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**AJR**

**Winston House, 2 Dollis Park**

**London N3 1HF**

**[ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk](mailto:ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk)**

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**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	63

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Ibolya
<b>Forename:</b>	Ginsburg
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	6 July 1924
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Paszto, Hungary

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	8 June 2004
<b>Location of Interview:</b>	Elland, West Yorkshire
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Rosalyn Livshin
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	4 hours and 42 minutes

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

**INTERVIEW: 63**

**NAME: IBOLYA GINSBURG**

**DATE: SUNDAY 8 JUNE 2004**

**LOCATION: ELLAND, WEST YORKSHIRE**

**INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN**

**TAPE 1**

RL: I am interviewing Ibolya Ginsburg and the date is Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004. The interview is taking place in Elland, West Yorkshire and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

Now if you can tell me first your name.

IG: My name is Ibolya Ginsburg.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

IG: My name was at birth Davidovitch.

RL: And did you have any other names?

IG: I did. My name is in Hebrew Sara Rivka.

RL: Were you named after anybody?

IG: Yes, after my paternal grandmother.

RL: And where were you born?

IG: I was born in a town in Hungary called Paszto, on the middle of Hungary, and we lived there until I was five, then we moved to a place called Tokaj, which is north east of Hungary, near to the Slovak border.

RL: And when were you born?

IG: I was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1924.

**Tape 1: 1 minutes 38 seconds**

RL: How old does that make you now?

IG: I shall be 80 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July.

RL: Now, if you can tell me first your parents' names and where they were from.

IG: My father's name was Joshua Davidovitch, but in Hungary you had to have a Hungarian name as well, and his name was Herman Davidovitch, and he came from the city of Miskolc, which was the third largest city in Hungary.

My mother, her name was Emily Katz, but we called her short Mirrel and she was born in a very, very tiny place called Torna St Jakab, but it was a big family and they came from a town called Zharoshbatok.

RL: Now, if you can tell me first about your father's family and his parents, your grandparents, and what you know about his family.

IG: Well, as far as I can tell, my grandfather was one of six or seven brothers, and they came from a place called Ungwar which was in Slovakia. Now that part of Slovakia belonged to Hungary before the First World War and after the Second World War they have taken parts away from Hungary and this part was, became part of Slovakia and they called the town Uzhhorod, so everybody who is Davidovitch from Uzhhorod must be my relations and most of the family lived there, my father and my grandfather had a youngest brother who also lived in Hungary. But that is about it, I know cousins and father's cousins still exist some of them and it was a big family.

RL: What did your grandfather do for a living?

IG: My grandfather was, how shall I tell you, a cantor, a ... now let me find it, he was a religious slaughterer, he was also a very able man, he used to, he was a scribe, he used to make Torahs, he was very good at doing the letters for it. So that is what he earns his living with and it was a very big city of course, Miskolc where he was.

RL: How many children did they have?

IG: About seven or eight children, and my father was the oldest of identical twins, he had an identical brother, and by the time my father became pretty grown up my grandmother died, and my grandfather married his wife's sister, younger sister, so in actual fact she was my grandmother, and until quite lately, as I grow up, I didn't really know that she wasn't my grandmother. And she also had two daughters and a son with my grandfather, so my two aunts who were born from the second marriage, one was two years older than I was, the other a year older, and I have an uncle who is younger than I am. So that is how life used to be in the olden days.

**Tape 1: 6 minutes 4 seconds**

RL: So where did your father come in the family?

IG: In what way?

RL: In number, you say there were seven or eight ...

IG: He was the oldest.

RL: He was the oldest.

IG: He was the oldest ...

RL: Ahh ... What kind of upbringing did he have?

IG: Well it was a strictly orthodox household, it had to be. And as I said, I don't know much about that, but I do remember my great grandmother, my grandmother's mother was still alive, until I was about four years old and I remember a lot about my childhood.

RL: What kind of education did your father have?

IG: Well, they had to go to the ordinary school. In Hungary you spoke Hungarian. You spoke Yiddish together at home, in religious families, but even there, not always. And he had a fantastic voice, if he wouldn't have been a religious person he would probably have become a opera singer. He was really very good, so because of that he started with it, singing, exactly like his father, and then of course he learned all the other things that go with it, so my father then became the same work as my grandfather. He was a cantor, and he was a head cantor because there were some others as well in town, so he was very well known, he was well known in not just the Jewish community but the non Jews used to come and listen to him because he was really extraordinary.

RL: What happened to him during the First World War?

IG: He was just about 18 I think, or so, when they conscripted him, there was him and his brother, and they went into the army but the war finished very quickly, so he had some experience and he was already in the First World War.

RL: What experience did he have in the First World War?

IG: Well, I remember him telling us that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was already non existent but all the command was in German. And he did his military service, both him and his brother, That is about all I can tell you about his escapades in the First World War.

**Tape 1: 9 minutes 34 seconds**

RL: Now coming on to ... well first of all, when his brothers and sisters grew up, where did they live? Did they continue living in the same ... ?

IG: No, no. My uncle he lived quite far away and he got married and the oldest aunt lived in Slovakia, and then he had a sister again, not living in the town where they come from. But, the younger ones were still at home, I had two aunts, the two oldest ones were from the first marriage, and the younger ones from the second marriage. They were still at home and my uncle, he went to school and then he went to a Yeshiva, and my father did that, everybody went to a Yeshiva for so long.

RL: Do you know which Yeshiva your father went to?

IG: Not really. But I can tell you that if anybody could afford it they always sent them to Slabodka, that was Lithuania, I think I mentioned this to you before, that was the crème de la crème, and by going to Yeshivas they got to know certain Rabbis, what we called Tzaddikim, and they all had their favourite Rabbis that they used to go to and where they used to belong and so on, so there was never a dull moment, I can tell you. If you really observe there is always a lot going on.

RL: So did your father have a favourite Rabbi?

IG: Oh yes, and that was the Satmar Rebbe. And our house was such that he came once to the town for a weekend and people were queuing up inviting him to come and stay at their houses, well to do people and so on, but he came to our house and he stayed in our place and he ate my mother's cooking, so that is the type of family that we were.

RL: How did he choose your family?

IG: My father? Well, it is very interesting because both my grandmothers come from the same family. That is what I told you, it was a very big family. I don't know if it is three or four times removed cousins, but both my grandmothers were called Grunfeld and they came from the same place. And probably it was by introduction, as they say, that is how they got married.

RL: So, tell me a bit about your mother's family.

IG: Well, there again, my mother's father, his name was Katz, Yitzchak Katz, but my great grandfather Katz, his profession was, he was a high ranking officer in the army, so you see, and he had two sons, and then he was going to buy a commission for them. My grandfather said, "I don't want to be an officer, I don't want to go in the army." And his father said, "Well, what do you want to be?" He says, "Oh, I want to be a farmer." So that was that, and his father decided that that is it, it is fair enough, if he doesn't want to

go to the Academy for Officers, and he enquired, of course I don't know but somehow, probably somewhere in the Officer's Mess and someone came to him and said, "There is **Tape 1: 14 minutes 12 seconds**

a big farm going. Would you like to buy it?" He said, "My son is only 15, I can't buy him a farm." He said, "Look, you will never have a chance like that, these are people who are old with no children and they want to retire. You don't have to worry because there is a manager with a wife and he can manage the farm." And in actual fact it was a ranch, and that is what happened, so my grandfather owned the ranch from being 15. And then of course he had to go to this place that I told you where there were no Jews at all and every summer he would go down to the ranch to learn the things, how to run it, and he was educated, and whilst he was there he became religious. He was in a tiny village, in a hamlet, and there were other places three, four, five miles, there was a shop and there was a so and so, and these Jews said, "Oh, wonderful, now we have got a minyan." So they used to meet at one another's places at Friday nights, and my grandfather then became religious, I don't know how religious, and got married eventually. He had a little boy about six, seven months old, and his wife died, and the wife's parents were, you know, they lived somewhere near, not far, and they told him, you have to find yourself a wife, because this child needs a mother. Well, there were plenty of wet nurses, this child was fed, and I think my father went, and my grandfather went to somebody who did this arrangement of marriage. And he said, "I want a nice girl, well brought up" and so on. And, she said right, one came and she said, there is a family, but they live very far and they were Grunfeld. It was my grandmother, and they had a few girls, so apparently, I think, he went to see her, to see them, and as I said, there were a few girls, and it was my grandmother who decided that she would take that on. So my grandmother came with her mother to look at the place, and the parents of the first wife, they sort of adopted her straight away, and they got married. The thing is that my grandmother came from a strictly orthodox family, so I think that she brought something into that home, and my mother told me that they must have been 15/16 when they found out that their brother, who they adored, was not their mother's child. And my grandmother had five girls, of which my mother was the second daughter, so ...

RL: What kind of education did your mother have?

IG: They went to the local Catholic school. There were no Jews around, and at home they had a tutor, a private tutor, who taught them everything about Judaism, and also taught them, educated them further, and I don't think that they had to, he had to educate them a lot about Judaism because my grandmother brought them up, but he did teach them all the other things that they didn't get in that small school. So they were partly educated at home.

RL: And of the other sisters, and the brother, where did they live when they grew up?

IG: My uncle lived also in Slovakia and my oldest aunt lived in Slovakia, but my grandfather, he died very early, he had a stroke, and I think his son was already married and the oldest daughter was married, and I don't know what happened, but they came

back to live, to the ranch, because they needed somebody to look after this place with another four girls around them and my grandmother. And they stayed there and my

**Tape 1: 19 minutes 33 seconds**

mother got married and the younger sister got married, and well, I must have been about four or five years old when my grandmother died. There were two sisters still unmarried and then they sold the place. And they paid out the sisters, and one sister went to stay to live with the older sister and the younger one came to stay with us and she got married from us.

RL: How had your parents met?

IG: By introduction, but you see, they knew they were related.

RL: Did your parents ... were they followers of the Satmar Rebbe? Were they part of the Satmar Chassidic community?

IG: They weren't really Chassidic, they were very orthodox, and you had to be, because the job what my father did had to be good enough, because the congregation where we lived, there must have been about eight or ten families who were Chassidim. Now they ate from my father's shechitah, so father had to be A1, and their wives, and they used to go to the little shtieble or the Beis Hamedrash, which was near the synagogue, that is where they used to pray, but their wives used to come to the synagogue and everything happened together. The community was very close, because you were either orthodox or you weren't, but a Jew was always a Jew, especially in a small place. I mean, there were a few families who didn't observe anything, but if you met a religious bloke, you went to school together, so there was always great big happiness if they met one another, they wanted to exchange pleasantries, how things are. And I must say, that they all stuck together very much, it was a very nice congregation.

RL: How big a community was it?

IG: Quite big, well I tried to count up, well there must have been a hundred odd families, a hundred and fifty, sixty. And you see Tokaj was the centre of the wine growing industry, Tokaj wine is very famous, so there were a lot of people, most of them had big chunks of wineries where they grow grapes and make wine.

RL: So you say that your family were not Chassidic themselves?

IG: Not in that respect, they weren't, I mean a child of a Chassid couldn't have a sleeve above her elbow, it had to be covered up, she had to be buttoned up and we also had relatives who were Chassids and the girls wore black stockings and didn't cut their hair, and I was allowed to wear little socks and short sleeves and if I used to go to visit my friends and the father was very religious and as soon as I used to come in he used to take his handkerchief to put it round my thing and I used to say to her "I know it is a mitzvah but you don't have to do it every time."



RL: What about the shtreimel?

**Tape 1: 23 minutes 50 seconds**

IG: Strangely enough, nobody wore it, there were two families where the men had them and the only time I saw them in it was when there was some sort of a wedding or something, at their house, and I understand that at home on Saturday, the Shabbat, they would put it on. But they wouldn't put it on, take it into the synagogue, or anything like that.

Now we had a village, about 7 km from us, they did, if you went out on a Friday night there they were all in white socks and shtreimels, they wore it, but not where I lived. I mean you got up, my father, he got up every morning, so first he would go to the mikveh, to the ritual bath, and then he would go to the Beis Hamedresh for a few hours to sit and learn, and then he would come home, have lunch, I mean breakfast and start his work. So there was always something went on by 4 o'clock, the Beis Hamedresh was open and you could always come and go and it was very busy .... You see we lived in the centre.

RL: So can you describe where you were living?

IG: Well, there was a very big synagogue as I said, it was a synagogue, I think there was six large synagogues and Tokaj was one of them, so all around the synagogue yard, it was very big, and there was the Beis Hamedresh and then on one side they had a janitor lived, and there were a lot of buildings there, and those places were kept always for baking matzos, and it wasn't open until before Pesach, so that was that part, and then it was sort of partitioned off with a fence, and we lived in the yard next to it. And there was the Rabbi who lived there and the sexton or the shammas, my father, and there was another chazzan further down, that is all, and there was the school, the Jewish school was in that yard. It was very big, there were lots of trees and everything ... oh, and there was a mikveh there as well, it was a very big complex.

RL: Can you describe your home itself and what it consisted of?

IG: Not much, it had a long narrow kitchen, two big rooms and a small one, well the rooms were higher than we have here usually, and probably as big as my hall altogether one room, and then, which was a living room, where everything went on, dining part and living part. We used to do our homework there, and there was also a sort of a couch that could be opened and we could sleep on there. And then there was my parents' bedroom, the parents and the youngest child was sleeping there, and we had a smaller room which was, sort of, well two smaller rooms. One we kept as a pantry where things used to be kept and another one, we always had a live in maid and she lived in there, so it wasn't big, everybody didn't have a room like they have it here.

RL: How many children did your parents' have?

IG: My mother had ... four living daughters, she had three babies that she lost, and the last one was a miscarriage, so actually she had seven, eight pregnancies.

**Tape 1: 28 minutes 47 seconds**

RL: And where did you come in the family?

IG: Well I was the oldest, well I was the second oldest. The oldest was a boy and he died, about, when he was about 12 months old, he got meningitis. And I think that my mother was expecting me then, so I was the oldest, and then she had two other little girls, and they also died in infancy, so between me and my sister there is six years, so I was the oldest, and then I had a sister who was six years younger than I was, and after that in three years she had two more girls.

RL: In terms of what they wore, what did your father wear? What kind of clothing? What did he look like?

IG: Really, he looked very different from a Chassid, because, he was a dandy, my father, as I told you, he was tall, blond, and he wore a beaver hat, I don't know, it was a bit hairy the hat, like velvet, and he always had immaculate white shirts, hard collars that used to be sent away and hard cuff links and his coat was down there, always black. In the summer he used to have lightweight ones and in the winter nice elegant one, and he walked with a stick, with a walking stick, so when he first came to the town, when we first moved there, all the high ranking Christian ladies came, "Who is that gentleman? I have never seen one like that. He takes his hat off." "Ah, that is our head cantor." They were very proud of my father. But I think as he settled down slowly he did drop some of these things, and he started not wearing the hard cufflinks, softer collars and things, but the length of the coat was always the same and the hat didn't change, but I think he dressed more to go with the people.

RL: And what did your mother look like?

IG: Mother, as I said, she was small, dainty, she was very fine, and I sometimes wish I would be like my mother. She was quiet and very authoritative. She used to give me a hard time, because I was always very, I was a tomboy and I was always a rebel, so even if I did things wonderfully, I was never told "Well done child", because we know that would be terrible, the worse thing she could do.

RL: Did she cover her hair?

IG: She didn't just cover her hair, it was completely shaven. She was, my mother wasn't just religious, my mother was saintly in all respects. The way she looked after the kashrus, and the kashrus in the marriage. I used to look at it, and I just didn't understand, how could she do that, and she was so clever, she was wonderful, my mother.

RL: Can you give me some examples?

IG: Well, for instance, there are, we had four more ladies in the compound, the Rebbetzen said so and so, and Mrs Hyman said so and so, and occasionally things, we

**Tape 1: 33 minutes 23 seconds**

didn't use to fall out, but you know, something happened, with the children, and my mother never interfered, everybody always came to her, to talk, to ask her advice, and nothing ever went any further. And I, I think that I understood that at a very early age that she was wonderful, and I think, that I had enough sense to try to emulate her, but I haven't got her character, I have got my father's character, but there isn't a day if I have to decide something, that I don't think "What would mother do?" It's, this is why she was so different.

