

NATIONAL

Life stories

**LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY**

TRUDY GALETZKAC

Interviewed by Louise Coutts

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



IMPORTANT

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F456 - Side A

Your full name?

Trudy Galetzka, no, you don't want Gertrude Galetzka, that's really my name, you know, Gertrude.

Gertrude?

Gertrude Hannah, you know, Hannah Galetzka.

Could you spell Galetzka for me?

G A L E T Z K A.

And your date of birth?

24th February, 1921.

And can you tell me where you were born?

In Bucherborg (ph) in Germany, Schambaslipper (ph), the country.

And were your parents and grandparents also born the same place?

Mein vater ist auch in Buchenborger (??), oh sorry! Was also born in Bucherborg, and my mother came from Hammel (ph ??). My grandparents lived in Hannover.

And what was the area again, what place was it?

Schlapperclipper (ph ??), it's a small state in Germany.

And your grandparents, did you say?

My grandparents lived in Hannover.

And do you know, that's where your grandparents were from? That's where they were from?

Mein grossmutter, mutterlichesitze (??) came also from Hammel (ph), and I think my grandfather was born in Hannover, but I'm not sure.

And do you know what they did there, what occupation?

Oh yes. My grandfather was a book-keeper. My grandmother didn't work. That was my mother's side. My, on my father's side, my grandfather had died pre-First World War. And my grandmother, they had a business in Bucherborn (??), sort of drapery and ready-made clothes, you know, typical business. And this business, my father eventually got.

And do you remember them?

Only my grandmother, yes, oh yes, very well, oh yes.

And when you were a child growing up, what significant influence did she have on you, do you remember?

I visited her always, yes. She didn't, she had her own house, she didn't live in our house anymore, once, when my parents got married, I take it she bought another house, you know, near there. And I visited her, played with her, looked at all her little knick-knacks and things like that, yes. She died when I was six.

And your parents were, well, they were from the same place?

My father was born in Bucherborg (??) but my mother was born in Hammel, but lived in Hannover at the time she,

When your grandmother died?

Yes, yes.

And your father had a business, a drapery business?

Yes, yes.

And can you tell me something about your parents, what you remember of them. Their character?

Character?

Mmmm, something about what, like, was he involved in, say, community work, for instance?

He was a, what was it called? The President, you would say, or whatever it is, of the Jewish Community in our town.

Right. This is what I'd like to know more about.

Yes. We were not religious Jewish people, but I used to have to take school, you want about the Jewish background?

Yes.

I, let's see. I went to a sort of a school on Sunday mornings for religious, for learning Hebrew and religion. Then we only really went to synagogue, and I don't think the synagogue was actually open on a Saturday, because, not to my knowledge. We went to synagogue on the High Festivals, you know, Rosh haShana, Yom Kippur and Succas (Succot ??).

Well, you say you don't think it was open on the Shabbath, do you think it was a small community?

A fairly small community. Some people from surrounding districts came there as well, and how will I say? Some of my very early recollection of the synagogue was that I used to go downstairs, be beside my father, and when, I don't hardly know the English words for this, you know how people get called up to, you can maybe help me there, to say for the Torah.

Halget nayiyah (?? ph).

Yes, well, it wasn't, we didn't speak, I mean, it was just called, I could tell you in German, to say something of the Torah.

I think that's the English term anyway, to be called up,

Be called up for that, yes. And I do remember that my father had a box with sort of little, lots and lots of metal tickets, and I believe during the time when they were saying the prayers and, they make a donation to the, they said something which represented money, and my father would, I would help him to put these things into little boxes, but he would know, probably, how that was done. I can vividly remember that.

So he was very involved.

Well, that was, you know, he was, as I say, the President of it, which I think was a sort of honorary thing there. But in no way were we religious Jews. We were not, we didn't have a kosher household, or anything like that. And, as a small child, apart from going to this synagogue on High Festivals, I wasn't even allowed to fast on Yom Kippur, you know, that wasn't, whatever's done.

