

NATIONAL

# Life stories

**LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH  
COMMUNITY**

**Anonymous**

Interviewed by Gaby Glassman

C410/007/01-05

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INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

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I'm going to talk about what happened to me as a child as a result of the Nazi takeover in Czechoslovakia. I was born there in Prague an only child and had quite a small family. Parents, no brothers and sisters, two aunts on my mothers side and one aunt on my fathers side. One paternal grandmother and one maternal grandfather. I think we were a pretty average family really in the sense that, I think we lived in the Jewish quarter of the time though I don't know many details. We were not practising Jews. In fact all my family are agnostic they're not believers at all. Although I do remember going on one occasion to a religious festival, I think it was Passover. My father worked for my maternal grandfather in his business. I think it was to do with paper manufacturing. My mother worked in her father's office. She lost her mother, in other words my grandmother, just before I was born. They tell me that I was quite a spoilt child and I don't remember being spoilt, because I can always remember being a conscience stricken child and really brought up with quite definite rules. But I'm sure I was quite indulged because I was the only child and only grandchild. We used to visit my father's mother regularly and she was more the traditional Jewish grandmother who made a great fuss of me. And I remember the treats, I used to get bags of almonds and sultanas every time I visited. And if I was good I got a penny and if I was naughty I got two pennies. And this was not to encourage me to be naughty but to console me for having succumbed to being naughty. I loved school I was a very sociable child, quite bright I think. And I remember my kindergarten and I remember how they told us about God. We were told that God was everywhere, so I shoved all the kids along the bench to leave a space by me so that God could sit next to me. I was very fond of skating and went skating every Saturday. My mother had a maid which was quite standard in those days, she would look after me while my mother was in her fathers office. And I do remember getting a fear of burglars at that age, which actually is still with me to a certain extent. But it was the time of the depression and a lot of people were very poor and I remember my mother feeding beggars on the stairs. She used to give them soup and bread and so on. I remember the time of Munich, I didn't understand it but my mother got in extra lamps and I do remember it was a crisis time. Now I'll give a bit of back ground about how it was that I got rescued. My mother was also a very sociable person and made friends very easily, in fact she was a very charismatic person, who attracted people to her. And she belonged to the Girl Guides as a young person before she was married and was a Leader and used to go to international conferences. And at one of the international conferences in England she met the woman who would later become my adoptive mother. Before my mother ever married they corresponded and as things got worse in Europe my future adoptive mother said, "If ever you need any help let me know". And in fact my mother made several friends in the north of England as well also Girl Guides, who also offered to help. And as things got worse and worse my mother realised that the whole family had to be got out. My father was an extremely nice man, they both were. But I think she must have been the sort of go getter of the two. And she decided that heaven and earth had to be moved to get us out. She did all the form filling and all the queueing and she ran from office to office. And I have a record of all this which she wrote to England describing how she filled up forms and queued and then was sent away and came again and the door closed in her face and she banged on the door and she tried and tried and tried. And in fact I know that she made all this effort to save my life has been a big influence on me. And has been a factor in really how I've developed and how I behave. What happened was that my

future adoptive mother offered to have all of us over and each adult had to be offered a job which no English person wanted. And mostly these jobs were domestic or nursing or something of that kind and she offered my parents the job of housekeeper, cook, cleaning lady and my father gardener, chaffeur etc. And I would just come along as the child of the family. So my mother continued her running around and got permission in the end for all of us to go. My permit was to come over on a specific date which was in July 1939, my parents permit was for the 15th of September and therefore they were able to get me out, but because war broke out on the 3rd, they missed it. I remember very well preparing to come over to England, my mother explained it all to me, I didn't fully understand about Hitler but I just understood we had to get out. We had to keep it from my paternal grandmother because the scene she would've made would've been too horrific. And she would have tried to stop me leaving, so we had to keep up a charade to pretend that I wasn't going I was seeing her the next week. And my mother and I packed two cases, we were each allowed two. And into one she put all the family linen, there was a great deal of embroidered work, which her mother had done, very beautiful stuff. And I was able to choose my clothes and my toys and she helped me as best she could. And prepared me as best she could. She also taught me a little bit of English, but not very much, I only knew one or two phrases. I was six and a half. When I looked at one of my children when she was six and a half I realised she could never have survived and I don't know how I survived because at six and a half one is really virtually a baby. Ehm anyway there was this nasty scene at Prague train station with all the parents seeing these children off with the labels round their necks. And I was quite excited at the beginning. And I can remember at the beginning of the journey being quite excited but gradually of course one got tired. And I do remember the train stopping and the boys got out and played ball and we girls had a picnic and I was told later that must've been in Holland. And we got to the Hook of Holland and then we got onto a boat, a very nice clean berth I remember and we arrived at Harwich in England and were taken down to London. Now my mother's younger sister had already arrived in England, she had not been got out by my mother, she got out because she'd got married a few months earlier and was in England on her honeymoon and they stayed here. And she took me down to the small town to what would be my future adoptive mother. Although we didn't know that at the time. And I was just placed there. Really I suppose the main feeling was that we were waiting for my parents to arrive. And of course this was the 20th of July that I arrived so we had about five or six weeks before war broke out and of course the first thing I did was spend the first week crying day and night with dreadful home sickness. And ehm my adoptive parents, at the time I called them auntie and uncle, ehh were pretty, a little bit irritated by this and they had brought up three children, but with nurses and quite a lot of domestic help.

I wonder if I could take you back to Prague now and whether you could describe what sort of house you lived in? Whether it was rented...?

Yes I remember the flat we lived in very clearly, it had two big rooms with parquet flooring, a sense of spaciousness, I think it was on the second or third floor and there was a connecting door between these two rooms and my father fixed me up with a swing in the middle. And I enjoyed this greatly, swinging between the two rooms. I

always remember pale parquet flooring and the big windows at either end and we had a kitchen with an old fashioned black stove in it, with you know, coal and wood. And a black and white checked floor in the hall where mother used to sort the laundry and I would kick the laundry round and have a great time with that. And my father had ehm fish tanks on the walls, he was very interested in tropical fish and he was very devoted to me and would come home from work at night and for example would show me samples of papers from, I mean coloured papers, from his office where they manufactured paper. And I know that we were great friends, he would take me out sometimes in the evenings and I would walk along hand in hand with him and see the lights of Prague and I sometimes got an ice-cream, which would be one of those ones in a cone with many colours scooped on to it with a wooden paddle. And I do remember that very clearly. And one of the nurses I had, allowed me to persuade her to dye my hair. I wanted blonde hair and she dyed it much to my mothers despair. She got dismissed for that.

Did you have your own bedroom?

No I think it was quite a small flat, my parents slept on the sofa, it was one of those that opened up. And I would sleep in the other room with the partition drawn across. I think it was fairly normal for ordinary middle class people who hadn't yet made their way in the world to have fairly limited accommodation like that. But we did have a place in the country, I don't know whether it was rented or not. And we would go there, we had a little car and I don't know whether it was a cottage or what, but it was in the country and we would spend weekends in the summer there and I was interested in the animals and so on.

Would you celebrate Friday nights?

No no, there were no Jewish festivals in the house at all. My parents were agnostic and we didn't come from a practising family or form a believing family. And I don't know who it was that... I attended a Passover and I don't know who was celebrating it but I do remember I was the youngest there and I also remember the Day of Atonement when everybody was in the synagogue and I was very fascinated that they had tangerines with cloves stuck in them. I was given to understand that this was in case they should feel faint with hunger, but it certainly wasn't my parents celebrating this, maybe it was grandparents I don't know. And I wasn't taught anything about the Jewish faith that I can remember.

So your parents never even took you to the synagogue?

No.

Did they have Jewish friends or were they non-Jewish?

I haven't any idea. Actually I do have an idea, when I look back the people that survived or didn't survive, yes I would think they were mostly Jewish. Though the people they sent me to in England certainly weren't. But I think ehm I would think it would be more chance due to the fact that... I think the Jews lived in a very limited quarter in Prague and I would think it was sort of chance. I don't think my mother would in any way have been exclusive, I'm sure she'd have friends of every kind. Because all her English friends were non-Jewish.

And the Girl Guides that was a Czech organisation?

Well you know the Girl Guides were a world wide organisation and of course she belonged to the Czech branch of it. And simply met people from all over the world at these meetings when she came to England.

Did you know what the word Jew meant?

No I didn't no. Only when I got to England I think. That feeling of being pitied for being Jewish began in England.

You never had experienced any kinds of...?

No no not at six and a half no. I don't know what the school was that she sent me to but I was totally oblivious. Apart from a terrible anxiety going on. In fact the most clear picture I have of the anxiety of the time was that the older relatives gave me an immense feeling of pressure. It was really a horrible feeling and I wish I could remember it more clearly. Because it was one factor that made me not want to go back to Prague. The older relatives sort of huddled. There was a dreadful feeling, Jewish people have a tendency to have empathy with others which is good in a way but they can also be oppressively knowledgeable of what's in somebody else's mind. It's almost as if one loses the privacy of one's thoughts. And that with the anxiety which was obviously current because everybody must have known their lives were in danger, this fearful pressure, it was very strange, it was almost as if there was a deathly feeling in advance. I can only imagine that they already knew about concentration camps, it was as if it was a miasma coming from the camps already. And of course I couldn't put any words to that at that age, I only knew there was the most dreadful feeling of pressure, I was the only child, and you know, I had to be rescued, it was awful, it was oppressive.

In England what I loved about England was the privacy. One was given the privacy of ones thoughts, and while one also had ones feelings neglected, at least one had head space. One didn't have head space in Prague, I felt.

Were your grandparents, the ones who were still alive living close to you?

They must've been yes. I think extremely close. My parents worked for my mothers father, they were together all the time. I mean they were literally working together and my fathers mother, it might've been a tram ride to visit her, it wasn't far you know, we went to visit her most Sundays. And of course my memories are augmented by the letters my mother wrote. She wrote a lot of letters and that described our lives, so it's partly what I read and partly what I remember.

What can you remember about what sort of activities you occupied yourself with at that time?

Yes I do remember some of my toys very well. I had a very very nice dolls' house which was not one house it was a set of rooms, you know each room was separate and one built it up with putting up walls and putting the furniture in. And I was particularly intrigued with the bathroom because one put real water behind the, there was the basement for the bath and there was a little tank outside the wall to put the water in. And in a museum in Paris this year I saw an identical one in the childrens section of the museum, obviously a 1930's thing you know. And I was very fond of clothes I think, I made a great fuss to have a red and green checked pleated skirt. I suppose I must've had the usual toys, I think I liked dolls, I'm not too sure. I was a terribly friendly child, I'm not sure if I was lonely because I do remember if I met children in shops I would ask them if they would be my friend and to me now that's a sign of loneliness and yet I think I was exuberant I don't think it was that, I think I was really extremely friendly. But school I just loved, I loved the sociability of it.

What age did you start school?

I don't know. But I'd obviously already been for a year or two before I came to England. And in fact my mother wrote and said how I was going to school and enjoying it. And I know I learnt to speak German with my nanny and of course you know one says now "Oh yes I spoke German and Czech," but I realise now having brought up three children that at six and a half, in fact one's language is quite limited you know, so I just knew limited Czech and German at that age. But I loved learning.

Could you read?

Oh yes very well, I loved reading and writing. Very very, crazy, it's maybe emotional I don't know, but ehm I was extremely good at English as soon as I learnt it and loved the language but I've got a huge resistance against learning any other language and never never, I won't even try. I mean I've lived for several years in Paris and my French is abominable really considering the opportunity I've had. I can speak it and get around but I have a real resistance to getting down seriously to learning languages. And yet my family know about ten languages each. So I don't know whether it was missed out or whether I've got a real block against it. You asked how I occupied myself, this is it, visiting relatives, playing, going to school, skating on Saturdays, visiting grandmother on Sundays. I've got a photo of my mother, father, grandfather the Sunday before I came to England, it's a historic photo. And we look so innocent, we're sitting in a cafe, the trees are in bloom, it's midsummer, my mother's got a 1930's dress on and a smart hat. You wouldn't think anybody had a care in the world and I was about to get on a train in order to have my life saved. My grandfather was shot in the street a few months later and my parents went to concentration camps and got killed. And to look at us you wouldn't have believed anything was happening. It's just quite ridiculous.

Did you take that photograph with you or did you...?

I got it from, yes, when my adoptive mother died in the last two years, my adoptive brother found that photo among her papers and that's the first I'd seen of it, she'd never given it to me. Now I don't think she did that out of nastiness, I think it was sheer oversight because she gave me a lot of other things that were mine. She did many things deliberately but I don't think she did that one. I'm very pleased to have that photo and my husband managed to make an enlargement and I've given it to my children and I've got it there. And I've given it to my aunt, my Czech aunt, so I'm very pleased to have that. But I think it's the innocence of it that really gets one. The fact that you look at it and it looks as if nothing was happening. I know that my... I know that it was my mother who got me out because my parents got on very well as I remember and the only disagreement that I do remember is of a letter being thrown backwards and forwards with rage and I think it was them arguing whether I should be allowed out, to leave the country.

Could you say something about the feelings you had for your parents?

I would say that really my feelings about my parents have been, in spite of their deaths quite central to my life. My mother and father were terribly terribly important to me and really still are. They were devoted to me and I'm sure they've given me all the strength I've got apart from what I've got from my own strength genetically. I mean my mother was a strong person, the reason I say my mother each time is because I don't know that I can describe my father's personality as well. He was a very very pleasant easy going person, very easy to get along with as far as I can tell, very loving, not at all difficult. This is only my view as a child but they did certainly seem to get on well. My mother was extremely competent but not in a bossy

overbearing way. She must've been filled with anxiety. I didn't get that so much from her as I got it from the older relatives. She was strict though, I mean I can remember getting punished for not washing before I went to bed. On the other hand... and I felt quite disgraced by that. But on the other hand I can remember she had a fur coat and I swung on it on the belt on the back and she told me not to do it and I did it again and the only significance that had, the reason I sort of remembered it as important is that she wasn't all that angry and that became important because after I got to England I could never ever put a foot wrong, I was totally condemned for anything I did. And somehow the fact that I'd been allowed to get away with that showed that I'd been loved enough to ehm you know be allowed my faults. I suppose the strength I got from remembering my parents is the love they had for me and my mother set me such an example. She saved my life I most certainly am not guilty of having my life saved, some survivors are said to be guilty, well I certainly am not. The people who killed my parents should be the guilty ones not me. But what I would feel guilty about would be if I hadn't done my best to make the most of my life after having been sort of given it again. And having it saved. But that hasn't been a drag on me at all. It's been something I've liked to do. I've kept this admiration for my mother partly fuelled by the admiration other people had for her. She was always said to be a wonderful person, great charm, great fun, a tremendous friend to people. She tried to get out lots of people besides me and my father she... I've got the correspondence where she tried to get out her next sister and various cousins and friends so she really was working hard to ehm save a lot of peoples lives. And I know that in the concentration camp she was in the Czech camp at Auschwitz, the Czech family camp, and she was teaching children because a friend of hers who survived told me this. And somehow or other she still managed to have shoes and she and my father were still together, which you may know, there was a Czech family camp where a number of families did stay together. Ehm so I do know she was a remarkable person. My parents have been with me always, the fact that I lost them somehow made no difference to the fact of their presence. And I would think I thought about my parents every day of my life. This may be quite abnormal, if I'd had a normal childhood and gone through adolescence and even if I were on good terms with my parents I probably wouldn't be thinking about them every day. I don't know if everybody who's had my experience does this, but I do. You know in my career, in relationships, in the family, all this I feel I've wanted to do as best as I'm capable in other words to use the capabilities that I've got. Not just for my mother's sake, for my sake but ehm I suppose I just feel like I want to carry on what she started. She did the best she could for me so I'm doing the best I can for me and my family and everybody else I come into contact with.

You described how you used to go out with your grandmother on Sundays, can you remember what you, you described also your father and you going out together...?

Well I can only remember as I told you how we went for walks sometimes. And it was a tremendous feeling of cosiness you know. My father and me together walking in the street and somehow I love big cities, I'm very fond of capital cities and the lights of Prague made a tremendous impression on me and I was skipping on the street and somehow I have that skipping feeling whenever I see the lights of a city at

night. All I remember is his devotion really and the fact that he would share his work with me. I suppose he was treating me as an equal even though...You see my mother was very much an equal when you think this was the 1930's, there was no question of her not being liberated, she was working, and in fact the reason that she didn't go and study at university was because she had to help her father in his business. And of course they were all working together and her father treated her as an equal and me as an equal and I must've been a bright kid because I was terribly interested in what he had to say about his work. I remember learning to tie my shoelaces for the first time, I remember playing in a little sort of yard and I don't remember if that was in our block of flats of my grandmothers block of flats. Now she was a humble person I think. I've got a photo of her and I remember her as a humble person. She was fat she suffered from, what now I think would be ehm..

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## F110 Side B

...what in those days was called dropsy. But she was really an idealised grandmother in the sense that I could do no wrong. You know she was always there smiling, welcoming me, doting on me. I suppose again it's been something that kept me going. That I kept this figure in the background to whom I was more or less, faultless (Laughs) or rather that she loved me with my faults. And that was specially important in view of the upbringing that I later had.

Who would you say was the most significant figure in your early childhood?

It's hard to say because I think ehh father, mother and grandmother were the three, my mother obviously was the strongest personality and I'm sure I've identified with her the most. But I can't answer that clearly because I don't know what I'd be like if I hadn't had either of those other two aswell. That's really my answer, those three.

The nannies you had?

I don't remember an awful lot about them. They were more in the nature of babysitters in the sense that they would take me to school and look after me. I don't think my mother was working full-time because I don't think I was alone day after day or anything like that. It was a matter of somebody to take me backwards and forwards and be there in between times. And of course I do remember my other two aunts, the two younger aunts. There was a middle sister who was a neurologist and she was a nice person and I remember my mother cooking cakes for her younger sister's wedding. And I was terribly excited and was kneeling up by the stove and fell over the stove and burnt my hand the day before the wedding, quite badly on this black stove. And was yelling and screaming the place down, so mother called for her doctor's sister who came and tended to my hand and the next day everybody shook my hand which was covered in bandages and had this enormous blister on it. This aunt, this middle aunt, got engaged to a man who I very much liked at six and a half. I think if we're going to talk about the Oedipus, it was father and uncle. I asked this chap if he would wait for me, I thought he was wonderful, but he didn't, he married my aunt. But my younger aunt married a man I didn't like at all and I was aware that I didn't like him at that age. I've never liked him until recently, recently he's mellowed a great deal and I can get on with him fine now. But he was a very tough customer, very difficult. Tremendously domineering. And I don't remember being domineered like that by anybody else.

Were you ever separated from your parents in those early years?

No no. I never went away and I never went to hospital.

Can you recall your parents reading to you as a little girl?