RL: What is your earliest memory as a child?

IG: Being pushed in a pram. In fact I remember a lot, being, before the age of three, mother didn't use to believe me, and I used to tell her stories and she just couldn't believe it. There was a time, from the age of eight through to 12 that I can't remember, but my younger age I did, and I still do.

RL: Did you used to go on holiday as a family? Did you ever use to visit anywhere?

IG: Not while we were young. But as we got older, father used to go regular to visit the grandfather. They were only, it was two hours by train, but I mean in a car you can do it, 35 kilometres was no difference, but in those days everything was a distance. My mother used to go over. And there was one big holiday I remember, it was when I finished my first year in school, we went to Slovakia to visit my aunt and my uncle and, yes, we did used to go, but not often.

RL: What school did you go to?

IG: I went to a Jewish school. The one that was in our yard, and there used to be about 100, 120 of us, from the age of six. Either you went to grammar school when you were 11 or 12 or you stayed, there was a school, a different teacher, until the age of 16, and as you know there was numerus clausus in Hungary, and certainly very religious Jews didn't think about sending their children to university, so school finished. We got the bare necessity I think, if I look back now, they taught you how to be a good wife and how to live.

RL: Who was in charge of the school?

IG: Oh, we had a teacher, we had three teachers, and, two men and a lady, and, you know, the first, second and third year was in one big room and one lady taught us. And I think they just used to be qualified. They had to have a proper degree, a university degree. You couldn't just go into a teacher's training college, because she knew how to play the piano, how to play the violin. She could conduct us when we were singing

together, she could teach us how to sew and how to embroider and the head, he would take for agriculture the boys, or woodwork, they were qualified.

**Tape 1: 37 minutes 57 seconds**

RL: Do you remember who the head was? The name?

IG: Lefkovitz. Yes.

RL: And did the school have a name?

IG: No, it was just Tokai Israeli, the Jewish school.

RL: And did you have any leisure activities as a child?

IG: Not really, we had friends. We would finish school at twelve, start eight to twelve, and as we progressed, got older, we stayed in school until one. And in Hungary, the Jewish school, the only thing that was different was, that in the morning we could, we did our Hungarian prayer, which was properly from the education authorities, authorised, and then we said our prayers, some Hebrew prayers, but that was all. Apart from it we did not get any Jewish education during the day. We had to come back twice a week in the afternoon, and the same teachers taught you, to pray, and learn the bible, everything, thoroughly, but not during school time. And that was so in the other religions too. The interesting thing in our town was there was no council school. There was a Catholic school, a Protestant school, and we had Greek Orthodox, a small community, they had a school and a Jewish school, and there was always competition. You see we would go out and there would be exercises and singing together, and of course the Jewish school always did best.

RL: So were these competitions?

IG: Yes.

RL: What kind of competitions?

IG: Well, we would have once a year when all the schools would go out and did all sorts of exercises, running, jumping, whatever. And singing, and then you were taught to sing, separate, and then you had a proper practice the whole lot of us, we were all taught, and we would sing separate and then we would sing together, and you would get ... I remember one year one beautiful light blue, silver ... light blue ...oh dear ... a banner, you know, with silver letters in it for our singing. We walked away with the first prize, and we got medals and all sorts.

RL: Were you any good at ... ?

IG: I was good at jumping, far jumping, what do you call it, the distance .. ?

RL: The long jump.

**Tape 1: 41 minutes 23 seconds**

IG: The long jump ... yes ... I was good at running too, I could out run the boys.

RL: On the other afternoons of the week, when you weren't doing your Hebrew studies, what did you do then?

IG: At first you had to do homework. If you finished at lunch time or two o'clock you always had homework, an hour or so, and then we just went out and we played, there was always something to do.

RL: What kind of games would you play?

IG: That all depended on the time of the year. If it was snowy and winter we would take our sleighs out and we would go up and up and down. There were always hills and we would play there, and in the summer, the spring came, we would make hop scotch and jumping with a ...

RL: Skipping rope ...

IG: That's right, a skipping rope. And I loved ball games, there were various things, a lot of things the boys did, that was good.

RL: Were there any clubs?

IG: No, no clubs. That was a long time ago, don't forget.

RL: Were there any youth groups, or ...

IG: Not really, no.

RL: Were there any Zionist organisations?

IG: No. There were Zionist organisations in the cities, but not in a small place. And I think they were too orthodox, I mean Mizrahi and things like that are more the religious Zionist movement. It started a little bit later. But we did have Jewish papers and things like that.

RL: Were there charitable organisations?

IG: Well there was always, there were charitable organisations of course. In a small place you had to look after the people who couldn't afford. When winter came it was up

to the teachers to know which families that had a lot of children, who needed new shoes, coats and all that was always, the town took care of their own people.

RL: Were your parents involved in that?

**Tape 1: 44 minutes 11 seconds**

IG: Of course, everybody, my parents, my father, was all the time going around, collecting money, and everybody knew why, because he always had a poor girl who had to get married, and he had to collect bottom drawers and some money and he always had a favourite charity. And people were very good, because they knew what he was doing, and if he came in and he would say, "I want money because I have a girl who is getting married and she has nothing" they did.

RL: What was your favourite time of year?

IG: Undoubtedly Purim, it was wonderful, really. As a rule, now you were asking about clubs, but as a rule the young men in the town already started, after Chanukah, rehearsing some sort of theatre for Purim, and there was always what they would call a Purim Shpiel, and it was in a big way. And yes, there was a WIZO for the ladies, I don't know that they called it WIZO but there was a ladies organisation also, they collected money and they had tombolas and all sorts of things that we didn't have.

RL: What was that in aid of?

IG: That also went for various charities and for Israel, already, if there was anywhere a simcha the first thing was that you gave a shekel, a shekel you could buy a tree with, and there was all the time buying trees, when there was weddings, whatever. And of course there was Keren Kayemet boxes at home that my mother used to put the money in every time before she lit the candles. And I remember, and they used to come once every six months and empty it, and that all went for Israel.

RL: Yes. I was just asking you something there ... it's gone now. Oh yes, favourite time of year, you were telling me about Purim ...

IG: Yes, Purim, that was great. Because you got dressed, and the children were always dressed in various costumes and we would go from one house to the other and you took the shalach monet, lots of cakes. Oh, there was so much baking at home, and we used to, mind you my mother always used to cook for people, Friday afternoon mother used to say, you haven't done your mitzvah yet, and I knew already that I had to go, she used to have fish and soup, and two old people that lived on their own. And I would say "I am not going there, it smells there."

And my mother used to say, "What about your charity?" And I had to go and I had to do my good deed. That was my mother.

RL: So on Purim you would dress up.

IG: Yes, yes.

RL: In fancy dress.

**Tape 1: 48 minutes 0 second**

IG: Yes.

RL: And did you use to take part in the theatrical ...

IG: Well, I was small, the grown ups did those, but from the school we used to do that every year, but whatever it was, I was always singing, because I had a good voice, and I was a little bit sore, because if I wouldn't have been a religious girl I would have gone to learn to sing, but there you are.

RL: At Sukkos time, did your family have a Sukkah?

IG: Oh, did we have a Sukkah? Absolutely fabulous. Now, that was exciting too. You know Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah and before that, a whole month they would get up at five in the morning and go for selichot, my mother and my father and because they lived more or less in the yard, to get up in the morning at about five or six and all the synagogue was lit up and this beautiful coloured windows and it was still warm sometimes in September, and you could hear father singing, and the sheriff would come down at five o'clock and, he would sit in the, he didn't go into the synagogue, he would sit outside on a seat to listen to my father singing, and once they noticed him, and I said "Why don't you come in?" and they said, "No, no, no, that's all right." That is what he wants to do. Because he always knew autumn is coming because the Jews are getting up in the morning. They knew that the high holidays were coming. He was one of those who used to like getting up early in the morning. And I remember the first time, he was coming down the street and he heard this beautiful singing and he didn't know where it came from, until he got there and he sat down, and then he went back to the town hall and he told them. So the next morning he brought about half a dozen of them to listen. Yes, it was lovely. So, on Yom Kippur, as soon as they had finished the night before, they already started bringing the reeds to the synagogue, for the Sukkah, and the Sukkah used to be brought down, we had it ready made, you know, walls, but it just had to be started, straight away in the evening.

RL: And did anyone actually sleep in it? Or was it just for eating?

IG: No, I don't think we slept in it, but it was for eating, and of course it could be pouring down with rain and you had to pick the whole lot up and take it in, because the, all the things that we used to make, they were on sheets, and the sheets were on the wall, and they were specially made, we had some fabulous things, we used to put it up from year after year. And we didn't have that fantastic nylon paper, you could just put it on

top and, you see, you could be rained out, and father would still sit out there and eat, and we would take him the food out, but when the weather was nice it was really lovely.

RL: What memories do you have of Pesach time?

**Tape 1: 51 minutes 58 seconds**

IG: Well, the excitement was always the baking the matzohs. For weeks, the ladies of the town used to go and they used to do it, it was all hand baked matzohs, and on erev yom tov the men would go and make their shmurah matzahs, and they only ate that, and in our house ... Do you know what gebrochts is? Something that you put in, we didn't have kneidls in the soup, not until after Pesach, because that was soaked already, and the only thing that we could have soaked was coffee and matzahs. We used to put the matzahs into the coffee, and so father had a different cup and it was washed differently because he didn't have that. So matzah kneidls started going on after Pesach, last thing Pesach, and then ...

RL: Did the family used to get together for Seder nights?

IG: Of course, people got together, the children who were away, who worked in town, came home to the parents, and then again, seders went on until three and four in the morning. It was great. It was a different world.

RL: So what was the language that you spoke in at home?

IG: Always Hungarian. My grandfather was the only person, he lived in the city, who spoke to me only in Yiddish, but I always answered him in Hungarian. We would have a long conversation and that was good enough for him, because he knew that I could speak if I had to.

RL: How did you get on with the non Jewish neighbours?

IG: Well, because we were in a compound like that, neighbours were ok. You went out, and you said hello and how are you? But you had no social contact with them, and we went down to a farm where we used to get the milk from, and we had to take our own kosher soap and towel and the things, the bucket or whatever that you used to milk the cow. You were there, I mean I was the mashgiach, to watch that that was so, and the lady, she was a widow woman, and she observed it always beautifully. She was a very nice woman. Now, she had four married daughters, and the youngest lived at home with her husband, she was a, she minded it that she had to wash her hands, when I came she had to wash her hands. She said, "Why should I wash my hands? My hands are clean." And her mother said, "You don't ask questions, wash your hands." So she would do and wash the udders and everything. And yes, they would ask me over before Christmas, because they had children, and they appreciated that I knew that there was no Father Christmas, you see, but they knew that I wouldn't let on, and they used to say, "Do you



want to come over and help us make things for the Christmas tree?" And I felt very honoured always and I would go and she would say to me, "Surika" because they called me by my Hebrew name, "How about an apple?" So I would have an apple, I would wash the apple and I could eat the apple. And, that is what I said, and the daughter would say, "You don't know how nice a piece of pork tastes."

**Tape 1: 57 minutes 0 second**

You see ... but, anti-Semitism came from the church, that we did know, you see the synagogue was built on a, it was a main thoroughfare, square, so the synagogue was on one corner, and the opposite corner was a Catholic set up, and the Catholic parson had a beautiful garden. Now he would shout over if he was cutting his hedges and my mother would go to the market, "How are you?" "I am fine, what are you doing?" He says, "I have to cut these things." And he would wait for my mother because when Shevuoth came, he gave us a great big bunch of peonies, and he knew that we take it to the synagogue, and the synagogue was full with peonies, and he always brought out ... he was so nice, he was such a nice neighbour, and he would pay his respects to our Rabbi or he would go to him. But, then of course he was quite happy to teach his children, saying that the Jews had killed Jesus Christ.

RL: Now actually we will have to stop here because the film is about to end, but we will continue on the next.

**TAPE 2**

This is the interview with Ibolya Ginsburg and this is tape 2.

You were telling me about the priest who lived across the road, with his garden, to the synagogue.

IG: Yes, I think I jumped the gun a bit, but basically, I told you I was a rebel and occasionally, if I got bored, on long summer days, I would go out to the front and I would see the urchins outside playing in the middle of the road, there were no cars, you could hear anything coming two streets away if a wagon came or something like that, and of course they were not Jewish children, and I said, "I am going out to play." And I had a good look at them, none of them had shoes on, and I had a pair of sandals, like that, on, so I said, I am going to take these off, and took them off and left them in the back and I came out. And they looked at me, and I sat down and we played. And I made friends, my, suddenly my mother looks for me, she looks all over and she saw me playing there with the children. Now, my mother would never say a word about it because, as I told you, she was brought up in a good Catholic place at school, and she always felt very easy with the neighbours and I would play, and I came back, and I made friends with them. And then when we went to school, the first year, at six we would go to school, and about, the first afternoon we went for religious instructions, they also go for religious instructions and since I live in the yard, I went to school, I did my lessons, I came back. The next morning when I got back to school there was a great big uproar, the children were all beaten up, those who went home, by the non Jewish children. So I said, well,

and the older ones said, "Oh, it only happens the first day." He says, "After that it's all right." And I listened to this and I couldn't understand it, I mean I was only six, I said, "What do you mean they beat you up?" He says, "Well they did, they said you stinking Jew, you killed Jesus Christ." And the same thing, what happened to me, after class, I went home to look for them and it was quiet on the square, and I was just going in as a

**Tape 2: 3 minutes 1 second**

little stone came past me, and I thought, did somebody throw a stone, and I didn't believe it, and I moved forward and there was another stone, and I went on and I stopped, and I said, "All right. Where are you hiding? Come out all of you." And I could hear giggling, so I went across the road, and where the priest lived, and they were behind the gate, and I said, "What are you standing there for? Come on, let's get out to play." And they stood there very sheepishly, and suddenly one of them said, "We are not playing with you."

And I said, "Why not?" Because you killed Jesus Christ."

And I said, "I never killed anybody, and besides I don't know who he is, I don't know him."

I said, "Are you coming out? Or am I going back." So sheepishly they all came out, we sat down, and we did our play and I went in. But that was after they had already beat up the rest of the kids. Well, beat up, they were small kids, you know, and I went in for my tea, and was sitting around in the kitchen, with my mother and my father and the rest of us and I said, "Who is Jesus Christ?"

Mother looked at me and said, "'Why?' "Well who is Jesus Christus", that is how they say it. Because they said I killed him, and I saw mum look at my father with a knowing look, so, my mother said, "Just have your tea and then I will tell you." And afterwards she told me, so when they told me, they told me that they had been beaten up, and I asked them afterwards, the next day, I said, "Who told you about that?" They said the Father told them, that the Jews ... blah blah ...and that is typical of a nice neighbour, but he told them what the Jews did, and how they did it and so on. So, and I was very disgusted with my lot, I said "You were frightened of them? Why didn't you go and hit them back?" But nothing happened, but this was the very first time I had come across, not, indirectly, anti-Semitism, that it was taught to those children at school. They didn't hear it at home, they heard it from the priest. After that I was always disgusted with him, and I had to go past him, and I had to say hello, and we said hello, I said hello but I was very disgusted with him.

RL: And how was this group of friends after that?

IG: They were always ok with me. I mean as we grew up they were always ok. I could go out, or my father could go out at night, already things started getting bad, before they occupied Hungary, the Germans, and they would never touch my father, or me, because they knew you.

RL: Can you slowly take me up to ... first of all, what was happening in Hungary. Erm, with the growth of anti-Semitism elsewhere, with Germany and Hitler. Was anything happening in Hungary at that point, in the thirties?

IG: Erm, when the war broke out, in 1939. How old was I? I was born in 24, about 15 or something like that. The war broke out, we didn't really hear anything, and one night there was a knock on the window and my father went to the door, and there was my cousin from Slovakia, the oldest daughter, and he said, "What are you doing here?"

