.

*Yeah...*

Ja, anyway, so as soon as he got a job and earned money he said, "Now you stop being a shorthand typist, you go and you go to university." So I was going to do medicine. And- But there was only one medical school in London that took women. And that was the Royal Free. And I didn't want to leave London. I didn't want to go to the provinces. Stupid – idiotic, but I didn't. I should have gone to Scotland of course. But I didn't. There you are; what can you do? And I went- you, In those days, to do medicine, you had to do what was called a 'First MBE'. Your first degree. And you did the basic sciences: physics, chemistry, biology. I did that at the Northern Polytechnic, which is now the University – as everything is a University - of Northwest London I think, in Holloway Road. So I lived with my mother, chez Madame Israel in Canfield Gardens. All through the air-raids. And went to do my First MBE Holloway Road. ...That was all right. But then I wanted to go to medical school; you know,

for the next lot you had to. And I couldn't get a place at the Royal Free. There were about thirty places a year, and as I understood it, at least 300 applicants. Now I wasn't even naturalised, you know? So I didn't get a place. But my two friends, who were doing First MBE with me at the Northern Polytechnic, their fathers were dentists. Doctor Engel and Doctor Orley. Doctor Orley Viennese, Doctor Engel from Breslau. And Ann, or as she was then called Lilo, and Liane were doing that, with a view to going to dental school. And there was I with no place at the medical school. They said, "Why don't you come with us?" So I said, "Oh, ja. OK!" And I went to University College Hospital to dental school.

*Which year was that, Daisy?*

Well I think I was twenty-one... twenty.

**[1:21:47]**

*So, '45. After the war ended.*

'44. '45...Again, I've got paperwork. Charles knew where all this stuff was.

*Daisy can you describe a little bit the atmosphere in the boarding house, and around Finchley Road - for us?*

The atmosphere in Fawley Road. Well...There were a lot – there were this group of nurses who had been chucked out of hospitals. One of them came from Homerton High Street. The other one, I don't know where they were. And they were in their twenties, quite a lot of them were older than I was. I think the youngest one was nineteen, and I was, well, just sixteen. And the oldest one was Dita Lustig, who was a pianist, who was in her late – second half of twenties. And we were all in this big room. And in fact when I had to leave Dorchester, my mother went to these girls and said, "Look, Daisy is being chucked out. Can she come into the room with you?" So they thought about it. They didn't really want a young one of fifteen, sixteen, you know? But then they said, "Well, we might as well." So a camp bed was put in this room at 14 Fawley Road, where I slept. And a couple of them, were - wanted to emigrate to go on. One, there was a family and only the daughter was in the room with us. And her parents and her brother were in other parts of the house. But they had affidavits. They were

going to go on to the United States. So they were quite cheerful. He was killed later. They boy was killed later – it was...But they were quite cheerful. But the others went to work in factories. Dita, the pianist, went to work in a factory in the East End, making leather belts. And well, they were all just waiting for the day when this sort of exile would end and they...But. and they could go on practicing whatever profession they wanted. Do you know, they just waited for this war to end. And of course there was also a certain amount of bickering and tension. What was her name...? The manageress who ran it...There was food; we were on full board. I remember a pound a week, or something like that. And then there was... nearly an uprising when it went up by five p. And we ate- I remember that's the first time I was familiar with Austrian food. *Beuschel* we had. The cooking must have been quite good! We had *Strudel*, we had *Beuschel* and I remember I loved *Mohnnudeln* [poppy dumplings]. I'd never heard of *Mohnnudeln* before. And there again, you see, the atmosphere amongst the girl- the young women in the big room was quite reasonable. The ones who had started off in hospitals, wanted to go back to be nurses, which they then did. And slowly, as the government here realised how stupid all this interning and segregating was, they left. They drifted off back to hospitals or took flats. That, that was all right. And in the evening, we used to assemble and talk. But there were a couple of women there who were terribly, terribly unhappy. One woman, Frau Karpasch who was from Vienna, and had been married to a non-Jewish husband, who promptly gave her the boot – when married to a Jewish woman. And her son was interned. Was shipped off to - I forget which one it is now, Canada or Australia - on the Dunera Star...torpedoed and died. Did the Dunera Star go to Australia?

*Australia.*

I think it went to Australia didn't it? He was- So this woman, who'd been left by her husband, and lost her son on the Dunera Star. And there was another one, I think called Frau Lichtenstein. She was very bitter. She too – but she was from Germany – had a non-Jewish husband, who said, “Off you go.” And she couldn't get over that. And she committed suicide.

*In the boarding house?*

[1:27:26]

I think after we had left the boarding house. It could have been. She was very bitchy, very bitter. She used to complain because we, the youngsters, used to joke a lot. And yes, have fun! We used to go to West End Lane; there was an iron-mongers who continued for many years afterwards. And we used to buy second-hand gramophone records for sixpence, and we used to have parties in the evening. We would put this on. And somehow Pat got hold of cocoa – you know, she made hot cocoa. So we used to dance, and have the records. And Frau Lichtenstein used to be very angry with us, and made- we were noisy, we were non-caring. So that wasn't very good. So then slowly when my father had his practice in Islington, my parents decided to move out. And they got a flat in Priory Road, and I moved with them to Priory Road. But- My father actually had left Frau Wagner, and my mother and I then got a room in Aberdare Gardens by Frau Oppenheim... where I also thought it was fine; Frau Oppenheim had a daughter called Dorli, exactly my age. I still talk to her on the phone except she now has a certain amount of dementia. And that...that was all right. And I think my mother did not exactly enjoy the general atmosphere at Fawley Road. But my father was in the provinces.