Would you know of any reason for that? I mean, was there a background reason to why, or was that just

Well, my mother didn't do that either. My father would fast. I have no idea, probably for health reasons, that's all I can think of. It was an interesting situation, our Jewishness. We were Jewish, very much. My parents' friends, I would say, on the whole, were Jewish. They sort of played bridge and cards once a week together, right? Now, I'm talking about pre-, pre-Nazi period. My father also was a member of the local, it's a bowling club you call, indoor bowling club, let's call it that, so that, of course, weren't necessarily Jewish people in there, there were no Jewish people, I would imagine, in that. My own friends, I would see were, I don't think I had any Jewish friends at that time, as a child. I can't remember any children of my age with whom I would be friendly. Pre-Nazi I'm talking about now.

Yes. What year would this be? What year would this be?

Well, '21-'33, so let's talk from when I went to school, six years old mainly. Before that, I would play with my neighbours, you know, but again there wasn't a single Jewish child.

(CANNOT HEAR INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION - BOTH TALKING AT SAME TIME)

All Jewish, all my friends were non-Jewish, I mean, I could show you photographs, and I couldn't, wouldn't find a single Jewish child in among them.

Still you were enough Jewish for them to know that you were Jewish?

Yes, because I used to go on these holidays. They were very jealous of me, because I got more time off than they did off. And I was a wee bit annoyed that I wasn't free on Sunday morning because I had to go to this education.

So although there wasn't the religious environment, there was a Jewish environment, as far as

Yes, I hope I'm not going to tell you, for instance, things are funny when I'm thinking back of it now, my father Jewish, and you want to know that?

Yes.

My father would eat ham or bacon and all sorts of sausages. We didn't hold Pesach in the house, nor Shabbath. All that wasn't done in our house, but I was always, I was invited for a Pesach always, to a more religious family, and I went there. I believe, at times, my grandparents made, in Hannover, the, I've seen the Shabbath there. He also did this, my grandfather. So that was all pre-Nazi period. And I remember another thing, it's just little incidents. What we did, we had a sort of, in this country you call it "Sewing Bee", and there were a few children, a few, my girlfriends, we had this also. And what we used to do, this sounds very snobbish, but there was sort of, a home for orphans, and we used to make little gifts to sell, to give them a wee bit of money, or presents for them. Now, I do remember we did that once on a Saturday, and for some unknown reason, my father objected for me to do that. I wasn't allowed to sew on a Saturday or do anything. Certain things he didn't allow, and yet, his shop was open, you know, there was always this sort of contradiction, you know.

And the relationship between the non-Jewish neighbours, non-Jewish friends and yourself was

Perfect.

There was no problems?

No problem whatsoever.

And did you have any other family in the house with you? There was your mother, father and yourself, was there any other family?

Yes, above us lived, we let this flat out above us.

And you lived there?

No, we had, the shop was down below, then, I'll show you a photograph if you want to see that. Shop down below, above was our own house, and above that we let a flat out to some people, and we had one or two more rooms somewhere there too.

And family, was it, did you have any brothers or sisters?

No. No, no, no.

Just your Mum and Dad and yourself?

My Mum and Dad and, of course, we had a couple of maids, you know, the usual thing.

So you were going to, you were telling me about your house. Do you want to describe it a bit more?

Well, what do you want?

The size, say, for instance, the size of where you actually lived, the size.

The flat, the middle flat where we lived.

Yes.

Well, in the front was three rooms, there was a dining room, living and what is called "herrenzimmer" - gentleman's room, for some unknown reason, that's what it was called. There was my bedroom, there was a maid's room, it was a sort of very long corridor leading out, then there was a bathroom, my parents bedroom, and there was a kitchen, and there was certain antebuilding (??) on, there is two or three little rooms there again, you know. And then upstairs, as I said, we had the flat let out, and there were two or three other rooms - one, two, yes, three rooms, which, one was sort of general room, you know it was all sort of rubbish in, and the other ones were sort of visitors rooms, you know, when we had visitors they would live up there. And above there was the loft.

What about the maids you had? Were they ...

Yes, well, there was very small, there was, well, we always had a cook. Then there was another maid which was partly there for myself, to keep me out, in the afternoon.