**Tape 2: 7 minutes 29 seconds**

She said, "Let me in." And she came to us, in the dead of night, so that nobody saw her in the town, and she told us that they had taken them all in together and she was in front of the firing squad and it was dark and it was night, somewhere in the woods, and she ran away, she managed to escape. And she got herself a ticket and came to Hungary and by that time it was dangerous for foreigners, Jews, to travel, and I remember, she stayed with us for two or three days, and none of the children knew that she was there, she was literally bedded in the bed, and a couple of days, she was there about a day or two, and we had police came to see if we had any guests. Somebody saw something, I don't know, and her idea was to go to Budapest, because she had there an aunt from her father's side, and dad, and somebody else took her out in the dead of night and we took her to the next village and put her on a train. And she arrived in Budapest and she survived in Budapest.

So that was the first thing we heard of what they did, but when you are a 15 year old child you don't take much notice. And I could see my parents and neighbours, in the summer they would sit out and they would talk, the first thing that we heard about Dachau, was that they took the priests, the Germans took the priests to Dachau, so they were also against, and they built Dachau, so we heard of that. We also knew one day about the Greek Jewish girls, somebody said that they took them to the front for the soldiers, and those who got pregnant, they shot them. Well those were really horrific things at the beginning. But then it quietened down, there was one thing that was interesting, that during this time, one morning my father came in and said "They have taken the Adlers and the Steiners away" two families "and nobody knows where to. And nobody heard a sound, they just took them out, and only the neighbours eventually saw that there was nobody moving, and they tried to go to the door and the door was locked, so they went to the police and they said "What happened? They have gone?" And the police said, "It is no good asking us anything because we don't know where they have taken them, but we had orders to put them on the train."

"Why?"

"Because they are Polish?" They had come from Poland years and years ago. So they took citizens away, and we asked the police officer, "What is happening to the house?"

He said, "Everything is locked up, it has been sealed, it has been taken care of, what happens we don't know, until further notice." And about three months later the Adlers were back, and nobody heard them come back neither, they brought them in the dead of night. And when they asked them "Where were you? What happened to you?"

They said, "Don't ask, we are not supposed to say anything." And that was it.

So there were sinister things like that. Now the Steiners, they weren't as lucky, and probably they took them wherever they took them, I don't know, and maybe these people were also taken, they must have had papers or something.

RL: Was this 1939?

**Tape 2: 12 minutes 20 seconds**

IG: No, I think it was a few years later, you see they didn't occupy Hungary until 1944, because the Hungarians were allies. They were at home about a couple of years before they took us away again and probably they knew where we were going.

RL: Were there any restrictions on Jews.

IG: No, there were not. And as I said, there were citizens that we knew they were anti-Semitic but nothing really strange happened, but by 1943 we had to give up all silver. There were orders, we had to give up all silver, all furs, carpets, everything, and they came systematically, and the police always said, we get orders, and we have to do that. And I do believe, that some of them, they had no idea, no idea. And one day I went into, I had a boyfriend, and I went up to their house, and her, she was sitting by the fire, and she was chopping up her Persian lamb coat into little bits and putting it in the fire, because she knew that they were going to take it, and they took away everything, even poor people had their silver candle sticks or things like that, so all those things went, and the fur collars or whatever you had, that went.

RL: Who was making those orders?

IG: Well it came from Germany always. And from time to time, they had been agitating, Hitler. Hitler was agitating, he wanted the Jews out, and there were a few changes of governments, sometimes smaller, sometimes not so and it didn't matter however anti-Semitic they were, they knew probably what was happening to the Jews, and they were always barking from that last thing to have them killed, so the Jews were intact right until spring 1944, and you see that we knew that the Russians had broken through, and the war was going to end and it might take another six months, another year, if we could just stay as we were, but on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1944 the Germans came in.

RL: Can I just ask you before we go onto that, I mean, had life gone on up to that point, more or less normally for you?

IG: Yes.

RL: Except for the silver and the furs that had been taken ...

IG: That had been taken but it was the things, things went on as normal.

RL: So people were still working in their jobs?

IG: Yes.

RL: What were you doing? Had you left school?

**Tape 2: 15 minutes 58 seconds**

IG: Well I was going to go to Vienna because I wanted to be a teacher of Beis Yaakov, and there was a, that is where I should have gone, but of course that happened. So the parents said, "What do you want to do?" And I decided that I wanted to learn to sew. And my parents thought that was a very good idea, because it will always come useful. And my father's sister, who was still at home, she had a salon in the city, well I mean, only people with a lot of money could afford to go to her, because she was quite famous, so she said, I should go and get apprenticed at home and then go to her to finish. And that is what I did actually.

RL: Did the salon have a name?

IG: Her name was Ilona Davidovitch. So, she was known, she was very good.

RL: So you worked with her?

IG: I did, I was two years at home with a very good dressmaker, also a Jewish girl, and I learned all the things that I had to do, and the last year I went and I stayed with my grandparents, and I worked with her, mostly, what she wanted me to do was just to follow her around, to see how she buys material, how she talks with her clients, because a person like her, they would go to her and say, "Look I need some clothes for the autumn." And she already thought, "Mrs so and so, those colours would be good." If you knew what colour was coming in and you already knew your customers, that will look nice on so and so, and she used to send me buying, colours, she made a suit and she said I want you to get me an ivory, and all I had to do was go down to the shop and say what I wanted, and then they would send the boy with a lot of the silks on the order into the salon, but before I did that I used to take cuttings. I remember on that particular day she said to me, "Do you know what ivory is like?" And each and every one she explained to me the combination of the dyes and why they did it. You see there was a big difference between something that was cream and something that was ivory. And these finer points, I followed her around for about three months before she gave me anything to do, but she knew that she could put me to the machine and give me handwork, that I knew how to do. So I was 17, I left school at 14, and I was 17 when I got finished and I came home. And I did start working from home, not a lot, but I did, I probably worked for about a year, starting, and my father didn't want me to do it. He was very worried that if I get as successful as my aunt it would be very difficult to marry me off. Because they wanted to find boys to get married to and she kept putting it off and she kept telling my grandfather well why isn't Rosie, let Rosie go, the younger one, or so and so, and my grandfather said, "No, It's your turn." But she was the one who earned more money than

anybody else and she didn't want to become just a housewife and have children. I could see that now that I am, sometimes I think about it.

RL: So did she never marry?

**Tape 2: 20 minutes 33 seconds**

IG: No, she was about 24 or 25 and she didn't marry, so, but I didn't think I would have trouble in getting married, I was already spoken for, so ...

RL: How interested was your father in politics?

IG: Well, I think quite interested. There was always the daily paper and the radio, and they were interested, of course they wanted to know. But you see, what was happening, really what was happening, was a big secret, people did not speak about it. People don't know, and I do reckon that there must have been some Jews who did know what was happening and they were told not to speak, because you can imagine that they were trying to get out and, yes ...

RL: Can you describe the day that Germany invaded and took over?

IG: Well, it didn't really matter to us, because we didn't even see them in our town. We always dealt with our police, and the police didn't know what hit them. The Hungarians didn't understand why they came in and the only explanation I think they have is that Hitler did not trust the Hungarians to fight to the death against the Russians. He wasn't sure, that is why he came in, and also there was this conclave of Jews still, because from all around he took the Jews out, and in fact they were, they came before Pesach, and we had Pesach very quiet still at home, and the day after Pesach they started bringing the Jews in, systematically into the synagogue, because that was the biggest ... and the police just said, "Come", and of course there were children and babies and old people and ill people and the first day was very fraught because, well, when you sit on those seats, but the police promised that they will take everybody back to bring belongings which they did, and they were very good. Now, what happened was, there were people there who weren't very old, and the first day already I remember sleeping on the floor because my bed was given to a lady who was bedridden, and it was chaotic, even though we were in our house, the school was full with people and then they started taking people back home to pack things, bring whatever they needed and this went on, and very quickly things were organised, because they put up stoves and things and they brought food in, there was no shortage of food and people just started to cook. And then they told us that they were taking us into the capital of the county, which was then, there was part of the town, turned into a ghetto, they moved the Christians out and they surrounded it with barbed wire and the brought us in.

RL: Which town was it?

IG: It was a place called Sátoraljaújhely. It is very difficult to pronounce it, and there were about 11,000 in that ghetto, and I also think that that part of Hungary went the first to Russia, to Auschwitz, and we were in the ghetto for three weeks only.

RL: How were you transported to the ghetto?

**Tape 2: 25 minutes 33 seconds**

IG: By train. We went by train. Ordinary normal train, and I don't remember, we could take quite a lot of things and before we left, my mother took the bed linen and beddings to the janitor, and she told him, if we don't come back, it is yours. And keep it for us. That is all she was interested in, because if we came back we had to sleep in something, on something. But the house was left with the furniture in and everything.

RL: What did you take with you?

IG: Clothing mostly.

RL: Did you take food?

IG: Some, but you couldn't carry so much because the police said, "food is no problem". They brought plenty, they had sugar and flour and margarine or whatever, they just brought it and they put it down, and every town had a centre where they went and they cooked. We were also very lucky there as well, because my aunt who got married from us, she lived in a village and she came in that camp, and she, and she had her husband, brother lived in that town. And this uncle of mine, he went away, you know the Hungarians they used to do working camps, they took men away to work and this uncle of mine kept writing from the front and she was on her own with the children, about eight or ten months before. So when she came in, they had a grocery shop and they had a farm, so when she came in she had her own horse and cart and she put sacks of flour and sugar and everything on, and the children, and she came into her brother in laws, and they had quite a big house, so when we arrived at the station there, we saw she was standing on something, and there was a note on her "Davidovitch", so we noticed her and she was waiting for us. As you can imagine it was thousands of people and the police was trying to allocate everybody to some places and we went to the authorities and we told them we have got a place where we can stay and we have got relatives and they just said, "Tell us where," and they said, "Go" and they were very happy to get rid. So we went straight away on this horse and cart and she took us there, and I remember the whole house was emptied of furniture, all the beds were taken out and every family had their own and we just bedded down. And in the kitchen there was cooking day and night because there were four or five families. And during the day we did go into the centre and we had to cook for people, those who didn't ... and you could always go there to eat. People just went there early morning, breakfast, lunch, there was always food to be had and you know, you wanted to know where your neighbour lives, where so and so is. It was pretty hectic and it wasn't very nice but it was, you were still together ...

RL: Who was in charge of the organisation of the ghetto?

IG: Only the police authorities.

RL: Was there a Jewish committee at all?

**Tape 2: 30 minutes 8 seconds**

IG: No. That was always, that was important, because a committee talked to the rest of the people and you got there to find out what was going on, but they were very civil, if you wanted to know something and they were on the street they would tell you, because as I said they were pretty stunned themselves. It was all very quick, it wasn't like we were for months in the ghettos and things.

RL: There was plenty of food?

IG: Yes, no problem.

RL: And what if people were ill? What happened to them?

IG: Well later we had, there was a hospital, and there were some people who were operated on and so on. So things got organised straight away.

RL: Where there minyonim?

IG: Oh, masses, yes. I mean all that was organised straight away, even where we were there were five or six men, with the next door neighbours there was a minyan and that was it. No problem.

RL: Was there any actual Shuls in the area?

IG: To tell you the truth, I don't know but probably there was.

RL: And at this stage, did you know how long you would be there or was it all ...

IG: Nobody knew anything that was it. And I tell you, we were there for about three weeks, and one morning the ghetto woke up and half the ghetto was taken out. Everything was always at night, and then of course when they asked they said they took them to Germany, and people were very, very upset and all that, and life goes on, and we must have been there about a week, or four days or five days, and then they told us that on a certain date they were going to take us to Germany and we have to prepare food for three days and we could each take so much per person with us, so you can imagine, we were preparing ... where are they going to take us? We are going to work. So everybody had to have two or three pairs of underwear for changing, and this was, I will tell you exactly, they came in the day after Pesach and we arrived in Auschwitz first day Shavuoth, so that was six weeks. In six weeks they came in, they put us in the ghetto and



they took us out and I remember we even had one postcard, father sent a postcard to my grandfather and we had a reply and they were not taken even then, they were not so near where we were and it was terrible, really, people just went around and did what they had to do.

**Tape 2: 33 minutes 47 seconds**

So we prepared our sturdy shoes, this was April, so we had our winter coats, you needed a change of clothes, something if it gets warmer, so a skirt and top and all these things until we got everything together and prepare food for three days because the journey will take three days, and then when they took us out. We went out on horse and cart or whatever there was, they took us out to the station, and the station was emptied of all inhabitants, and these long cattle wagons were standing next to the platform, and they were open, and there was nothing in them, on the floor, the corner was partitioned off with blankets and there were buckets for our needs, and in another corner they had some buckets with clean water to drink, and we had to climb in these wagons, they said around 70 per wagon. And you just go up, and you carry your luggage and we put it down and we sat around on the floor. And I sat opposite the door, and we sort of sat in a half circle, I had my sister and my aunt and I had another aunt there, and father and mother opposite and between them the two children, the young ones. Well, I was nineteen and a half, and Judith, my sister was thirteen and a half, and there was Rachel, ten, and Miriam, seven, when they took us. And then of course before they closed the wagons they said, "Pick ten men in the wagons who are going to be in charge and who the authorities can talk to." Now, there they were taken over, not straight away, because as we went up onto the wagon I still had a watch on my hand and I had that from my boyfriend, and there was a soldier, an old Hungarian soldier, and he said "You know you can't have that. You must take it off." And he probably just pocketed it. And when I took that off I had this premonition that I shall never see him again. And then the German soldiers came and the problem was again the language, because a lot of Hungarians only spoke Hungarian, so straight away they said they have to have people who can speak for every wagon, and when they counted us up there were 72 of us in the wagon, and then it took ages until he shut this wagon with this bang, and locked us in. And there was this deathly silence, the children, the babies, all the ill people, and eventually we start moving, this clatter and this movement, and then it gathered speed and the train went so fast and it was so noisy in all the three days I couldn't have a decent conversation either with my mother or with my father, we just sat there, and every so often she would dole us out some food. And the first night we didn't stop anywhere. Now, as we were going, the only way to look out, there was little cracks, and we would look out and say, "We have just passed a station." But it was so fast, the train was so fast, we didn't know where we were going, so some of the men stood on top of one another's shoulders, to reach those little things in the wagon, you know, where the air came in, and they stood there, and finally a station came and they read it, and another one and another one, and we pretty soon found out that they are not taking us to Germany at all, we were going across Slovakia. I think on the second night we stopped late at night, about a mile out from a station. They opened the wagons and they took water for the train, it was a boiler or whatever, and they took out the dirty buckets and we got fresh water, for the second night. On the third night the same thing happened. They went out and they took some buckets out. And all these three days we

couldn't sleep properly lying down, we were hunched up together, but we slept and the noise and the rattle was terrible, and luckily nobody died in the wagon. Occasionally you heard a baby cry, the children were so good and they were so quiet. And people were full

**Tape 2: 40 minutes 26 seconds**

of foreboding, it was, "Where are they taking us?" "What are they going to do with us?" And it showed on the children, they felt this terrible fright and panic.

And on the third morning I woke up in the dark, and what woke me up? The train stopped and it was quiet. I lay there and I realised that we must have arrived somewhere because it was very quiet and we could hear the soldiers going about and it got a bit lighter and a bit lighter and as I sat there, my father was opposite me, and the light came down, now he still had a beard, he had cut a little bit but he still had a beard, and as it got lighter I kept looking, there was something different about my father. I looked again, I can't see, and as it got lighter, he had a white streak, he got grey overnight. Now after he survived, we survived, and we started talking and I told to him "Do you remember that last night that you got white?"

He said, "Did I?" I mean there were no mirrors or anything.

And I said, "Yes." And then when he turned the other side, just the two streaks, he got white.