*And what happened to your grandmother? Were they in touch? Did they know what had happened to her?*

My grandmother died in Berlin, but she died a natural death from a pneumonia. And that was very strange, because of course they wanted her to come to England. And they told her, my parents told her, and one had some sort of contact, because her sister Bronislava who was married to Josef Luxemburg. And Josef Luxemburg – that's quite a mad story. But I can tell you how rich ... Josef Luxemburg became an American citizen and they went to America. Josef Luxemburg had been married to Bronya, had produced one child who was a cripple, and then made off to the United States and disappeared. Bronislava was left in Berlin with this daughter – crippled daughter - who had a dislocated hip, and a terrible limp. And... Josef had disappeared! And then I believe fifteen years later he turned up in Berlin! He'd been in the earthquake in San Francisco. He came back at a time of inflation it must have been in Berlin, with American dollars. Can you imagine, American dollars? And he bought up properties in Berlin ...with his dollars. Bronislava - Bronya, and Alisa – this was the daughter - went to live with him. And they all lived in a flat in Nollendorf Platz. And when this Hitler period came later, Josef of course had lost his American citizenship; he never did anything about it. But then he re-applied, and the Americans re-naturalised him. So Josef and Bronya



went to New York. And when the Americans were still not involved with the European war, there was communication with Oma Feller in Berlin via Bronya. Ja? But... she, Oma Feller then contracted a pneumonia and Aulchen – Fraulein Aul– looked after her. And luckily Oma Feller died. And I also remember that my mother came and said, “You know, Papa had a bad dream last night. Dreamt about his mother.” You know, it was the night she died. Strange, but...ja.

[1:32:57]

*Which year was that? When?*

Well the war was still on... Again, I've probably got all the papers, in fact I know I've got papers there because Charles kept everything. So if you really want it, I can possibly dig it up.

*So what happened to this Frau Aul then, who was with your grandmother?*

Well of course she, then, was stuck in Germany. And when the Russians captured Berlin, she fled. And she went to somewhere- She got caught in the *Russische Zone* - Russian zone - and she was very ill. She had rheumatoid arthritis. She was crippled with rheumatoid arthritis, and she died. But that must have been when the – ja – the war had ended, because one sent food parcels.

*So were you in touch with her?*

She was in the Russian sector, and my mother and I sent her food parcels. And she had gone and collected ...where is it? No, it's downstairs. Some *Kristall* things and some belongings from my grandmother, which my friend from the Northern Polytechnic, Ann, who later got married to an American, who was stationed in Berlin, brought back to London. And it's downstairs.

*She kept it for you?*

Ja.

*... from your grandmamma?*

It's all very confused and very confusing.

*No, I think you describe it very well, Daisy. So to come back to you, and your dental studies.*

Yes. Well, when I'd been at University College Hospital Dental School for I think- I'd got my First MB. I passed that probably mainly because I took it when these flying bombs came, and I remember sitting in this big examination hall; I was never frightened, you know? And a lot of the students were terrified. In fact, I stayed in Aberdare Gardens and Canfield Gardens in one of these rooms with huge windows, all through the air-raids. Everybody else, including my mother, went to the tube here, in Swiss Cottage. The deep tube. I refused. I stayed in the flat.

*You were not worried?*

**[1:36:20]**

Cuckoo! Why was I not worried? Mad! But I wasn't worried. Ja. Going to the tube... my poor mother, with Frau Oppenheim and everybody else.

*Swiss Cottage tube? Where did they go?*

I think it must have been Swiss Cottage because Finchley Road is not deep. And it was close by, so it must have been Swiss Cottage.

*Did they sleep there at night? Did people stay the whole night in the tube?*

They stayed at night, they used to bring mattresses I think, and blankets, and they stayed the night. But I said, "My bed is very comfortable." Nothing to be done. Obstinate.

*Did you frequent – did you parents and you – did you frequent the refugee businesses along the Finchley Road like the Cosmo, the Dorice?*

Of course. The Cosmo and the Dorice...you know. Yes.

*Can you describe them a little bit for us?*

Actually the Cosmo came later. First it was the Dorice. And one loved it because one could eat inners...you know, chicken, she did it as a goulash. You know, chicken liver and...What was it called again? ...Anyway, the inner chicken.

*Is it [inaudible] ?*

No *Beutel* is *Lungen*, lung or something or other. But she, one used to get what one was used to. And there must have been cake as well, otherwise my parents would never have gone, now, would they? But- And that's where one met. And all the refugees met there. And my parents used to meet people from the boarding houses. Herr und Frau Salomon, und Frau Magnus, und... It was entirely refugee orientated. And one went to get the food that one was used to. And Doris, yes, I remember she ran it together with a - a married man who was her boyfriend, and couldn't get a divorce.

*Mnn! ...Did you actually meet her?*

Oh, yes!

*Yes. Her name was Doris Balacs.*

Because it was Balacs- that's right. Who couldn't get a divorce...did he ever?

*And they ran in together.*

They ran it together. Balacs was very much in evidence... and everybody knew about Balacs. And one talked, naturally about the war and then about things that came you know when this what was called again, the '*Aufbau*'. This American paper, ...*Aufbau*... when that came and talked about gas ovens. And everybody, then we were still at Fawley Road, said, "Rumours. Impossible. Can't be true. That's rumours." ...I remember those conversations.

*It must have been, what, '44-ish.*

**[1:40:00]**

Because I think it was the 'Aufbau' that brought the first reports from – from where? - about Auschwitz, or Sobibor. I think about Auschwitz actually. Ja.

*What other conversations? What else do you remember from...?*

Well obviously about where one got things that were rationed. Because... that you could also buy sausages and things in the East End. Where one could buy that. And then naturally about ...one's landlady...[laughs] and ...what else would the conversation have been about? My mother would have talked about clothes...What else did she? Oh, and that really- They didn't really like London. Berlin was better, you know. And that it was a shame that one had to live in this primitive country, where people had gas fires instead of central heating. And the dreadful food, where one ate mutton. And the vegetables, boiled to death in huge quantities of water. And one talked about that, although my mother- my mother started to cook a little, a little. When they moved to Priory Road to this flat.

*And how would she pass her day, if your father was working?*

In KaDeWe, im *Erfrischungsraum*, meeting Frau Magnus, Frau Lissauer...and who else...?

*But the KaDeWe was in Berlin. Where did they meet here?*

Waitrose.

*In Waitrose.*

John Lewis.