Yes I think my father must've done. I'm sure my mother did but I don't remember it. There were books, books were a big important thing. Ehm in fact I suppose I was over-important really, I was a very important person being the only child and I certainly didn't lack for anything. I don't mean that I was lavished with a lot of material things, I don't think we were that well off and I don't think that I was a brat. I don't think I was allowed to scream to have my own way or anything like that at all. But I was important.

What about songs, did your parents sing to you?

My father had opera records but I don't remember them. I'm not particularly musical though I do like music. It's never been developed in me and I don't remember my mother being musical, but I remember her drawing well and I'm far more artistic than I am musical. I'm obsessed with decoration, with colour, with paintings, with beautiful things, with gardens, with flowers but it's all visual. And I'm also interested in textiles and handwork. But although I like music I'm obsessed with all the visual things. I think that was my mother and my father's influence on the music, he must have played his records but I don't remember. There wasn't any musical instrument that I remember. But I'm sure there were the songs, because I mean everybody knew Czech songs.

When you think back of those early years and think back of your parents do you see them in black and white ...?

In black and white oh yes, or in colour, is that what you're going to ask me?

Yes.

That's an interesting question, because my daughter said to me that she saw the world in black and white because of having seen the war films so often. And I said, "Yes the world was in black and white in those days." But I think that's because life was grey and difficult. No I think I see the colour because I see the parquet flooring which was golden and I see the colours in the flat and I think I see my parents in their clothes.

Did you ever go abroad on holiday?

No no.

How would your holidays be spent?

Oh I think they must've been in the country as I told you. We went by car and I would always be travel sick. I was an absolute menace in that car throughout childhood, always sick, very very quickly.

Can you remember what your favourite dish was?

I've always had a sweet tooth. I don't remember being given sweet things, although that was always my favourite. And I don't remember what I ate in Prague at all. I only remember the nuts and sultanas my grandmother gave me and I do remember my mother actually telling me an episode where she took me to visit somebody and they served me spinach which I didn't want to eat. I protested that I didn't want to eat it and she said, "Eat it and be quiet". So I filled my mouth with it and I spat it right across the table, which was brattish. But that's the only occasion that I was told off where I really did behave badly. And I've got my mother's letters where she, yes I've also got my mother's diary which I've had great difficulty in getting translated. It's been a mystery to me why it's been so difficult. I think it may be because it's actually very boring for adults to read. My mother was absolutely besotted by me just as I was by my own children. And she detailed every detail about what I ate, every tiny noise I made, every blink, every smile you know. And she was years ahead of her time, or maybe times have come round in a full circle. But she was right into the sieving of the vegetables, you know the healthy food. I was given the correct foods, it's all detailed in the diary, but I don't remember any of that. That was early baby days you see, I've got an actual record of my early baby days. Then of course I know from that how besotted she was you see, I've got these diaries and that's been terribly valuable to me to know what a valuable baby I was.

Would she make you eat things that you didn't like as a baby?

I don't remember any scenes over food whatsoever. She wasn't a Jewish mother in the sense of stuffing me, I don't remember any fuss about food what so ever. And I don't remember any fuss about going to the lavatory either. I only was told once that I smeared my cot, which this aggressive uncle thought was very funny. I always regarded it as quite boring and quite normal for a child to smear. I mean I was about eighteen months or something, it was absolutely normal as far as I was concerned, it didn't seem worth mentioning. I don't remember scenes about washing or toilet training or anything.

Would you say that you were an independent child for your age or were you still very clingy?

Well dependence and independence is so deceptive. I'm sure I needed people as much as anybody did. Because I was lively and active and interested I'm sure I gave the appearance of being independent. I loved my friends, I loved school, I mean there was no question of me not wanting to go to school or anything like that, quite the contrary. But I know in retrospect the amount I needed my parents and how homesick I was and the fact that it took me fifty years to recover from the fact of losing them. I must have been infinitely more dependent than I acted. You know.

What education did your parents have?

I think that my mother must have done the normal high school and passed complete education in high school. I know that she wrote in one of the letters to my foster mother that she wanted to study astronomy. But because her mother had died and her father needed her in the business she had to give that idea up, she had to run his home and his office. My father it's a little more mysterious, his family were Czech but his father had run a business in Alexandria in Egypt and they'd come to Prague when my father was adult, so that the language that my parents communicated in when they first met each other I think was French. They both knew nine or ten languages and I can't answer at all what education my father had. I presume he must have had some business training.

How come they could both speak so many languages?

I don't know. Ehm whether it was the custom or whether in central Europe maybe necessary. They all seemed to have been talented in that way because both the ones who survived and didn't survive all spoke a lot of languages. You know I'm the disgrace who doesn't speak a lot of languages.

So which languages would they be able to speak?

Oh I suppose German, French, Spanish, Czech, English, Italian. Goodness knows, I don't know, it was a lot.

Apart from your father who you said had lived abroad, had they spent any periods...?

My mother actually used to go on sales missions for her father. You know selling things for him abroad and I don't know which countries she went to. But ehm you know that wasn't bad stuff for late 1920's, early 1930's.

Was that before you were born?

Yes. Once she had me she stayed home and looked after his office really. And looked after our flat.

How big was the business?

Only medium, it wasn't huge, I don't know the exact size. The only indication I have is that ehm when it came time for compensation after the war, compensation was a bad joke of course, because I got a thousand pounds for losing my entire family and all the businesses. Different people in the family had businesses and they were sort of in the order of one or two factories that kind of size. Not bigger, not a huge chain or anything like that.

Did you ever go back to Prague?

Once, yes in 1947. Do you want me to talk about that now?

What would you like to do?

I think I'd rather talk about that later.

Do you know whether you were named after anybody?

Not that I know of. I've looked in the family tree that my aunt wrote out for me and the name isn't there.

When did your parents get married?

Ehm I do have the exact date, ehh it was well over a year before I was born. It must've been about a year or eighteen months before. You know what I mean I was certainly legitimate. But it was a short time, they had me fairly soon.

How old were they when you were born?

I think my mother must've been about twenty nine because... I mean of course I know their ages and I've done the arithmetic several times and I keep forgetting it but I think she was about twenty nine.

And your father?

Very close in age, I think about thirty.

Did you celebrate Christmas at home?

Yes I think we did. I don't, I mean I think we even had a tree. We certainly celebrated St Nicholas with the broom and not clogs, a sabot or something was put out for presents before Christmas, yes we did.

On what date was that?

That would be early in December I would think, whatever date it's celebrated in Czechoslovakia, I've forgotten.

Was that a very big event?

It doesn't loom large in my memory. I mean I can remember a birthday party more clearly than that, with a pink cloth on the table and I had friends to tea. I think I always got very excited at times like that but I don't clearly remember Christmases or whatever. I think there was sort of threats in the background, like if you didn't behave yourself you didn't get presents. And that reminds me, talking of threats, of a fear I had. I do remember I must've been extremely young, when somebody said if you eat, it was either cherries or raspberries, either the tree was going to grow inside you or you were going to die or something. But I remember standing up in my cot and it was an actual cot, screaming my head off because that way I would keep myself awake in order not to die.

Did you have any other superstitions?

I think I've always been a fairly fearful person, I don't think myself particularly brave, particularly not physically. I think I'm quite brave sort of psychologically and that I can undergo ordeals alright, but I do tend to avoid physical danger.

You were saying about all the efforts your mother had made to save other people. Do you know when she actually started to work on this?

I've only got this from the letters that I've got. I've got a big pile of correspondence and she was writing to places in England trying to find sponsors for her friends and relatives and I can't tell you a date I'd have to check the letters, but it must've been at the same time that she was getting me out, which must've been, I suppose it was after me, I doubt if it was before.

What can you remember of the marching in of the German army?

I feel as if I saw them. I've been told since that I couldn't have done because we weren't living in the right place, but I thought I saw an army marching down the street, you know soldiers all this sort of thing. And I certainly remember my mother telling me "We've got to hang out flags - the Germans say so," and this has been confirmed by somebody I'd talked to recently who said, "Yes we all had to hang out flags and the Germans were pleased." And I certainly knew then that we weren't pleased, I knew we were occupied by the Germans.

Can you remember the helmets and boots of the soldiers?

No I think I remember more green, that would be my memory, the green uniform. You see in my mind's eye I see myself looking down from the window and seeing their shoulders. I don't remember the helmets.

Did you witness any fighting?

No no. That's all I saw, I didn't see any horror scenes at all. And I didn't know of any, they didn't tell me.

Is there anything else you feel you want to mention?

No, really the only memories of Munich were, I don't know why I call it Munich because we all call it that now, goodness knows what my mother called it at the time. I only knew there was an emergency where for some reason they expected the

electricity to fail and they bought lamps and I can't explain more than that. But I knew somehow that there was a big crisis. And somehow that our futures depended on it. I did know that.

Were you sometimes afraid that sometimes things would be different and your parents would maybe not be there when you came home from school or...?

No never. Oh no no. Apart from these preparations for me to leave Prague I wasn't aware of how terrible things were plus the atmosphere among the older relatives. Well I was aware in a psychological way. I was aware emotionally that something bad was going on, but I didn't see persecution and I didn't feel persecution.

How long in advance do you think that you knew about you having to go ahead of your parents?

I can't answer but I should think that I knew two or three weeks at least.

What were you told about having to keep a secret because of your relatives?

I think I was told "Granny loves you so much she would be dreadfully upset if she thought you were going abroad and therefore we're not going to upset her." And so we didn't tell her, we visited her that last Sunday and I didn't say a word, nobody said a word.

Can you remember if you ever gave away any other secrets?

I didn't know any secrets apart from that.

It must have been very hard for you to keep the secret?

I don't have any memory of whether it was hard or not. I think I knew that it was in a good cause, that was my feeling but honestly I'm guessing, I don't know.

You said a bit about how your mother packed your toothpaste, were you allowed to take any toys?

Yes I chose my toys.

What did you choose?

That was a very agonising decision because I think, it's as if to say I had to choose some and it was almost impossible because whatever I chose that afterwards I would feel that I chose wrongly. And I don't even remember what I chose, I do remember I had this nice skirt I was very fond of, I had a revolting hat that I detested which had red white and blue tassel on it, which my mother for some reason insisted that I wear. And I very carefully lost that as soon as I got to London. I did keep it all through the journey but I lost it quite carefully by leaving it behind in the hall where we were based for a short while. That was quite deliberate. I don't know what toys I chose, I've got a feeling that... There's always been a feeling that I'm sure I chose the wrong ones. I mean I must've chosen some books and I must've chosen some dolls. I didn't take that precious doll's house that would've been too big. It was a sort of feeling that I chose the wrong things. I always had a big difficulty in making choices of that kind, even to this day.

It must've been a very hard decision to make for a child?

Yes exactly six and a half you know.

What was the atmosphere like at home during the final days?

I would think it was tense and anxious, but, well I can't say it was tense no, I didn't feel a tense atmosphere, I think my mother was very busy; whether she, I mean an awful lot must've hinged on whether she thought they would survive or not or whether she thought they would ever see me again and I don't know the answer to that. I don't think I was conscious at all, I'm sure I wasn't, that really it was life and death, I wasn't. And I don't think it even crossed my mind that I would never see them again.

Can you remember the final words that were used as goodbye on the Sunday to your grandmother?

No I can't. You see the funny thing about that Sunday, I mean children's recollections are so inaccurate. I've got the photo of being with the other grandfather and yet my memory is that we visited that grandmother. We couldn't have done both in one day and I don't remember words, I remember hugs and kisses. I do remember being there for the last time but I don't remember words no. She lived in this humble little house, I've got a photo of her, a fat lady with a simple sort of dress on, very simple sort of hairstyle just rather loose, no make-up or anything like that. Almost looking a bit peasantish. And for some reason she had a little chicken run. I think she had a very

tiny house somewhere because she left it to me. That house was left to me, needless to say the Communists took it. But it was a little house somewhere in Prague it wasn't a flat, that was for me that house.

When did you find that out?

After the war, I don't know how we found out that she'd left it to me. And also I don't know that she even went to concentration camp because she was already ill. I have no idea how she died, you see because there is no record of my fathers family. No survivor except me and so nobody can tell me what happened. I know my father died at the same time as my mother because we have our cousins who survived who told me exactly how and when my parents died, but they don't know how my paternal grandmother or paternal aunt died. And I hope that my grandmother died before the concentration camps because she was already ill.

When you described her dress, can you remember the colour?

No not really. In the photo it's sort of darkish with sort of flowers on she was a very simple sort of lady. Less sophisticated and less educated I would think than my mothers side of the family.

What can you remember about you leaving home?

I can't remember leaving the flat at all. I've got a feeling that the entire family saw me off at the railway station and my cousins in their autobiography have said that. And I do remember there was a deathly silence on the platform, all the parents were seeing of these children and we had labels round our necks with our names and I sort of had the feeling that I began to feel like a refugee right there. And I remember the pitched(?) silence, but my cousins said that I screamed for my parents, but I have no recollection of screaming at all.

Did you know any other children?

No no. And my isolation I'm sure is partly because I, or the isolation I've sought since is because I was taken over with nobody I knew, taken straight to strangers and then stayed in an alien environment without ever seeing Czech people again except very occasionally my Czech aunt and then one time at the Czech school later when I was eleven. I was entirely brought up amongst English people from the time I went down to the foster parents.

I know it's a painful question to ask but can you remember your parents final words?

No no I can't.

Can you remember waving or anything?

Yes maybe I remember waving. I do remember I was excited and the incongruity of that now strikes me. Which shows that I wasn't fully aware of what was going on. My parents obviously must've shielded me from quite a lot. Which obviously you would with a six and a half year old. No I don't remember.

Can you remember feeling that you wanted to stay with them rather than go on the train?

No I don't remember what I felt. I must've done but I have no recollection. I think we took some food and I told you we had a picnic, I just remember that, you know how children are, excited at first and gradually you get tired. I can't tell you how long it must've been well over twenty four hours, maybe two days the whole journey took. Because you know with the train and stopping and a boat, it was an all night boat you know from Holland to Harwich, so it was a long journey.

Were there adults?

Yes there were adults in charge of us. I don't remember anything about them. I do remember that when we got to London there was a big sort of sorting out hall and as I said it was there that I deliberately lost the hat I didn't like. And it was there that my Czech aunt came to collect me. And I can certainly recollect that there wasn't any warmth in her greeting. Do you know I felt a nuisance right from there onwards.

(End of side two, cassette one)

F111 Side A

I was just telling you about when I arrived in England, I don't know if I'm exaggerating or if this is all in retrospect, but I have a feeling that I was conscious of becoming a nuisance and of really being out of my own environment from then onwards. And I would think, I think that feeling really stayed with me throughout my entire youth.

Where did your aunt take you to?

She took me down to the south of England to a seaside resort, where the lady who had corresponded with my mother lived with her husband. Her husband was a well known surgeon in the town. And they were very well to do people, his father had been a surgeon too. And they were what we used to call in those days, a big noise in the town, meaning you know a big fish in a little pool. They had an immense sense of their own importance. The atmosphere in their home was totally different from anything I'd come from. It was English middle middle class. They were what was known as non-conformists, which means they were not Church of England, they were one of the branches of the non-conformist English church, mainly congregational. They were quite frequent church goers and prided themselves on their church going. Regarded themselves as rather virtuous people who you know did good in the world. They did quite a lot of voluntary work, I was definitely a good deed as far as my foster mother was concerned. Taking me in she would boast about it at the church, show me off, "This is my little Czech refugee. Yes her mother will be coming over." This kind of thing. I was sort of on display in that way.

They were people, they were really the tail end of the Victorian era, they were people who'd been brought up in exceptionally strict homes where sin loomed large. Ehm and sin loomed large in the home that they brought up their three children and me. They had three children who were, the youngest was ten years older than me and they were sixteen, seventeen, eighteen when I came to England. And all of them were at boarding school except the oldest who I think was about to go to Cambridge and study medicine as well. They were people who did not enjoy children, or rather they enjoyed boasting about their children but not actually bringing them up. They always had nannies and maids.

In fact my foster mother I'm afraid was quite an appalling person. She was the second eldest of a family of five and had been brought up really by a lower middle class family, but her father was a Congregational minister, a clergyman. And I think she must've been the least favourite of her parents. I don't believe she turned out as she did because of that, I believe she was the least favourite because she was so unpleasant. I believe she was genetically unpleasant, my adoptive brother and sister and I have mulled over her personality for many a year and we've more or less come to the conclusion that she was just born unpleasant.