He said, "I will tell you why, when they took the water, the buckets down, there was an old German", and my father's German was fluent, not Yiddish, German, and he said to the man, "Tell me. Where are they taking us? What is going to happen to us?" And father said, he looked at me, and he told me. So he sat there the whole night knowing what is going to happen to us and he got grey. I don't know how, I don't know how he could manage that. But that I witnessed myself, and of course probably my mother saw, everybody saw it eventually. And then they shunted us in and they opened the wagons and we all had to get out and there were SS standing there with rifles on their shoulders, and then we saw these funny looking men, about five yards in front of them, in striped uniforms, I said, "Who are they? What are they?" And suddenly the loud speaker started blaring out instructions to get out and these funny looking men came to the wagons, and some stepped up to help people out. Now behind them, five yards behind them were the SS, and they said in Yiddish where we came from, so of course you asked them straight away, "Who are you?" One was from Poland and one was from Slovakia, these were inmates who had been there already years, and they knew what was going to happen to us. And we got out, it took ages. Our next order was that the able bodied men had to separate, which happened to all the transports, and father said, "Goodbye" and we stood there separate and the rest of us had to start shuffling forwards, and we waited for ages and ages, old men and old women, young men I never saw were here. There was someone screaming, "No, I am not giving my child away." And this bloke would say to her "Shhh, the Germans mustn't hear." So what they did, when they saw a young woman with a baby on her arm they would ask "Have you got your mother here?" Some said "Yes" they said "Why don't you give the baby to your mother? Because you will be able to work", they wanted to save these women, some did as they were told, but some wouldn't, and as soon as there was a noise the German said, "What is going on?"

Because they wanted to have everything in secret, so there were all these funny things. And then I saw that ... all I did was put my arms in my mother's arm and Judith was on this side of me, and on the other side of my mother was the two younger ones, and then

**Tape 2: 46 minutes 9 seconds**

my aunt with hers, and when we got to the front, and there he was, Mengele, we didn't know who he was, and very politely he said to me, "Now then young ladies, you go this way because you are young and you can work, and the children and mother's will go to another camp."

And I look at him, and I look at my mother, and he said, "You will see them by and by." And it is happening so fast that you can't even retort, "How can I see them with all these millions of people."

And before, when we got off the train, off the train, when we got out of the wagons we had to leave all our luggage there. We will get that how? But you don't think of these things and my mother just looked at me and she looked at my, she was the apple of her eyes, my sister Yudit, and she said to me, "Take care of her."

I said "I will", and they just went, and my sister Rachel, she was ten, a child like that can't think for herself and as mother was pulling her she kept looking at me and she fixed me with this look, and that is it, and we just went to the right and we stood there for ever such a long time, and I started thinking to myself "What's next" And I thought, "I know what the next is. The first thing they will want to know is who speaks German, because these women didn't speak Hungarian." And I thought I am not going to say that I speak, I am not going to do their dirty work, the only way I am going to survive here is if I stay between the hundreds, so I turned to Yudit, and there were three girls from our town, and the middle one I went to school with, she was a friend of mine, and I turned round and I said to them "We don't understand German." And the oldest one, Ella said, "Yes, she is right, because it is the first thing they will ask." And that is what happened. And those who said we do, they gave them sticks, big ones. They said, "Now you, you have to keep them in order, and if they don't do as you tell them (she made a sound and action like hitting). And then they brought out some inmates from the camp, they were well organised, because they brought out all the Slovak girls who spoke Hungarian, so, we had to stand in fives, and each of these women were given 1,200 of us to be in charge. Well, we didn't know why that amount, but that amount was what went into one of those barracks.

Have you been to Auschwitz? And she told us, "You do as you are told and you will be all right." And she put us in fives because that was easy to be counted and she said, "We are going to have a shower." And meanwhile I looked to the back and there were the men still, and they were still standing there, and I saw another train coming out and escorting all of these people again, so these transports were coming, and we started going, and as we were going on our left side was a highway, with the trains, and on the right hand side were these huge big camps with big long barracks and it had two rows of barbed wire. The inside wire was electrified and there was this constant humming as we were going, and in the ditches I could see money thrown about, torn up, people what they took out from their pockets, and they really took us to the showers, we went in. There

were hundreds of women in various stages of undress, and the German soldiers were standing around and I just stood there, and our block elder, her name was Alice, and she said, "Quick, quick, quick, just push yourselves in, just keep pushing in, in, in, and start

**Tape 2: 51 minutes 28 seconds**

getting undressed, and don't ask me where you put your clothes, leave it on the floor as you take it off, and keep your shoes and move forward. Get on with it, because if you don't they are going to shoot." So off came our nice warm winter coats, clothes, everything, and we were moving in and I looked at the soldiers and we were having, they were joking with one another, they never even thought that we were women. It was the first realisation when you see that they don't look at you as women. And then we went into the next room where they cut your hair off, it all happens fast. You must have heard it before; in the next room they took the rest of the body hair off and into the showers. They gave us this soap that wouldn't lather, it smelt. And they made those in Auschwitz from human fat. But of course we didn't know any of this and you go under the shower, the shower was warm, it felt very good and as I stood there I nearly passed out, I thought to myself, "Dear G-d, I have lost Yudit." I had just promised my mother that I would take care of her. Where is she? I had a feeling I was going. Everything went dark and I kept shouting, "Judith, Judith, where are you?"

And she touched me, "I am here." She was standing next to me.

I looked at her and I said, "Where?" And all I could hear was this sound coming out, and I looked at her, she had no hair on. I said, "Don't ever leave me." She said, "You don't have to worry." She sat down before me so she watched me being shorn and she didn't move until I went, and I tried to find our friends, and they were with us. And I remember there was this terrible panic again under the shower, and we weren't in there long, because I could see blood on the floor, rivulets of water, red, and it was a huge big room, and I thought, "Dear Lord, they are killing us here. What is all this blood?" And not far in front of me there was this woman and she was menstruating, there was no sanitary towel, nothing, just like animals. And then they started shouting, "Raus, Raus, Out, Out, Out" and we went out and I was very cold. The last day of April, it was winter, there was no hair on you, nothing, they didn't give you towels or knickers or underwear, just these grey clothes that they gave us. There was a hole to put your head through and a slit for your arms. And that is how they did it. It took them less than an hour to reduce us to a non person. And then the strangest thing what happened, there were some German ladies sitting at the tables, and they took all our particulars. Who are father was? Where they came from? What they did? Everything. And when they finished, they wrote it all down, and when they finished they said, "From now on you are known as prisoner number 86711." That was my number, so we moved on, we thought they would tattoo us because the Slovak girls had that, but they said there is no time for that. They were coming in very fast. And then we heard that they are taking us to the gypsy camps, it was the first time I had came across the gypsies. We went there but I didn't see a gypsy, they locked them in when we came, and we went into there, and we had to go onto these three tiers of bunks, it was very long, and on each of these tiers ten women had to go up, and all I remember, I went there and I lay down, it was just clean wood, and I fell asleep and then I remember them waking me up later on, they gave us a blanket each, so we put one

underneath us and with another we covered ourselves up. I don't remember whether they gave us anything to eat that day, I can't remember. But very early they woke us up, it was about five in the morning and all hell was let loose again, "Out, out, into the barracks." And you see, you only have this thin dress on, but you are squashed together,  
**Tape 2: 56 minutes 49 seconds**

and you are covered up, so you are already a little bit warmer and you go out once again, and the wind is howling and it is raining and we stood there and we had to do that twice a day, we had to have a roll call, and we could get wet through and by the time they let us in we were dry again. And that was the only torment we had, because it was dark, and we had to wait until the German Nazi woke up, had a shower, put her nice clothes on and came to count us up. And that was Auschwitz.

RL: This tape is about to end, so I think we will just stop before you go on to the next thing.

### **TAPE 3**

IG: That camera, I wonder what it is going to look like.

RL: So this is the interview with Ibolya Ginsburg and it is tape 3.

So you have just been describing your first days in Auschwitz and the roll calls. What did you do after the roll call? What happened then?

IG: Well, I was going to tell you that the most memorable day was the first day because when we came in, I don't know if it was before breakfast or after breakfast, but we had to come back onto our pallets, and suddenly, when 1,200 women was quiet, and I looked out and we had about four or five high ranking officers, came into the barracks and looked around, and one of them said, "Good morning ladies". Now if you think about it, what sort of ladies. "How are you?" "Are there any wishes?" "What can we do for you?" They were taking the Mickey out, you know.

Naturally people started shouting, "When can we see our mothers? Our children? Whatever." He said, "No problem, Sunday is a day of reunion." And they were already not alive. Our transport was dealt with the same day. And then he was very pleased with himself that everybody was happy and went out. But there is one thing that struck me straight away as strange, that girl, our Kapo, Alice; I saw the panic in her face when she saw an SS. We had no idea what they were, but she did, and right through when we were in the camp, people who were there a long time, they were horrified, they were petrified by them. We knew what they were, but we never were as frightened, and I wondered why that was, but she saw them off, and she shuts the door, and she came to the middle of the road, of the barracks, it was a long barrack, and there was this long stove there, and she stood on top of there and she started screaming and ranting and raving, "What sort of idiots do you think you are? You never ask an SS anything, because he will always do the opposite of what you are asking him to do. And as far as seeing anybody, you are not

going to see anybody, because they have all gone up the chimney ... the chimney.” That is how she did it. And we looked at her and we thought, what sort of a nasty piece of work is she. This man just said that we will see them, but if you start thinking logically,

**Tape 3: 3 minutes 42 seconds**

how could you. And we didn't know what was hitting us. Now, we didn't work at Auschwitz. We could go out during the day. Within a week we went into a new camp, they took us out from the gypsy camp, they only took us there because the barracks, the camps weren't ready, they couldn't build it fast enough as they were bringing us in.

RL: Were there any gypsies? Or had the gypsies already gone?

IG: They were there. They were there. And we went to the Lager C, C which is, yes, Lager C, block 11 I was in, and we were, well the most important thing is that we would sit and talk about food, because we were so hungry.

RL: When did you start to believe what she had told you?

IG: As far as I am concerned it must have taken me about ten days. And we could go out of the barracks and when the sun shone, it was already May don't forget, we could go out and we went to the side of the barracks and sat by the corrugated iron, and it was warm from the sun and I was sitting there, and all these 32,000 women were walking up and down on the highway you see. And as I was sitting there with some friends, and the first time I looked around me and it was a sandy soil, it was reddish, and as I looked, I was looking for a blade of grass. There was no grass, the only place there was grass was the big ditches between us and the wire and if you went to near it, it sucked you in, and there was nothing there, and I looked at that patch of grass, and I thought, "What about trees? There are no trees." Well, this all comes slowly, over an afternoon. I thought, "There is nothing that reminds you of the world outside." And I kept thinking to myself, "There must be a world outside, I am sure I haven't been here all the time." You see, as you start coming round, and I had a home, and they took us here and they locked us up, and the whole world is out there, nobody takes any notice of what they do with us, they can do anything they like with us. And I was literally looking for something, a cat, a dog, nothing. So what about a bird? And there isn't a bird flying around. I said, "Have you seen a bird?" "No, I haven't seen a bird." Nobody bothered about birds, I am crazy thinking about nature, you know. The only thing that I saw that I always saw was the sky, and that is the only thing that there is. And I would sit, and I am suddenly aware of some chimneys on my left hand side, I could see two, squat, square chimneys, and I had seen those before and I wasn't aware of it. And I looked at it and it was, smoke was coming out, pale yellow smoke, and another time, another few hours went past, and I thought "Those chimneys are still smoking", and then I smelt, and it smelt of burning hair, of burning flesh, and then it hits you, that is when it hit you, "That is what she meant about going up the chimneys." And when you realise that your people are no more, that moment when I realised what those chimneys are for I knew, and the first time I was asked the other day, by a boy, what my feelings were, I didn't like to think about it again,

because, well, I just don't. The only way I could explain to her, was, I think I was screaming, but there was no sound coming out of me, you can't describe that. But then I did blurt it out and I said "That's what Alice means. Can you see that?" And so, we

**Tape 3: 9 minutes 20 seconds**

realised it, and I somehow think that we were very stupid and naïve, because some people went in and they knew what that was straight away. When I read other people's stories, but I didn't. I didn't know it. And then afterwards I knew there was a lager on the right hand side that was a Czech lager and to our great surprise there were still families there, and one night we woke up and there was screaming, they took them out that night. But then we knew where they were taking them and I can't explain to you that feeling. And in a way, when I thought this all out to myself, that they are no more, there was something inside me that wasn't bothered, because I knew that I am going to follow them. I was quite certain that that is why we were there. It is obviously that they take the children and the old and the ill and so we weren't long in Auschwitz because we came out in July.

RL: How did you spend your time whilst you were there?

IG: Just sit around, not doing much, but our Alice was a very good kapo. Because she came in one day and she said, "I need forty volunteers." She just stood and said, "You, you, you", and pulled people down and what happened was that there was a new lager across the road, lager B and the people were coming in. Now they were already coming in from further south, Hungary and the kitchens weren't ready, and the food had to be carried there and she was very clever, and she saw that if she gets her block, a working block, we would have more chances of survival, and she took out forty of us and we had to carry this thing that had soup in it. It was the size of a dustbin made of metal or steel and it had the same kind of handle, and five of us had to touch this little handle and walk with it to the next block, and you can't walk because you step on each others heels. It was the hardest thing to do, and I sometimes thought, if two of us were on either side could have lifted it up, but it was very heavy, so nobody wanted to go, but they put people down every so often, and she kept telling us, you have to be a working block because that will make you survive, and we were the second transport ever to come out of Auschwitz, and that was very lucky.

RL: What was the food that you had whilst you were there?

IG: There was coffee, which was substitute of course. On Sunday's it had sugar in it, or whatever, it was sweet, and during the week it wasn't. Madame didn't drink that during the week so they could have my portions and on the first Sunday when it came up somebody tasted it and somebody tasted it and said, "Hold it, hold it everybody, Iby is having her drink first."

And I did ... and I said ... "What ... what .."

"Just drink enough, there is plenty for everybody." So Sunday I had my coffee. And we used to have like a 2 lbs loaf square, and it was like sawdust, and it depends how much they had, sometimes they cut it, they cut it into eight it was quite a nice chunk, but if it

was ten, it was like, less than 200 gram, it was square like that, and you got those once a day, and at the end you got a little bit of cheese, some marmalade and sometimes liver pate or something like that, now you didn't know what to do with it, to eat the whole lot

**Tape 3: 13 minutes 58 seconds**

at once, or just bite a little bit at a time, you tried all sorts, and you didn't put a little bit down because somebody would pinch it.

And, and lunch time they gave us soup, and I never had anything as horrible, it had all sorts of weed and surplus stones in it, and my sister says to me, you have to drink it, she said close your nose, because there was nothing else, only what they gave us, and we had to survive somehow, and we drunk that, and in the afternoon we had the bread ... so ...

RL: What did you put the soup into?

IG: Oh, they used to have great big cooking pots.

RL: But to have it yourself ...

IG: We had to drink it ...

RL: You had a bowl?

IG: Yes ... no, there was no bowl, coffee neither, it was in a great big thing, you take a sup and pass it on. And if you found something resembling potatoes or turnip, that was wonderful.

RL: So you were sharing one big pot between a number of people?

IG: Yes.

RL: And would it happen that by the time the last person got all the food ...

IG: No, it didn't, because there was plenty, and it was so horrible ... you had no problem with it ...

So, we were very lucky, because suddenly they said, "Quickly go outside and get undressed, strip." Just leave your things there. And we had to march by the side of the barracks and there was Mengele. By that time we knew Mengele. I want to tell you this because this is interesting ... my ... I had two cousins there, and they were each, the older one was a little bit younger than me, and the younger one was even younger than my sister Judith, and after what our block elder said, we were very careful any more, sisters didn't stand together, because the Germans would weed you out, you know, separate, try to separate you. So, we were marching and we had to lift our arms up and march past him. He was selecting, and I had my sister in the front, and then my oldest cousin next to her, I after her and the little one was behind me, so we walked past him



and we still looked reasonable, because we were only there for less than three months and we still had whatever we had on us from home, and my sister Judith went through, my cousin went through and I go through, and this little one, I mean she doesn't look older

**Tape 3: 17 minutes 28 seconds**

she goes through, and she was about a yard and a half away and Mengele puts his arm out, and says, "You little one, come back." And he says to the rest of the officers, "Who has got a thermometer?" Nobody had a thermometer, he said, "Quickly go for a thermometer this child has got a temperature." Now that was a doctor. And he looked at her and he said, "But you are beautiful." She really had gorgeous eyes, she was a ginger child, of course no hair, and he said to her, "How old are you?" And she says, "Fourteen". And he turned to me and he says, "Are you her sister?" And I said no, "And then her sister comes out from behind me and says, "I am her sister." And by that time the thermometer came, he put it in her mouth and took it out and she had temperature and he said in German to the rest of us, "She has got measles." He could see it through her skin, and he turned to my cousin, and I thought it was very nice of him, and he said, "I am afraid you can't go." Because he could have sent her and left the child behind, "because your sister has got measles, and she is going to the hospital, number 32 barrack was the hospital and you should go with her and stay with her and you will come out with the next transport. And as I was standing there very quickly I made up my mind, this is where we say bye bye, because I have to say mine was through. So, we were going out, and I have never seen Alice so elated, she said to us, "See, I told you you had to work, you are going out on transport." Somebody asked her, "How do you know?" She said, "I know because one transport already left and we have notice from them", and they sent some sort of notice that they are out, and then they took us straight away to be disinfected and bathed, and they gave us underwear, clean underwear, and we could choose a dress for ourselves that fitted us. They were taking us into Germany. And our hair was just three months old, grown, and they gave us each a whole loaf of bread and a great big can of bully beef and something else, but they told us that we had to take care of it because it had to be enough for three days, we are going on a three day journey into Germany.