*In the Finchley Road.*

In the Finchley Road KaDeWe.

*Oh, they called it the Finchley Road KaDeWe?*

I think- No, it was like the KaDeWe.

*What was the KaDeWe for the...? What was the KaDeWe in Berlin?*

[1:42:17]

I think my mother was also a regular at the KaDeWe in Berlin, so ...John Lewis - John Barnes, then, John Barnes ...Thank God, you know.

*So the KaDeWe was...?*

The one- she spent her days looking at shops, or sitting talking to Frau Oppenheim. Frau Sound-so. That's what she did! And later she - did, when they were in the flat, I remember when I came back from – from my First MB course she sometimes made some sort of afternoon tea, but not really. I remember once being absolutely furious because I came back, and she still had all the lunch stuff on the table. And I thought that was outrageous. But yes, she had her KaDeWe, well as I said, and of course the cafés – the Dorice. She did a bit of food shopping; she must have done.

*Did they join anything? I mean they didn't join a synagogue or anything like that? Nothing. So they joined the AJR probably at the time? I don't know.*

Do you know, I don't think they ever belonged to the AJR- well no, they, yes, they must have done because. Or Charles may have done it for them, or for my mother, because she ended up in Leo Baeck.

*That's later.*

You know, when she could live on her own any more. And she died in Leo Baeck - in the Bishops Avenue one.

*And when you did your dental studies, did you still stay at home or did you...?*

Yes.

*You lived at...*

I stayed at home, and in fact when Charles and I got married we lived in Priory Road with them for a year. And at the end of the year we bought this house.

*Which was when?*

[pauses to think] Well, could it have been '59, I think it was?

*When did you meet Charles? Do you remember? How old were you?*

Twenty-nine I think.

*OK, so that's... So maybe mid-50s. [break- phone rings]*

*We just talked about- I asked you whether you were living at home. What your mother was doing. So we think mid-50s you moved in here, around?*

Would have been wouldn't it?

**[1:45:23]**

*So tell us a little bit about Charles.*

Well, I met Charles- Charles was three years younger than I am. And I met Charles at a party in Belsize Park Gardens, given by the daughter-in-law of Gretel Reich who worked for me as a dental nurse. And her son, was in the British Army as a doctor or medical student. And they were going to Israel. And Steffa, the daughter-in-law, was going to join him. He was already in Jordan with the Army, and was going to go to Israel from Jordan and she was going to join him from here. And she gave a farewell party, and I was invited to that, because her mother

was my dental nurse. Her mother-in-law was my dental nurse. And there was Charles. Why did they know Charles? Through the school somehow... Ellie would know that... Anyway. And... Charles was on the lookout for somebody to get married to, I think. At any rate what happened, he first promptly took out the wrong girl. [laughs] And when he found that she was a Catholic, he thought perhaps that wasn't such a good idea. And then he rang me! And I still remember I was down somebody's mouth in the surgery. I was already a qualified dentist. And the National Health Service had started. And I was earning pretty good money, but that's not why he... And he then took me out... And he was living with his impossible uncle, Kubi, who was his mother's youngest brother. And the only one, you know, the mother had committed suicide. His grandparents, with whom he came to England, as an illegal immigrant, because they smuggled him in, had both died. And he was at a boarding school in Maresfield Gardens with the – what was their name again – well, Ellie's...

*Called Regent's College. Is that correct?*

Yes, that's right. And then he went and lived with Uncle Kubi, because the -his mother's other brother, older brother, was in New York by then. And that brother paid the school fees for Charles here. But this uncle was... one of those people who think the world owes them a living. And he never had any money. The one in New York used to support him. And when Charles, who was sent to study chemistry in order to join the uncle in New York who ran a factory dyeing furs. So Charles was supposed to get a degree in chemistry, and then go to America. But first of all, after Charles got his degree, he went to the work in the research labs at Kodak. And Uncle Kubi, who never had any money, used to confiscate his money, and altogether was an impossible man. He was divorced. He'd been married in Leipzig, was divorced. Had married somebody else here: some poor unfortunate woman... who thought she had a good catch from the Hoffner family. You know, they were well-heeled established fur merchants in Leipzig. Little did she know what she married there. And Charles lived with those, but decided he has to get out. So in a way, to get married was a good idea.

**[1:49:58]**

*So it was the Regent's School, I think. Not the College. Regent's School in Maresfield Gardens.*

Again, we'll have all the paperwork. So... Well, we got on very well. And Charles put up with me. I always had a very sharp tongue. It didn't seem to bother him. And my not being Jewish and having been baptised didn't seem to bother him. And my being three years older than he was didn't seem to bother him. Although when he said, we should get married, I said, "Well do you realise, I'm three years older than you are? I was baptised." And then he said, "Well, I think we should get married." And I said, "What makes you think that I want to marry you?" [laughs] Lovely, eh? Charming. "Anyway," he said, "Well I think it's a good idea." So, there you are!

*And when did you get married?*

At the Hampstead Registry Office in end of March...impossible isn't it? I can't remember. I don't...

*It doesn't matter, but you were already a qualified dentist?*

I was a dentist. I was running a surgery.

*Where were you- when did you start? When were you qualified? Do you remember that? Also in the 50s?*

Yes, in the 50s.

*And where was your practice? Where did you work?*

In Islington, in Hemingford Road, because my father had then got this practice in Hemingford Road, in a house, Number 2, Hemingford Road. And there were rooms to spare, and I set up my surgery there.

*While he was still working also?*

He was working as a doctor so in one house we had him, with his- My father with his doctor's practice and me, with my dental practice.



*But you were quite independent at that point because you were making your own money.*

Yes.

*So that was quite an achievement.*

**[1:52:17]**

Yes, except that my father...well. How old was...? I set up this practice when I was in my early 20s. I think I must have been twenty-four, twenty-five, because there was terrible trouble with my father, because I had a West Indian boyfriend. And my father thought that was the absolute end. ...Who was here, at the Inns of Court, studying to be a barrister. And I'd met him at the International – needless to say, in the Quaker Centre – at the International Students' Club. And my father... So that was catastrophic.