Ehm it's sounds mysterious as to why she should've kept me. She liked my mother and also her having me was challenged by another friend of my mother who wanted

me, another girl guide who lived up in the north of England and who had been told by my mother she could have me for term time but this lady in the south could have me for the holidays as nobody considered children's feelings in those days, nobody considered that it might be disturbing to a child. But I went and visited this lady in Sheffield actually in the first August that I came to England and she was a spinster lady who was lonely and wanted a child in the house. She lived with her mother and taught school and was quite intellectually sensible. I've got letters from her saying that I was a bright child and she would send me to university and all this sort of thing. And therefore my foster mother was not going to have anybody usurping her right to impose her will on me. And she dispatched the lady in the north very fast by telling her that my mother wanted her to look after me and she wouldn't let anybody else do it and that was that. And as she was accustomed to getting her own way in everything she got it and she got me, which was quite ridiculous because she didn't really want me. So by September the 3rd when war broke out of course she realised that she was stuck with me. I want to try and describe the atmosphere at home, which is a very difficult thing to do. It was basically a very hostile atmosphere in the sense that the aim was not to be loving and warm and helpful but to be sort of teasing and challenging. The kids, my foster brothers and sister had been brought up sort of on the basis of being given a hard time. You know if they had some little quirk or problem they would be teased out of it, they wouldn't be helped out of it. Ehm they were brought up by nannies, they got really no love properly, not what we would call love these days. I mean there was no hugging or kissing or loving arm round anybody or interest in what they were doing or joy at their successes or sympathy with their failures nothing like that. And I got this in spates really. So they'd been brought up deprived. At first they were a little bit wary of me. Naturally because I was here I was another unwelcome sibling. But they were only nasty to me for a very short time. Nothing too bad. I mean you know my adoptive sister said to me, "Well my brothers were nasty to me so I had to be nasty to you for a wee while." There was nothing malicious about it she's a very nice person. And I knew there was nothing malicious in it and that's how it didn't traumatise me. And she sort of made it clear that as soon as she had that out of her system it would be over and it was. And she and I have been bosom friends ever since. Really and truly the two brothers and sister were really nice to me. Considering I was sort of imported without their you know by your leave. So there I was six and a half and my parents had got stuck over in Prague, so the first thing that had to happen was that I had to go to school. And I was sent to the ordinary state school because ehm, well I suppose they had to think what to do next. And they'd sent their children to public schools ehm but I was really going to be the daughter of what were their servants. Although my parents weren't servant types everyone who came as a refugee had to be a servant type person. And my adoptive mother or foster mother as she then was or after, always made it absolutely clear to me in words, not just by implication that I was the child of servants and that I didn't deserve anything more, that I was lucky to be alive. In fact I was such a nasty person I didn't deserve to be alive. I must be extremely thankful that I wasn't living downstairs with the servants because of course she'd had to... You see this was a big house ehm my adoptive father ran a surgery from the home so on the ground floor was a waiting room, a surgery and a whole flat for the staff, the receptionist and all this. And that's where I was going to live with my parents, but of course they had to get another housekeeper and gardener and chauffeur to fill up that flat and I was told how lucky I was that I didn't have to live downstairs as a servant child. And my

entire childhood was devoted to getting it into my head that I was living above my station. "You don't know your place," my adoptive mother said many many times. I was taught how unappreciative I was to be living in such comfort and so forth. Anyway I went to this school and once again I loved school, always loved school throughout my childhood. And learned English like magic. I can remember learning it, I learnt it off buses, I learnt it off books, we did have a lot of books in the house. And there was no trauma about learning it, I loved it. And school was no trauma I thoroughly enjoyed it and my adoptive mother was told very quickly that I was better at English than all the other kids and she was immensely proud of herself. Now my adoptive father was a little bit complicated, he meant well. He meant better than she did, he was completely under her thumb. He was basically a very aggressive man but he had kindness in him. He tried to comfort me when I was homesick. He tried to be kind to me intermittently throughout my childhood, but he never ever was able to stop her being cruel. And he never was able to overrule her in any of the really important things. For example the fact that I was taken out of school when I was fifteen. And my education was ended. And he was never able to stop her being cruel and unkind. She was terribly fond of animals, she had dogs and cats and goats and chickens. They had a cottage in the country as well as this big house in the town and we went to the cottage every week. And the place was awash with ducks and geese and bees and goats and everything. And of course we had food from these animals and the land all through the war, we didn't go short in any way. And yet she always kept us hungry. My adoptive brothers and sister were always hungry and so was I, she would not give us enough to eat. It was quite extraordinary I don't know where the food went because there was plenty of it. She always had maids, she quarrelled with everybody. The maids didn't last for long especially during the war when they could go into the services or go into the factories and found they didn't have to stay and put up with her. She was poor in her youth and she'd married into a much richer family and money was everything to her and her entire self esteem rested on the quantity of money she had. And her power rested on it, she used it. And she had a very extraordinary quality that, she didn't care at all if people hated her. Everybody hated her heartily, she was notorious, she didn't care at all, all she was concerned about was getting her own way. And she would boast happily, "I beat somebody else in an argument, I won, I've got this, I've got that..." But it never crossed her mind that that person would hate her and dislike her. She didn't care. She never was bothered about, her self esteem was not dented at all.

What news that you had from your parents during your early years in England?

I have letters, actually I still have. Letters came through occasionally, very nice letters of course, very loving. You know, how was I! But there was a very strong thread of anxiety in the letters about the way I would behave. They were obviously extremely worried incase I didn't behave well enough for this lady to keep me. And I have in fact got a letter in which ehm apparently I had tried to touch the violin of my adoptive sister and my mother really wrote a pathetic letter, in which she begged me to not touch it. I mean the anxiety comes through in a big way now that I see it as an adult. Between the lines she was saying, "Please don't do anything, don't put a foot wrong, your future depends on this woman looking after you." Of course in fact that

wasn't quite true because she could've got rid of me to that woman in the north any day. But she'd never have lost face and done that. So there was a great anxiety on my mother's part that I should behave nicely. Apart from that there was the usual things that you would expect in letters about hope your enjoying school and hope your eating everything and not arguing about your food, we think about you all the time." You know the usual things that you as a young child would get from your parents. I have letters from both my parents. And these letters got less and less and I don't, can't try and tell you exactly when they stopped. They came through Switzerland as I believe a lot of kids parents letters did at that time. I can't tell you exactly when they stopped.

Obviously not as much as your parents did in the beginning?

Well you see it's not a case of how many they wrote it's how they got through. And that would only be occasional. I know I was always teetering on the brink of homesickness. I mean I remember I kept a diary myself, which I haven't kept unfortunately in which I wrote very proudly, 'I have not cried all day'. And I think another time, "I have managed not to cry all week'. And homesickness was a terrible terrible thing. I couldn't move an inch without getting homesick after that. You know as I said, if I was sent away to my Czech aunt or the Czech school or anywhere I was. Even though this woman was a tie(?) in Bournemouth, my homesickness was so great I couldn't bear to be parted with her because I had to have status quo you know.

At first you thought your parents were going to follow you within a few weeks. How was it explained to you that they couldn't?

Well I don't remember any explanation at all except that the war broke out and it was made clear to me, and I can't tell you what the words were, that because Britain was now at war with Germany nobody would be able to leave Czechoslovakia and I understood that therefore my parents couldn't come until the war was over. So that all through the war one of the problems I had to contend with was what was I to adapt myself to. Was I to adapt to being English and being in an English family forever, or was I to keep myself a bit Czech to go back to being Czech. And in actual fact I became very English and I more or less had to because everything Czech and everything Jewish was laughed at. The wogs began at Calais, you know that saying in England don't you?

No.

Well what the wogs began at Calais means everybody who isn't British is to be laughed at and is not as good as British and I definitely was in the category of, not being as good as British. Jews, it's interesting, my adoptive mother was not all that anti-semitic but everybody in the town was. I was very very conscious of anti-

semitism. Not in the sense that you'd get killed for being Jewish but you were definitely not nice. You were not clean you were not decent, you were somebody that people would whisper behind their hands about. You were definitely unclean and I was extremely conscious of that. I mean so conscious that even to this day I don't tell strangers about myself. You know I will not tell neighbours anything about myself. I have put myself in a very embarrassing position because I wait until I know somebody well and then I have to make the embarrassing thing statement. Whereas if I was open about it there would be no embarrassment. But it's a hangup I haven't recovered from yet. Of course there are a lot of people who know it from the start then there's no trouble at all. But when I keep it secret I get myself into all sorts of difficulties. And that began then because it was real whispering. You know how people say, it's a saying in England, they're trying to tell you they're not anti-semitic they say "Some of my best friends are Jewish," I can tell you that some of my best friends are anti-semitic. You know I can be best friends with somebody for years but they will still say something anti-semitic, they just can't help themselves. Of course you're the exception you know, I'm the exception. But it's there. I was very conscious of it as a child. How I dealt with it actually was becoming more English than the English. I forgot Czech in a matter of weeks I think. And I don't know a word of it to this day and I have no wish to learn it. I think I was very conscious of that pressured atmosphere remember I told you about among the older relatives. And there was a sense of dread to going back to that.

Although I wasn't happy with my foster family I was in a terrific state of confusion about what I could live with or really I didn't know whether I was coming or going. The anti-semitism, I got a lot of anti-semitism from my adoptive father, he laughed a lot about Jews. You know for example one of my mothers many friends up in the north of England sent me Hannuka candles although I scarcely knew what it was about. She thought it would be a kindness to send this to me. He laughed greatly saying, "Happy Hannuka ha ha ha," this was supposed to be a big joke. You know, you were making jokes about this. Anyway after a while at the ordinary state school, they realised they'd got me on their hands for a very long time and it wouldn't do for the daughter of this well known surgeon in the town, to be speaking with a crude accent. So they decided that for social reasons they'd better send me to a better school, a decent school where I would learn to speak English properly. And they did and I enjoyed the school greatly, I'd never had the slightest trouble at school, I loved it. One of the reasons I loved school was that, apart from the sociability of it I loved the other kids. At school in my home in Prague you could get away with doing the odd little crime and nobody thought any the worse of you, whereas at home absolutely nothing was allowed. Although my adoptive mother hadn't got my parents as servants she did her best to get me to be as much of a servant as possible. Now I don't want to sound too pathetic, she didn't have me down on the floor scrubbing until my hands were raw or anything like that. But I fetched and carried and I laid the table and I washed up, which wasn't necessary because we had maids. Ehm for example they would go out to the theatre in the evening, I wasn't allowed to eat supper because they always kept us hungry, we would get bread and margarine at tea and then at six o'clock it was bedtime, it didn't matter what age you were, you went to bed at six. But before you went to bed you cleared their supper things, washed them up, laid the table for their breakfast and they went to the theatre quite a lot. Or went out a great deal. In fact they were great do gooders, they went to meetings almost every night, they gave me a great dislike of voluntary work for many many years. I was always clearing up

the supper and you know leaving the breakfast ready. And on one occasion they had a radio, of course there was no T.V. in those days, a radio in the dining room with the plug in my bedroom which was next door. And I was accused of having had the radio on while they were out, which was the worst crime in the world, instead of having gone to bed at six. No reading was allowed, you were supposed to go to sleep you know like that (demonstrates) at six. And I was accused of having had the radio on, it was supposed to be the most enormous crime. I hadn't had it on, I don't know why it came on in the morning. They probably forgot to turn it off themselves, but for three days I wasn't spoken to because of this terrible crime. And I only quote that to give an idea of the atmosphere in this home. Ehm the other dreadful crime I did, in fact these are the only two crimes I can remember in my entire childhood, that which I hadn't done and the other one where I was supposed to be reading after lights out at six o'clock and my adoptive sister did the same crime, reading in bed and one actually got smacked for that and being smacked was a very big deal. They were not physically violent, I did not get smacked around, but being smacked was a big ceremony instead, which was almost worse, it was done in cold blood you know. Smack smack on the bottom and it was a live event for these incredibly trivial crimes. But I was sort of, I felt, I was chased by this woman you know, probably it's no more than most average mothers do, "Your room's untidy. Your cupboard's untidy." I can even hear myself saying it to my own children. But it was all done with hostility. I was almost doing crimes, I was considered a criminal. I was brought up to think I was criminal and I can't tell you to this day what my crime is supposed to have been. Except existing. Now my adoptive father didn't treat me like a criminal, he tried in between to say the odd kind word and I know he thought quite a lot of me actually, but he didn't dare express it because this tyrant of a woman, you know really she was a towering figure, she was a big tall woman, I was absolutely terrified of her. And he was frightened of her too, everybody was. And I don't know what her power was but that she was capable of an endless tirade, if anybody crossed her. She was just a loathsome person and everybody loathed her. One of the horrible things about this woman was the complete and total lack of interest in what one did. In fact I had a hundred percent privacy. You know in a way it was a blessing because it allowed me to develop privately, in one way. But on the other hand not only was she not interested she actually wished one ill. I would hardly tell her that I'd passed exams because she would be so annoyed, she was so jealous. She'd wanted to do medicine herself and her father wouldn't let her and she married at nineteen, had almost no education. She'd been through school but she hadn't learnt anything, terribly ignorant. And she was very very jealous and constantly one had to hide both one's joys and one's sorrows from her. If one was sorrowful she was thrilled, if one was joyful she would stamp on one until one was full of sorrow, so everything had to be hidden.

How old were your foster parents?

They were a bit older than my own parents. I should think my foster mother was about thirty six when I first went there.

And you stepfather?

Oh he was seven years older so he must've been forty three.

How did other children at school think you were Jewish?

They didn't. I had no trouble at school whatsoever. I never had any problem with school. When I talk about anti-semitism it was all from adults. No adult outside the home was unkind to me at all ever. It was strictly only my foster mother. Everybody was very very kind but it was the whispering. It was remarks about Jews that I overheard. It was otherwise nice people who would say awful things about Jews. But of course they would never actually have done anything to Jews and they certainly didn't do anything to me. And no child at school ever ill treated me at all. I was never one of the ones that got persecuted in any way.

At what expense did you have the Jewish identity during those years?

I shook it off as hard as I could. I did the real Judas Escariot business, I absolutely washed my hands of being Jewish. In fact I did a really idiotic thing where I pretended that all that background hadn't happened. I didn't talk to, of course they all knew it wasn't my real mother because she was called my aunt. They knew I was a refugee at school. I loathed pity. You know the way people would talk about me, "Poor thing we don't know where her parents are." This kind of thing. I loathed it. I detested the whole business of being a refugee. But as far as my age group was concerned, they would quite, I mean they were neutral, they treated me like another friend. In fact if anybody was domineering I was. You know how children particularly at the nasty age of ten and eleven could be quite nasty to each other, nobody was nasty to me, if anybody was nasty I was. I can't ever say I was badly treated at school. And not by any other adult outside the home.

Did you hear anything about the war progress through these years?

The war was a big feature of our lives, the main thing of our lives. Everybody who lived through that war it was the pivotal experience of their life. My foster parents were deeply involved because of being in the medical field. And because of being in the St John Ambulance Brigade. My foster father was also in the Home Guard, which was also the hilarious congregation of old gentlemen who'd been in the previous war and got together and felt great defending the home land again. And so he was sort of rummaging around the bushes with an old gun. You know this was an old joke because we knew he couldn't defend England with this weapon. I mean the Home Guard was regarded as a joke. They were both involved with the St John Ambulance Brigade which was concerned with, when English forces came back injured, for example from Dunkirk, from everywhere, there were first aid stations all over England. And there was a first aid station in Bournemouth and my foster mother was

a big noise. Of course she was always a big noise, she was never a humble member of anything. A big noise organising first aid stations. The war was her favourite time, she had a wonderful time, she felt very important, she did have talent in the sense she was an organiser and a bossy person who could organise and she did organise first aid stations and that kind of thing. And of course the bombs were dropping. And I don't remember any fear at all, it's quite extraordinary. We had a shelter in the hall, I'm sure other people will have told you about this, metal things, rather like a rabbit's cage and before we had that we used to go down into the pantry and I used to creep into a sort of little bunk underneath the shelf, I'm sure it wasn't at all safe. But we had the idea that under the stairs was safe. And they did take the trouble to take me downstairs and put me in this thing. Then we used to be in the shelter, sheltering under this metal, a sort of lidded box. And I don't remember any fear at all, bombs used to drop and ehm my foster father would rush out and have a look at the bombs, which is what all men did and all the women and children sheltered inside and run into the thing. We did have quite a lot of bombing. I mean we were on the direct line from the coast to London route..

(End of side one,cassette 2)

F111 Side B

We had some direct hits on the town of course and bombing was a very big feature. You know the air raid siren was going and we were rushing to the shelter. Nobody will ever forget the noise of those sirens. We all had our gas masks, we carried those to school and we would shelter when there were air raids at school as well. So the war was extremely prominent in our lives.

Did that make you frightened about the fate of your parents?

No I'm afraid I made no connections. It's amazing to me how unconscious I was during the war. I must explain to you that I would say until the age of about... I'd have to think about what age it was. I really operated under huge denial. After I'd stopped all that crying and apart from my problem with home sickness, I turned myself into an English person. I didn't think about my Czech family, I didn't think about Czechoslovakia, I just thought about living in England. And I didn't start to grieve for my family until I was fully adult. I switched it off. Nobody mentioned them, nobody said, "I wonder what's happening to them, are you worried?" Nothing, not a word. And I know I was anxious as to how I would adapt when the war was over. And at the end of the war all they said to me was, "It looks as though your parents haven't survived." And my immediate reaction was of relief. Not because I wished them dead but because I didn't know how I was going to adapt. I'd become so English. And I didn't start grieving until I started reading the books about the camps, which I didn't do until I was in my twenties. So I was quite cut off emotionally. And I ehm, I would say up to about the age of eighteen, I think I acted like a hard person except for my ability to go away anywhere. I must have given a hard surface, but I think I was very anxious. And of course what I was really coping with was deprivation, because my foster mother was so hateful and making her hate of me so clear that all my unhappiness centred round being hated by her. Not about having lost my parents. The grief about my parents happened much later. I had to work through my misery at being hated by her and feeling a rotten person because she told me I was a rotten person.

Did you have any dreams or nightmares during this period?

I can't remember any, no. I don't remember dreaming about my parents and I don't remember dreaming anything, but I'm sure I did, it's just I don't remember.

Who in fact told you that your parents were...?

My foster mother.

Was this immediately after the war?

I've no idea.

Do you remember asking questions about them?

No I didn't ask questions. And the mysterious thing about it is, that my real aunt, my mother's sister, never came and spoke to me about it, not then, not now. I mean it was simply a taboo subject. And nobody thought I should be grieving. I mean the attitude was, you are a lucky person to have survived, period. We don't discuss it. There was nothing to discuss. The fact that I might mind losing my family you know, it just wasn't discussed. And of course it wasn't just my parents, it was everybody. Except the aunt who is in London.

Do you remember whether you believed this straight away?

Yes I did. I heard, I'm sure I knew about the concentration camps quite early, because there were pictures in the newspapers of all these bodies, you know skeletons. And somebody, don't ask me how I connected it up, because I've no memory of anybody telling me that's how my parents had died, but I knew, there was never the slightest doubt in my mind that's how they died. But I can't explain to you how I knew or when I knew. And I didn't get my information about how they actually died until many many years later. No that's not quite true. That's not true at all. I got it when I visited Prague in, when I was sixteen, that's when I heard more details, but it wasn't from my aunt. I got it from my cousins who'd been through the camps. Had been to the same camp as my family and had survived, they were the only survivors. And they told me, they took me to the gravestones, they took me to Terezin outside Prague and they told me all about the camps. And the awful part about it is that they were just out of the camps themselves in a dreadful state, and nobody, I had no-one to discuss it with. You know I couldn't discuss it with my adoptive family, nor my real aunt who'd gone back to Prague herself by then. Never had anyone to discuss it with at all. So I had to just keep that to myself.

Why did you go to visit Prague?

Simply that my aunt had invited me. And apparently there was quite a bit of money, well there was a little bit of money in the bank which was mine, presumably inherited from my relatives. And they couldn't touch it, but they could touch it for me by paying for an air fare for me out of my own account. And ehm a holiday and some clothes, they got the dressmaker in and I was able to buy clothes with my own money. I couldn't take the money out but I could take clothes out and they gave me the family silver which unfortunately was lost, was stolen. Ehm and they also gave me, got me

the family furniture, so it was really just, I made a visit and it was during that visit that I got the details about how my parents had died.

So the silver was stolen?

The silver unfortunately, my uncle said to me "I can get your furniture and your china and your silver out, do you want to take the silver back to England with you or shall it go with the furniture?" And like a fool I said, "Send it with the furniture," and it got stolen in transit. So I got my furniture and china and glass, not my silver. And I have it, I have that all.

What were your feelings going back to Prague?