Like a nanny?

Well, it was called a children's maid, but she also did cleaning in the house, and cleaned the shop, I believe, at times. You know, she did sort of general cleaning, but always took me out in the afternoon, and generally terrorised me!

What memories do you remember about her?

Well, we'd quite a good time going out. Saying something, I actually visited her a few years ago.

Really?

She's dead now. And I was amazed how little difference in age there was really. I was 6 and she was 14 or 15 when she came to us.

Oh I see.

You know, maybe 16. So it's amazing that, and to me she was a great big woman! She was called Augusta, that was always "my Augusta", you know. She used to knit and we used to go to the park with another, my next door neighbour's girl with her nanny, or housemaid, you know. Used to walk to the park every afternoon. And also I went to a sort of a nursery school, you know, pre-school nursery school, and she would take me up and down, up and down to it. One, another vivid memory I have is, and it took me years after to realise who this was, that I was sometimes allowed to help in the shop, you know, do things in there, because a treat was when I was allowed to take in the money, you know, by that time I must have been possibly 7 or 8 or something like that. And I remember pinching a bit of that money, you know, to buy ice cream, you know, all children do that. And obviously my mother or father must have noticed that, but never said anything, and at Christmas, before Christmas time, you have a sort of, a, we actually kept Christmas, as the presents, not Chanuka, that only came after the Nazis came, did the whole thing change. So on Christmas, prior to Christmas, on St. Nicholas Eve, and sort of, Santa Claus, up to a point, comes round. And I remember the bell ringing, and you normally get a little present from him, and he has a sort of a (CANNOT CATCH THIS - bizum (??) beside him, that carries (two or sheet (??)), and so this Santa Claus came, and I'd opened the door, and just said, "Was I a good girl?", you know, there were just were questions, and, of course, everything was fine, I'd never done anything. And then she opened a great big book, which was a copy book from the shop, you know, the day book, you know, and she read out that on such and such a day I'd taken 10 pfennigs, you know, and all this. You know, this was one of my memories of them, but, she just helped and did things in the house, you know. My mother also worked in the shop, incidentally. She worked in the shop.

The help that your mother had, say cooking, was obviously to help her, to enable her to work in the shop?

I would imagine so. It was something, I'm actually one of these very strict, almost Victorian brought-up children, that money and all these sort of things were never, you didn't talk about things like that, it was never discussed in front of me.

And your father was, you're saying, I know what you're saying about your father as being (defutz ??), and he still had some restrictions for yourself, as far as

Yes, yes, there were certain things.

What, what part did your father play when he wasn't quite strict?

Well, I would think on Petrum (??), how my cousins here were brought up, I was probably very, a very spoilt child, very much spoilt. Everything was done for me, you know. He was obviously very interested when it's school, when I went to school, and, but I think I only, he only hit me once, you know.

And your mother and your relationship with her?

Very good, excellent. I really had very nice parents, you know.

Yes. And you mentioned, you touched on the, like the Victorian type, at mealtimes, how strict were they, at mealtimes.

Oh, you'd have good manners.

Were there subjects like, when you'd finished, you would talk about?

The way they had it, the way they discussed, I mean, that was done. They had a sort of code, which I know now what is, and every night, my father, cos my mother would probably do the books. My father would ask my mother how much money she was taking in, and that was not said, 100 marks or 200 marks, they had a code for that, the way that was discussed. No money, I mean, I, right up till the Nazis, even further than that, say till the Kristallnacht, I had no idea how well my parents, or not well they were, everything was always there.

So, to have this picture of you, round the table with your parents, you wouldn't talk about money, so what was the, the talking that you remember, was it just general?

Yes, I would think so, yes, uh huh.

Just general?

Mmm. All pre-Nazi, you know, eventually, of course, the Nazis came.

This was all as a young child?

Uh huh. Played cards, you know, played games, and went for walks. I used to go swimming, and my father took me swimming before, he went for a walk about 7 every morning, and in the summertime he went swimming, and I used to go with him, and sit on his back while he was swimming in the bath, you know.