*And your mother?*

My mother... kept out... didn't involve herself. I don't know what my mother did. Nothing.

*And how was it resolved?*

This was resolved because Joe went back to Trinidad, because [laughs] in fact Joe was married, and had four children. He was twenty-eight at the time... which I found out to my dismay. That's also quite a story. And that nearly cost me a nervous break-down. I lost half a stone in weight, and my father cursed.

*That means you didn't know that before?*

No. I found out that Joey was married because one of his fellow Trinidadians told me.

*Mnn. So you reconciled?*

So I threw him out, but then I took him back. And in the end, he went back to Trinidad and I was going to marry him. Ja. Fortunately, that didn't happen. I met him years later. He came...ja. Michelle has met him.

*Yes? ...But you reconciled with your father?*

Well, my father was just a terribly difficult man. Terribly difficult.

*But did they – did your parents accept... to be in England? I mean, did they find it easier in their later lives, or...?*

**[1:55:22]**

My father continued to be difficult all the time. With his, well I'm sorry, dreadful anti-Semitism. He was a Jewish anti-Semite. ...And my mother, she wouldn't have been, nor would she ever have had herself baptised. She did 'what Kurt said'. And she always said, "Yes, he's very difficult but he's hardworking, he's honest."

*Did they go back to Berlin after the war? Did they...?*

To visit, because my... Yes, they did, because my father's sister, who had remarried after Uncle Hans who was a Party member, had died. My ...she went back to my grandmother Feller, and my grandmother Feller rented out a room in her flat, because she needed the money. And the room was rented out to a Chinese, who was the son of a Chinese government official, who fell in love with my cousin Inge. [doorbell rings- interruption]

*Daisy we have to stop.*

*Yes, please.*

And... that's when things got so difficult in Berlin. And my aunt had married again, and I think she had an advertisement in the paper, "Widow with Visa", because she they got a Visa for China, because of Chang who was in love with my cousin. Because otherwise people had to go to Shanghai. And nobody could get into China proper. And my aunt, and cousin, and her step-father went to China. China proper.

*So she married somebody with her...*

My aunt must have married Onkel Albert with a view to emigrating with him. That, I don't know. And they- but why did we talk about that?

*We talked about your parents going back to Berlin after the war.*

[1:57:57]

Ah. Ja. And they were interned by the Japanese...

*Yes...yes?*

And then my aunt and her second husband went back to Berlin. And there was a lot of this property to be reclaimed, that this uncle who was in San Francisco and had bought properties in Berlin for next to nothing. And he and Bronislava died in America. But their daughter, the crippled daughter, who had been married to a Berlin doctor, Doctor Peretz, who married her, because he was penniless. And he sent a telegram to his friend saying, "*Habe mich soeben mit einer amerikanischen Millionärstochter verlobt.*" [ *Just got engaged to an American Millionair's daughter*] He married money. But she stayed behind to look after the houses. And she had a daughter, Ines, with this doctor who promptly left her when he found that there was no money. And they were deported to Litzmannstadt [Lodz, Poland]. And they were killed in the...Lodz ghetto. And there was property there, which my father and his sister inherited. That's why they went back to Berlin. But not permanently. But his sister and her husband went back permanently. And both died in Berlin. That's how we came to talk about the Chinese.

*Yeah. And what was it like for them to go back to Berlin?*

What was it like? Strange. I still had a lot of friends there, because my friends from the Quaker children's group were still in Berlin. And it was strange because I didn't recognise a lot of the things. And I looked at the street signs and thought, "Ja, I must have stood here many times in my life, but it doesn't look familiar." I can't find my way around anymore.

*When did you go back to Berlin?*

**[2:00:34]**

The war was up.

*So much later, after 1961?*

Yes. With Charles... to visit my uncle and aunt. And I can tell you what year because there was no- There was no Sebastian. Michelle was three. So it must have been '66. That's when we went back. And Charles didn't know Berlin at all. ...It was just strange. And to go back to the Quaker Bureau. And then- that's right, we'd taken Michelle who was I think three or two and three quarters and an au pair. We had a Danish au pair and we took her with us. And we stayed at the Savoy in Fasanenstraße. And I wanted to go to the Brecht Theatre in East Berlin. And we had, on a previous occasion, met where else but in Ascona, in the Ticino, we met Brecht's ...girlfriend Helene Weigel, in a cafe. And she said, "If you ever come to Berlin, and you want tickets for the theatre, look me up." So I said to Charles, "I want to go across and I want to look up Helene Weigel, and I want to go to the theatre." Charles was very doubtful, because as he had at one time been a Polish national, because of his father, he said, "I don't like to go into countries - these countries...." – you know, these Eastern European countries. "I don't like it." But I said, "Yes, yes, don't be silly. Don't be daft. We'll go." And we went across at Bahnhof Friedrichstraße. And of course it started that one had to hand one's passport over, about which Charles was extremely unhappy. I wasn't delighted but well, still. And then we went to the theatre and we were told there were no seats for the performance and Helene Weigel was not there that day. So we turned around and went back. And there was a queue going across, and we had left little Michelle with the au pair the other side. And they called names when they gave the passports back. And one name after the other was called. And people who'd come way behind us were called, and our name was not called. And Charles says, "I told you! Look what's happening!" And I said, "I will deal with that." And I went up to this juror who called out the names, and I said, "*Was fällt Ihnen eigentlich ein?*" [How dare you!] And I started shouting at them! And saying, "We've come across to see Helene Weigel to get theatre tickets. *Und Sie behalten jetzt unsere Pässe!*" [And you are

keeping our passports!] Ooo! ... We got them. But, oh God... So that was a... And Charles says, "Never again am I going to go across." [laughs]

*And did he?*

"You and your bizarre ideas." That was the visit to Berlin. And afterwards, we met my West-Quaker friends in West Berlin. And I said, "Do you know what happened to us?" And they said, "Yes, of course." I said, how did they know? "Because you are Westerners." I said, "How did they know we were from the West?" And they said, "They can tell by the way you dress; they can tell by your clothing." I said, "But why did they keep our passports?" And they said, "Because you are very suspicious. You go across for a theatre ticket, and back the same day? That's unheard of! That was suspicious behaviour. And they obviously thought they had to keep an eye on you in case you want to pass documents to East Berliners who want to get out." So: so much for my first visit to Berlin.