You see, the Russians were bombing every night, we could hear it. And they only just started to evacuate Auschwitz then, and it went right on until December or February until it was actually evacuated completely, so we were out ...

RL: So was that ... up until that point your barracks had stayed together, no one had been taken ...

IG: Oh, there were some bad moments, I had some terrible moments, because one day she came in and she said, "I have to go through the barracks to take out the young ones that sleep through." Like my sister, at that age she should have been on the other side really ... and there were women who were a bit older, and she took out 40, and my sister was one of them, and she took it out the roll call, and I knew they will not take them away, because normally if they pick some people out they took them out into a quarantine, into a different block, and I was thinking very quickly, and I looked at this

girl, and her name was Yutzi and her mother was taken from her, and as soon as we were, as soon as the roll call finished I said to her, "Would you change with me?" She says, "What do you mean?" I said, "You stay instead of me and I am going with my sister."

**Tape 3: 22 minutes 27 seconds**

She said, "Is it possible?" I said, "She doesn't remember now, she took out 39." And of course she did with happiness, she was staying and I was going, but I decided there and then I am not going to let her die on her own. And, that was good, fine. The next morning we had to go out to the roll call, and suddenly he started putting out his ABC, and because we were D for Davidovitch we were right at the front, and she said, "The 39 I want separate." And we stood there separate, and there again, there I fainted, I realised, if she marches them away now, how could I do this, I will never see her again, and the next thing I remember, I had two, big slaps from both sides, she picked me up, I will give you fainting when the SS woman is walking around. I saw the stars, I had to stand, because she was really walking down, that is how frightened she was, and suddenly they let us go, and I was running in, in a panic, and my sister is standing in the door, waiting, she said, "I am here."

I said, "What happened?"

She said, "Alice went through with 39 of us and she took her out." She took out those who she thought she could get away with. So really she can thank her life for her. And she said to her, "From now on you are 16 for your mother." And she took out that lady too, and she survived too. But that moment when I thought they might have taken her away I will never forget.

RL: Was there any other ... erm ... sticky moments?

IG: Yes, there were. One day when they were taking them, they also came to take people again, and I pulled my sister out and said, "Come on we are going to Alice to take the food, because then we won't be there." And then the woman who is in charge of us didn't want Yudit, and I knew her from home, she lived in the next village, and I said, "Just a minute, you mean you are going to send her back and there is going to be a selection today, and she won't be able to carry." She said, "I don't care if she can carry or not." I said, "How much did my father help you?" They were very poor, she went red, and she was alright and my sister came. There were cases like that, but we got out. And the journey was good, there were just 40 of us in, but we had a terrible trouble because we had this great big can of bully beef and we didn't have a knife, and we had nothing how to open it, how we were banging it. Now some of the SS soldiers that came with us, they were in a different barrack, different cabin, they were very human, very nice, those who came with us, and they took us into Germany, to Bavaria.

RL: What were you travelling in?

IG: In wagons.

RL: And how many in a wagon?

IG: Only 40 of us. We had what to eat, we had what to sleep, we got out of there.

RL: Did the train stop on the way?

**Tape 3: 26 minutes 42 seconds**

IG: No, it didn't. We had some buckets. All the time while we were travelling I don't remember going on a bucket. So, that was something, and yes, we went, maybe they did stop, I can't remember that, but they managed to open this thing, and we made friends then, and we managed, the three girls from our town, and we stayed together, and I was upset because I left those two cousins and they didn't survive. You see, this is it, they came out later and they took them to Bergen-Belsen and they never had a chance, so you had to be lucky, you know, you had to be lucky, it wasn't just endurance.

RL: Once you were in Auschwitz did you see new transports arriving? Did you have any view?

IG: Not any more, we didn't. We didn't see that because we were quite far away from the highway, but then of course, when we were going we didn't see then anything.

RL: Did anybody try to commit suicide in the time you were there?

IG: I think so, one or two, but I saw one who didn't want to commit suicide, but across the other camp there was somebody that she knew and they were throwing her over something and she fell to the wire and we couldn't get her away. That was an accident.

RL: What were the sanitary arrangements?

IG: You had across the road from where we were, there was one barrack, a long one, where you could sit with lots of toilets and that was ok, but there was no, never any sanitary paper or anything. So from there we went to the washroom, in the washroom they had like a trough and the water was dripping all the time. So you had to wash yourself, only with cold water but it didn't matter, so that was ok, we weren't really dirty, but there was no warm water, none of the time when we were there, they only took us once, because we were in Birkenau, they took us into Auschwitz for another bath, shower and disinfectant.

RL: So you were on the train for three days, and what happened when you arrived?

IG: They brought us into a place which was in Bavaria, and it was one of the satellite camps, satellite camps of Dachau, and when we got there, there was no German hierarchy at all, only about 40 soldiers who came with us on the train, and they had to set up the whole thing. Now the girls who were with them on the train, they straight away, they got to know them during the three days, they got straight away jobs in the kitchen, and we had to build the camp, and we had to build barracks, that was dug out and half of the barrack was inside, sunk, and the top was wooden. And we had some men coming in

from a different camp who used to do the joinery, and we had to help, but it wasn't bad, we, I we liked it because it was green, sunny, we didn't see the crematorias, and that is it, **Tape 3: 31 minutes 28 seconds**

so we were locked up and all that, but we weren't there long, we were there about two, three weeks.

RL: And what were you doing while you were there?

IG: I told you, I actually dug out, or we were helping the man holding the things while they were screwing them in, we helped them with all that.

RL: Oh ... all right.

IG: We had food, reasonable one, and it was very civilised, they didn't wake us up at the crack of dawn, and we had to go, I think there were just 400 of us, we had to go to the kitchen and we had single things to have our tea or coffee or whatever it was and we didn't have to drink from the big stuff any more. And they gave us a sort of a, what do you call it, like a billy can, and we had our soup there and of course the girls knew what they put in the soup so that you got a little bit of a thicker one, it wasn't as bad, I thought it was a lot better, and then one day 200 of us had to go, and my sister went, and they took us first to a camp, this place was called Kaufering, and from there they took us on the way to another camp, Lager 4, where they, where we had a shower and again disinfectant. We went in and it was still a beautiful afternoon and when I came, we had to hang our clothes on a thingy and they just put it in the oven so that it came out, if there was anything, there were no lice, not at that stage, I never saw one. And, we got our own clothes and we got dressed, and when we came out it was abnormally dark, and there was a storm brewing and the SS who were with us, you see they were always with Alsatians, and they said, "Now, stand in five, we must go, it is going to rain, we have only got a mile and a half to do and I want you to go fast, they said and keep together and don't run out, and that was the most horrible thunder storm and hails, they were really hurting, it was dark, and we were going, and we kept saying to one another, "Don't move out, don't move out" because we were frightened of the dogs, and the Germans themselves, I mean it was terrible, and they said, "just round the corner you will see the camp", and when we saw the camp and the light we were so happy, I started crying, just to see a camp. The door, and they opened the gates, I mean a thing like that to happen in a camp, and all they said was, "In to the kitchens straight." They never counted us up, it was such a storm. And the kitchen was sort of straight after, by the gate and was warm and lit up and we all went in there and we looked like cats, with no hair, and we go in there and there are ladies standing cooking, looking very elegant, boots and these were the Lithuanian women who came from the ghetto, so they had some of their old clothes, but they had no hair, they were wearing turbans and all that, and we went in, 200 of us and the man in charge, the SS, a little bow legged man called Kirsch, he stood there with his bow legs apart, and he looked at us as if he had never seen anything like it, and he looked at us and he said, "Where are you ... where did you come from?"

We said, "From Kaufering"

He said, "No, where were you before?"

So we said, "Auschwitz."

**Tape 3: 36 minutes 17 seconds**

So he knew, he understood, but I don't think he has ever been to Auschwitz that he has never seen inmates like that, and the water was going down in rivulets, and he let us stand there, and we had soup, we had lovely warm soup. And these Lithuanian women couldn't understand that we didn't speak Yiddish, because they always spoke Yiddish together, so they had a block elter and she was a little ginger woman, and she said in Yiddish, "Do you understand Yiddish? Who from you children speaks Yiddish?" So we stood out and there were about six of us out of two hundred. And she said, "What's your name?"

And I said, "Sarah".

"Come with me", so she took hold of me.

And there was another girl and she said, "What's your name?" Rochele was her name, and she said, "You two come with me." And we started going, by that time the rain had stopped, but the rest of them stayed and we came to her ... and we were in the men's camp, and we within the men's camp was the ladies camp, so we went through to the women's camp and she took us into one of these barracks and that was a VIP barracks, where she was, and she said for the friends, "Come on children, push up, push up, I have got six girls they are moving in with us." They called the German girls the zigeuners, the gypsies because they didn't speak Yiddish, they couldn't understand that, and she wanted to know why they didn't speak Yiddish. I said, "Because they don't speak Yiddish in Hungary". It was, that was how the Rabbi wanted it, and they said "Religious Jews speak Yiddish between themselves, men do, but women don't, how is it that you can speak."

I said, "Because I heard it all my life". I said, "I don't speak like you." Because they spoke Lithuanian Yiddish. And we spoke a Polish Yiddish, but very quickly we learnt their Yiddish, and she says, now you are going to stay here and bring your ... now there were seven of us and they all spoke Yiddish, she says "All seven come in here." And she wanted to know the first night how to say in Hungarian "I have no shoes, I have no coat." And she started learning Hungarian, well that was really hilarious, and that same night this man, Kirsch, the SS, he was a real murderer and he was a horrible man and he took her and the Lager elteste from the men's camp and he said, "I want all your girls out working and the Hungarian girls going in their place." So he saved our lives because all the 200 Lithuanian women worked in kitchens or cleaned for the SS or did something "kushy", and he knew that the only way he could save us was by giving us their jobs. So overnight, you can imagine they were pushed out of their jobs and even in the kitchen she kept one or two of the old ones and the rest were going.

So, the next morning, when we woke up we didn't know all that and there was a roll call, and for the roll call we had to go out into the big square where the men's camp was and I couldn't walk, my feet were all swollen up, and I sat on the floor, and the doctor looked at it, he was a Hungarian, a man, and he said that is because I was short of vitamins and the sun was very strong, so he wanted me to be not working, but, anyhow, she said, "What I am going to give them will be ok." So she sent us up to the SS kitchen, the seven of us, and two of them went straight into the SS kitchen and the rest of us sat and

peeled potatoes, so we were ok, but we very soon realised that these women were sent out to do other jobs, but even the ones who went out to do, the jobs weren't heavy, it wasn't

**Tape 3: 41 minutes 32 seconds**

so difficult, it was just tedious, and they were out and they didn't have the opportunity to get more food but then I heard as they were talking, because I was in the barrack that some of these women have their husbands in the other camps. They knew where their men folk were, and they used to go to work out to a place called Moll, they were building an underground factory, or a hangar, whatever it was for Messersshmitt, and it was deep in the woods and these men used to go there and ten women from our camp used to go out there and they used to take their menfolk food. So when I heard it, I went to the girls who worked in that kitchen and I said, told them what is happening, and she says, tell them we will take it, that they should tell us where to leave the things, so I went back and I said, "Look, we are quite happy to take your peoples thingy", so that was, they realised we are not animals, we are human beings and they did, there was a certain place where you put it, but it was a risk, it was always a risk, and if we had some potato, then some women would say they had a potato and they took names, and we did all that kind of thing, and within a couple of months they mixed us up again, they came in and we came in, and life was ok with them.

RL: What was this camp called?

IG: It was lager eins

RL: And were there many roll calls in this camp?

IG: There was a roll call every morning and every evening but it was quick, you had to get out and you were counted up and there were 1,000 Lithuanian men there and 400 women, 200 Lithuanian women and 200 Hungarian women.

RL: Were they all Jewish?

IG: Yes.

RL: Were there any non Jewish?

IG: Between the men, yes, there were homosexuals. And there were some, what do you call them, men who were in jail, criminals, I have got it, and the lager elteste, over the whole Lager was one of those. He was a very handsome man and a very nice man. I don't know where he was, why he was there, and most of them were nice and kind, these Germans, they were also inmates but they had better jobs and they were always either Kapos or doing things that were easier.

RL: How did everyone get on together?

IG: On the whole we got on all right. We got on all right because we had opportunity to have a little bit of extra. The men didn't. I mean I wasn't always peeling potatoes, after a while I went out into the kitchen to the Moll. And, 1944, winter, we went out two

**Tape 3: 45 minutes 34 seconds**

weeks before Christmas and did the night shift with 1,000 men and ten women and at the end of the fortnight there were only 400 men left alive, 6000 of the died of hunger and hard work, and it didn't matter how much potatoes they would bring in and they would stand at the perimeter to see. And he would bring something out, but you couldn't help it, well you could help if you just had a man and you would bring every day a potato for one, that little bit would help, but it was really, you couldn't keep 1,000 men fed. They had it very hard in spite of it, and that is where I was. So, I mean, at this stage I could tell you that we stayed there until about a week before the liberation and our constant companion was humiliation, hard work and we knew that it was coming to an end.

RL: In what ways were you humiliated?

IG: Well you were humiliated if you had to do menial tasks and everybody wasn't, you were a Fraulein **Haftling**, Miss Prisoner, and if they called you that you were already ...

RL: What did you talk about amongst yourselves?

IG: Well, normally everybody wanted to know what the other was doing. Where they go out, and some of them went into town, and I only went once on a commando where I went into town and I saw civil people walking, minding their own business, and lots of things happened and you discussed this if you had a German who was horrible, or one that wasn't, and you still hoped to survive.

Also, it was interesting, because very few Hungarian women learned to speak German, I mean those who did, it was only school German, and because I understood Yiddish it was quicker for me to understand school German and I spoke it quite fluently and that was all right, but if you didn't it was hard, and you didn't have time to sit and discuss it because you worked all the time, you went out in the morning, you came in at night, and especially in the winter, you went out it was dark, you came back it was dark, and you were glad if you could get into the barracks and there was a bit of fire and you got your food and rest.

RL: What about a Sunday?

IG: So I wasn't much ...

You know I don't know whether we worked on Sunday or whether we didn't. What did Wald tell you?

RL: I don't think he did.

IG: I can't remember. I know I didn't have Sunday because after the Christmas recess we came in one day from work and they didn't let us out again, because they found one

**Tape 3: 49 minutes 45 seconds**

typhoid fever in our camp. And Wald's bad luck was that he was out and they didn't let him back, because he could have rested up, it would have saved his life, but instead they took him to another camp. So we didn't go out, so that was going to be great, so we could sleep and mind our business and so on. But, I think it was the second day, she came to me, Luba, the block elter, and she said to me "I want you and Rochele to go to the men's hospital. Now the men's hospital meant the inmates hospital and every commando had a Kapo who was in charge and we just went, and the woman who was in charge, she was an old woman, and I don't know how she came to us, but she was from Belgium, she was Belgique, and we got there and the man who was in charge was a German, I think he was a homosexual too, and he was in charge, and he lived outside with the SS, and we had to scrub out the room and we were there until the evening, we had to clean the room, and there was ill people and they spat on the floor and it was horrible you know, and the doctors room and the surgery, there was an entrance, but we were young and we scrubbed and we did it, and the next day, we thought it was a casual job just for the day, and she came again and she says, "Sara, Rochelle". And I looked at her and I said, "What is going on Luba?" I said, "Why us? What about somebody else?"