I hated it, I just hated it. It was so, I felt like an absolute sore thumb. There I was with my Czech aunt and again totally unwelcome, English. She feeling that I had rejected Czechoslovakia. But how could I possibly have kept Czechoslovakia when I hardly saw anything of her or any other Czechs all through the war? So there were the Brits saying, "Czechs and Jewish, ha ha." The Czechs were saying, "Oh she's become an English person, rejected us." You know I was so confused it was unbelievable. And ehh I was just uncomfortable. I couldn't speak a word of Czech, I felt unwelcome. I think my aunt and uncle were under a great deal of stress because the Communists were about to take over. He was becoming politically involved, he was an economist, a politician, a journalist, a lawyer, he's multi qualified. Ehm and ehh he always stuck his neck out and he got into trouble with the Communists. And it was a harsh atmosphere in their home. Harsh in quite a different way from my adoptive family's harshness. And I loathed it, I only stayed for about three weeks I think, half in Prague and half in the mountains. It was a very big joke because I was afraid of skiing and I got given heck for that. There was nothing I could do right. You know I couldn't wait to get the heck out of Prague.

Was there anything you remembered from before?

Well of course the buildings in Prague were beautiful, I can't say whether I rememberd them. They took me to the opera and saw the 'Bartered Bride' and of course the Charles Bridge(?) and the very beautiful buildings. I don't know if I remember them, I might have done you know, I was quite susceptible to beauty from the youngest age. And I certainly remember, I mean the beauty of England I loved always. So it's quite possible that I was struck by the beauty of the city. But I certainly felt absolutely non Czech and embarassed at my non fitting in you know.

Could say what you heard then from your cousins?

Well the cousins were in a dreadful state, they were nowhere near recovered. I mean how could they be, it was quite recent you know, this was '47. Now what year would they have come out of the camps! '45 wouldn't it have been, May I think. They were in Belsen at the end or she was. They were liberated by the British in Belsen, so from May 45 to January 47, which is when I visited you see, it was quite recent and they were so traumatised it was absolutely awful. I mean I could see how terribly disturbed she was. And I rather thought she was rubbing my nose in it, as if to say "You haven't been through all this, I'm jolly well going to tell you how terrible it was." Of course I said unfortunate things, "Did you make friends in the camps?" was one question I asked. And she said, "Don't be silly as if one could make friends in the camp." And yet in her autobiography she describes how the friends she made in the camps was what got her through. She dismissed it, you know showed lack of understanding. And she showed me all these cemeteries with all these crosses, that must have been at Terezin, I think, but I'm not certain. But I think I remember standing on a hill and seeing a whole lot of, a huge hillside of white crosses. And I felt terrible. I sort of felt resentful, I know it's unreasonable because I hadn't been through the camps and I hadn't had as bad a time as they had and I perhaps shouldn't have felt resentful but I think what I was resentful about was, I'd had a lot of trauma myself but nobody recognised it and they were giving me a trauma I don't know how to deal with. I knew already you see, I already wanted to do psychiatry at that age, I knew that that was what I was fitted for and I knew I needed help. Ehm I knew I could cope with all this if I had a bit of help. But they were just throwing this information at me. My aunt never said, "What did the cousins say to you? Does it worry you? How do you feel about having lost..." Not a word, you can't believe it. Instead I was the sort of sinner who had ceased to become a Czech. The Jewishness they didn't bother about because they were non religious, non practicing, it just wasn't an issue. But I was a disloyal person.

I would like to take you back a little bit and ask you whether there is anything else that you would like to share with me about your life with your foster family before you were sixteen?

Yes I'd like to talk a little bit about that family and how I'd changed and developed with them. The atmosphere in their home was so different from the one I'd come from. They both somehow were very hostile to the world ehm they somehow seemed to have to fight with people and prove that they were right. They were not particularly friendly people although they did interact with others a lot in their work and in the voluntary work they did. Then I was quite small and had just arrived from Czechoslovakia, I was still a very friendly sort of child and I can remember being sort of following my foster mother around like a little puppy dog. She was a tremendous talker compulsively so. And I made an audience for her which I didn't mind at that age at all. I want to be fair to her, I think that she partly had me there because she did feel affection for my mother. Ehm and in certain ways she did her duty by me. For example she did introduce me to English books and she did even read Beatrix Potter books to me and I quickly learned to read and you know, began to become a really fanatical reader. After that she didn't have to entertain me at all. Ehm as I said before she did use me as a sort of little servant around the house, a little bit. She was out a

great deal, I was left alone a lot. And I occupied myself with reading. I would say that the real hostility from her didn't come until I was about eleven. At the age of about eleven, they suddenly realised that it was possible my parents might survive and having forgotten Czech it would be awkward for me to meet them again, so they sent me to the Czech school in Wales, where as I've said, I was so homesick there. I only stayed a term and was sent back home again. Or rather they kept me home. I found the atmosphere there so alien that I couldn't cope with it at all. They tried to teach me Czech and Hebrew and I didn't really manage to learn either. And the other kids were very precocious or so it seemed to me. And were interested in boyfriends at a terribly young age and I was only eleven and you know, boyfriends were the last thought on my mind. Soon after I got back with my foster parents a disaster happened. In that their second son was killed, he was an airforce pilot and was a bomber pilot and was missing over the North Sea. And my foster mother was so upset by this that she really never recovered. And unfortunately she used it as a sort of excuse. Her grief was an excuse to become you know, much nastier to others than she'd been before. Ehm I think about this time I began to get school reports which weren't quite as good, they said things like 'She could do better if she tried' or 'She's not concentrating properly'. And in fact I didn't work as hard at school as I should've done. I really don't know why this was, there was certain subjects which I enjoyed which I did well at and others that I was much less good at like maths and languages. And I began to get into quite a lot of trouble about bad school reports. They were paying for me to go to school, to a good school and I can understand them being annoyed by that. And they were kind enough to send me for tuition in maths and another thing was, it was strange because they didn't like me to do well academically in one way and yet of course they resented it if I wasted their money at school by not working. For some peculiar reason I was also encouraged to do acting. I think that they were both very fond of public speaking and I think anything performing in public they didn't object to. And they encouraged me but I wasn't good enough to get into the local theatre. There was a little repertory theatre and that didn't bother me because I didn't have any ambitions in that direction. Although I was a bit stage struck, particularly ballet struck for quite a few years. I would say I went through those years up to about eleven in a sort of emotional vacuum. I was just going through the motions of living. It was not a family that had any understanding about feelings at all. In fact I always had the impression that the only person who was allowed feelings was my adoptive mother. Things were pretty disturbed in the home from the time this second son was killed. And he'd been particularly nice to me, he was probably the nicest of the whole family, although my adoptive sister was also very nice. And he took the trouble to play with me a lot and his loss was a bad thing for everybody. Although I don't remember personally grieving. I think my feelings had become quite numb. I wasn't really conscious of my feelings at all. I concentrated on going to school and stepping around trouble. And I know I did my utmost to please. My foster mother had many symptoms, she had migraine, she had backache and so on. And I would hold her head when she had migraine and I would rub her back and you know, generally make myself useful. Now after the age of eleven, I gradually got into more disgrace for not doing well at school and I think at that time, I must've become a little bit more individual and I don't know what it was that provoked her, because I certainly didn't have any adolescent rebellion or anything like that, it was out of the question, for one thing adolescents weren't indulged in those days, I mean you know, there was no such thing as being a teenager. You just went on being a child until you started to earn

your living. Ehm so I didn't really rebel in any way, although if she accused me of something I hadn't done, I would certainly argue that. Ehm she was a woman who went in for saying very unkind and cutting things to everybody and she somehow needed people to suffer. It's a very strange thing but there was a very sadistic component to her nature and of course I was a very handy target. Everybody in the family knew how she treated me and I was regarded as you know, poor child. And I was very conscious of the pity which I didn't like. But nobody could really do anything because she was such a very angry aggressive person that she would you know fight anybody. I suppose about this time the conflict was really growing in my mind about what sort of a person I was. First of all I didn't know whether I was Czech or English and I didn't know whether my parents were going to be alive and what I would have to adapt myself to. Whether it would be to stay English or to become Czech again. And then an even more important point was whether I was a good person or a bad person. Because I knew that my pa... You know I didn't formulate it in this way, but I knew I'd been made to feel okay by my own parents and yet among the people I was now with I really felt a bad person. Thoroughly unloveable and I certainly didn't receive any love from the time I arrived in England, really more or less until I was quite grown up. There was a terrible sort of bleakness and emptiness. I remember having a fantasy that it would be so nice to come home and sit by the fire and put my slippers on and talk about what had happened at school and have a really homely feeling. And this not once happened, ever. She talked continuously about herself and was quite impervious to anything that was going on in anybody else's life or mind. She was devoted to animals and I was very conscious, we all were, that she liked animals a great deal better than human beings. And I think I reached a sort of low point in my life when I was fourteen, when I bumped, we had two dogs, two cats, a parrot, a canary, and all the animals in the country as well and I bumped into the parrot's cage by mistake and she said, "You be kind to my animals, we chose to have those, but you were pushed onto us." And there was a sort of emptiness and a despair which really I think stayed with me for many years after that. She was equally nasty to her daughter-in-law. But of course the difference was that other people didn't have to live with her every day and didn't depend only on her for their nurturing so to speak. I can't remember what age I began to feel that I had got to fight for my emotional health. I know I became conscious of it quite young. I knew at fifteen I wanted to do psychiatry, but I knew that they wouldn't pay for me to stay at school. My school, when I say I didn't do well at school, what I really mean is that I didn't do well at all subjects. I did well in quite a lot of subjects, but some I neglected. I certainly could've passed university entrance, but they hadn't allowed their own daughter to complete schooling in fact they didn't even allow her to take the school leaving exam. Whereas I at least was allowed to do that. One was able to leave either at fifteen or at seventeen in those days. And I was told that fifteen would be long enough schooling for me and I didn't argue about it because they were not people one could argue with. One was extremely conscious of being a financial burden. He earned extremely well and came from quite a rich family, but she grudged everything we ate and we were told what it cost. And it's a wonder I didn't get anorexia nervosa because I really reached a point where I didn't want to eat, I didn't want to take anything from her. But I did eat and in fact actually she kept us all so short of food that I think we would've eaten anyway in order to nourish ourselves. I was really desperate to do medicine. It's really strange that I've always felt there was a doctor inside that never got out. And because I wasn't allowed to do that and I had

to earn my living as soon as possible, I agreed to do nursing which they regarded as the only thing for a girl to do. For the simple reason that one could start nursing at sixteen and be off their hands financially. Which is what their own daughter had to do. From fifteen to sixteen they had to occupy me somehow so they sent me to the local domestic science college where I learnt interesting things like cleaning a room weekly and cleaning a room monthly. And ten different ways of folding paper napkins or cloth napkins and dyeing clothing and sewing things and so on and so forth. And although this was useful I remember shedding tears of frustration over this business of folding these table napkins, because I knew I wanted education. I already by this age began my campaign for improving myself. I was determined that if I had to do nursing I would go to the best hospital that I could find and I was always terribly systematic about all these things for myself. For example I would send for ehm brochures from all the best hospitals in London. And I even wrote, I even made a sort of catalogue of the pros and cons of every hospital and weighed them up very carefully. And I chose St Thomas's hospital for myself, which actually was the hospital where my adoptive father and my adoptive brother did their medical training. I should say before this time that I think I was told at about the age of fourteen, that my parents probably hadn't survived. Or have I got my arithmetic wrong, it must've been younger than that. No I must've been about twelve and a half when I was told that my parents probably hadn't survived. And I don't remember how the question of adoption arose. First of all I was naturalised British again I don't remember any discussion about it. I was quite happy about that and I think my adoptive father was quite fond of me although he found it quite impossible to show it. Partly because of his own inhibitions and partly because of the whole atmosphere of the home and her attitude towards me. And it's a mystery to me to this day as to why I was adopted. Maybe they were more fond of me than they let on, maybe they still felt it was their duty. I was quite happy about it, because I was very embarrassed about being Jewish by then and being adopted allowed me to change my name. From then onwards I felt a sham. And I've always had the feeling of being a sham. In a sort of way of a sense, until maybe fairly recently.

Can you tell me something about your feelings when you were told your parents hadn't survived? I know you mentioned that you were relieved but what were your other feelings?

I was in a very peculiarly blocked off state by that time. It's really very strange, I think I turned into somebody who had to cope by... There were some things I was very conscious of, for instance I've already described how I knew I had to work to get mental health so to speak. Yet at the same time I blocked off all the Czech, Jewish family things. So I was in a very peculiar emotional state.

My real aunt never came down to where I was staying and talked to me about my family herself ever. She's never talked to me about their death to this day except in the most passing fashion. I don't think I was expected to be upset. I think because I'd acted in such a blocked off way people were probably unaware, in fact I was unaware of any grief. Apart from that relief, at that time I can't say that I can remember anything. The grief came much later.

Could you say what your expectations were when you heard that the war was over you would find out about the fate of your parents somehow?

I think it was more dread of coping with this totally different culture that I'd left behind that worried me the most. It's very difficult to explain how different the two were. Because I feared I think that I would get the same hostility from my parents as I'd got from my real aunt and uncle, who also seemed to regard me as a bad child. I never quite knew why. I don't un...

(End of side 2, cassette 2)

F112 Side A

Ehm I know that the feeling of being in disgrace stayed with me for many many years after that.

What were you able to find out about your parents fate?

As I said to you, my aunt never came down to tell me about it. Although I know now that she'd learned about it at the time. And I don't know where my adoptive mother got the information from. The strange thing is that I remember seeing pictures in the newspaper of Belsen survivors or non survivors. All these dreadful skeletons and dreadful sufferings. And I think also on the newsreels of the cinema I heard all about it. And I don't remember being told in so many words that my parents had been in the concentration camps, but I did know. So I think I must've blocked off being told. Unless they made the most glancing reference to it and I just put two and two together. I know I was very annoyed because my adoptive mother would say things at church for example behind her hand, "We don't know what happened to her parents you know." And of course we did know. And I hated being talked about like that. But I can't actually remember what I felt about their fate. I only came to grips with those years later.

Have you ever approached any organisations who gives documents on writing with a list with your parents name on it?

I didn't have to go to any organisation, because my cousins who survived Auschwitz and Belsen, were actually at Auschwitz when my parents were in the selection to the gas chamber. They actually witnessed it and they wrote affidavits afterwards, stating what date it was. And when I wanted death certificates from the German Embassy I had to pay a pound for each of these, which infuriated me, because I felt it showed no moral responsibility for what happened had sunk into the German minds. I'm very glad that I have the actual evidence because I feel it must be so much harder for people who don't know what happened to their parents and although it was still bad, it's much better to know the details. And it's somehow nice to feel that family relatives were actually there who are able to tell me about it now. While I was talking I did remember for the first time for many years that my adoptive mother did actually mention concentration camps to me and certainly she mentioned gas chambers. Because I remember now that she did tell me that people were herded into a room and gassed. And I've always had that picture of my parents and it happening to them. Although I knew this at a fairly young age, I must say I didn't deal with it at all at the time. Ehm all my feelings about their deaths and the grieving happened much later. At the time I just tried to get on with living, which meant coping with school, coping with this extraordinary home I was in. And incidentally another embarrassing thing about the home was that it was a very well known family in the town and ehh both my adoptive father and his family had always been important people in the town, they sat on many committees and were highly regarded and were sort of public figures. And I

felt as if I were living a lie in several different ways, not only was I pretending to be English and not Jewish, I was also pretending that the home was normal, when it was a very hostile aggressive unhappy home. But I couldn't tell anybody. The family knew, the rest of the family and of course my adoptive brother and sister knew what it was like, and we talked about it together. But outside the home, in fact everywhere I felt I was always living a lie in lots of different ways.

Could you say something about your identity, your sense of belonging when you were adopted by your foster parents?

I would say that everything was totally confused. Ehm I'd never had a sense of belonging, I never felt I belonged to that family. I wanted to very much, I would've, had they been loving people and kind, I would've adjusted myself and been quite happy. I was a very bouncing outgoing child, I could easily have adapted to a kind family. It's very confusing trying to think what that adoption meant either to me or to them.

Were you asked if you wanted to be adopted by them?

No I don't think I was, unless I've forgotten it. As far as I can remember, my adoptive mother said, "Daddy thinks we should adopt you." And knowing that he was kinder than she was, I suppose I must've thought, well that's quite kind of him. I suppose in a limited sort of way I must've felt it was a sort of an acceptance. And yet she never actually allowed me to feel as if I was a member of the family. It's very hard to describe in what way I was always made to feel different, but I certainly was. Her own children were treated like her children and they belonged and I certainly didn't and never did. As I said before I think, I don't at all know why I was adopted. I don't know if they did it out of kindness or whether they accepted me more than I understood. I just don't know the reason. I've asked my adoptive brother why he thinks for example they sent me to a decent school, and he says it's because of their status. And therefore I wonder if adoption had anything to do with their status. But you know that sounds a little bit far fetched. I would've thought they didn't need to do that, I don't know the reason.

Would you describe yourself as a difficult adolescent or were you quite easy trying to please them?

I was extremely much trying to please, I was so well behaved it's unbelievable. I was terrified as I said, of her. There's no way I would've dared to misbehave in any way whatsoever. But somehow or other I couldn't do anything right. You know I would be in big trouble even if I shut the door with a slight bang, if she was having her afternoon rest. Or if, you know I've mentioned many times that I was a sort of a servant, well it was all the servant things I did wrong, like I didn't hang the tea towel

up correctly, I didn't lay the table quite perfectly. I can rack my brain but I can't think of any way in which I caused any problems. I did, at the age of fifteen, she gave me an allowance, she said I could buy all my own clothes and everything I needed. And she was always very keen to keep us all very short of money, especially me. And she gave me seven pounds to last three months. And I had to buy all my clothes and everything I needed and of course it wasn't sufficient. But I had to make it last. And on one occasion I can even remember selling a skirt, I had hand me down clothes from my adoptive sister which I didn't mind in the least, because it was war time and everybody handed clothes down and that was fine. But I had so little money that I was even reduced to selling a skirt to one of our maids to try to get a little money to buy something new. And ehm I felt it was important to have my hair cut well, because I thought, well if I haven't got new clothes I'd better have a neat head. So I went to one of the better hair places in the town and had a really good hair cut and she was annoyed about this. She said she wouldn't be seen out with me, I can't understand why because it was a very nice neat haircut, beautifully done. I think the worst thing I would ever do would be answer back, particularly as I said, when she accused me of things I hadn't done. She would make absolutely outrageous statements, she was a tremendous liar. She would lie about all sorts of things and one either had to be silent or stand up for ones self and I varied, sometimes I stood up for myself and sometimes I didn't. But I certainly learned to keep silent and try to tread the very very narrow path of behaving as she wished. But I couldn't manage it and I can't explain quite why. I felt as if she was trying to annihilate me, as if she was taking over from where Hitler had left off. It sounds extreme but anybody who knows her or knew her would support me in this. I wasn't imagining it. Well in fact her sister, her younger sister said to me, "She tried to break you and she was so angry because she couldn't quite manage it."

Could you say something about when you first started your menstruation?