And what about your education, your school?

Well, I was, as I said, I went to nursery school, possibly for two years. I then, you start school when you are 6, that sort of volkschule, a sort of, generally a type of primary school, and I was there till I was 10, and then you, I went to a private school, fee-paying school, a small fee-paying school for girls, Marienschule, and then, of course, the Nazis came, and took all, we had to leave, and I was about 14 and a half, or so. And

What year would this be then?

Well, I would go to school in '27, and the Nazis came to, I think I must have left school, possibly about '35. You know, when we all had to leave school. I didn't think that was, I would say I would be 14 in '35, that's right, yes.

So what do you remember, what was your first recollection about the Nazis when they came to the town?

Well, I bet you nobody else tells you this! The Nazis got into power, and there was a boycott straight away.

This was 1933?

That was '33, that was the January or February of '33, something like this. At that time, we had travellers come into the shop who would sell certain things in the shop for us to resell, but my father went two or three times a year to Berlin, to buy things, you know, ready-made clothes and things for the shop, there. And he happened to be in Berlin at the time. And I remember when this boycott was. My mother got very annoyed. We were very well standing people in the town, and my father, I think, was also something to do with, I mean, it's all a very small town, but there was a sort of trade, well, Chamber of Commerce, but not like it would be in Glasgow, a small association. As far as I know, he was President of that, and so my mother really got annoyed about this, more than anything else about the boycott. They had all, they obviously always voted sort of, right wing, like Conservative Party, right? And then, and I'm quite sure they couldn't understand, in hindsight, you know, that all this could happen. So my mother, I remember, was so annoyed, she just simply kept throwing money into the, from the cash desk, you know, to make a noise, how much money was there. And then I remember, this, she phoned my father, to tell him to stop, now I overheard her telling that somebody else, and made an impression on me. Phoned my father that this boycott was there, and stop buying, and to come home, because nobody would buy anything anyway. And my father apparently told her on the phone, "Don't worry. I'll be back. Ten minutes will sort that out." You know, I remember that. That was one of my early recollections. By that time, of course, I was in this Marienschule. Then my next recollection of the Nazis was then when my birthday was in February, and normally I invited the whole class, more or less, came to my birthday party, and that year, nearly everybody had some sort of an excuse for not coming, you know. And I'm quite sure that didn't please my parents at all, this business. And they then introduced, there was another Jewish girl at the, but she was a year actually below me, at this private school where I was, Marienschule, and then my parents started suddenly to find a Jewish child here, you know, in the villages around, and I was sort of pushed on to them, and did that, but at the same time I

remember that the daughter of the, sort of the provost of this little village, she played still with me, and came, because they were very strong, they must have been strong against the Nazis, they came, and I remember that her mother, who normally wouldn't buy, never bought in our shop, came during the boycott to our shop, and just walked past the Nazis, you know, quite a few people did that. Uh huh, this is sort of early recollections I have.

When you say she walked past the Nazis, were the Nazis outside the shop?

Yes, yes, the two were standing there, yes.

And how did this affect you, or the school?

Well, to begin with, nothing really very much happened, and I also remember another incident. Then, during the summer holidays, they were extended that year, and I was, spent this holiday with my grand, was sent to Hannover, to my grandparents there. And on hindsight now, it was possibly because there were more Jewish children in Hannover, and my, I remember all sorts of, whom I'd never seen before, suddenly appeared at my grandparents house, to sort of play and do things with me. And, so as you can see, I was really, I think my parents aim was to let me suffer as little as possible under that, you know. It was never discussed, but on hindsight, I can see it that way. And, but, then there was a great big demonstration in, I think it was all over Germany, during the summer holidays, and I was sent for, and was taken back to Bucherborg(?), and I took part in this demonstration. I still remember, to this day, as I said, my father probably thought all this would blow over, he couldn't believe it. And he said, "If they all shout 'Heil Hitler', you just do the same." You know, I probably would have done that in any case.

What demonstration was this one?