*But you were- so you re-met your Quaker friends from the...group?*

**[2:05:23]**

Yes, we all kept in touch. And we were all in different spheres. One of us was in the American intelligence. That was Tom Döppner, and he was also half-Jewish. And one of his- I think his father was a Communist journalist. They had gone to the States. Then there was Arno Linke, who was *Leibarzt* to Ulbricht. Personal Doctor. Then there was Friedl Wilke, whose parents ran a pub in East Berlin. Odo Horowitz whose father was half-Jewish and who worked for the *Berliner Rundfunk*. Theo Hans, who'd also been in the American forces. Bernd Brandt, Gert Bernstein, who was in Australia. He and I are the only ones left alive.

*Of that group?*

Yes, actually I think also Gisela, who was a Quaker by birth right in Berlin. That's all; they're all dead.

*But all of you kept corresponding and...*

Corresponding, enquiring about each other. Ja.

*And also a thing I didn't ask, is in the 50s when you studied and when you became a dentist, did you go to Quaker meetings? Did you keep on the connection?*

[2:06:57]

For a while I didn't, but then when some from the Berlin Quakers came over, we went back to Hampstead Meeting, and I went with them. And then I started going again, because I like to sit in silence. And at a Quaker meeting you sit in silence.

*So you - you find it attractive, the service.*

Well, within limits.

*Of- let's say of any organised religion, that's the one you, well if you can call it an organised religion, I don't know. Maybe it isn't.*

It's not even an organised religion. And at Hampstead Meeting you don't need to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ either.

*Aha.*

You do it quite a few- You see, each group is slightly different.

*Oh, I see.*

And you find the provincial Quaker groups for instance are much more as one calls it, 'Christ-orientated'. At Hampstead Meeting they're mainly half-Buddhists.

*I see so you don't have to be Christian as such, to go to meetings.*

No, no. In fact, some of them don't even call themselves...

*OK. So let's just go back to your life in England, and being a dentist and setting up your house with Charles, and then eventually having children. Can you tell us a little bit about that time?*

Well for a year we went and lived in Priory Road with my parents. But then we decided we wanted to buy a house, and we saw this one being built. And as I always wanted to be near the Heath, because you could swim in the ponds. Because from first coming to London at the age of sixteen, I went swimming in the ponds. And I insisted I had to be near the Heath. So we bought this house. And then with- Charles was very keen on having children. Actually, quite honestly, more than I was. And as that didn't work, we thought we would adopt. And then... I went to a dentist-patient seminar - dentist-patient relationship seminar - and a colleague of mine there, another dentist, had a contact to The Mother and Child Society you know for the girls who have the illegitimate children. And she said, "There's- you know, there's a little girl for adoption." And we went and met people there from that Society. And I told them a pack of lies...

[Laughter]

*In terms of what?*

**[2:10:00]**

Because, first of all, in those days, I was not supposed to continue working. That was this particular society: The Society for Mother and Child. And also they preferred the child to be brought up in a religion. So I discussed with Charles what religion was most suitable, and we decided Jewish was perhaps the most suitable. [laughing] So we said, of course we would bring the child up Jewish. So they went back to the biological mother and said, "Is that acceptable?" And she said, "Yes, Jews make very good parents." Little did she know. And ...so that's how we got Michelle. By the time- But I always said, I don't- I was an only child. I think it's horrible to be an only child. I want Michelle to have a brother or a sister. So... By that time, they had The Agnostic Adoption Society, so we didn't have to tell tales any more about synagogues or churches or... this or that. And then they came up with Sebastian.

*Quite amazing. So they – and how old were they when they came to you? When Michelle...?*

[2:11:34]

Michelle was six week and Sebastian was four weeks.

*But- that's amazing. And you managed to- but you continued to work, and you managed?*

I worked part time. Not full time any more. I ran the surgery part-time, which was quite difficult - very difficult in fact.

*And what was Charles doing? What profession?*

Charles, originally he got his degree in Chemistry. And when he was preparing to go to America, the uncle who he was to join in the factory, was killed by a crane that dropped on his head. A box: a workman had a crane with a box and he was killed. So that was that. And then I met Charles. And he had by that time- What did he do –ja. What was he doing? He was first in the research labs at Kodak – and then at Kodak's in Wembley Park or somewhere. I said, "That's no good. One has to be self-employed. And anyway, find yourself another job." And then he got a job as a Director of a company making plastic buttons. And that job didn't look very promising to me either. But he had to do export selling. And he went to Sweden one year, and I went with him. I just ...took my surgery holiday and went with him to Sweden. And there were these units – String - these units. Swedish units. And we had just got the house here, and we wanted to buy them. And we couldn't buy them here. So I said to Charles, "Next time you go to Sweden, see whether you can't get the agency for this." So Charles went. They appointed him as their agent. And then he started an import business with Scandinavian furniture. Hence you see all these samples here. Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish,

*And that became his business?*

Ja, Ja.

*So he fell into that somehow.*



More or less, yes.

*Yeah. And were your parents still alive when you adopted the children?*

Yes.

*And what was the – how did they ...view...?*

**[2:14:17]**

At first, with great unease. My mother said, “*Das ist doch ein fremdes Kind.*” [But this is someone else’s child“] But we ignored that. By the time we adopted Sebastian, I think my father was dead. Was he dead? No, I think he was still alive. Ja, he was still alive. Well. What could they say?

*And were you close to them? Were they close to the children? Were you at that point...?*

They had the children sometimes, but you know they were also quite old. They were old parents. And my father was not that well. He had a heart condition. There was no close contact. There was contact, yes.