Yes and this is very relevant because my adoptive father was an obstetrician and gynaecologist. And the house was filled with pregnant ladies coming to his surgery downstairs and it was a very interesting ambivalence that they had in that they regarded biology as something wonderful. In other words the production of babies was a wonderful thing and we sort of admired the human body as a marvellous machine that produced babies. But at the same time I mustn't ever be allowed to think that sex was going to be enjoyable. Now I'd educated myself about sex by reading the books in the house. It was filled with books which was a great advantage and I read the whole lot and I had gathered from these books that sex was fine. But my adoptive mother said to me "You needn't think it's all fun, it hurts like hell and you bleed like a pig." And I thought, there's the old bitch lying to me again, hoping that I'm not going to enjoy sex, but I'm not going to let her put me off. Nevertheless she did frighten me and I was frightened of it for some years. At the same time when she told me about menstruation, she was quite sensible about it and it so happened that she knew a psychiatrist in the town that was doing some research and she, my adoptive mother said to me., "When you start menstruating..." this is really quite extraordinary because it's the only time she ever said it to me, she said, "...tell me what you feel because I have to tell my psychiatrist friend what girls feel about menstruation?" So I

was fully prepared and I was very proud of myself when I menstruated because I actually felt I was taking a step into being adult and I was you know, it was no trauma and I never did have any trauma about it at all.

How old were you then?

Eleven and a half, quite young to menstruate.

I suppose ehm at the age of eleven and a half when you started your menstruation you may have identified with your mother, if so what were your feelings about your mother not being with you?

I can't tell you what age I began to identify with my mother, I've got a feeling that I always have and that menstruation didn't make much difference either way. And the strange thing is I don't actually remember longing or yearning for my mother except when I was small and had first arrived and then when I was much older.\*

But that's also reminded me of the fact that on one of the last times that I met my adoptive mother in the last two years before she died, she quoted to me how my mother had recieved a letter from me saying, "I'm going mad with longing for you." And that was one of the few occasions when my adoptive mother acknowledged that I was really mad with homesickness for my parents. Because it was mostly glossed over. So that the menstruation didn't make me think particularly of my mother.

\* (Addendum by interviewee: I felt the absence of a mother extremely when having babies myself. No-one else cared as much as she would have done. Felt the big loss for them too. Also birthdays are bad, only to her would my birthday be important)

There was another thing that I had to contend with, with my adoptive mother, which was her preoccupation with bowels. She'd been brought up to not opening the bowels as sinful, she had excessively religious parents, again I told you that sin loomed large. And sin was tied up with the bowels. But interestingly enough, she didn't succeed in convincing me about these sort of things, she never affected my bowels in the slightest. I've never had the slightest trouble but my poor adoptive sister certainly has and is constipated to this day. The regime was that if you didn't open your bowels for three days you got medicine, if you didn't open them by the end of the week, you got an enema and I was frequently threatened with enemas. Now although I was a child who never lied, because my own mother had taught me never to lie, that was one exception I made, that I would say I had been, when I hadn't. But I never allowed the fixation to bother me at all. I did forget to mention when I spoke about my mother, that she was terribly strict about telling the truth and I do remember as a young child, being stood in the corner in disgrace, because I'd lied about something. She so impressed it upon me that this was not acceptable, except in the rarest occasions like the one I've just mentioned, I never lied again until I was forty. The occasion that caused me to realise that lies were sometimes diplomatic was when I actually lost a cousin as a friend, because I told her the truth about something, which did reflect badly on her but she took it the wrong way and I thought after that, I've got to learn that there are times when you just musn't tell the truth.

How did you deal with your own anger?

I think I was quite an aggressive child actually. Ehm never in the home of course, but I, you see for example, I said to you, I never was bullied at school and although I didn't bully others, I must've been dominant enough, that nobody bullied me. I think that my anger must've been used to keep myself sane. In other words I said to myself, quite consciously, I'm not going to let this woman wipe me out, I'm going to somehow triumph over it. I had an enormous drive towards health and I think all my energies went into defeating her if you like and defeating Hitler. I think later the anger was turned into depression. But as a child I wasn't depressed I think because I enjoyed myself at school, I made friends extremely easily and had very devoted friends and I think I must've felt sufficient support from my adoptive sister. The brother was away at university, my adoptive sister nursing in the same town and I saw her frequently enough to get some support from her. She'd been deprived enough that she couldn't actually give me love, but she gave me friendship. And I sort of had a feeling that people around me supported me. My adoptive mother had one friend who was actually very fond of me and was very nice, although we never actually discussed the situation. So that the anger wasn't all that conscious except in terms of defeating her. But if you asked me what sort of a person I was, I would say I was an aggressive person. I may have acted meek and mild in front of her, but I certainly didn't feel meek and mild inside.

What were your hobbies apart from reading?

I think talking to my friends was one of my favourite occupations. I always liked to make close friends and we talked to each other about our friendships and feelings. Ehh I don't, I liked dancing, I liked ballet at school and gymnastics and I enjoyed those, I was quite an agile child, but not very good at sport. I did play netball for the school and I quickly learned I could jump up and down, but I couldn't run any distance. And I think in my own way I'm sure I was quite attention seeking. Ehm I quickly learned I could get a lot of credit by playing the shooter, the person who shot the goals, make the least effort and get the goals and get the credit. And the interesting thing is, that although I was unkindly treated I don't feel I was ignored. Another child survivor that I talked to has told me that she was treated with indifference. And I've learned since that indifference is much worse than hatred. If a person hates you they've got enough energy to hate you and often there's a little bit of affection going along with it, but indifference is much worse and I didn't receive indifference. I always felt special, I was either specially nice or specially nasty but I never felt in between.

Who would you say was the most significant person who moulded your care?

Do you mean in my entire life?

Mmm.

I suppose the two mothers, if you like. I mean the first home made me feel good and the second home made me feel bad. I think the problem that I had to struggle with, was the feeling of feeling bad and in a way I suppose my whole life has been affected by that, because everything I've had to do since then, has had to prove to myself that I'm not bad.

So would you say that the periods in your foster home overruled the previous...?

No it didn't overrule it. It caused a tremendous conflict because the two homes were so much in opposition to each other, it certainly didn't overrule it. It just made an equal comeback inside me if you like. But I think I must've been a bit like my mother in that I was attractive to people in the sense that I never, somehow or other people always regarded me as special. I think I was very funny, that's something I'd forgotten to say. I had a very big sense of humour and I was very funny, I could always make people laugh. You know I was the proper sad clown. But I've lost this funniness, I lost that in Canada, but I was very funny when I was young.

Did you have any dreams during your childhood, or nightmares?

I'm sure I did, but I don't.... I mean I'm sure I dreamt as much as anybody but I don't remember them. I do remember you asked me earlier whether my mother read to me and I remember now, she read me all the standard fairy stories and I was very frightened by Little Red Riding Hood. I identified with Little Red Riding Hood visiting her grandmother and the grandmother turning into a wolf. And I also remember two films, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, I was very keen on, but I was very frightened of the wicked mother and also Shirley Temple and I think I identified with her and got a little bit of my stage struckness from her.

So have you ever ...?

I'm sure I have but not any that I can remember.

Could you say something about your religious...?

As you know I told you that we were told God was everywhere at nursery school and yet apart from the Passover and the Day of Atonement, I don't remember any religious feeling in my Czech home at all. Now in my English home I entered a very outwardly religious home. I think I mentioned to you that my adoptive mother's father was a minister of the Congregational Church. Her mother was an extreme practitioner of the most sort of Calvinistic type religion, where everything was sinful. For example Sundays were devoted to reading the Bible and going to church. And right from the beginning of coming to England I was always sent to Sunday School. And went to church at least once on Sundays and to all the religious festivals. And my adoptive father was the choirmaster and I heard the Messiah and all the other sacred music from an early age. And church was extremely boring and I found the sermons rather unintelligent actually. We had a rather stupid clergyman and I was able to see that he wasn't putting his case logically at all. But I enjoyed Sunday School for the same reason that I enjoyed school, which was that it was a chance to socialise. And I found the scriptures extremely interesting. I liked the Bible very much and I got 100% for my scripture exams and they gave me a book choice and I chose the book, "The Naughtiest Girl in the School", by Enid Blyton which I always thought was very funny. Now I did believe in God and I did believe all the stories in the Bible, I believed in Jesus. And then my adoptive mother also had a brother and sister who were missionaries, one in Africa and one in Papua, New Guinea. And the aunt, in particular, influenced me a lot because she was very kind. She only visited England occasionally but she was very kind when she did. And she saw the trouble I was in really with her sister and she tried to help me with career plans, but because no money was forthcoming for training we didn't get anywhere with that. And she influenced me a lot later on. But I'll talk more about that later.

Was there a real listener in your childhood in England?

No no. Well my sister and I used both to talk about our mother and we both found her completely impossible. And really it would be just an exchange of, "Do you know what the latest is she's done?" But my sister was far less equipped to cope than I was. She wasn't as badly treated because she did belong and she wasn't made quite such a scapegoat, also she was sent away to boarding school, which I wasn't except for that one term. And therefore she escaped a lot of this. Also there was safety in numbers where my adoptive mother was concerned. I was always glad if other people were there because they took some of the heat off, whereas she sort of had me to herself. Ehm and for some reason she had this need to prove to me that I shouldn't have survived, where of course my sister didn't have that. No there wasn't anybody I could talk to apart from that. Everybody knew what I was going through, nobody ever discussed with me the fact that I'd lost my parents, what did I feel about it. Even now my sister has only sort of ehm guessed for herself a few things about it. I don't think now even I've ever discussed that with her. But she's a long way away, she's in New Zealand, so we can't talk that much. We write to each other but we can't talk together much.

Would you describe yourself as a survivor or a refugee?

Both. Ehm I think that it's very hard ever to shake off that feeling of being a refugee., I'm sure I've struggled with it. But of course I'm a survivor. I mean everything I've done has been in order to survive.

Before you wanted to become a doctor did you have other ambitions?

I was very fond of ballet and I had fantasies of ballet dancing. I think even I would've toyed with the stage but not seriously. I don't think I ever seriously thought I had the talent.

What was your concentration like during your childhood in England?

It was rather strange because it ran to two extremes. If a thing didn't interest me I didn't pay proper attention to it, which looking back I realise was a very self destructive thing to do. But if a thing did interest me I had intense concentration, you know quite exceptional. And could learn very very well indeed.

So would you say that it was impaired at all by your experiences?

It's awfully hard to say because when I arrived in England, they remarked how terribly good I was for example at mental arithmetic, we used to pull (?) the ability to add or subtract figures very fast, which I could do. And yet when it came to studying

maths at school I didn't concentrate and I don't quite know why. I think, I was much hampered by the fact that nobody took an interest in my education, I don't want to blame anybody else, but I think I would've benefited by people taking an interest and also pressing me on a little bit. The school was very lenient, they didn't try to press me, they were very kind to me indeed. Almost too kind. And my adoptive parents did not take any interest at all in, although they were angry if I didn't study, they didn't actually say, "What are you learning? Is it interesting? Do try harder you'll do well." You know ehm, they literally showed no interest whatsoever and because I was such a responsive child, I think I would've responded to any kind of encouragement. I can't actually say whether it was what had happened to me that impaired my concentration or...

Do you feel that there has been continuity in your life before and after the holocaust?

The only continuity is myself. Ehm if you mean were the lives separate, no. Ehm because I'm the person who's continuous. No it was just a totally different experience which has actually affected, I can't emphasise this too strongly, the events of the holocaust have totally affected everything in my life. They are with me to this day, they have affected every relationship and everything I've done and I can't ehm, there's no aspect of my life that it hasn't affected. I think I was quite conscious at an early age that somehow or other I had to put a lot right. And I don't mean this in a guilty sense. I mean it ehm as an act of defiance on my part, that I was simply not going to...

(End of side 1, cassette 3)

F112 Side B

... I wasn't going to allow it to destroy me or my family I think.

When you finished your domestic science school, what did you do then?

That was when I started nursing. And the first hospital that I had arranged to go to was a children's orthopaedic hospital away from the town in which I was being brought up. And I went there at the age of sixteen and conditions were extremely hard. We worked from, we were called at six fifteen in the morning and we worked till eight o'clock at night. The pay was very bad indeed and worst of all we were looking after children who were chronically ill. They had tuberculosis of the bones and poliomyelitis which was a big epidemic at that time. We were nursing children who were infectious. And in fact young people of our own age. And being so young really none of us were properly equipped. And we were given no psychological support in nursing these sick children at all. And the children were very disturbed they were noisy and uncontrolled and they sort of rattled their cots across the room and engaged in fights amongst each other. And we very young girls who were looking after them and taking a great deal of responsibility and having to work at great speed as well. And it was really quite a bad experience and I know that I'd already got it into my head that I somehow had to preserve myself. You know I wasn't going to die, I had been saved from dying and I was determined to stay alive. Another problem was that the children were in hospital for many months and even years and nothing at all was understood about child deprivation at that time and they had very few visitors. They seldom saw their mothers and they were desperately deprived of love and they would ask us for love and we were such young girls and so incompetent and incapable of providing what these children needed that the whole thing was very painful. And I remember feeling really wrecked by the noise they made. I've never much liked working in a very noisy atmosphere. But above all it was extremely tiring because of the long hours we did. And one time when I did visit my home, my adoptive parents were away but my sister was there, I cried with exhaustion and she told her father. And the next thing I knew he'd arranged for me to go to the local hospital to begin my general training instead of waiting to go to St Thomas's, which is what I'd arranged to do myself. I felt rather inferior for letting him influence me in that way, but I did give way on that. And then I spent, it must've been three and a half years doing general training, general nursing training. And I had very mixed feelings about this, the work was extremely hard, poorly paid, very poor status. I was very conscious of status. I felt I wanted something good for myself and this wasn't the way to get it. But on the other hand I also had to prove to myself that I was okay as a person and I did that by trying to be a good nurse. I was, you know very kind to the patients, efficient and very gentle with them and so on. And I was very intrigued to know more about them,. I liked the medical aspects of it and ... But what sort of really intrigued my curiosity was you know, what sort of person were they and what was the context in which they were ill. One of the things that bothered me a lot was that I'd never met young men. I'd been to an all girls school and now here I was in an all women's hospital, there weren't even any students because it was a provincial hospital and I wasn't meeting young men at all. And here I was nearly getting up to twenty one.

And except for one Dutch young man that I met and became friendly with, I had no opportunity to meet young men at all. I used to go to farm camps for holidays because my adopted mother resented my visiting home. She felt that I was going home for free meals which was wrong, I was going home to get home life. But I never got any. And I should mention that really until she died I always hoped that somehow she would become human and would behave nicely, just occasionally and intermittently she might for a very short period of time, but she didn't manage it at this age, when I was young and particularly needing it. Now the relationship I had with this young man when I was nineteen, was important because he treated me well but on the other hand he didn't feel that we were suited for marriage and I already felt that I had to get married in order to make a home, which I needed so much. So that when he in effect rejected me I did get quite depressed and that was the sort of first time I got depressed. It wasn't the sort of depression that you go to hospital with or anything like that, it never affected my work. But it began a feeling of being alone and unwanted and a general feeling of misery. I had no trouble at all with my exams and I found that nurses were treated as if they had no brains which annoyed me greatly. And as my training went along I thought, I've got to do something to get out of this and improve myself. So I began to think about how on earth I could possibly get myself to university because my adoptive father was not prepared to pay but he had far too much money for me to be eligible for a grant. But I discovered that if I waited until I was twenty one I would qualify on the grounds of what they called an independent person at twenty one. So I decided that I would finish my training get the nursing qualification, which would also be a help as a background, since I had so little general education and that way I would try to get to university. And I did my usual systematic method of writing round to universities. I tried to get into medical school but I didn't have enough maths. So I racked my brain about what I should do next and I did a great deal of reading and one of the things I read about was the profession of psychiatric social work and I thought, that's the next best thing to psychiatry I'll do that. And I discovered there was a place called the London School of Economics which took people who had not got their Advanced School Leaving exams, but would take the students if they were able to pass entrance exams. So I applied there and they were very meticulous in interviewing, one had several interviews and we had to write essays about why we thought we were suited to this profession and so on and so forth. And then I had to take the entrance exams and I took the greatest care to make sure I passed those by finding a student who could show me all the papers and coach me in how to answer these questions. And I read a great deal of philosophy and politics and history and current events and everything I possibly could to prepare myself for these exams, which I passed. And I also did six months midwifery, so I had really quite good training by the time I started social work. I did the midwifery just before going to L.S.E. and going to L.S.E. was the first marvellous thing that happened to me because it's a wonderful place with a tremendously liberal benign atmosphere. And for the first time I didn't have to be afraid. In nursing we had to sort of stand at attention with our hands behind our backs and even bow to the male doctors which really annoyed me intensely. And at last I was in a place where people treated me like an intelligent good adult. And it was really like sort of arriving home, I loved it.

What did you feel like when you first left home?

Well I was relieved to get away in a sense that my adoptive mother and I had such a bad relationship, but I really felt completely alone and adrift in the world, because I had nobody. My adoptive sister could only just about cope with her life and really my brother was the same, because he made an extremely unhappy marriage. So there was no help from any quarter. My real aunt was back in Czechoslovakia with her own problems and I did feel quite ehm lost really. I just coped in the way I had up to then by keeping a cheerful surface, you know laughing at things, making friends and pretending everything was alright. While I was at L.S.E. I realised I had the chance to get some psychotherapy which I knew I needed. I knew I was very confused about my identity and my whole self esteem. Ehm I should also say that I was living with the elder brother of my adoptive mother who was a famous surgeon in Harley Street, and all of the family were much kinder to me than she was. And he was very kind and allowed me to live there at no expense to myself for two years, which actually made me feel very guilty, because I didn't like living at other peoples expense. But I did answer his phones in the evening and sometimes at night. I was still a little bit of a servant because his son lived there at the same time while he was studying for his fellowship in surgery and you know he would have his supper, leave everything on the table and go and study. Whereas I would clear the table, wash up, prepare the breakfast and answer the phones. And of course they would go away to the country seat at weekends but I never went, so I still felt somewhat of a servant. Anyway I found that there was a psychiatrist at L.S.E. who gave psychotherapy to the students and so off I went. And I went to him once a week, on and off for two years and up to a point it was very helpfull, he was a little bit I think, not quite analytic enough actually. He was almost too friendly. I don't mean that in the worst sense, I mean just that he treated me too much like a colleague rather than a patient. I think he got too much entertainment out of the stories I told him. But nevertheless he helped me a great deal, this was the sort of first step. I did first of all social science, then I did the mental health course. And I simply loved studying, I was enormously studious. You know they would set us an essay and instead of reading the one or two set books, I would read twenty books. And I just loved every minute of it and the mental health was exactly what I wanted to do, I really enjoyed listening to people and doing this kind of thing. And I very carefully chose a good place to train at. I was always a great one for trying to train at the best places, so I went to the Maudsley and the Tavistock to do my adult... well actually no, I went to the Tavistock later. I went to the Child Guidance training Centre to do the child guidance training and the Maudsley to do the adult work. And I had one or two placements outside London as well. So I finished my training and I think I did quite well. And I've been very lucky because I've never had to apply for a job, people always offered me jobs. I've never had to apply for a job in my life. And I was offered a job across the road from the Maudsley at Kings College Hospital when I finished my training and worked with Dennis Hill, who then after I'd worked there for four years, asked me if I would go with him to the Middlesex Hospital and work in the academic department of psychiatry which I did. And at the same time I went to the Tavistock to train in marital case work. Ehm now I should explain that the department I worked in at Kings was a very analytic one and everybody there was being analysed and they didn't see why they should have analysis and I not, so they nagged and nagged a lot until I said "All right". And anyway I knew I still had some things to work out, so I

applied to the British Institute of Psychoanalysis to get taken on as an ehm patient at a lower cost. You know they took people on and used trainee analysts, which was fine because you had a supervisor who was sort of watching your analyst. And I got on fine and did very well. And it was enormously valuable. Now the problem I had was to find a husband because I was so mixed up about myself. First of all I'd been told nobody would want to marry me because of that Jewish nose and also my terrible personality, who would want me! So I was convinced nobody would want me.