Must have been some sort of a Nazi demonstration during that summer, I guess, it was a huge, the Jews were German (?), etc., and they were all marching and shouting "Heil Hitler", and all this sort of thing, and all the schools just marched. We were just singing all sorts of song and things, you know.

The schoolchildren?

And grown ups, there was a huge, you know, I'm quite sure the SS was there too, but I just was so protected as child, I didn't even know anything at that time about And then, the next thing what happened is that, then, eventually, of course, none of the children, they were all frightened to sort of play with me. You know, I couldn't go any more, in the small town, you used to walk up, you know, when you got that wee bit older, the girls on one side walked up the street, and the boys on the other side, you know, you know the usual thing, that all gradually stopped for me. The next thing, I couldn't go swimming any more. I wasn't able to take part in, the Saturday was mainly physical education, and became under the Nazis, we didn't go to proper school any more, it became physical education. I couldn't take part in that, but I did have a, there was something, you took, you know, running and jumping and all these

things, and you could make either bronze, silver or gold medal for that, so I remember that I qualified for the gold medal, and obviously I wasn't given it any more.

But the swimming, these activities went on for the other children in the school?

Oh yes.

So this was because you were Jewish?

Jewish. The swimming baths, we used to spend the whole summer in the swimming bath, after school. Didn't go so much with school to swim, as a school swimming, it was after. But all these sort of sports things stopped.

It was through the school they stopped, or did you have some sort of identification to show that you were Jewish?

They knew, everybody knew in a small town who was Jewish, yes.

So it was,

You wouldn't dare to do anything where you wouldn't be allowed to go.

And were the Nazis there at the swimming, or was it just the people,

It was just probably,

The people you knew before?

F456 - End of Side A

F456 - Side A

Yes, this business here, and we were well-known people in the town. And then a new teacher came to the school, I remember him. And he must have been a quite strict Nazi, and then I suddenly found myself sitting on a bench myself, you know, I wasn't allowed to take part. And I do remember that he taunted me once or twice, not knowing anything, and I knew that one or two of the children would say to me that they didn't really like that taunt, you know, it wasn't true, or whatever. It's not, I mean, I was quite a clever child. I'm not trying to boast, you know, but my maths weren't so good any more, that must have had an effect on me.

And you said earlier that there wasn't many other Jewish children there, so were you on your own?

I sat on my own at a bench. The other girl was in a lower class, and there was another, her sister, but I think she was probably taken off school, because she would be past the school-leaving age.

So this was the same school teacher you had before?

No, he came, he came during the Nazi period. There was a new teacher appeared at our school.

(CANNOT HEAR INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION)

Yes, yes, and there was one rather unfortunate incident. Now, you know that there were other Jewish children, one or two in the town, but you know that, how German Jews are very snobbish towards Eastern Jews, so there were one or two families there who were poor Jews, I still didn't play with them, even under the Nazis. I mean, it's a horrible thing to say that, nowadays, on hindsight, that's how you took it. So I wasn't, and what had happened, there was an incident with one of these children. Whatever it was, the child, I probably had a fight with this girl, or probably called her names or something, you know, she wasn't dressed in the same grade as us. I don't even know whether she was at the school, I simply can't, I'm trying to think, I don't think, I think she just was at an ordinary school, this girl, and there must have been something. Anyway, her parents, believe it or not, under the Nazi period, went to the Headmaster of my school and complained about it, and I remember there was a big kerfuffle about this, and the Headmaster took a part, he wasn't ant-Jewish, he took a sort of part in it, and I think I was called to the Headmaster, and I do remember that my father, I had to apologise to this girl. And my father had to take me up to her house, now, I don't want to sound snobbish, but I had never been in anything like this, you know, upstairs, and they were obviously poor. You know, I still remember that. I'd never really seen that. And I had to go up there, and my father said, "Just say that you are sorry, and then we go away, straightaway." So he took sort of my part. What it all was, I have absolutely no idea any more, but I can still see myself going up these

stairs. At that time, well, I must have been about 12, you know, it's an amazing thing that, you know, if you really think of it.

You mentioned the Eastern Jews.

Yes.

What do you mean by that?