*And you said that you had to pretend that you were going to raise them Jewish. How did you- What was your plan? How did you want to raise them?*

At the time, as one...does when one has children at King Alfred’s - where we had them – nothing. I now think this was probably a mistake. I’m not so sure that it was such a good idea. But then, do you know it was also quite difficult. What should we do? I couldn’t really bring them up Christian. I didn’t believe it. Charles was brought up very Jewish; didn’t want to have anything to do with it on the purely religious basis. He was totally ...indifferent, shall we say? And you know- Yes. Do you know, Sebastian goes round saying he’s Jewish?

*Mn-hnn.*

And when I say, “Why are you Jewish?” He says, “Because of you.”

*Mn-hnn. So maybe you transmitted something.*

But Michelle does not think that. There's nothing there.

*Aha. But did you talk to your children about your history and about...your past?*

Oh, yes, yes, yes, Yes, certainly.

**[2:17:11]**

*But did you speak German for example?*

They heard German, because we used to have my parents for lunch every Sunday. And after my father died, my mother for another sixteen years. Now, Sebastian never took much notice because he was always out playing in the street. In those days one could still let children play in the street, you know. And Michelle understands quite a lot of German. Yes.

*And did you and Charles continue to speak German or how...?*

Charles's German was not very good. It was faulty. You know he was five when he came here and grew up in the school, like Ellie.

*So you spoke in English?*

Yes. He couldn't read German. He didn't have the patience to read German. He understood all right, but he made mistakes.

*And tell me about your circles? Who were your friends? Did you mix with other refugees, or with...?*

**[2:18:20]**

Well, I mean my two friends at the Northern Polytechnic, Liane, who was Viennese. And Anne, who came from Breslau. But Anne came here when she was five or six. And what other friends? ...Those were really my closest friends. ...Quite a few refugees, yes.

*Were you part of the Hampstead circle? Let's say, I mean I know that you knew Erich Fried for example?*

Oh, yes, yes, yes. The Frieds. Ja.

*How did you know them?*

Because, in the boarding house where I lived with my mother in Aberdare Gardens... there were a couple of other young men - who was it? Gert Freudthal? , who had been interned with Hans Eichner, who lectured German literature, who knew Erich Fried. And I got dragged into the Fried circles - very much so. Because I - I then later had them all as patients. Rudi Dutschke - Rudi Dutschke and his Frau was a patient. [laughs]

*Explain to us. I know who he is, but maybe some people will not know who Rudi Dutschke was.*

Ah, well Rudi Dutschke [spokesperson of the German student movement of the 1960s] – what was he? The left-wing agitator and Christian, very Christian, in Berlin, who got shot at by a right-winger, I think. He was quite a politically prominent figure...

*Yeah.*

Rudi Dutschke. Ja, he was my patient and a whole lot of them.

*Who else was in that circle?*

Hans Eichner, who later emigrated to Canada and also lectured German Literature at a university in Canada. Gerry Field – Gerhard Feld something-or-other. And, oh, a whole lot of the German left-wingers you know? I met a lot of them. Who else? A lot.

[2:21:02]

*Not Elias Canetti; that was earlier? That's a different group. Did you ever meet Canetti in Hampstead?*

Well my parents had only refugee friends. They didn't have many friends anyhow, but the ones that they did have, were certainly not English.

*So Elias Canetti and yeah, and so there were people from Germany coming and visiting and...*

Ja.

*There was a theatre person; I forgot his name.*

Yes, cab- in Finchley Road. The Austrian. What was it called again?

*The Danube?*

The Blue Danube.

*The Blue Danube. Do you remember that?*

I went once or twice. I think my parents never went. The Blue Danube – ja.

*What was the Blue Danube? What was it?*

[2:22:10]

It was a cabaret, as far as I remember. Political cabaret as well. And a lot of the refugees gravitated around that. You know The Dorice, The Cosmo and The Blue Danube. But my parents not. No. But then as I said, my mother was no *Hausfrau*. And one did not really entertain. I don't ever remember my parents giving a dinner party. My mother couldn't really cook. And my father I think... was a *Kaffeehausmensch*.

*And just to come back to you, you know, as a dentist, somebody who's finished school here. Did you find that as a woman, it was more or less difficult for you to be a refugee in Britain? Or did it impact at all that you were a woman?*

No. As a woman, no. No. I mean, the only thing that was more difficult is that I didn't stand a chance of a place at the Royal Free. Had I been true British, maybe I would have got in. I don't know. I don't know.

*That as a non-national British...?*

Ja. Ja.

*Did you feel any- did you face any discrimination coming to England as a...?*

No...no. Except being a sort of rare specimen in Dorset. No.

*And what impact do you think did it have on your life, that you came on the Kindertransport? That you were forced to - to flee your home?*

I think it was a very deep trauma. Not realised as I said earlier on, throughout my life. I thought it had next to no effect on me and that's not true. I think, but this is very personal. I have actually never I think fully - use big words, eh? - got over it. I think I've never...[sighs]

*In which way, or in...Like you said, you feel it more now? You find it more upsetting to talk about?*

Yes, I don't know why. Well first of all, because I've never really become English. And because to be told, "But you're not English are you? And where are you from?" doesn't help one to integrate. And... well, I'm so aware of this conflict. I have quite a few, as Charles and I used to call them, 'German German' friends around here. And it's very funny and strikes me as strange when they introduce me to other people, they always treat me and introduce me as a German! And they really do! You know, 'we Germans'. They're all post-war Germans. How many are there here? There's four or five of them here.

[2:25:48]

*But that makes you feel good or bad? That can be interpreted in different ways.*

Neither... Neither good nor bad. Just strange. And odd. And not really quite integrated. Because they introduce me as German, and in some ways I want to say, "You know, I'm not." And in other ways well, I am. And I find that I share quite a few ...standards, or ways of behaving with them. I have never become English. ...And I think this immigration has been a very, very serious trauma. Yes. Yes.

*And do you think you realise it more now, than before?*

Yes. Perhaps it's because I have more time to experience it or think about it. You know I was very occupied running a surgery and having two children. Two children, two dogs and a cat.