Who had said that?

My adoptive parents, both of them. They'd make jokes about me, my nose, my looks, my personality, "Who's gonna want you?" So I was quite sure nobody would want to marry me and consequently I behaved in a very defensive, rather aggressive fashion. At the same time I had this conflict about myself in that I thought I was okay. So I was also extremely fussy at the same time. So I was either convinced nobody would want me or nobody was good enough for me. I was quite confused about the two.

Had you in fact met Jewish people?

Interestingly enough I met one Jewish doctor when I was doing my nursing and I realised afterwards he was awfully like my father to look at, but he wasn't at all interested in me. I just admired him, but we didn't have a relationship at all. And I hadn't met any Jewish people at all. I was living in a completely non Jewish environment. Though interestingly enough, my adoptive family's name was a Jewish name. This surgeon uncle had a very Jewish look about him, you know we feel there must be some Jewish there, but you know the actual atmosphere was completely Protestant. I was concerned about my Jewish appearance and also my Jewish behaviour. Because I realised that my behaviour was not the same as English people. Although I tried to pretend to be English, I didn't hide the Jewishness. In psychiatry it wasn't necessary because obviously there were a lot of Jewish psychiatrists and therefore it wasn't something one had to hide. But at the same time my behaviour somehow didn't fit. I felt I was more boisterous and more enthusiastic and altogether livelier than some of my British colleagues and I was always always trying to damp myself down. Ehm and I would also I think cause resentment because I was good at my job and it sort of came naturally and easily to me and a lot of them were struggling. You know they couldn't, they didn't seem to have the insight into patients which I seemed to have very easily and I had to be very very careful not to sort of appear brighter than they were. Now my boss was ehm very good, he sort of, I was no threat to him obviously he was the boss, and in a way I was no threat to my psychiatric colleagues because they were doctors and I wasn't. And that's another thing, there was a hierarchy, doctors first, psychologists next, psychiatric social workers last. And women last of all. And there was a real feeling of inferiority and I wasn't being paranoid and imagining that, I mean things have changed enormously since but I had to definitely put myself down in all sorts of ways. But my boss obviously thought I was good, because he wouldn't actually have asked me to start a

new department with him. And they said, "Oh yes the blue eyed girl". But because I had such a sense of inferiority in some ways I sort of, you know my conceit over my work was hampered by my lack of conceit about other things. I loved my job because it was, there was always an academic job where we were questioning what we were doing and this was what I really liked, always the feeling of inquiry. And we all gave each other a great deal of support and supervision. I think I had sort of seven years of training after my training, just in my job we examined the cases we were working with and helped each other and had constant meetings and conferences and I kept learning and learning which I loved. Anyway I ehm I should say the time I spent at Kings was probably the unhappiest I've had in my life. For four years there things seemed to get steadily worse, although my job was very satisfactory, the rest of my life wasn't. I was living in a bedsitting room, or rather a tiny flat, we were still paid very poorly and there was very little one could do on such a small amount of money. And I was very very home-loving and also very interested in decoration, so I put a lot of effort into making this tiny little home as nice as I could. But I became, I began to feel increasingly isolated. The friends I'd made at L.S.E. had scattered, I mean they'd all gone to different jobs, some of them abroad, some of them married. I began to feel more and more alone. And really you know the depths of loneliness were really appalling. I suppose I always looked reasonably cheerful but I didn't feel it and I was extremely worried that I wouldn't find a husband because I simply couldn't envisage a life on my own, I wasn't capable of sustaining myself emotionally. And yet I knew I was a strong person inside. One of the things that made me reject quite a lot of men, was that I was stronger than they were. And it wasn't that I wanted them to prop me up, it's that I didn't want to prop them up, I wanted somebody that was either as strong or stronger than I was. Ehm I did have a few boyfriends, most were not all that satisfactory, although there was one who was very kind. I think I wanted kindness and somebody to recognise that I wasn't ugly and I wasn't hateful and I had one who recognised this and sort of helped me along the way you might say. But he wasn't all that bright and I didn't think we were suited for life. And then I met another one that, at least two that I would've married if they'd asked me, and it's a good job they didn't they weren't suited. But gradually I was sort of improving all the time and nevertheless the loneliness was getting worse and worse and worse. And finally I got ill with, we didn't know what it was, it was an infection tht went on and on and on and I went from one G.P. to another and they couldn't diagnose it. They didn't try to diagnose it that was the trouble. They kept giving me different antibiotics and ehm one of them thought I was depressed and gave me what used to be known as purple hearts, I immediately knew what they were and threw them down the lavatory, because no drug was going to cross my lips. I was so busy preserving myself I wasn't going to do myself any harm. And finally what I'd done, you see I sort of done everything systematically and when I saw, there was a heirarchy in the hospital I was supposed to have my lunch with secretaries and physiotherapists and so on, all women, and I thought this is no way to find a husband, because as I'd said I'd hardly met any men and at L.S.E. I didn't do too well either because the men that took up social work were not my kind and I didn't seem to meet anybody that was right there. So I thought it's no good I've got to go somewhere where I'll meet some men. And so I decided that I would eat in the doctors dining room and I managed this by wearing my white coat and being smuggled in by the rest of my colleagues and we would have lunch together. And anyway it was obvious I was ill and all my colleagues said, "Øh you're just angry, your fever has been kept up by anger." But there was a

microbiologist there who ehm looked at my state of health and didn't like what he saw and offered to get me an appointment with a professor of medicine. And so I went along and was properly examined and they found I had what was known then as glandular fever, now we call it mononucleosis. And I really was so ill that I couldn't stand up anymore you know it was pretty terrible living alone and being ill. Anyway I was put into the sick bay of the hospital where I had very good care, and the man who had helped to get me into hospital visited me frequently. And we got to know each other very well and our relationship developed and we seemed to be well suited and later on we got married. We had a civil ceremony because my husband was an agnostic and although I'd been quite religious in the past, I was going through an agnostic phase myself at that time. He was not Jewish and my adoptive family were actually quite scathing about the fact that his family might object to the fact of my being Jewish which I thought was extraordinarily rude and unkind. I don't know whether there was any prejudice on his family's side, possibly his mother might have been slightly prejudiced but she really didn't behave badly to me at all.

(End of side 2, cassette 3)

I'd packed in having three children by the time I was thirty five. Ehm I had a very difficult delivery with each of the children. But in particular the first one, it had a strange effect in the sense that I was still trying to prove that I was a good person. I refused to have a lot of painkilling drugs because I was so anxious to have a normal child. The birth was very difficult but I felt if I could do it for the child's sake, it showed I was capable of loving. The problem was that I'd felt both unlovable and incapable of loving because I had been made to feel that way. And the fact that I could feel for the child showed I was okay and I was okay after that. So this was another healing part of it. And I was really extremely happy to have this child and have a family and in the midst of my happiness about this, I was actually expecting my second child. My husband was offered a job in Canada and when I sort of looked a little dubious he said, "If you argue I shall want to do it all the more," and because I didn't realise I had any rights at all, I didn't say anything. And I allowed him to go for the interview and take the job without any protests. In fact I didn't realise how drastic an effect it would have on me to have to emigrate again. And quite sort of ehm in a daze almost we sold the house and ehm packed up our things. We were extremely poor. Anyway we went to Canada and I had the most dreadful shock, because I hadn't prepared myself at all. I was under the illusion everywhere would be like London, I can't understand why but that's the idea I had. I didn't realise what I was doing at all. That I was throwing away the only home that I'd sort of struggled for, you know the feeling of belonging somewhere, that I was gradually at last beginning to feel. I found myself in a town on the prairie where the temperature went down to forty seven below zero fahrenheit in winter, for six months at a time, with two babies. And not knowing anybody, while my husband went out to work. And all the women were in this position, the great aim there was for all the men to make a lot of money and work very hard and the women to get on with bringing up the children. And somehow being lifted up out of my context like that with nobody knowing me all over again was absolutely disastrous. But neither my husband nor I had realised in advance, that you can't do that twice. Ehm and I don't think he has ever allowed himself to admit that that was an impossible thing for me to do. I've always felt that somehow my inability to adapt to Canada was reprehensible or that he thought it was reprehensible, that I should've adapted. I think his attitude was, "All right, if you think you can help to earn some money, fine." But I couldn't, because I felt I should look after the children. And it was very unfortunate because I'd actually applied in London to become a psychoanalyst and have analytic training, which would've meant I could've worked in the home and earned, and I was recommended to do it by one of my colleagues. And I passed the first interview and was told yes, that's fine. But then I went to see Donald Winnicott who, as you know, is a famous child analyst, who said to me "You've already been analysed once and you have just got married and you are just starting a family, your timing is lousy, run away and have your family". So I missed my chance, which meant we went to Canada, which I find really very sad. Because I feel that I brought a whole lot of new troubles on my head. Ehm now my life was sort of divided in the sense that the home was extremely happy, we loved the children, we really enjoyed them and we got on extremely well together. But I just loathed and detested my environment. I loathed the North American way of life. I couldn't stand the superficiality of the outlook. The fact that people seemed to be so uncomplicated and so facile somehow. I didn't like the materialism. Of course we

had a comfortable house which was nice, we were warm enough indoors. But it was just a new environment again, it was almost like being a refugee again. And I would say that I tried for about six to ten years to adapt, I did all the things that I was supposed to do but none of them worked. I just thought it was hopeless. Anyway I had a third child, that was quite deliberate, I wanted a third and interestingly enough one reason I wanted a third was, I was always so afraid of losing one. I thought, I've got to have two left if I lose one. Anyway the child was fine although I had to have a Caesarian section for the third one, because somehow the heads of my children didn't turn as they should do. Ehm but I had no trouble as a mother with them when they were small, it was all very very easy for me. You know it was fun I enjoyed it, I didn't find it difficult at all. The only difficulty at all was when they were all talking at once, as I've said before I've always found a lot of noise hard to bear and it was extremely hard physical work after the third one was a Caesarian. Coping with the physical work and quite from an early stage in Canada, I was already feeling, I've got to save to get out of this country. And I feel very bad about the way I behaved, because well it wasn't entirely my fault, you see I sort of felt happy and having arrived when I had the children in England. When I was in, the minute I was in Canada my, I wasn't there, I was not spiritually in the right place, so that although I was happy with the children, I wasn't happy in my own place. The home didn't even feel like a home because I couldn't feel right about being there. So I feel that I was a much less good mother than I would've been if we'd stayed in England and I still feel that.

Is your husband Jewish?

No he isn't. And this is a very interesting thing, because my husband is one of that group of people who particularly likes Jewish people, he tells me that he had a fantasy from when he was a boy about marrying a little dark girl from Central Europe. And instead of making me feel bad for being Jewish he made me feel good for being Jewish. And I feel I fulfilled his need somehow and he's always made me feel special and you know, just what he wanted. And interestingly enough all the friends he's ever had have always been Jewish. His first wife was not.

Do you have two daughters and a son?

Yes I do. The eldest daughter, then a son and then a daughter and I did name them. I know that this has cropped up a lot in research about Holocaust survivors. The interesting thing is I named them, not so much after people but always with European names and then when my aunt showed me a family tree, it showed in fact that I had named them all after relatives. I did name our son after my father and I think our oldest I did name after my aunt of my, my father's sister. But our youngest, my husband chose the name, but it was still a central European name.

Was your son circumcised?

Yes he was and that was very funny too because I was in a ward with another girl who wasn't Jewish and for some reason she had it in her head that it was hygienic to have boys circumcised, and I thought, yes it's hygienic. I'll have it done and I had it done by just sheer chance, but it meant nothing. I mean I wouldn't have thought of it otherwise.

Did you just have a civil marriage?

Yes we did yes.

I'll try and think back a little bit now about how much the ehm remnants of the problems over the loss of my family was still affecting me at this time. I've now got three children, I had a very happy home life although I wasn't happy in the country I was in and felt very very exiled indeed. I'd made a lot of good friends in England and I thought I'd left them all behind. But I very assiduously kept in touch with them because I knew I'd go back to England one day, I was determined on that. But I still had the remnants of the isolated feelings. I know I sort of still thought of the world as a bit of a void and was always very scared of losing my husband. I don't mean to another woman, I never feared that because I knew he'd learned enough lessons with his wife and previous girlfriends that he wasn't interested in anybody else. It was that it was losing him to death. I was always death-ridden, everybody was going to die always, that I cared about. But I don't mean that I brooded about that all the time. I was cheerful and didn't feel depressed or anything: I coped well. And of course I was always horribly efficient. I'd learnt to be competent at a very early age and I always was. Ehm I think when the children began to get a bit older I then found I had the opportunity to read a lot of the literature about the Holocaust. And I spent perhaps two or three years before we finally returned to England, reading a vast literature and this helped me a lot. Because first of all I was very glad to find books had been written and although it was horrifying I should actually, I've missed a whole lot out there. I should say that I began to read the Holocaust literature when I was about twenty one and the first book I read was called 'Five Chimneys' and that's about Auschwitz. So that I had a description about what Auschwitz had really been like. And it was at that point when I was about twenty one that I started to grieve for my parents for the first time. And it was only then that I could cry for my parents. It was a sort of grief that was chronic it never seemed to get any better. I would, but I found that reading about the camps and about the people's survival afterwards, had a sort of solacing effect. And I continued to do that. Now this grieving went on right until this year when I had the opportunity to meet the children from the train for the first time which had been organised by Esther Rantzen and put on the B.B.C. And the way that I came to meet them was really strange. I had a friend in England, one of my best friends that I first knew at university and she'd always thought that I'd had an unusual life and she thought I could write well and she was always telling me I should write about it. And I had made a few attempts, I'd written a summary for my cousins when they wrote their memoirs. And I felt, I sort of had a feeling that I should, but I never

really got round to it and she kept nagging even when I got back to England. And in the end I thought, well I'll try and meet some of these people who've had similar experiences and see if I can do a little project of my own. So I got in touch with the person who'd organised a reunion of the Czech school, which I hadn't attended because I felt I had no connection with the school anymore. And I wrote to her and asked, explained what I had in mind and asked her if we could meet. And she wrote to me and before we had a chance to meet she phoned me and said, watch the T.V. on Sunday, we train kids are going to appear on it. And also get the 'Sunday Mirror'. And I did and there we were. And she then, they said in the paper and on the T.V. would any adults now who were children then, on the trains, get in touch, which I did then. I went to the T.V. and met these others - some of the other train kids and it was quite amazing the effect it's had on me, because I'd sort of been almost hugging this grief to me as if somehow it was all I had and I'd jolly well keep it, as if I wouldn't let it go. And meeting these other kids enabled me to let it go and it was the end of the feeling of isolation. Because I'd finally met a group who experienced the same as I had and I haven't felt isolated since. And it's been an enormous benefit. I've really felt hugely better since then. You know quite healed. I also met another woman there who'd had experiences so similar to mine that we were able to become friendly and meet. And we spent five hours talking about our experiences together and they were so similar that we helped each other enormously and we are friends now and we still get in touch with each other if we want to report on any progress or tell each other something interesting. And strangely enough when we attended the gathering of survivors in the summer this year, we both brought our daughters to the gathering and the daughters took a liking to each other and they've become friendly too. Because my eldest in fact all my children I'm sure have felt the effects of my upbringing.

Was it important to you that your children still counted as Jewish?