Well, of course, it's the same here. The Jews who came, do you know about that? About Western and Eastern Jews. I don't think the same effect is in this country. It's the same here. The German Jews are so-called "Western Jews", the German Jews, apparently, on the whole, were Western Jews, and then the Eastern Jews came in, who had to leave Poland and Russia during the pogroms, they were the working-class Jews, they were poorer Jews, and that's all it is.

They would be refugees, coming to Germany?

I don't know. In Germany you called them "Ost Juden", so it's an Eastern Jew, it's an Eastern Jew, and they're just slightly below you, you know, and you were upper middle class, and they were working-class, and at one time, with the class, it really is, it's dreadful, if I'm thinking of it now, but you don't, you just grow up like that.

That's right.

So I still didn't play with

(CANNOT HEAR QUESTION)

Never, I've never played with these children.

So, you were at school at this time,

Yes, sat on a bench on my own.

You sat on a bench on your own, then what happened?

Well, then, of course, we all had to leave. And then the first thing happened is the next summer holidays came, and I was bundled off to, that was a Jewish childrens' camp, and we slept in tents, and I spent my summer holidays there.

What camp was this? From the school?

No, from the Jewish, the Jewish people must have organised that. There is something called, I think it was "Reisverbund" (ph ??) I think it was Judische(?). I think it was from a Reisverbund(?), a sort of organisation, and I think it was from former Jewish soldiers who had fought in the First World War, they had some sort of Reisverbund, RVF (??) I think it was, Judische, Soldaten (??), I think it was called. I suppose I could look this, I could try and find out for you.

I could maybe ask you to write it down for me.

I think that it was, now, I may be slightly wrong, but I'm sure I could find out from somebody, the letters.

Were you there all summer?

Well, I was probably there for three weeks, or four weeks, I don't remember, there. And then the rest of the time of any holiday, well, we either went away with my mother on holidays, or would be sent off to Hannover. But on hindsight, I must say, I was as much protected from what happened under the Nazis as it was humanly possibly, by my parents, and I, I never knew much about it really. I mean, I knew, certainly, when you went to a bigger town, you couldn't go to certain shops and everything, you know, and things like that happened.

Was this again just because you were Jewish?

Couldn't go into shops, oh yes, it's,

Because you were Jewish?

Yes. Of course, big notices up, uh huh. And I remember coming back from this holiday, and then things became, I was told I couldn't go to, in to buy ice cream at certain shops any more, and I couldn't do this, and I couldn't do that, uh huh.

To go back to your father's business, when you overheard this conversation.

That he was going to sort this out?

Yes. How did this affect his business? Was he, did he have to close his business?

No, no, he carried on and, to begin with, I think it was just as busy as ever. It was, you see, the town I come from, there weren't so many Nazis active there, very few of them, actually. You know, in comparison very few took an active part in it. Some of them eventually went, but when they did, I always heard my parents say, "Oh, that so and so might wear this uniform there, the SR uniform", but that he'd said he couldn't help it, you know, he just had to do it, but he didn't really like doing this.

And did they hear of anything happening in other areas?

Oh, I'm sure they would, but I wouldn't know.

You wouldn't know. So you were at school, and

There I was put, and the first real thing what happened to me, I had to sit on this bench on my own, and then this other girl, the two of us would spend our time in the playground together. I was ostracised up to a point from all the others.

How long were you on this bench? All during the school time?

Yes. As long as I was at school, I would sit at the front on a bench on my own, yes.

Ah, so this was, I mean, you weren't being educated, this was what was happening to you, your education stopped.

No, I took part in schooling, but I wasn't allowed to mix socially, or sitting beside other Jewish children, other, the ordinary German children, non-Jewish children. But my education I was, I had to do all my work just the same as anybody else.

You were sitting on this bench.

Yes, yes, obviously, as a child, it isn't healthy that, you know.

I'm just trying to picture where you were sitting on this bench.

All the benches were like this at the time, you know, we didn't have tables, we had the work benches with the,

All wood?

... and there were probably only 20 children in the class, and I was sitting, sort of, in the front, there, you know, on my own, there was nobody sitting beside me.