Um. Ja. I think so.

*And do you mean by trauma, the uprooting? The...?*

The uprooting. The- Not to have a shared childhood, you know. People like Louise referring to things which meant nothing to me. I didn't experience that as a child. And then Johanna who's one of the post-war Germans mentioned something, and that's exactly what I had when I was a child.

*Yeah. So there's sort of not rootedness?*

An uprooted-ness. Yes. And going to Germany, and not belonging. Because I don't. And I don't feel very happy in a terribly English ambiance here.

*So where do you feel at home?*

[2:28:29]

In Hampstead.

*So that's something. Hampstead is your home.*

Preferably in Belsize Park. ...Very parochial.

*So speaking of Belsize Park, can you tell us the story of Louise? Because we didn't finish it.  
Or Muriel, as you...*

Well the story of Louise was that this girl was put in charge of me and then when I left- had to leave Dorchester to come to London, we lost touch. And I often wondered what had happened. And I had her picture, photograph in my album. And I used to talk to Charles about her, with no idea what had happened to this Muriel Taylor. And... then friends of ours, Günther and Lore Hoffstett - he's an architect and designer. And he said, "You know, it's funny, but somebody who used to work for me lives just a few houses from you, in Glenilla Road. Don't you know her? Louise Pennington-Leigh." I don't know her, Louise Pennington-Leigh. I have no idea who that is. And then one day I think we were out in the street. And Gunter said, "Here, let me introduce you." And he introduced us to Mrs. Pennington-Leigh, who had worked for him in his office. And he said that she was divorced and she'd left her husband or something. You know, we didn't take too much notice. And then one day – you know, we used to have dogs. And we had a huge Alsatian. And you can imagine the garden was a – sewer, back there. It was dreadful. Well both dogs had died, and we were not going to have another dog because it's a big, big tie. Although I would love to have a dog now, but it's a big tie. And Charles said, "We ought to put the garden in order." But neither he nor I are gardeners. And one day we were walking by the- You know the green at the Royal Free there, which now looks dreadful. And there was this Mrs Pennington-Leigh, cutting the hedge together with another young man. And Charles said, "Oh, you are doing a good job!" And she said, "Yes, I love gardening, and I haven't got a garden." So Charles said, "Shall we ask her whether she'd like to do our garden?" "Good idea." So we told Mrs Pennington-Leigh would she like to do our garden. She said she would love it, and she started. And then I thought she's really quite nice and quite often when we were in the conservatory having tea, I would say, "Come and have a cup of tea." And then I said, "I must invite her to dinner once." And I invited her to dinner together with two other friends of ours. And Christine is also from Dorset. And Christine and I always talked Dorset, because she's twenty years younger than I am. Still had a lot of family in Dorset. We used to talk about the villages, you know...

Winterborne, St. Andrews, and Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton. And then Mrs Pennington-Leigh said, “Well actually, I’m from a West-country family. But I’ve also lived in Dorset.” I said, “Really? Well you know I went to the Dorchester County School for Girls.”

**[2:32:26]**

And she said, “Daisy, what was your name then?” And I told her. And she said, “Do you remember how we used to walk home from School together?” And I thought, ‘she’s mad’. I said, “I’m sorry, there’s some misunderstanding here. Because I didn’t know Louise, OK Pennington-Leigh is your married name.” She said, “Well you know it wasn’t Louise then.” And that’s when it came: “Promise me, that you will- nobody - nobody will ever know what name you knew me by.” And I said, “God! It’s you!” And I went upstairs and I got down the photo album, with pictures of her and me. I said, “Look, I’ve been talking to Charles about you.” So there we had been living- She’d been here I think for twenty-something years. Two houses away.

*What a story. Well, it’s lucky that you found out at all! You could have lived there...*

If we had never invited her with the Winterbergs, and Christine as a Dorset person, and we had been talking about it, we might never have found out.

*And once you found out then you talked about- You said that you...*

Well, then we talked about- Then we were contacted by somebody who was looking into the history of the school, and who wanted to know, because we were pupils of PC Ruegg’s, who actually ended up here, in Hampstead. But Louise and I didn’t know; and she had just died. We would have gone to visit her. Ja.

*Yes, because it’s really interesting that you say you don’t feel English although you did go to school here.*

Ja. Look if you’re always told, “But you have an accent; where are you from?” In the end you think, “Ok. Have it your way...Fine.”



*And how would you define yourself?*

[2:34:53]

As a central European... . Just a European. Nothing specific.

*And was it important for you that Charles had a sort of a similar background, or not similar but he was also a refugee?*

Only in as much as he understood. Because... I find one has difficulty explaining to one's non-Jewish friends what one's exact feeling and position is. "Oh, but you're German." "Oh, but you're this, Oh, but you're that." ...But you know, this experience when I first came to London – no, not first. When my parents had taken the flat in Priory Road and I went to live there with them. And we had some people called Morgan living in the flat below us. And it was Derby time, you know, horseracing. And I met Mrs Morgan and I said, "Oh, so and so has won" Whatever horse it was. And she said, "Oh, Daisy, do you take an interest in *Our* Derby?" Thank you... Thank you.

*Yeah. So there was a degree of exclusion, but I guess London is more multi-cultural... now, than before, maybe.*

Ja.

*And how was your experience as a sort of let's say, mixed race family?*

You can't explain. Actually, Sebastian I think feels himself very English. Michelle does not, as it happens.

*And Charles, how did he see himself? Because we can't ask him anymore.*

No, he never felt himself English. He was very familiar with the culture. He grew up here. He knew nothing about Germany. But really nothing. His German was faulty. And ...he knew how to behave here. He had no accent. He spoke English without an accent. But he never felt himself...

*We just have to change cards. Yeah, we were talking about Charles and you said, that despite him not having an accent he didn't feel English.*

Yeah.

**[2:38:12]**

*Is there anything which we haven't discussed which you want to add? Maybe one thing I didn't ask you is something that I know- Switzerland was quite important for you and you went on lots of holidays...?*

I think we've covered it.