No it wasn't, in fact I think I always wanted them to be assimilated. I wouldn't mind in the slightest if they married non Jews, in fact I'm sure they will. I don't think they feel themselves particularly Jewish except our eldest daughter and even she I'm sure, it's not a heavy thing with her. I took care not to mention anything about Jewishness until the children had developed their self confidence. I was determined that nothing that I said should hamper their development. And although I gradually introduced the matter when they were a lot older even then it was quite a slow process. And I didn't dwell on my difficulties as a child, at all. When they were quite grown up I would say something about it in an outspoken way, but usually with a bit of humour. On the other hand I'm sure they did suffer in spite of my attempts to ehm prevent it. Simply because first of all there was the problem of Canada, and second I think I was over-protective as a mother. I know most Jewish parents are. I was always concerned for their physical welfare. I don't think I fuss to really an excessive extent but nevertheless I'm sure I took more than average care of them. I think they may have suffered in the way that all children of that generation have suffered, from parents who went through the war in any way at all. For example in England the great thing was not to waste anything it's always been a big joke, 'Waste not, Want not', you know we would do the most idiotic economies, particularly because it was what one had learned in ones youth and this is quite a joke with the children. We got the book

called, 'How to be a Jewish Mother' which was always a joke in the family but very helpful too because it somehow made humorous something that could've been a heavy thing. You know my strange ways, like buying clothes that were far too big would be joked away and my habit of using a teabag more than once. It was all part of being a Jewish mother and therefore funny and okay. However since my eldest daughter has grown up, she told me that my background had had an effect on her that I hadn't realised at the time. She said she felt that she always had to be a good girl and not give me a bad time because I'd had a bad time in my youth. And I had no idea that this was having that effect on her at all. And my youngest daughter was completely different and determined to rebel at a very young age and was very hostile to everybody. And I did say to her when she was quite old, about seventeen or sixteen, that it seemed such a shame that she disliked her family so much when I felt she was lucky to have one. And she said quite brutally, "You needn't think I'm going to fulfill your fantasies". I think my son is quite afraid of the Jewish aspects and is pleased that he's got fair hair because I think he would take a rather paranoid attitude, the whole thing could happen again and he doesn't want to stick out like a sore thumb. Whereas my eldest I think is much more open and she mixes a great deal with fellow students who are Jewish. And she acknowledges herself to be partly Jewish. And is much more identified with the continuity of the family. But where damage to the children is concerned, I think my attitude to Canada was perhaps even more important. I can't weigh up which was the more important. But I realise now the effect was even worse than I feared at the time. In other words I think it must have been extremely insulting to them to feel at the time that their mother was dying to get away and that she was bringing them up in a country where she didn't feel she belonged. I'm afraid I was quite outspoken about Canada all the time instead of perhaps keeping more quiet about it. My attitude was, that if I suppressed it, it would come out in other ways and it was better if I was honest about it. The other thing was, that I'm afraid I despised this kind of suburban life we were obliged to lead so much that I felt it would do more harm to adjust to being a conventional suburban housewife than to be an openly rebellious one. But it's only in retrospect I realise what a divisive effect this must have had on the children emotionally and how much they must've resented it. And I think probably do still very much. And then in fact of course I did insist on leaving when my husband retired. I'd always said that we would then leave. And he agreed that since he had the choice of where we lived when he worked I should have the choice when we retired. So the children always knew we were planning to leave and my son in fact has always said, "My mother ran away from home", though it wasn't quite as bad as that. It may have felt as bad as that. I did in fact go out to work when the children were, the youngest was four and the eldest was seven and I was offered a job in the hospital which I took for a year and found the working conditions quite unsatisfactory compared with what I'd been used to in England, so decided to go into private practice. And I set up a little practice in the town and really thoroughly enjoyed it. And the good part about it was that I was able to work only two to three days a week and didn't neglect the children at all. Even the hospital job had been down so that I was always there in the mornings and always there at, in fact I collected them from school and took them home and made an absolute rule that I was always home at tea-time with their tea ready. And I was always at home in the evening because I was determined that they shouldn't have a mother who was absent at all. However going out to work gave me the chance to do some more saving and ... I should go back to the fact that my husband had the

opportunity to have sabbatical leave after being in Canada for six years, so he went to the Pasteur Institute in Paris. And we took the children with us. And this gave us a chance to live in Europe and for the children to experience life there. We put them into ordinary French schools and at the same time I took the Canadian syllabus with us so that they wouldn't lose the year that they were missing in Canada. And in fact I always say it shows how little they had to learn in a Canadian year because a whole week's syllabus could be easily done in two hours on their afternoon off in Paris without the slightest effort either on my part or theirs. The work was so easy. And we had the happiest year of our life I think in that first sabbatical, everything seemed to be right, the children were at an age where they adapted extremely easily to their school. My husband loved it at the Institute and we all adored Paris. To me it was a sort of opening up of the cultural aspects of my personality that hadn't had any sort of ehm opening before, simply because I was so emotionally racked up with surviving that I hadn't allowed myself to develop culturally. And I, you know it was a complete eye opener to walk around the streets and look at the architecture and go to the museums and art galleries. And I became an absolute addict and spent all of my free time there. And my husband discovered that he enjoyed cooking and we had a wonderful time shopping and cooking. And it was a special joy to take the children round showing them these things. My husband took the girls out a lot and they were extremely patient with him going round the book shops and all his favourite places. And I took our son round the galleries and museums and he took to it as well. And it was wonderful really, introducing him to pictures. And I always have this memory of us going round the galleries, with him so thrilled with the pictures, but when he flagged I would bribe him with another patisserie so that he could keep going a little bit longer. And ehm I'm sure, I know he has very happy memories of that. And when he went to university ehm because in arts degrees in North America they take a wide range of subjects, one of his subjects was Art, the History of Art, and he told me with great pleasure that he was one of the few who'd seen all the originals in their proper places, in his class. And of course the children learnt French from a very early age. Our youngest was four and the middle one was six and the eldest was seven. And when we went back to Canada, we put them into bilingual schools so they kept up their French. And that French has been extremely useful to them because it's got them entrance to all sorts of things that they wouldn't have been able to get into. And has opened up a whole new culture for them. And we were so in love with Paris that we decided we would try to buy an apartment so that we could spend part of our retirement in it and go there each year. And it took us two years to do that because of the difficulty of finding something suitable and saving up enough money. But we succeeded, we've bought a tiny little place which is really only a pretty rough garret. But we visit it every year. However after another year or so that even a place in Paris didn't overcome my homesickness for England so I saved a lot more and then bought a small apartment in England as well and from then onwards we would come to England each year as well as Paris. And we must've increased the confidence in the children or widened their horizons we really don't know which, by this kind of international upbringing they were having. We then had a second sabbatical also in Paris which was not as easy because my husband had problems at his work and had to go back to Canada a couple of times which left me with the children by myself in Paris. However they were big children by that time and they needed a great deal of help to get them through their schooling at that advanced age, because the lycees in Paris are notorious for their strictness and high standards. But it was a wonderful

opportunity for them and they were very good about it. They didn't complain they realised what an opportunity it was and in fact our eldest had already decided. I don't know whether it was because of my pressure or whether it was really genuine, but I hope it was genuine, that she would prefer to return to England. And she won a scholarship to go to one of the United World Colleges and chose to go to the one in Wales. Which meant that she was able to start living in Britain immediately after we finished that year in Paris. The rest of us went back to Canada where we had, I think, it was three years to go before my husband finished his job.

Was the separation from your daughter difficult?

Yes it was, it was much more difficult than I'd expected. Ehm I, in a way I was glad, I was extremely glad she went of course for her sake. And also she fought quite a lot with the other two because she was, I wouldn't say she was the cleverest, she was the most earnest and serious and that irritated the other two and they also thought she was far too friendly with me. They thought she was my favourite, which most certainly wasn't the case. But they chose to interpret it that way. And therefore it seemed good for them to be separated, but I realise now that it wasn't so good and she's now missing them a lot. And at first it was good to have the peace in the home that her absence caused, but gradually I came to miss her immensely far more than I expected and really quite grieved at her absence.

Did you mix with other Jewish people in Canada?

Absolutely not, I've never mixed with Jewish people except at work or just by chance, and then latterly since I met the train kids. I'm much more conscious of being able to mix with Jewish people and feeling much more at home with them. But I think I mentioned before I had this hang up about not being able to, first of all I had difficulty in seeing myself as both British and Czech and Jewish and as I explained I divided off the Jewish bit and tried to ignore it. Later I was able to incorporate that better. Nevertheless amongst ordinary English people I still say absolutely nothing about my background unless they ask me straight out. And sometimes I'm quite relieved if they do because it gets...

(End of side 1, Tape 4)

## F113 Side B

It gets it all out and we can put it behind or mention it casually, as the case may be. If I don't mention it, it becomes a little bit awkward because sometimes I become friendly with somebody and they develop into a good friend and I find I've got all this big history about myself behind me which I've never mentioned. And one doesn't want to make a big deal about suddenly announcing this business and overstating it all. So I put myself into a corner of embarrassment by not mentioning it and ehh in Canada I did this too. I didn't mention the Jewishness to anybody and I certainly didn't mix with the Jewish population. Incidentally I did find that there was little prejudice against Jews in the town in Canada than anywhere else, than people I've met anywhere else I've lived.

Did you carry on with your practice once you had settled back in Canada?

Yes I did. I worked in my private office for nine years and I'm very glad I did it, it was very satisfying to be able to do a job and look after the children without the children suffering and it did give me a slightly better understanding of the environment I was living in and the people. It also gave me a very satisfied feeling to start this little, almost you could call it a business or a little professional practice and run it. And make a little profit. I didn't make a huge amount of money but that wasn't the aim. It was really just to have a job and to make enough to save and keep my profession going. And really it worked extremely well. And as I said, I did buy a little flat in England and that meant I could visit in the summer for perhaps a couple of months each year and gradually I felt I was sort of weaning myself back into English life. It meant that I wouldn't come back to it sort of cold, expecting it to be the same as it was twenty years ago. I knew it wouldn't be. Each year when I came back I would learn as much as I could about the changes that had happened during the previous year. Of course I kept up with all my friends, I would even make new friends and take up new hobbies here, preparing ourselves to return. And the children and my husband came over as well, not always for as long as I did, but enough so that we shared the life here. And I sort of felt that I was preparing us all for the return. But because I was coming for longer and longer to England each summer and because our sabbatical leave was three years before we were going to come back to England anyway I did close my office two years before we returned and it was an extremely busy time preparing to come back and also settling the two remaining children in Canada. And of course unfortunately even when we first went to Canada, I realised I was asking for future trouble because I knew that the children would want to stay there naturally. It became their home, they felt Canadian and unfortunately I had instilled a conflict in them as to whether they were British or Canadian and I'm surprised now at how tolerant of me they were over it. There were several occasions when my husband was offered jobs in England and we had great difficulty in deciding whether he should take them or not, but each time he felt the pay and conditions were so poor that he couldn't bring himself to take them. And it was very painful, because each time we put it off, I knew, sort of it struck the death knell as far as our family ever being together in the future was concerned and I was very unhappy about it. It's the real sort of blot on the landscape as far as I'm concerned because I feel that after

all the attempts I made to make a family, really I failed, because you know the family has broken up. First of all I brought the children up without grandparents and, except for my husband's family and he was also, had no father, so there was only a grandmother and an aunt. So first they had no extended family and then I sort of broke up the family by moving back to England. And my husband pointed out the other day, that they must've felt I cared more about England than I did about them, which I hadn't even thought about at the time, but I see how it must seem like that to them. And I think this must've affected our youngest daughter, the youngest child the worst because she was born in Canada and thought herself to be Canadian and I think enjoyed that way of life. And I think the combination of my overprotectiveness and incidentally my husband was also extremely protective of the children, plus my hostility to Canada, must've set up perhaps the most conflict in her of the three children. And probably ehm contributed greatly to the hostility ehm and rebellion that she felt towards us for many years. She also tended to have a rather independent personality and to like people perhaps who were different from us. And she did choose to leave home when she was eighteen and work for a year, but I think she actually has quite an understanding of the situation. And I think over the years we're gradually getting on much easier than we did. .... for a year, and is now doing her B.A. working towards journalism, which is what she always wanted to do. Our son was never any problem in terms of hostility, although he was a little bit hostile when he was sixteen or seventeen. But it was not very deep, he was basically always pretty friendly with us and still is.

How did you react to the separation from the youngest two?

Well I think I began to grieve about it quite a few years before it even happened because as I said my great aim in life had been to have a proper family around. You know I ideally would love to have them all in the same country and getting married and having children and seeing my grandchildren. I was really grieving about all this the whole time in Canada because I knew this was going to happen. And I couldn't see any alternative because there was just no way I could stay there. Canada filled me with a sense of emptiness and even my children somehow couldn't make me feel right. It does sound crazy in a way, but I could not live there. So that I would even, several years before we left I would wake up in the morning feeling quite depressed, particularly... On the other hand I could feel that to some extent the children would benefit if we gave them independence, particularly our son. And in that particular town children went to school at the local university, they would literally stay at home until they were thirty which I don't think is very healthy. And I know our son would've gone on staying at home until he finished all his studies and he intends to go through to a Ph.D. So we would've been keeping him until he was thirty and he wasn't actually studying very hard, he was taking life very easy, he wasn't helping us at all. For example he wouldn't even shovel snow you know. They tended to be quite spoilt and lazy. I mean all children there, not just ours. Although I tried to bring them up with standards of behaviour, it was extremely difficult to battle with this society which tended to spoil the children. And I had great difficulty in getting them to help at all. So that in fact our decision to leave had quite a galvanising effect on them. He suddenly realised that he must study and that he would have to be standing

on his own feet when we went and the year before we left he began to work hard and get good marks for the first time in his life. And is doing extremely well and is doing a Masters in Sociology now. Ehm so that in one sense our leaving had an extremely good effect on them but it caused me a lot of grief and I think an enormous amount of anger. Ehm I've been angry with my husband over it and the way I coped with it was by expressing it quite openly and he handled it always by being humorous about it, which may or may not have been a good way. Possibly it was, ehm but on the other hand it enabled him to go on doing what he wanted to do without really taking it very seriously. And I didn't get really profoundly angry until he even tried to persuade me to stay in Canada at the end. And I had to make a very big scene in order to persuade him to come away as he promised. And we did. Anyway we did return to England and I'm pleased to say that England wasn't a disappointment to me, that after twenty years of wishing to be back, I haven't been at all disappointed, although we have made several mistakes since we returned. Ehm leaving the other two children, what I would say about it is that looking at it over all it's a very great sadness because they will be having children who I shall be separated from and of course it is distressing only to be able to speak to them intermittently. And if we're lucky and if we can afford the fares. Either us visiting them or them visiting us. But on a day to day basis I wouldn't want them living in the house as I find that ehm it's not fun living with teenagers after a certain while and I'm very happy that they're standing on their feet and they do seem to be enjoying life quite well. And we are fortunate in having our eldest in England, but I do feel guilty because she feels the separation from her brother and sister very much and she feels that my inability to settle in Canada has broken up the family. She and I are extremely close friends and we get on wonderfully well. And I have a nasty feeling that I, she's extremely dependent on me which is not good, and I have a nasty feeling that I'm nearly as dependent on her. I mean she doesn't live with us, she's a medical student and she's doing extremely well and she's got a large circle of friends but she's a little bit more dependent than on average I think. Though I'm sure she will grow out of it eventually. I also have quite an uneasy feeling that she may even need to go back to Canada in order to convince herself that she can get away from us, but I'm not sure because she's very happy in England. I think it all depends on who she marries. But on a day-to-day basis I don't grieve, it's only a kind of pervasive slight sadness that I didn't achieve what I wanted to do, I haven't what I'd call a normal family. However my husband says that they would've only emigrated like many peoples children have. But I say that children don't usually emigrate at the early age of eighteen and twenty which is the age at which we left our younger two behind. On the whole our life in England is quite good, we made a mistake in not choosing a very suitable house, it's a little too small and I think my husband is still not very good at occupying himself. He had such an extremely busy job with a lot of responsibility and he didn't plan or prepare himself for retirement at all. He always thought he had enough interests to keep himself occupied. But I find that he hasn't and he tends to potter and not do anything with any goal or very constructive. But he has had the opportunity to return to Canada for three months three years running on a sort of short term contract. So in the winter he goes for three months and I visit, not for three months, because I can't face three months of that winter again. But I went for three weeks last year and I'm going again this winter, just to see them all. And it's very tantalising because one gets the feeling again of having a proper family and then has to leave it again. So it's a kind of perpetual being torn, but I suppose one day I'll adjust to it and I know that it is very

common. Ehm I have actually found a great many interesting things to do as far as I'm concerned. I do voluntary work because we ehm, my husband likes to travel a lot, he wants to see as much of the world as possible while we can and therefore a paid job would be quite difficult to do and therefore I do two voluntary jobs. And ehm also I'm able to pursue hobbies that I didn't have time for before like painting, art of various kinds. And I can do gardening. I had a dream in Canada of having an English garden, and I even made a mistake over that, because instead of getting conventional garden, I always had a picture of an old fashioned walled garden with cottage flowers and instead we bought a house on a precipice, so I'm gardening on a precipice. (Laughs) And ehh it's not quite as romantic as I'd hoped but I've still got a cottage garden in the front. So I've achieved some of my aims. I was lucky enough to keep all my old friends and it literally has been as if I hadn't been away. And because I'm now here I'm able to be closer to both the remaining members of my adoptive family and of the surviving members of my Czech family. And I do get a sense of belonging now again. And an interesting thing I've discovered recently is, far from being a sort of appendage or an unwanted member of my, both these families, I noticed at a family gathering I went to in each family this year that in some peculiar way I seemed to fulfill some sort of a function, I suppose I come at an intermediate age. I'm older than the, my adoptive brother and sister and younger than some of the other members and its as if I'm a sort of, in the same way everybody forms some sort of a key or milestone in their own circle. It's as if I do form some function and I didn't feel at all out of it in this gathering. I didn't feel like a foreigner. It was after all fifty years that I'd been adopted into that family, hard though it is to believe and somehow in a strange sort of way I felt accepted after all this time. And the same in my Czech family, I realised I did fulfill some sort of peculiar intermediate function and I felt pleased about this. And the other thing I'm very pleased about is that whereas in Canada I seem to have lost the art of making new friends although I did make two or three, it was very few friends for me in twenty years. But since returning to England, in spite of being older I've been told that as you get older you don't make so many new friend, but as well as keeping the old ones, I've made excellent new friends and you know therefore I feel that ehm life is quite good and quite a lot of things that were wrong in the past have been put right.

Are your adoptive parents still alive?

No my adoptive father died quite a long time ago. I suppose afer we'd been in Canada about, I can't remember exactly the year, but it was about eight to ten years after we'd gone out there and my adoptive mother died ehm about two years ago.

Do you keep in contact with those two Canadian friends?

Yes I certainly do. Actually I think it's about three friends, one of them is... The more I think about it, perhaps it's more than just those, but those are three good friends, one of them is still in Canada and I see her when I visit, but two of them have returned to England themselves. One is English and the other one was also a Jewish

refugee from Latvia, who'd also travelled to a lot of different countries and landed up in London and so we're good friends and have a lot in common. Ehm and then the ones I made through the voluntary work I did in Canada, I've also kept up with. Those are the only two Canadian friends, all the rest were European, it's really an extraordinary thing, that in twenty years in Canada, I didn't make one close friend who was a true Canadian.

How did you take the death of your adoptive father and later of your adoptive mother?

I'm afraid I didn't grieve over either of them. It's really been quite extraordinary to me to look back and realise what an important function they filled and he in particular somehow seemed to have made so little emotional impact on me. He's a person I never think about, although I regret that I didn't give him more opportunity to be nice. I think he would've liked to be nice. And I've got a feeling that I could've behaved better. It's difficult when you're a teenager and a young person to behave better, but I think sometimes when he was trying to be kind and he was a little bit tactless or inept, if I'd been kind I think I could've kind of cultivated a far better relationship with him and I do regret that. And it was not a nice way to pay back all he'd done for me. I'm far more grateful now for what he did with all its limitations, than I was at the time and I do regret that I didn't express any gratitude to him at all. As far as my adoptive mother is concerned I feel that I did try to be a good daughter to her and my chief feeling is of sadness that ehm she didn't allow me to be a good daughter and she didn't allow me to compensate her, either for the effort she put in bringing me up or for the fact that she lost one of her sons. And though I couldn't compensate for his death I did make a third child for her and unfortunately because of her personality she wasn't able to enjoy my presence at all. But as for actually missing her I certainly didn't grieve for her. And the strange thing was that everybody however hostile forms a kind of landmark and she's not a landmark I regret and yet you still feel oh how strange. You know I even occasionally feel, I could tell her that in a letter, though we never saw each other much. Ehm and she never really showed any interest. Yet it was a sort of habit that she would write, not very often and one would have to be terribly careful what one wrote in reply, but nevertheless she was still some form of a landmark. But I certainly haven't grieved for her.

Did she ever come to visit you in Canada?