You were isolated.

Yes, uh huh.

But your education went on.

Went on. At that point it still went on, and then I went to this, as I say, I was at this holiday camp, which was great. And when I came home, apparently things must have got more difficult, because I think it stopped then, that I couldn't go swimming any more, I can't, I mean, that's a bit hazy now. And there were certain other things I couldn't take part in. I also used to be in a sort of gymnastic club, in Germany, German Gymnastic Club, that also stopped then, all these things gradually stopped. Then our maids, of course, had to leave, you know. You know about that?

No. Tell me about that.

Now, I can't give you the date for that, but I certain, it was possibly early on in '38 I would imagine, no, no, it must have been earlier than that, it must have been in '35. Our maids, Jewish people, I think, generally, weren't allowed to have any more maids, and so, the reason was in case there was any, my father would interfere with them, you know, sexually. That was a story which was made up. I think there was some story made up about my father, incidentally, I've a feeling something or other was in the local paper about this, but of course, there was no truth in it. You know, he'd probably given somebody a row once, and maybe knocked at her door and told her, or

make her do something at night still, you know how that was. And I remember then, we didn't have any more maids. The only maids we were allowed to have, she had to be over 60, and some woman came who lived in the local old age cum poor house, and she came, and she sort of did things in the house. And I remember my father making a great song and dance about it, that she could not dry dishes! These are all child, literally, up to a point, childhood memories, but they make impressions on you, you know.

Of course, of course. So what happened then? You were at school, and then you left school?

Well, you all had to leave school in, it must have been, either '34, '35, I'm not quite sure. Either late '34, I was in the, I would have been just about 14 roughly. Now, I got home then, so all Jewish children had to leave school, and so I helped, swept the floor, and did things which I'd never done before. I'm not trying to be snobbish, but I'm just trying to tell you the things were, and did certain things in the house, you know, my mother suddenly had to learn to cook and do things like that. And then I was sent, by that time, one spoke about emigration, of leaving Germany, that became then an interest, and I think one of my uncles went to South Africa, another one went to France, to Paris, you know, you heard people, you knew about people who had left. And I also heard that, I think, one of my cousins went to Israel, and we heard of others who would want to go to Israel, but my parents didn't really approve of that. That wasn't, I mean, we were not Zionists in that way, you know. But then they decided there was a Jewish school in Hannover, which prepared you for emigration. It was a sort of a, it was actually a garden, you know, where you learn garden, horticultural school, and there was also for girls, they opened up a department to teach us cooking and sweeping floors, and also to teach us to cater for big institutions. So I was sent there for the next term in, it must have been '35, Easter '35. But prior to going there, my mother said, "Now, we are having to leave Germany some time", you see, and you won't have a shop downstairs where you can go if you need a new dress or a pair of stockings." So she bundled me off to a dressmaker. I was the bottom of the class in sewing, at school. And she bundled me off. You could go to a dressmaker and there was, in our town, and the idea was really, that she made you a trousseau, but I was made there to learn how to make clothes, you know, and I learnt a bit at that time. And then I remember going to Arnhem(?) and I remember my father was terribly upset, I mean, he literally cried when we had to leave the house. And then again, there was another island where we didn't know what happened in the world outside, very much. Do you know that was all Jewish children there, and Jewish teachers? We had further education, you know, still in English and German, and maths and all that, and learnt to cook, and learnt to milk a goat! And they had two sheep which were called Beethoven and Mozart, I remember! Ate the goats, and we done cooking for ourselves, you know, for small houses, and we done both, it was, I wouldn't say it was 100% kosher there, but they certainly didn't use pork or anything. So we learned all this, and we used to go synagogue, there was a local, you know, within the, probably an assembly hall, I would say, where we would go to on Sunday mornings, on Saturday mornings.

Where was this?

Near Hannover, Arnhem. Arnhem. (??) Arnhem it was called, it was just probably part of Hannover, just on the outskirts of Hannover.

So how long were you there?

I was there for three years.

Three years.

Finished the whole course, yes. So it was '38 I would leave.