She says, "You girls have done a very good job, and ..." What was his name, maybe it was Fritz, I can't remember now ... "He said that it is the first time that that place has been cleaned. You see, what happened was that they always sent for him the commando, once the workers went out, those who were poorly, they went to do the job because that was supposed to be an easy job, and this time he had two strong lasses. And it was cleaned up, and he said to her "I want a proper commando of this and I want those two girls back."

I said, "Well I am sorry, can't you tell her that I am not well and maybe somebody goes instead of me."

So he says, "Look, I will make a deal with you" So he said, "If you go there, and you make a commando out of it, the two of you, I promise that your sisters will always work in the kitchens."

So I said, "Done". So I went there, and Rochele went there, with this old lady, well the old lady was always in the kitchen, and this Kapo he thought the sun shines out of us because the place was always spick and span, and within a week the people who were ill used to shout at one another, "Don't spit on the floor. Use a spittoon, it is not for those kids to scrub after you." And in the morning when we went in after roll call, and we always laughed, we always came in with a lot of noise, they said, "The children are here." They waited for us, we were like sunshine bringing in something to them, and the doctors, we got very friendly with them and we made a good commando out of it, so I worked Saturday and Sunday, with no rest.

RL: Who were the doctors? Where were they from?



IG: There was, for the women there was a Hungarian doctor, and for the men there was a surgeon, called Dr Zacharin, an eminent surgeon from Lithuania, and he used to swear like a trooper in Russian, and there were three more doctors also from Lithuania and a

**Tape 3: 54 minutes 36 seconds**

dentist, and we made an awful lot of friends there because we knew the men, and the only privilege that we had was that we could go, without anybody sending us through the men's camp on our own back to our barracks, and eventually we were allowed to go out of the camp, up, and have a shower, so that was great, because sometimes I finished scrubbing, and I would go and I would get ... and also it was easier to lay hand on another extra dress of something, so we could wash, and we were more human I think there.

RL: How was the camp guarded?

IG: By barbed wire, but not electrified, and there were these towers, look out towers. And I don't think that anybody sort of cut it open and went through, because if you got out you were in the heart of Germany and they would have caught you straight away.

RL: How did the SS behave towards you?

IG: It depended on who they were. But it was very funny that this man, Kirsch, she had a putzfrau we called it, cleaning girl, and she was the youngest of the three sisters from our town, Eva, and she was a very pretty girl and she used to clean for him and he appreciated her because she kept him, really. I said, "Are you crazy? You are working for an SS ..."

She said, "I found his button was missing, so I told him if you get me a button I will put it on your shirt." And he did. She said, "Have you got cotton?" So he brought her cotton. So he appreciated that she didn't just clean, or she would find socks that were holes in it and she would do it for him, and it went to so far that one weekend he went away, he had a weekend off, and when he came back she had the temerity to ask him if he had a nice time, and he said "Yes, very nice." And he took out from his pocket a picture of his wife and four daughters, four pretty blond girls, now a man with children and a wife, how could he be so cruel, he could get hold of a man and beat him until he was dead. And then she asked, "What are their names? And how old they are?" And he very proudly said, "That is so and so ... this is ... that is so and so" and then he turned round and he said to her, "And what is your name?" And she says, "My name is Eva too." And he said to her, "Eva you are a good kid." So you see, he always behaved to her very nicely and the SS cook ...

RL: We are going to have to just stop here because I think the film is about to end but we will continue.

IG: Blimey ... it is ten to four ... well really we can finish on that, can't we ...

RL: Well we are coming to the end of this period but we will ... now do you want to stretch your legs or pay a visit anywhere ...

#### **TAPE 4**

This is the interview with Ibolya Ginsburg and it is tape 4.

You were just about to tell me something about the SS cook.

IG: Well, when you got out of the camp, that is where the SS lived, and all around it was very nicely laid out, gardens and things. And they employed the slaves to look after the gardens. Now, the gardeners had a nice job because it was an easy job, but they were just as hungry, and every so often if we had a chance we gave them a morsel or something like that. Now the SS cook, the ones in the kitchen, there was plenty of food left, so we could have it, we could eat it, but she was very careful that we didn't give it to them, we had to do this very stealthily if we wanted to give them anything. However, they were so hungry some of them that they would go to the dustbin, because if we threw something out, they didn't make it dirty, they could have just got it out, and once he caught someone and he beat him. I don't know if he beat him to death or not, only one of the girls who worked with him closely, she had the cheek to him when he came back "Have you had your fun for the day?" And he looked at her and said, "Our luck is that when this is over nobody is going to believe what we have done." So that sums you up.

RL: Were, did punishments often take place? How often?

IG: Well it depends if you were caught like, probably, I told you about those boys and how hungry, and if you used blankets for your feet, even if you used cement bags for your back because it was very cold, if you were caught yes you got punishment. Either they beat you up or something like that, but I can't remember any of the women getting caught. And my little sister she really did try, sometimes she brought in ten, twelve potatoes in a bag and then she would go in and do her good work. She would leave me one potato and I would take it into the kitchen, to the Moll, and I put it in the ashes underneath where we cooked and it was done by about 1 o'clock in the night when we finished working I could sit down and make a sandwich. The best thing was a slice of bread and some margarine or whatever they gave you and slice these warm potatoes on it, it was a beautiful meal. Now that kept you going, something like that, and one always felt guilty, one shouldn't eat any more, I had enough for today, even if you were hungry, because you just had to give it away, people were dieing of hunger, it was very difficult to see that, it was bad.

RL: How aware were you of what was going on in the war?

IG: Oh, we knew, because there were newspapers, especially those who went into towns, they saw papers, if they were thrown out you would just pick it up. We did know that it is coming to an end; it was a question of holding out.

RL: What kept you going?

**Tape 4: 4 minutes 24 seconds**

IG: I think what kept us going was that we had a bit extra, we could subsidise ourselves, and the willpower was always there to survive. There were also things that kept us going, like, about eight months after we got taken to the camp, one day they brought in four or five pregnant women. Now as a rule they used to take them to the gas chambers. Now this was in Bavaria, and I suppose they were beginning to understand that things are coming to an end and they have to do some good things as well, so all in all I think they had six women, six pregnant women. Has Wald told you about that? I think they brought them into our camp because there was a doctor specially for the women and our hospital was well organised and these women were not sent anywhere. Not only that the SS woman used to come and visit them every day and one had her mother with her and they made them beds, they lay in beds, they made them a special sort of wooden room and they gave birth to six children, now that was something. As a rule when you went out in the morning there was a roll call and they always said on that roll call how many alive and how many dead. And one morning they said "one addition", now that was worth everything. We did know that things are coming to an end and we really had six children.

RL: When was this?

IG: That was at the very end, because eight months after, it was already during the autumn. Wait a minute, we came in April, and these girls must have got pregnant, they didn't know when they went in. Now you see in Auschwitz women did not menstruate, so they wouldn't have known that they are pregnant, not until, they were so emaciated and hungry, not until they actually felt these children move, that they realised that they were pregnant, so you reckon May, June ... yes about November and the babies were born about December.

RL: Did women menstruate in this work camp?

IG: The Lithuanian women did. But those of us who had come from Auschwitz, we did not. Because they gave bromide, they put bromide in the bread, so we were already in the working camp which was in the ... already in the winter, and as I said I worked in the Revier, in the men's revier, and we were talking about it, talking to the doctors and we said something about it, and they were horrified, they didn't know that, so when there colleague came in, the Hungarian doctors, they said "Listen to what they tell us." We said, "Didn't you know that?" They didn't. So one day they called us into the surgery in the afternoon and they said, "Roll your sleeves up." And we said, "What for?" They said, "We managed to get from the SS ...". The SS came down, and if we wanted medication we managed to get it, and we got some vitamins and they were going to inject, so I had a vitamin boost and Rachel had a vitamin boost. Well, we didn't know, they didn't tell us what it was, and that brought on our periods. Well you see pretty soon

we realised what they did ... and we didn't know whether to be mad with them or not, but it was no problem to get some sanitary towels, which in Auschwitz they didn't exist.

**Tape 4: 9 minutes 24 seconds**

It was simpler for them that way, but within about a month from us starting slowly people started automatically, the periods started coming back. Because we had no idea really what they gave us and what happened. So, after that it was ok.

RL: Were you aware at the time, whilst you were in Auschwitz, of the reason for you not having periods?

IG: We didn't know straight away, but within ten days to a fortnight, when you were with a thousand women and nobody has got a period you knew that something isn't right, we knew that they put something in the food, and I think that they told them, the inmates told them, you can imagine what sort of an epidemic there would have been, all those women and not washing. But you see we didn't know that that is going to harm us in the long run or not, we had no idea.

RL: And the barracks in the work camp. What were they like?

IG: They were also this underground thing. You had to go down three steps and as I said they dug it out, and then they lined it with wood where you stood and they built up a sort of a yard and a half or so wood and wood again, and on that you put your blankets and there were some straw mattresses that you put on and you slept there, and it was very warm because it was underground.

RL: And the sanitary arrangements.

IG: The sanitary arrangements were all right, only people didn't have the opportunity to have baths and things unless we were taken up. But we did have little stoves and at night they managed to get already a bowl or a bucket, it wasn't so difficult already, fill it with water and heat it up and you had a wash, and everybody in turn had a wash. And as I said, we two were very, er, privileged.

RL: Did anybody ever sing?

IG: No, there were no sinks, only in the laundry, in the launderette where they did wash, they did, and in the kitchens and at the surgery. Now the surgery was quite well run, and it always depended on the SS officers doctor, some of them were very human and whatever they could they brought medicine in for the doctors and bandages and things like that.

RL: So, tell me about what happened next. Take me forward ...

IG: Well, about ten days before we got liberated, they got all of us together who could walk, and they took us on a march, they took us on a long walk, there was chaos, I don't think they knew what they were doing, and we had to march out and only left the people

**Tape 4: 13 minutes 43 seconds**

who were ill and the doctors and the rest of us started walking, and we walked overnight. We stopped at a little wood but we already had, I remember I had a winter coat and the shoes that we brought from home didn't exist any more, we had these wooden clogs, it kept me pretty warm. Anyhow we had to lie down on the floor and cover ourselves up, and we were unusually warm, and suddenly I woke up and it was so lovely and warm, but the air was very cold, and when I looked up we were covered in snow, it had snowed over night, and we were really nice and warm there. And then we had to get up and somehow, I don't know how, but they gave us some food and we had to march again, and we got into Dachau.

RL: How many were marching?

IG: Well, I don't know if they had six hundred men or five hundred men, because as I told you they died out, but there were plenty more, some new ones came in. I can't remember whether there were eight hundred men or a thousand men, there were quite a lot of men and the four hundred women. So you can imagine this camp was pretty privileged, it wasn't like Bergen-Belsen or Buchenwald, none of us died, and we got into Dachau and I can't remember, whether we stayed there a whole night, yes I think we stayed the night, and the day. And then we were going to have another night, to sleep, but we were told that the men who came with us, that Wald was with, that our men had went out already, a few hours before us, and we went to sleep. I was going to sleep outside, there was so many of us in Dachau, and they said we can go into this big building, this big wooden building, and it was snuff dry, and we went and we put our things down on the floor, like a huge building, and suddenly I had this premonition, "What if this is a crematoria, they can just shut the doors and finish us off." My sister was already practically asleep, I said, "Yudit, come on, let's go." And I took her out and we lay down on the floor, and I said I am not going to sleep inside, I don't want to be shot, and suddenly all hell was let loose and the sirens went, and there was an almighty air raid, terrific, and the American planes were so low that we saw the blokes, and we kept telling them "chuck the bombs" and we were delighted to see all the Germans run away, and they went into their bunkers, and we were all there and they showed us these flares, and it was like daytime, we could see them, and when the air raid finished, and nothing happened, we were hoping they were going to bomb us, suddenly they got us together, the four hundred of us and they said we are marching, they are taking us, and there were all sorts of rumours that they were taking us to the Tyrolean mountains and that they are going to shoot us at the end of it. Now I never took any notice of it because I thought to myself "It is such a chaos", they have no idea what they are doing, I knew they had no idea. But, this was about half past eleven or twelve and we set off going, and we were so tired and there were five of us, and in fives we were going, and the Germans were with us and they were tired too, and I noticed that most of these blokes that came with us were old men, fifty and over, and I thought they probably want to go home as well, they are

fed up with it. We had been out about fifteen, twenty minutes and one woman said she was getting on and she says, I can't walk, I am staying, and of course we all had this thing that if we stopped they are going to shoot you, so we told one

**Tape 4: 18 minutes 50 seconds**

of the German soldiers, you stay with them, there were two women sat down and they stayed there, and as we were marching we were very quiet and we were going to listen if they were going to wait while we go away and they were then going to shoot them. But we didn't hear anything and we walked. I don't know what happened because I must have been walking the whole night fast asleep because the next things I knew when I opened my eyes it was daytime, and they took us somewhere again into a big ... I think they had some corn or something there, it was a farm, a big barn, to sleep. They kept us sleeping during the day and walked us at night, and as we were walking ... every so often they brought us some food from whichever town we were, the Germans went and we got food, and as we were marching one day, one day Munich three miles, next day Munich four miles, we walked again, Munich two miles, so we were going around Munich. The first morning when we woke up when we were there, the SS said to us, you know those two women who stayed behind. "What about them?" They are free, the Americans are in. And we were walking and the SS were walking with us. And finally we got fed up of this, we were going like this for about four days or five days, and I said to Yudit, next time we come to a little wood, because every so often we would say we had to go, and we used to wait normally where there was a little wood so we could go. But they didn't come with us, I said, "We are mad to come back, the Americans are here." So we will lie down there for a day or two, we will survive, the next time we are not coming out. So, suddenly we have a delegation of Lithuanian women came to us. They had an idea, that we overpower the Germans, so I looked at them and I said, "No way." And they said, "Why?" I said, "Because they will start shooting." They said, "So a few of us will die, but we will be free." I said, "But we will be free without that, and what about the dogs?" "If one of us gets a rifle we will already shoot them all." You know, and we said no, and we went away, and they were quite happy to do that, and the next little wood came and we went in and we came out, and I said to Judith, "We should have stayed there, I just said so." And one of the Germans came out with a motorbike, and he said, "He went into the town to bring us some food out". And they told him that we had to go into a camp, there was a camp. And we looked at him, and he said there is a camp around the corner. And we didn't believe him, and he said, "Ten girls, right, come on." And we went around the corner and they came back, and they said you will go in there and you will be fed. Because Americans are already in Wolfratshausen, they said. So the idiots set off walking again, and we went in, and it was a Russian prisoner of war camp, so we felt a little bit better, because I felt if there was a bit of rising to do, they will do it, not we, these were well seasoned soldiers.

RL: How many were guarding you?