*Daisy, Switzerland: do you want to talk about it? Ancona? Is that something?*

Ascona is the place where Charles would have wanted to go and live. He was hooked on Ascona. And in the end I was quite fed up, because one always had to go to the Ticino... You know we had a flat there for a long time.

*What attracted Charles there, or both of you?*

Oh, the scenery. It is beautiful. It really is beautiful. You've been haven't you?

*No, I haven't.*

It is beautiful. It really is beautiful. Before the Germans did their best to ruin large parts of it by building chairlifts up the mountains and. No, it is very beautiful.

*So you spent many holidays there?*

Three times a year and...ja. Walked through the valleys. Enormous amounts of walking. On the Locarno side. Not the Lugano side. The Locarno side. Ja.

*And was there ever or did you think you wanted to live in another country? To emigrate elsewhere with Charles?*

I didn't; Charles did.

*Where did...He wanted to go to...?*

**[2:39:49]**

There. If I had said, "Yes, let's go", he would have upped like a shot. I said, "What am I going to do there?" He said, "Oh, well you just look at the mountains and the lake." I said, "That's not enough. What about the people?"

*You were quite happy to stay here?*

In Hampstead, yes, yes, yes.

*Yeah.*

I think I would have been less happy in, in Sidcup or Sidmouth, or...[laughs] Yes.

*Is there any message, Daisy, you have for anyone who might watch this interview in the future, based on your experience?*

Just that England is not the England that I knew when I came here. That it's not recognisable. ...And this includes this part of London. That the change is so, so really drastic. Some of it to the better, some of it not.

*For example?*

Well as far as I'm concerned, too many people with too much money have moved into this area, and with it some of the specific character has gone. Because quite a few of them sit in their mansions, and shut themselves away from the rest of the people. It's still just about

bearable because to some extent it still is mixed. But I think that's going. And Michelle, who keeps telling me she would love to come and live in Belsize Park. I say, "You know, I'm not so sure that if I were your age now I would want to live in an area that attracts money to such an extent." I mean Hampstead used to be very much artists, and you know, some poor, some rich! But now, my God. You know some of the people who've moved in here...

*Yeah. Daisy one question I actually forgot to ask, which I would like to ask you is- how different do you think, would your life have been if you hadn't been forced to emigrate?*

I would have become a good German, I suppose. When I was a little child, I hated Berlin. I wanted to be 'an der Ostsee' [at the Baltic Sea]. But I think I would just have become a good German. I would not have become a dentist; I would have become a journalist or something like that.

*Do you think?*

**[2:42:58]**

Yes, yes. Yes. My father had connections to the 'Ullstein Verlag' [one of the largest publishing companies of Germany]. And in fact when I had started my dental studies here, I said, "You know, I don't want to go on with this. I - I will write." But this, my parents said, "Be practical." So, I was practical.

*And write in English or in German?*

I think in English. In English. Yes.

*So you could have had a career as a writer?*

I probably would have had a career in journalism, yes. I think so. I don't know. Hasn't happened.

*Daisy, thank you very much for this interview. If you have anything else, we're going to look at some photos now. And thank you very much for sharing your story with us.*

Pleasure.

**[End of interview]**

**[2:44:03]**

**[Photographs]**

**[2:44:24]**

Well that looks like a photograph of my mother as a baby, with her wet nurse. I wouldn't know when this was taken, but if my mother was born, when, she would now be about 120 so I suppose in the 1880s.

*And where?*

Probably in Berlin.

*Yes, please, Daisy.*

I would think that's a photograph of my father's mother. Felizia. But I really wouldn't know when. She was probably in her twenties when she had him. Looks middle aged doesn't she?

That looks like my father, during the war, when he was a doctor at a military hospital. I would say that's 1914, 1915, something like that. I don't know whether that's a German or Austrian uniform, because I do know that he was in the Austrian Army and the German Army.

This is a postcard which my father sent to his parents. He wrote to them and said that he thought he was very, very well represented in this picture. But this would have been I suppose 1914, 1915. Ja.

It's addressed to this address in Bayerische Straße 6, where my grandmother died.

That looks like a photograph of my mother as a young girl. I would think eighteen, nineteen, before she got married. I think she was twenty-one when she married. Ja. In Berlin. Everything would have been in Berlin.

That's a picture of me; I think must have been three years old, or four years old. I don't know. It was all taken in Berlin.

Which one? ...That's me. It must have been in '38, on the balcony of our flat in Lietzenburger Strasse, in Berlin. I think in '38.

Which is that one?

[2:48:06]

*The self-portrait.*

Ah, I used to like taking photographs. And this is a self-portrait. And again, this must have been in '38.

Well these look like, this must have been passport photographs, before we emigrated. And they must have been taken at the end of 1938. In Berlin.

Which one? Ja, that's my parents and myself...and, when we went to Southampton... to meet my father's sister, on their way from Germany to China. And this must have been maybe 1939, 1940. 1939, .

*The middle picture.*

Which is?

*Of Milton Abbas. What can we see Daisy?*

Just roofs and... must have been a view from the window of the room they gave me in the house in Milton Abbas. So this would have been '39.

*Yes.(Bea)*

This was taken- I was already in London, and I was doing my First MBE at the Northern Polytechnic. And my friends Anne and Liane are there, so this must have been in the 40s, in the early 40s I would think.

*And where are you?*

Next to- next to my friend Anne, there.

*Are you the third on the right?*

Yes... No...

I can't really see it from here. Well... this is Sebastian and Michelle. And Michelle must have been about- Michelle was probably about five and a half and Sebastian, well, a little baby. A few months old. That's it.

And here are Charles and I, in old age, at Michelle's wedding. So Michelle I think this must be now about ten years ago, so this was in '95 (Bea speaks "ten years ago")...2005. So there we are.

**[2:51:32]**

*And when did Charles pass away Daisy?*

Charles died in '09.

*2009. That's a lovely picture of you.*

March '09.

*Daisy, thank you very much for this interview.*

Pleasure.

**[End of photographs]**

**[2:51:56]**