Once, when we first went out there. She came with her sister and she was always a terribly difficult visitor, very very critical and she was extremely unpleasant to the children. Our oldest was aged two and our youngest was just a baby and to the eldest who was sucking her thumb she said, "Oh it'll be nice when she does that on her twenty first birthday". And to the youngest, when I brought her over at the age of four to visit, she did the same to her as she'd done to me when the dog barked at her and frightened her she said to the child, "Don't you dare frighten my dog". And when she spoke she said, "Does that noise pass for speech?" And I thought then, there is no way I'm going to allow you to make my children unhappy. And I swore I would

never take them back to see her until they were older and I never did. And she didn't appear to miss them, she never asked me you know how they were getting on or anything and she showed no interest at all. And I always, one thing I aimed at even till the day she died, I always aimed to be civil to her I thought I owed her courtesy, I always aimed to be better than she was to me. I knew I owed her a lot in spite of the way she treated me and the last time I saw her before she died I was determined that it would end on as happy a note as possible. So I racked my brain for any time at all that we'd had that was bearable and I reminded her about the cottage we had in Dorset and how we used to go at the weekends and what a lovely place it was and the flowers. The one thing we had in common that we didn't fight about was we both loved flowers, and she would allow me to pick the flowers and arrange them. She kept lots of vases and I would arrange the flowers and put vases of flowers all over the house and that was one of the few things I did that she approved of. And I reminded her of this the very last time. I don't mean of me arranging flowers, I just mean about this cottage and what good times we had there and so that was fine. But ehm neither she nor he counted me as their child because everybody in the family cut me out of their wills. They left, there was a lot of money and they left all the money to my brother and sister. And some of the relatives left me nothing. And the adoptive parents left me a minute amount in a very large ehm estate. I should say though that my brother had a moment of conscience and chose to share his father's money with me three ways so that I got one third of his father's money. But they didn't share their mother's money which was much greater, nor the aunt's who specifically cut me out of their wills in actual statements, that I was not to get anything. Even though I had got on well with them.

Did you get to the funerals of your adoptive parents?

I couldn't go to my adoptive father's funeral because I was in Canada, but my husband and I we went to the mother's funeral, but we were just back in England and we managed to lose our way. I'm sure we didn't do this on purpose, (Laughs) but we were so unused to the British roads after Canada, that we lost our way round Winchester and Southampton and only arrived in time for the lunch after the funeral. And I was actually sorry, because I know that one needs these rituals and I needed the ritual of going to her funeral. I don't mean that I was deeply grieved over it, I was just sorry that I hadn't been through the final ritual. Ehm I shall always regret that I couldn't get on with this woman and the only comfort is that nobody could get on with her.

Have you shared throughout your married life, your experiences with your husband?

Yes I have and this has been a wonderful thing, that I've never had to keep any of this back. Right from when I first knew him I told him all about my background and he understood absolutely the position I was in both in relation to my real family and my adoptive family. And he's been completely understanding about it and extremely tolerant of the fact that I like to mention it. My method of handling it is that I

mention it quite freely and if I want to be angry about it, I'm angry about it, and it's not painful or difficult for me to be angry, I don't mean that I have to make great scenes about it. I mean that if I want to be rude about anybody I will, quite freely. And he understands the development that's happened in me in adjusting gradually. When he first knew me, of course, I was still feeling very unsure of myself and not fully settled as a person and I think in his head he understands my problem with Canada, but in his emotions it's hard for him to accept, because if he did he would have to accept some blame, in inverted commas, for really not discussing with me the question whether we should go there and taking a rather high-handed attitude about it. He ehm deals with it by saying, "Well somebody had to earn a living" and "I wanted a family and I wanted to look after them". And I also realise that I should've been more, I should've thought more carefully about the question of my earning a living, the fact that it needed some responsibility from me as well. Ehm so that's been the only problem. But he now understands also the changes that happened to me over the years, that I've gradually gone from being... Yes I suppose I would've been, you could've said I was a fairly dependent person when he first knew me, although dependence is a matter of degree. I don't mean that I was dependent in the sense that extreme dependence, whereas I would've been absolutely shattered if I'd lost him at that time. I've gradually over the years, first of all, dealt with the whole problem of the loss of my parents, my feeling as I've described of ehm, being different in terms of being a refugee and so on. But I realise that there's been a tendency for me to, because of the extreme loneliness and isolation I felt as a young person, I can see that I've spent my whole married life, preparing myself in case I should've become widowed. He's ten years older than me, I realise the chances are high that I'll be widowed and I know that my behaviour had been aimed at strengthening myself so that I can manage. I want never to feel as lonely as I did when I was young. And everything I've done has been as if I'd prepared myself a support system should it happen. And I have to thank him for the confidence he's given me in feeling that I'm a good person. Because if you feel a good person, this is half the battle as far as loneliness is concerned. And the other half is really working out for yourself what sort of person you are, what you want to do, building up your network of relationships, interests, learning to be self sufficient up to a point. Maybe exploring the question of whether you have any religious beliefs ehm you know, being true to yourself, so to speak. And I think that I've worked very hard on this, so that ehm now that he's sixty six, and I'm fifty six and we have had a lot of losses this year, I feel as if, difficult as it would be, ehm I'm in a kind of state where I would have the beginnings of an idea of how I would cope.

Has either of you suffered from a serious illness during your marriage?

No touch wood, we've been very lucky, apart from a hysterectomy I had for fibroids, which were just benign, neither of us has yet, although both of us have got high blood pressure. He in particular has to take beta blockers for his and I've managed to lower mine by a kind of juggling with my hormones. Ehm because beta blockers didn't suit me. Ehm so we have that hanging over us just a little bit. And I've got high cholesterol and I keep to a low cholesterol diet, but apart from that we're okay. His...

(End of side 2, cassette 4)

F114 Side A

His mother is still alive at ninety four and his aunt at eighty four, but his father died when my husband was eighteen months old, of T.B. which was contracted as a result of being gassed in the First World War. So in a way we feel we were both orphaned by the war and that has given us a certain understanding of each other even though it was somewhat different.

Do you notice any symptoms that you would say are contributable to your experiences?

When I was young I mean just a young child, with my new family at first, I used to blink my eyes, you know screw them up tight. And this was regarded as a nervous symptom, which no doubt it was. And they used to give me a penny to stop me doing it. But when I think about physical symptoms no, I don't think I've ever had physical symptoms. And I don't think I've ever been incapacitated in any way. For example I've always been able to work. Ehm the only thing is, I suppose I've had a bit of a tendency to infections and I really don't know whether that's just my nature, that I would've had that problem anyway. It isn't so much that I catch more infections than other people, but I do seem to have a bit of a problem in shaking them off, they seem to last for a long time. I always feel as if I have a rather sluggish immune system. But who can tell whether that was anything to do with my background. And no I can't say I've had either mental or physical symptoms, except for getting depressed when I was so lonely and felt so alone.

How long did your eye blinking problem last?

I suppose it might have lasted for a couple of years.

So at what age was that?

Well maybe seven to nine, something like that. I think in fact that I had this huge drive for health, that I somehow determinedly would not allow myself... I don't mean that I sort of had great control or inhibited my feelings, but I think I tried to use every misfortune as something I would use towards... In those days they tried to build children's character and I think I had this idea that everything bad that happened, I would try to use it to my own good and try to learn something from it. And sort of strengthen myself and be healthy, so that I always had a goal, it didn't matter how bad things were going, I had this goal of being healthy and overcoming it.

Are your children interested in your background at all, to the extent that they would want to visit Czechoslovakia with you?

I think my eldest daughter would, but I've had a resistance to going there which I suppose is really quite neurotic. It says born in Prague on my passport and I've got this feeling that, I got away in '39, then I got away again in '47 literally days before the Communists took over. And I've had an enormous resistance about going back. My Czech relatives all tell me it would be perfectly all right to go back, but I don't trust them an inch because, after all my uncle spent seven years in prison after the Communists took over. And he always said everything would be fine. I simply don't trust them and I'm too paranoid to go. Even though I've known lots of Czechs who've gone back many times and although I'd be interested to see the place and I don't feel it would be particularly traumatic for me, I somehow can't bring myself to go.

What do you feel about the Germans today?

I'm afraid I'm really quite hostile about them. I feel very cynical about the fact that they all pretend that Mr Nobody did what happened. I know perfectly well that they knew about the concentration camps and a very large number of them supported him. Ehm strangely enough my adoptive brother has been married twice and his second wife is a German and it's really quite ironic, because she entered the family like a tiny Hitler, in other words, trying to annexe all the family's goods and behave as if she owned everything. And in fact when my adoptive mother died, this German sister-in-law took everything in the house and then tried to make me pay for any little ornament or anything that I wanted. And in a rather hypocritical way I felt... She apologised to me for what the Germans had done and I'm afraid I was a bit hard and I said, I didn't exonerate the Germans and I couldn't take apologies on my parents' behalf because they are dead and it's for them to make apologies to, not me. I realise now this was a rather pompous way to react on my part. And she's been very friendly to me apart from these annexing ways of hers and on one occasion I said to her, "What about the extremely poor compensation the Germans made towards all of us. I got one thousand pounds for the entire loss of all my family and the loss of my education and the property?" And she said, "Well, you see darling, the Germans were very tired after the war." And then when I said, "Well why did I have to pay a pound each for my parents' death certificates?" She said, "Well, you see darling, the Germans always charge for documents." I read somewhere that the Germans seem incapable of making moral connections and I feel that she is an illustration of this fact. Ehm I find it a little bit confusing because of course there are many qualities about the Germans that I do admire. I admire their efficiency and it's rather painful to see what wonderful home makers they are. And it makes me exceedingly angry to see what homes they make and they wrecked the homes of so many of us. My sister-in-law's mother is still alive and my sister-in-law is tactless enough to say something wonderful like, she is still alive, quite forgetting that she's the same age as my parents would be. And on one occasion my sister-in-law even rebuked me for not being quite as friendly to Mutti as I should be. Apparently with no regard to the fact that it was quite difficult for me to be friendly to a German.

Did you ever discuss what her father did during the war?

Her story is of course like so many Germans, they simply loved the Jews. Her father had a factory and in fact she says that some Jews saved him. It's a long and involved story which I've forgotten but it was something to do with him being a supporter of the Jews and when he was ...(inaudible)... But whether I can believe this story or not I don't know. And then of course I'm thrown into even greater confusion because of the fact that so many Jews were German and I'm always confused when I think about the fact that I can't be hostile to German Jews. Only this last week I've read a book for the first time, 'We Came As Children' and of course this is all about German Jewish children, this book was written twenty five years ago and I wish very much that I'd read it then, because in all my reading of this literature, I've never read this.

Do you feel that the Holocaust could happen again?

Yes I do. I think that we all have it in us to be cruel to each other, every one of us. And we behave ourselves I feel, I mean morally and kindly to each other, according to our environment and training as children and it's heartbreaking to know that the younger generation of Germans immediately afterwards were not taught about the Holocaust and can be so callous. And of course one of the reasons that I'm telling this story is in the hope that the more people are educated about the Holocaust the less likely it might be to happen. After all one only needs to read the history of all the nations to know that we can all be cruel. And none of us can exempt ourselves from the capability of behaving cruelly to each other.

Have you ever been to Germany?

Only on the way to Austria. I would never go to Germany deliberately, no, because I feel too angry. Also I feel scared of the Germans. Ehm it's not that I rationally believe they would do anything to me, I know they wouldn't. But for example even in the 50's I remember going shopping at Schmidts in ehm, near the hospital I was working at in Central London and it was filled with enormous Germans and they absolutely pushed me to the back of the queue although I was in the front. They had the most incredible arrogance. I just can't explain the overbearing strength that they had. And I realised that they would have swept me aside and that they were the kind of people that were killing. I don't know what they were doing in England, perhaps they'd escaped, perhaps they were escaped Nazis, that's how they were behaving. And I would say that I fear and hate them and I wouldn't subject myself to being with them and I wouldn't give the Germans more money than I could help by going there as a tourist.

Did your children learn German at school?

No, none of them know German.

Was that because you...?

It just didn't arise, very few languages were taught in the Canadian school and they only learnt French by chance because they went to Paris and then we put them into bilingual schools.

Do you think that your children share your view on the possibility of another Holocaust?

Yes I think they do. I think they all understand human nature very well. And I think that they would, they know how badly human beings can treat each other not just the Germans.

Would you like to say something about your integration into the Czech relations that you still have?

Yes. I should say that as well as the cousins who survived Auschwitz, there was also the aunt and uncle who spent the war years in England and who then went back to Czechoslovakia immediately after the war. As I mentioned before that uncle was imprisoned by the Communists for seven years and in 1968 when the Communists became aggressive in Czechoslovakia again they realised they had to escape. And they got out really by the skin of their teeth, as the tanks were coming into Prague, and had to re-establish a life for themselves in London again. That was them and their daughter and son, both of whom were married by then. And at that time I was in Canada and I did everything I could to help. You know sending clothes and offering them any accommodation they might want, but they preferred to stay together in London. And from then onwards we maintained contact, we wrote to each other. I would send them parcels and things, because they really had to start from scratch. Although my uncle had an excellent job as a journalist on the 'Financial Times' he was highly qualified in all sorts of subjects, economics, law, politics and journalism, so that he could turn his hand and make a living at a great many things. And in fact I had found him a journalist's job in England earlier, because I had a friend who was an editor of an Engineering magazine and he wrote articles for him so managed to re-establish himself in London before coming over. And I also did what I could to help my aunt establish herself by introducing her to various psychiatric clinics because she had the same job as myself. And the fact that I chose the same job as she, was simply a matter of genes. Because I had no idea of what she did and I chose my job on the basis of what I wanted, not because I knew that she had such a job. And of course we did visit when we visited England. Then when we returned to England ehm we were able to see much more of them. And I would say it's required a certain amount of

ehm adjustment on both sides to have me as part of the family. Because I think that quite a lot of misunderstandings had arisen. I think that my aunt had felt that I'd become very English and she did feel this was somewhat of an attitude of rejection on my part to my Czech family. And maybe I felt some rejection on her part and it's taken a considerable amount of adjustment for us to, I wouldn't say understand each other, because I don't think either of us understands one another. We haven't spoken about it openly at all, I think the subject is too painful for her. And it's certainly extremely painful for me. But what we do is, we've learnt a way of behaving that both of us can tolerate and the younger generation have been more open and we understand that there are problems but we know that we want to be close. Or rather we want to be as close as we're able to handle. And so we've worked out a sort of modus vivendi in which we are closely related, we get on well but we are still careful what we say to one another. But then, there's the next generation which is my children and their children and I think it becomes easier with each generation. My elder daughter in particular is at great pains to be friendly with that part of the family, she wants to be part of it. And in fact the ones in Canada too want to be part of it and they do keep in touch and they visit. So that in a sort of strange attenuated way we are getting closer and I think that the future generations will feel quite at ease with each other and this difficult phase will pass. But I think that we've got to remember that the whole conflict over Canada is perhaps more important to my children than the question of their Jewish background. They I'm sure have to struggle more with whether they are Canadian or British and what my attitude to Canada has meant to them, rather than the question of the Jewish background. Which I think, especially the younger ones see as being a long long time ago and not all relevant to them.

Have they ever been in a synagogue?

No never.

What place does Israel take in your life?

Well until recently I really didn't start to give it serious thought until I began to read the Holocaust literature which was several years ago. It simply hadn't been a part of my consciousness at all, it felt like a remote place with nothing to do with me. And then I began to read about it and give it some thought. And it's the next place I want to visit, I'm very happy to think that the Yad Vashem and other various place of that kind exist. Ehm I found the whole concept of Israel extremely interesting but I'm very distressed about the violence, because I feel that the Arabs have as much right to their land as the Jews and I don't feel that one can take land on the kind of historical basis that some Israelis feel one can take it. And also I think it's a very big mistake for Jews to be violent. I don't want us to get a reputation for treating people as badly as the Nazis treated us.

To what extent do you identify with Israel?

I don't. I'm pleased that there is, in a way, that there is a place where Jews can call home should we be persecuted again, but I don't feel that we should do that at the expense of Arabs or anybody else who might have a previous right to that land. I also find extremely Orthodox Jews hard to deal with. For example those who are unable to eat with me because of their dietary laws, somehow there seems something so bizarre in one Jew refusing to eat with another in view of all that happened, all the persecution that happened. That one should feel themselves either superior or so different that they can't eat together. I would like just to say one or two more things about, in summary about the effects of the Holocaust and being a refugee on my whole life. I feel that because of the problems that I was left with after losing my family, an inordinate amount of energy has had to be extended into just making myself healthy and strong enough to cope with life on my own. And as a consequence I do feel that ehm I'm an under-achiever really. I feel that I have far more ability than I've had the energy or time to use. And also my attitudes about myself and the world were altered to the extent that I saw myself in a rather subservient position and was always afraid to seek any leadership position. I think partly because I couldn't deal with hostility of any kind. And somehow I seem to have the feeling that I should hide to some extent as if standing out in any way was somehow, would somehow make me a target for hostility. That sounds quite paranoid and I don't know how I would've been if none of this had happened. But this is the feeling I have. I want to tell a little story that I forgot to tell early on but which also illustrated the time wasting energy spent on coping with various conflicts. When I first arrived in England I had a letter from my mother with me to my foster mother, saying that she would notice that all my boots needed mending. And when my foster mother took the boots to the cobbler, she looked at them and she could see that in fact they had been recently mended and there was nothing wrong with them. So she took them along to the cobbler because she was quite sharp in this kind of way and got him to take the heels off all the boots. And inside the heels he found all my mother's jewellery. And I was rather proud when she told me this story when I was older. I was rather proud of myself for smuggling jewellery at the age of six and a half. And I kept all this jewellery, some of which was diamonds. And when I got married my husband had no money and I got him to make me a ring with some of my mother's nicest diamonds. And this was a sort of conflict that was set up in that I, as well as having changed my name several times, I felt somehow as if I was a phoney, changing names was phoney, changing countries, pretending to be English was phoney. And now I was wearing my mother's diamonds and pretending that these were an engagement ring. And as if my husband had more money than he actually had. And yet these diamonds were my very own, they were what my mother wanted me to have. So that all these, there have been these rather silly futile conflicts to solve, where I feel I would've been better occupied using my energy for something more constructive. However as I said, having met other refugees this year and sharing experiences with them and learning that they also dealt with both small and large conflicts of this kind, made me feel both less isolated and much more accepting of the fact that this type of thing under the circumstances, was normal behaviour. Nevertheless as far as career development and so on was concerned it was still rather energy consuming. If I've learned anything at all that's useful to pass on, one thing would be that probably any misfortune particularly very large misfortunes are made

much easier if one interacts with people who've experienced the same. And I know this is actually known nowadays, but it's taken me fifty years to discover that had if I mixed a little bit with refugees right from the beginning a great deal of the conflict and isolation would have been avoided.

(End of side 1, cassette 5)

End of interview.