IG: There must have been about ten, eleven, plus dogs. And we could have overpowered them but there was a risk. Anyhow, we got in there, and they took us in a barrack, there were wooden beds, and we went to sleep. We had some food, they gave us

something in the kitchen, and we went to sleep. And you know, we fell asleep, and no one wakes you for roll call, and I got up and I said, "What is going on?" And somebody said, "Just quickly look out." And we looked out and all the SS were standing in roll

**Tape 4: 23 minutes 47 seconds**

call. And we were standing in there and watching and when the roll call was over, our old man, he was an old Lithuanian, he came in and he said, "Well girls, we are going to leave you here, the Americans are in Wolfratshausen, they are going to take you over, 'bye 'bye, all the best." And the Germans marched out, and we were left. Well, the Russians, instead of going to open the gate, and they went, and the first thing they went, they went straight across the road to the beautiful villas where the SS used to live, and they went in and broke up the most beautiful pianos and chandeliers and it looked a mess. And we were sitting there waiting for the Americans, meanwhile we were hungry, so Rochelle, we decided, "Come on let's go and get some food from somewhere." They said, "Where are you going?" We said, "We are just going somewhere, to the villages, for some food." So we went, her and I. There isn't a soul anywhere. And as we were going out from the camp we had to go through a little wood, and we found all the SS uniforms, these soldiers had in their rucksacks their civil clothes and when they left us they changed and disappeared, so the wood was a very small sort of a thing, and we went across and there was a farm here, and we said "Let's go here", and everywhere the white flags were out, flying, so we knocked at the door, and somebody came to the window, an old lady, and then the husband, and they saw two women, so they opened the door and we told them that we were sorry to disturb them but would they have something to eat because we were awfully hungry, and she said, she was very scared that some man was behind us, so they pulled us in and said, "Come inside", and they said well we haven't got much but whatever we have we will give you. And we went in and we sat down and they asked us where we are from, what we are doing here, and we said "We are prisoners", and they said "What kind of prisoners?" And I said, "We are Jews." And one looked at the other, you know some of them knew that the Jews disappeared and there weren't Jews all over in places like that, maybe they had no idea, and I turned round and I had the red cross on my coat, and they brought us a big bowl of potato salad. And we sat down to this and we ate, and they just looked at us, and I said, "That could we take some of this because she has got two sisters and I have got a sister." So, she brought some bread out and she brought some potatoes out and we put it in our bags and we said thank you very much and we went. We went to the next place, and we got some more potatoes, and by the time we both had a bulging potato and we said, "Come on, let's go back." And as we were going we saw forty soldiers marching, and as I look at them, they were Hungarians, I recognised their uniform and their things ... I said to Rochelle, "Look who is here?" in Hungarian. And this chap stopped and he said, "Hungarians?"

I said, "Yes, what are you doing here?" says I.

He said, "Well we went home for a holiday, we had a month off, and when we came back we knew that it was over so they didn't want to go out to the front, so they came to this village and the villagers kept them hidden." Forty of them.

I said, "Where are you going now?"

Well I went to Wolfratshausen to tell the Americans that we are here, and they said we are to go back to our village and they will come to see to us. So I said, "Where are the

Americans?" And as I was saying that there was this jeep going round and there was this American star on it. Well, we started running into the camp, and by the time we got there were two big tanks there, and the inmates were on the tank and they were giving

**Tape 4: 28 minutes 48 seconds**

chocolates and all sorts, but never mind, Brocha and I had about 210 potatoes so we had what to eat, and we were free. That is how it happened. Unbelievable.

RL: How did you feel?

IG: Oh, you felt euphoric. I mean to begin with, you really felt euphoric. It took a couple of days until you realised what had happened, and as the days went past you saw that there were very few of us alive and communities and families were wiped up, wiped out, and it didn't feel very good, one got depressed and guilty, why me ... why did I survive and why didn't so and so survive. Altogether it was a strange existence, it didn't happen over night.

RL: What happened to you after the liberation?

IG: We were in that place for quite a few weeks, and you know straight away they made their Jewish council, those who could speak a little bit of English with the Americans, in that camp there was ....

RL: What was that camp called?

IG: It was called Buchberg, it was really for Russian prisoners of war stayed there originally and then they brought food and we marched straight in the kitchen to work, because you don't want to sit around, and then they came to look for us, the doctors, because the ill people were left and then they put them on wagons and they were towing them backwards and forwards in the Bavarian woods and they were bombed, and the Americans found them like that, some of them were so emaciated. They found straight away a hospital in Bavaria that originally was an agriculture school, and Hitler made a hospital of that, and the agriculture school was run by brothers of a Christian order, the teachers. So there was a cloister and that was where they lived and there was a school, it was a private school, an agriculture private school, probably for rich farmers children, and it became a hospital all the time. It was four story, big building, and it was set up for operations and so and they brought there German soldiers who were wounded in there, and when the Americans found that they said straight away, they told the German doctors, there weren't many German people ill still, but some of them still had you know all sorts of things, broken arms and things, and they said they had to take them over to the cloister and they cleaned that part out and they started bringing these ill people that they found into that place, and those doctors that we were with, they came in straight away, and they worked with the German doctors, the German doctors stayed and they established a big hospital and the kitchen and everything was ran by nuns. Originally the nuns weren't from there, but they were educated already, they were teachers, high school teachers. And all this food was coming in, 4.000 calories a day per person and the Jewish



doctors were sitting there, and said, "We need the children." We were the children. We need women who can take care of that. Those nuns can take care of half of it out and sell it." I mean coffee, butter, sugar, and the Germans were very hungry, you know, and there

**Tape 4: 33 minutes 50 seconds**

was special diet for ulcers, and there was a department for tuberculosis and they all had special diet, and so it started looking for us all over, and eventually they found us, and we came into there, and well we had to take care of things. Food went into where it should go, and we worked with the nuns and we also cooked for the Germans as well. They got there, when the food came in they got their rations as well, and they got their, and they had the doctors still until they got better and left, but this place was called St Ottilien, S T, Ottilien, O-double T-I-L-L-I ... Ottilien I-E-N.

And that is where I met Wald, he was ill when I met him, and then, this was already May, June, July, and then two, there were three sisters and us, and the two sisters decided to go back to Hungary. That was just before the High Holy Days, because they wanted to know if anybody had survived. So then we decided, they lived not far from us, and I said I wanted you to see, to have a look, if there is a man, that I promised myself for, if he is alive, if my father is alive, who is alive. And on the way home they met a bloke from our town who found out that we are alive, and he jumped out of the train and went back to the city where my father came from, because father was in the hospital and he got back in the middle of the night, in the dead of the night and climbed over the gate of the hospital and went in and started shouting for my father, and he said "The girls are alive." And my father got up, and got his clothes and the nurses and the doctor said, "Where are you going?" And he said, "Didn't you hear? My children are alive, I am alright, I am going home to celebrate the High Holy Days. This boy came to fetch father home, there were about thirty, forty people who came back. He came for my father and he didn't want to go home, but when he knew that we were alive he got out, and he had the address from these girls, and it was two days before Yom Kippur, so he got in the train, and he went to the place with these girls to talk to somebody who was with us, and that is how he found us. And he wrote to us and he wanted to know what we wanted to do, and we said we don't want to go back to Hungary. This is a chance to get out, and he said "Just sit quietly and I will come out when I can", because that was the Russian, and he came out in February to join us, that was already 46, February.

RL: What date were you liberated?

IG: We were liberated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1945.

RL: And how had your father survived?

IG: Pshhhew ... Well, he was ... Where was he? Was he in Wolfratshausen? No...

Wald! ... I have forgotten, I will tell you in a minute, he was in a horrible camp.

RL: You can tell me later then. We will talk about that again. So he came to you?

IG: He came out to Germany. Yes, he did. So that was a great reunion.

**Tape 4: 38 minutes 34 seconds**

RL: Where were you living?

IG: I was still living in St Ottilien when he came, and then he got himself a job in his own profession. Quite a way from Munich, it was six hours by train, and that was where we got married from, I knew, I mean I knew Wald before, but at the same time I also found out that that young man had died, and I was going out with Wald, and my father came out and said to me and said, "Are you serious about him?"

And I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "You know, you couldn't have married a man like that at home, because he wasn't religious at all."

And I said, "Of course I do." But I think my father by that time had realised that if we survived on our own that we have got the right to decide what we have to do, which some parents wouldn't have done, specially not a religious Jew. But I did ask him, I said, "Have you got anything against him apart from that he isn't religious."

And he said, "Not at all, nothing."

And he was very fond of Wald always, we were very good together, so ...

RL: Where were you married?

IG: And then father said, "If that is the case, get engaged and get married, I don't hold with going around."

And I said, "Fair enough." And we had a civil marriage, still we went to St Ottilien and we had a civil marriage, that was in July, and in August we went to father's, he was in a different part of Germany, in a place called Weiden, and there was already quite a Jewish community there, and we got married from there, and then we went to live in Munich, because he decided to go and learn building radios. I wanted him to finish off his university, but he didn't, and I never thought that he was going to earn his living with radios, and he went, and from there we came to England.

RL: Whilst he was doing the radios what were you doing?

IG: Having a nice time. I was at home, we had a nice room in a nice villa and I cooked and I took care of him, I became a housewife. And my sister was with us as well at that point, because she was learning, she went back to school, I mean she was only 13, but then once father got this job there. No, the thing was, that father had to get married, so I had to find him a wife, which I did, and then Yudit went, because I thought she belongs to father after all.

RL: Who did you find for him?

IG: A very nice woman. She was Polish, she was a lovely lady, she really was.

RL: Did you father still have his religious faith?

**Tape 4: 42 minutes 27 seconds**

IG: My father never changed, he was, he did the same thing that he did in Weiden, where he was and then he married and he went to Israel, because my step mother had a son who went out to Israel already. He was already in Israel and her brother was alive. Now he went to America, so they joined him in Israel, and father got a job in Israel, and he had a ...

RL: Where did they live?

IG: They lived in a small place called Neve Yehoshua and that is Ramat Gan district but it is quite a bit of a way, and he had quite a nice big Shul there as well, in Israel.

RL: And how long did he live?

IG: He was 72 when he died, it was all very sudden. So, wait a minute, he was about 45 after the war, yes, and he lived ... until he was 72.

RL: So, had he gone ... who left Germany first?

IG: We did, but they were already really on their way. My sister went out about six weeks before them, or two months, and then they followed.

RL: And what, you know, what had happened to your religious faith over this period?

IG: My religious faith has never changed in so far that I have got faith, I always did have. In a way my relationship towards G-d, I feel just the same. There are a few things that I, well there are a lot of things that I don't go along with, and if I look back it, I wonder how a girl from such a religious home, why I didn't stay as religious as I was, and I realised that whilst I was at home, all these things that I did, I did it automatically because that is how it was. And I am quite certain that if I could turn the clock back I could go back and live that life with my parents around, but I don't need it for myself. There are some things, straightaway as I came out, I looked at people, some people were so religious, I mean, that day when I was telling you about arriving in Auschwitz, people lost their children, they took children away from them, and that evening two women managed to smuggle through two candles to light the candle because it was Shevuoth, and I just couldn't understand what sort of mentality was that. One of them had had their children taken away, but they had this faith, and that religion never left them, you see, and I never discussed it with my sister neither and we both went the same way. Now, from a mother like my mother, I still wonder why. Well I think I know why, there are a lot of things that I didn't go along with as a child, I remember the very first week when they taught me the six days, how the world was created, and I went back next time and we learned about the Garden of Eden, and when I heard about the snake and Eve I was

personally offended and I got up and I said to the teacher, "Why did G-d single out Eve? Why didn't he single out the man? Why the woman?" And he was stuck. I took it as a  
**Tape 4: 48 minutes 6 seconds**

personal insult and from then on I didn't know I was a feminist but I must be. So there you are.

RL: And yet you say that your belief in G-d never changed?

IG: No, it hasn't, but basically something did happen, because I don't believe that it has anything to do with G-d, what human beings did to one another. This is what I didn't go away because they went and said "Why?" And some people said, "Because we were being punished because we weren't good." But the babies were not, the babies are innocent. Why? Why my mother? She was good. And this basic things is what, is what the whole religion is founded, that the bible comes from heaven, and if I say that it is not G-d's doing, then I don't think that the bible is from heaven, you see? So there is this fundamental difference, and I had it ever since I was ever so young but I wasn't aware or it.

RL: You came over to England?

IG: Yes.

RL: Can you describe the journey over?

IG: Well the journey over was very simple, we crossed over from Hamburg to Hull and we were desperately sick, it was a dreadful storm, I couldn't speak English at all and the first word that I learned was, the steward used to come in and say, "Change!" Because we were sick. And Wald's cousin and his wife came to pick us up from Hull and as we were leaving the boat somebody said, "Cheerio!" And I came down and I said, "Is that a swear word?"

He said, "What?"

I said, "Cheerio", and he tried to explain to me what cheerio was.

I found England different to begin with and, but it's unique, the people are unique, the English character is different.

RL: In what way?

IG: They think for themselves. You can't lead them so easily, or they couldn't, you know, they are not regimented, the character is different. Maybe it is something to do with they had hundreds of years of peace and prosperity, I don't know why it is but they are different. They are different to the Europeans.

RL: What were your first impressions?

IG: Oh, the first impressions were terrible. When we arrived and it was October 16<sup>th</sup> and it was raining and foggy and we were traveling already for an hour or so and they took us into a café for a cup of tea, and I said “When are we in town?”

**Tape 4: 52 minutes 6 seconds**

And they said, “We are in town.”

I said, “What?” The Yorkshire stone was black, the windows were dark, there were no small curtains anywhere, well I couldn’t get over this. Well, when we arrived that autumn it was so foggy. You couldn’t go out ... so we didn’t work there, and I said to Wald, “Let’s go out for a walk, I am fed up sitting here.” They went off and we were on our own. And he said, “We won’t find our way back.”

And I said, “We will do a Hansel and Gretel.” So I got some stones, we got out and I put it down on a corner, and then I went to the next corner and we walked. And every so often somebody came near you, you were frightened, because it was so thick and dense the fog it was terrific. And we found our way back and then of course when I started going to work, I was amused, and the first letter I wrote to my sister and I said, “I have never seen so many people with false teeth.” There was a conductor on the bus and he had no teeth in at all, you know, you just don’t see that in Europe, but I loved it, they were so kind, I can’t tell you. The people who we worked with were so kind and so nice. And pretty soon, we came here for five years, we were going to join my sister and my father, and after five years it was 1953 and I went to Israel for the first time for three months, and Wald said to me, “Now if you think we can make a life there, we will sell up and we will go.” And Pauline was just over three years old and I was there for three months and I took stock of things, and I realised that Wald would not survive the heat there, which I was right about and we already had the first five year plan here, life was very difficult to begin with because we never brought anything until we had the money, and we already had a house and to give all that up and to start again, with a new language, and I just loved it here, so I came back and I said I want to stay. So I can’t turn round and tell him, you see so we should have gone there.

RL: How did you find it in Israel?

IG: Well, Israel was Israel. You were always brought up that it is your home and your land, and yes I have got, I have found Israel from the first day on very exciting, I mean I could just go there and live there, but life is very hard apart from what is going on there now, now it is really bad, but it is a great country.

RL: So, what was your first job here?

IG: Well to begin with I thought maybe I should open a dressmaking business, but I did some research and I realised that I don’t want to do that because the people who were in it worked very hard, and they didn’t earn enough, what I thought was enough, so I went into the factory and I was taught to do “burling and mending”. Do you know what that is? When the pieces come off the loom you have to go through, you pull it through a table which is lit up and you take out all the knots and you clean it through and you look if there is any mistakes that the machine made, you chalk it and then you pull it through

again and you learn to do invisible mending. And I learned there the fine mending, in Huddersfield, and I never looked back, and I was with that until I had my daughter, she was born December 1949, just over 12 months after we arrived. And I still worked a

**Tape 4: 57 minutes 33 seconds**

little bit in that business but after that I got out and started with manufacturing Gannex coats.

RL: Ok, so we will just stop here because this tape is about to end.

IG: I think we can stop there forthwith.

**TAPE 5**

RL: This is the interview with Ibolya Ginsburg and it is tape 5.

So you were just telling me how you went into manufacturing.

IG: Well, I didn't go into manufacturing, I didn't manufacture, we had a boss who manufactured and he manufactured this cloth that became quite well known, a raincoat called Gannex, and because I could sew we started off, I mean, the first person who saw it was me because they were in the experimental stages and I managed to get some old machinery and look after it and tried to sew it and things like that, but pretty soon it took off without me and I went to Israel as I said for three months and during that time we already had a room full of women, and we got somebody who could cut the cloth, and it was manufactured, I only did little bits then, here there and everywhere. And then I had a second child.

RL: When was your second child born?

IG: She was born in 1957. Another girl.

RL: What were there names?

IG: My oldest one is Pauline and my younger one is Amanda, Mandy for short.

RL: So where were you living?

IG: Well, we lived first, first we lived with Wald's cousin. And we lived with them from arriving in '48 until '49 I had Pauline, I was still in Bradford, I lived with them and I think it was 1950, she was about seven months old when we moved to Brighouse. We bought a house and we were there until '53 and then I went to Israel and when we came back we decided to sell that house up because it was too big for us and a bit unyieldy ... That was in '54 and we moved out of there and we were in rented accommodation for a couple of years.

RL: Where was that?

**Tape 5: 3 minutes 20 seconds**

IG: Just a couple of miles up from Elland, in a place called Stainland, and then we bought a house in Elland and we came nearer to work, and I had to take care of two girls. And when my second daughter was three and a half, four years old, Wald got ill and he had an operation. Did he tell you about that?

RL: He didn't, no. You will have to tell me ...

IG: Well, I don't think I want to enlarge you, let's just say that he wasn't well, he had an operation and after that he worked sort of part time.

RL: Was that connected with his wartime experiences?

IG: I would say so, yes. And we brought up two children, two girls.

RL: Did he go back to work fulltime?

IG: He did go back to work, but not fulltime. He came in later and he worked less hours, but he worked.

RL: And how did you settle into the community?

IG: Here in Elland?

RL: Yes.

IG: Very well. Because, to begin with, I knew only the people who came into work, but then you get to know the shop keepers and the people around you, and as I said it was very nice here. We had a nice quite life, and we had the family, and Margaret and Joseph, Wald's cousins, and they have had children so at the weekends we were always together, and largely that was what happened, hard work and raising children.

RL: How do you feel you were received?

IG: Pardon?

RL: How do you feel you were received in this country?

IG: Well, when we came we were received very well. You see it was after the Second World War and it was only the Europeans who came. There were some Poles and some Ukrainians and a few Jews after the war, survivors as such, they weren't so many, and that I felt a little bit harder, to fit myself into the Jewish community, strangely enough, than into the Christian community. Because I always had this feeling about the Jewish

community that they felt a little bit guilty, you know, because they didn't go through that, and it took me some time to get some Jewish friends actually.

**Tape 5: 6 minutes 40 seconds**

RL: Had you had a bad experience at first?

IG: I didn't have a bad experience, but, as I said, it was not, there were Jews here already who came before the war. They came from the Germans, and they were already settled, and they found it very difficult, and it wasn't just their fault, because I had to work five days a week, and I came home at the weekend and I had to do everything on my own, so the religion went out of the window really, because I had to manage the family, and I had to manage the children, but as they grew we joined the synagogue and they went for instruction, it was easier, but I never had time to join a B'nai B'rith or the Wizo because I just couldn't get time off. These types of things were always done, ladies could get off, they could go, but I couldn't, I worked full time until I got 60.

RL: How did you decide which synagogue to join?

IG: I would rather not talk about that if you don't mind. The only thing I can tell you is that I didn't know of the reform synagogue until I was pretty desperate and somebody told me about it. Now when I rang up the Rabbi, he was a refugee like we were, and it just clicked straight away, and with the congregation too, because even though a lot of textile people were there, they also came in before, some of them brought everything with them and some of them had enough money to buy mills and things, but it was much easier because they were Europeans. I have found the settled Jews, that is why I didn't want to talk about it, it is nothing to do with if they are orthodox or not, it is probably the people that I didn't gel as well. It wasn't just their fault, it was both things, but as soon as I went there I got in straight away, and as soon as Dr Beenheim saw me, and Pauline was already seven or eight years old and I said I wanted her to come to cheder and learn and he said, "Yes, fine." And that was again before Seder, and they said we have a communal Seder, why don't you come with her and your husband and get to know people, and that was that.

RL: Was that ... ?

IG: Whilst I did go to the orthodox synagogue week in and week out, and took her there, nobody ever said "Why don't you join?" or anything. There is just this feeling and I find, later as well, as I meet people that some people felt guilty that they lived here and had a good life and what we went through. You see where I came from, if a stranger came into the town and you saw her, or him going in once to the synagogue you wanted to know everything and you surrounded the person, and this didn't happen, so, maybe I should have pushed myself more or what, but I didn't, it was just one of those things. And I did find it very hard to get used to a reform synagogue, because I wasn't used to that. But, the children were instructed properly and they knew a lot and that was it.

RL: How much contact did you have with the Shul? Or do you have with the Shul?



**Tape 5: 11 minutes 32 seconds**

IG: I go every month to the Shul. I make it a point to go once a month, and we have contact, and the Bradford synagogue, both, I mean it is a dying community, there are only very few of us, but the lovely thing about the Bradford lot was that socially they always did everything together, and they still do, and now if anybody rings up and says "I have got a Kiddush", I will go to the orthodox synagogue just the same, but we belong to the reform synagogue.

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

IG: I am a foreign Yorkshire woman [Laughs]. Well, I British by ... I am Hungarian by birth, Jewish by religion and I am a British subject.

RL: Do you feel different to the British?

IG: Against ... a Jew of a British? Are you talking about a Christian or a Jew?

RL: Either.

IG: No I don't, where do you stand. The people I know I feel exactly the same thing about them. I don't have this feeling that if I meet someone who is Jewish, that is one of my people, to me somebody who is genuine, it doesn't matter. Is there anything else you want to know about this?

RL: Do you feel that you have a different culture to the people around you or do you feel that you have adapted?

IG: I am different, I am foreign, but I, my day to day life I don't think differs very much from my next door neighbours.

RL: Is there anything you miss?

IG: In what way? Socially?

RL: From the past.

IG: Oh, well, the past has gone, it is no more, that was cut off, that is it, it is no good.

RL: From your way of life in the past?

IG: No, because life was a lot harder than it is here. I went to Hungary in 1989 and it is like going back 300 years in time.

RL: How did you feel going back?

**Tape 5: 14 minutes 39 seconds**

IG: I felt nothing towards the Hungarians. Now then, the land itself, was my land, this is where I was born, I was very upset and very hurt because the Russians have bled it to death. The country itself, but I have absolutely no feeling for the Hungarians, not like I have for the Brits, so that explains it, doesn't it. So if you have got a Hungarian football match with the English, I will want the English to win, not the Hungarians. So I think when it comes to loyalty, well you don't become a naturalised person unless you have some loyalty to that place, which is very important. It is important to me what is happening here, what is happening to this country.

RL: Did you meet anybody that you knew when you went back to Hungary?

IG: No, not a soul. There was nothing.

RL: Did you go back to your home town?

IG: I mean in the home town. No, there was nothing.

RL: What made you go back?

IG: Well, my sister's son lives in Milan, and one day we were in Israel and he was there, and he said, "If you both come to Milan I will take you down by car." And I said, "Right." So, right, and because in Israel there are quite a lot of Hungarians there, and they go regularly to Budapest to have their dentures done, because they have wonderful dentists. And I see it even here in the newspapers, and they were cheap, so she, she got some addresses from some friends who go everywhere, and she said "How about going?" And I said "Yes." And we met in Italy, and my son in ... my brother in law and her and Uri the son, he took us to Hungary, but really we stayed in Budapest most of the time, We went out to have a look at our village, or our town, where father comes from, but there was nobody, there was nothing really. I met one person there and I felt very strange, my only really feeling as I said, I never thought that the land itself is so near, but not the people.

RL: Do you get restitution from Germany?

IG: I do get something for being incarcerated. I don't get a lot, but I get a small amount, it doesn't amount to much.

RL: And how do you feel towards the Germans?

IG: I feel towards the Germans like I do to anybody else because: Number one, you cannot feel the same way about it, the young generation, you can't blame the young generation. If I meet a German my age, yes I wonder what she did, but don't forget I

lived with them for about three years, in Munich after the war, so you had those who were Nazis and some who weren't Nazis. What ... why I am saying that I don't feel any

**Tape 5: 19 minutes 1 second**

different, in every country that Hitler has occupied you had sympathizers, and they were no different to the Germans, so you find it in every country. Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Hungarians, there were all sorts collaborating who did the nasty deed, so I don't have against Germany as such, the feel, it is as I said, it is people and it was a set up, and as I said the only organisation that I feel anything is the catholic church, I am talking about Rome, I believe that if Pious had tried a bit, things would not have been the way they were. I don't know, I mean ...

RL: Do you think your experiences have affected you psychologically?

IG: Yes.

RL: In what way?

IG: Because I ... I ... for a long time I was suffering with anxiety and neurosis, and I have times that I don't feel so good and I know that that is it ...

RL: Has it affected your sleep?

IG: Not my sleep, no, I don't have nightmares, but there isn't a day I don't think about it, I do in fact ...

RL: What about your health?

IG: My health ... well I have got a bad back. It is really bad, it affects my whole body, and I am old, but on the whole I think I am more or less for my age I am not bad really.

RL: Do you think your experiences affected the way you brought up your children?

IG: I can't tell you that, maybe they could tell you that, but I don't think so, I don't know, I find the young generation quite different, as I said ... they are so busy with their lives. And they work so hard, they don't have time to sit down with mother and say "Tell me how it was." My grandchildren will do that. Now my grandchildren, they will, they spend time, they want to know how it was, "what did you do when they were young?" ... my children didn't use to ask me that. The only thing I used to get from my children at an early age, was "Why don't I have a granny?" "So and so is going to her granny's for tea." And it is very difficult to explain to a child of six or five why ... you tell them that they died during the war, but how they found out, they tell me sometimes, they don't know but it came to them, bit by bit, I suppose it is because both of us are survivors and I suppose they hear odds and ends and it just came to them and they learned in school, not much, because now they are learning in school about it, but they didn't.

RL: What kind of Jewish identity do your daughters have?

**Tape 5: 23 minutes 3 seconds**

IG: Apart from knowing that they are Jews I don't think that they have much. I mean, even my grandsons if they are asked, they will say that they are Jewish, you see, and the girls, yes they are Jewish and they learn and they know, but I don't think, I don't really know exactly how it would be if it would come to stick and rift, you know, if they would have to. I suppose there must be something, there must be something there.

RL: Did they ever think of marrying Jewish partners?

IG: Oh, my oldest daughter, yes, she went out with some Jewish boys and at one time, she did try very hard, and nothing happened. The other one didn't bother.

RL: In terms of observance, was there any practical observances that you kept on?

IG: Yes, I light the candles every Friday night, I go to the synagogue, they know when we fast and when we don't fast, Seder, Yom Kippur, they know all that. And we get together, and I think when I am not here, they will do that for themselves. I watch them now, as soon as I leave home, they have a very busy life, they are always together on the weekends, and also there are seven years between the two girls so where they go together, as they get older, so they get together, how much they will keep I don't know.

Once or twice I tried my oldest daughter to involve her as second generation as survivors, but she just said, "Mum, I am too busy, I can't, I am not saying that I won't when I get older ..." but at this stage she is not and the best thing is to leave it at that, because they are busy.

RL: What do they do?

IG: Pauline is a probation officer and Mandy is a barrister, and they work very hard, both of them, busy, busy lives.

RL: What grandchildren do you have?

IG: My older one, Pauline, she has got two boys. The oldest is 24 and he finished in Durham, he got a first in economy, economics, and he works for a firm in Horsforth and I think that boy is going places. Yes, he produces some work that is already pretty outstanding and the younger one, he also does the same, also economics, and he just finished, he just finished his exams.

Now Mandy has got a daughter, she will be twelve the day before my birthday. And she has already earned herself some money. She appeared in The Forsythe Saga, she had a very small part, and she is going to be in another series in July or August, called Island of War, it is about the Channel Islands, the occupation of the Channel Islands by the

Germans, and she is a little evacuee, but she is still at school and she isn't going to be an actress I don't think, but she is very good at drama, so ...

**Tape 5: 28 minutes 9 seconds**

RL: So has Mandy just got the one daughter?

IG: Just the one girl.

RL: Yes ... Did you join any clubs or organisations.

IG: No, if they want me, they know where I am. If they want my money they come for it, they know where I am, but I belong in the Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association in Leeds, that is how I came, and I used to go quite often to Beit Shalom and we go talking to schools, universities and so on, but we are getting older and we are doing less and less.

RL: When did you start doing that?

IG: Six, seven years ago ... maybe more now ...

RL: Was that the first time you had spoken about ...

IG: Yes, the very first time we talked in Durham, just for some lecturers and then we went to Sussex University and then we went back to Durham, we talked to the historical society of the university. We have been a couple of times in Leeds, Hillel House, also we talked to the non Jewish students and Nottingham University, also Hillel House, Manchester, is there a synagogue? ... Wilbrahams ... ?

RL: Wilbraham Road?

IG: Yes ... And then we go ... schools come into Beit Shalom quite a lot and you do get some questions asked ... and we are getting on ...

RL: What kind of people would you say make up your social circle? What kind of backgrounds are they from?

IG: Any sort ... we don't, I am friendly with a girl who I have worked with in the mill, and her husband worked in the mill, and we have been very good friends all the time, and it doesn't matter, it is the person that matters. We don't have a lot of friends, but lately we have got mostly Jewish friends, and I think that comes mostly from working with it, but I have got some non Jewish friends who I have been friendly with for fifty years now. Not so many people, we like to be at home, we are not big socialisers, and as I said my husband had to do things steady, specially as far as socialising was concerned, so ...

RL: Have you come across anti-semitism here?

IG: No, nor did my children. But I think that comes probably from where we live. I suppose you see, you get more anti-semitism where there are more Jews, and I think that  
**Tape 5: 32 minutes 8 seconds**

part of the anti-semitism that has lifted its head up comes from what is happening in Israel, I mean my children went through Christian schools on their own and they were never discriminated against nor said anything, nor my grandchildren.

RL: And when you have given talks have you ever met any kind of negative response?

IG: No, I haven't, they always ask about deniers, what about deniers, but that is not because they are not ... normally people who come because they want to hear and children learn. So they listen we had a couple of students, not so long since, they are from Germany, they are here in a college, and one of them was crying so much, she was very upset, it is very hard on some of the young people to have a past like that. The most important thing I think in ones life is not to hate. Because it screws you up, it doesn't help.

RL: Is there anything that you think we might have missed or you would like to add?

IG: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

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

IG: Message, what is my message? I don't know. I think one has to be true to oneself. It is nothing earth shattering my message, I don't really think of messages.

RL: Well thank you very much.

IG: You are welcome.

Yes ... now here is my mother, called Emily Davidovitch nee Katz with me when I was about three years old in 1927, it is a photograph that was made to go to Slovakia on our holidays.

RL: Where was it taken?

IG: It was taken in a town called Paszto, where I was born.

Now this is the photograph, I don't exactly remember the date, but it was February 1946, the day my father and we met again, he came to join us in Germany, I am on the left side of the photographs, and then my father and my sister Judith. It is taken in St Ottilien in Bavaria. Ok.

Right, now here is a synagogue of Tokaj. Where we lived where my father was a cantor and behind the synagogue was another yard where we lived, and this photograph was

taken a long time before we went to the camp because it has been renovated and painted just before we went and it was in first class condition.

**Tape 5: 36 minutes 57 seconds**

Anything else?

RL: No, that is fine.

IG: This photograph is from before the war. The third person on the left is my grandmother Rachel from my father's side. The two girls on the left are her daughters and the girl on the right is also my father's sister who had very well known salon, high class dress making, and the other two girls I think were employed there. The picture was taken in the city of Miskolc in the late 1930s I should imagine.

This I think is my first identity card in Germany, dated in 1946 in the city of Munich, and I am on the photograph with my thumb, what do you call it thumb print, identification, and that is it.

Now this is a photograph that was taken shortly before we left in 1948, Germany, on the left is Wald, next to it is myself, my sister Judith and a German friend called **Loss**

RL: What part of Germany was it taken?

IG: That was in Munich.

This is a certificate from Dachau confirming that I have come out from the concentration camp. It is dated in 1946 ... and ... there is my number, my prisoner number on that.

This is a photograph of all four of us. On the left is my youngest daughter Mandy, who was then about 14 going on for 15 years old. There is Val next to me and Pauline is on the right, she is 21. The photograph is taken in Elland, 5 Victoria Crescent and I think that is about it ...

RL: Approximate year did we say?

IG: 1990 ... about 1970 ...

This is a photograph taken in Beit Shalom in 1998, the day they published Val's story, his book, where he is signing it with me.

These are my two grandsons, Jacob, the younger one is on the left and Samuel on the right and it was taken in 1994 in Elland in Brooksbank School, they are the children of my oldest daughter Pauline and her husband Malcolm, and I am sorry I have not got any new photographs of them, this is the latest I have.

This is my youngest and only granddaughter, called Amy, in 2002, the photograph was taken in Harrogate school ...

You see I forget ...