And then you went back home?

No. I wanted to go on and learn about, you know, the catering or whatever it is, for institutions, you know, the hospitals. And the way things were, there was a school, a sort of college, I would say it was, it wouldn't be university, in Frankfurt, but prior where you, before you were accepted, or maybe I was too young, I don't know, you had to do practical work in, you know, in this field, so I got, worked in a Jewish old age home in Hannover, and that would have to be from, well, I would imagine that I'd left this Arnhem at Easter, probably went home for a short holiday, and then started working in this Jewish old age home there. They all had actually, I was the only Jewish girl there who worked, you know, most of them, they had little rooms, these women or men who were there, you know, and I cooked and did housework, and everything in there, from one part to another. And to this day I don't know whether the lady who was in charge of it was Jewish or non-Jewish, I don't think she was Jewish, on hindsight, because she was there still after '38, you know, she wasn't there after '38, I mean, after the Kristallnacht, she was suddenly away then. But the other girls were all non-Jewish. And they were all very nice, I visited them in their houses, you know. And I slept there with them, I stayed in there, you know.

So you mentioned 1938, that was the Kristallnacht year?

That was before, yes, I was there obviously only for a very short time, uh huh, for a few months.

And what happened after?

Well, that was really dreadful. The Kristallnacht came. I, my mother, oddly enough, had been, I'd seen my mother the day before. She'd visited her parents in Hannover, and I had probably got the day off, and had been with her, and nothing was said. I don't know whether she actually, any of them expected anything. They knew that this, because this fellow came, of course, this Gulchman (??), came from Hannover, and so whether she knew that he had shot this fellow at the French Embassy or not, I have absolutely no idea, you know. So anyway, she went home, I went back to this old age home at night, and I remember in the morning, this lady was in charge there, the matron you would call it, called me, possibly about 10 o'clock, that I would have to go home, my mother was needing me. I had no idea what had happened. And I remember taking the train to Bucherborg (??), which was about an hour's train journey, and coming off the train and seeing my grandparents had been on the train

too. And so they walked a wee bit slower, and they said, "I think you should go on home. Something has happened." Still nothing was said. And I remember walking, I really remember that to this day, walking through this town, now everybody knew me, and people standing in, literally in doorways, sort of shaking their head and looking at me, you know. And I became alarmed by that, nobody said anything, you know, so I got home, and of course, the windows had been smashed in, and my mother was home, and she said that my father was in prison. And then she said that she'd also been in prison. So what, you want to know what had happened that night? I grew up that moment. That was the first time the whole horror of Nazi really came personally to me. I mean, I had seen papers with, you know, Streicher (??) things, and hoards with Jewish things there, but, well, I knew it was all, I wouldn't say I ever worried really about it, you know, because I always said, somehow or other my parents always gave me a happy life. That's all, I mean, to their great credit, thinking back on that. You know, they seemed to, I don't know how they managed it, because I mean, when I hear of other children, they seem to have suffered much more under that, known more about it than I did. Anyway, what had happened during that night, that my parents, probably when my mother came home from Hannover, they'd gone out and played bridge with another Jewish family. Gone home, my father was a heavy snorer, and my mother used to put little things into her ear all night. And my father, I think, had probably got a wee bit excited over the bridge game and had taken some sort of a pill, not a sleeping, maybe even aspirin or something. Anyway, they were sound asleep. There was a door, in our house, there was a door downstairs which would be locked at night, you know, we lived upstairs. So apparently the bell must have been ringing, now this is what I was told then, as I said, I grew up that moment, and 17 years old I was then, so till then, you can see how you can be protected from something if your parents think that it is necessary. I was told that the Nazis, my parents woke up, they hadn't heard the bell or anything, woke up with the Nazis standing beside their bed, with the revolvers drawn, and made my mother dress, had to dress apparently in the bedroom, my father was taken into the bathroom, which was just next door, and so my mother had to dress, in front of this Nazi, and this fellow actually had lived next door to us at one time, a flat from the shopkeepers next door, and I remember they were a big family, and my mother used to help them, you know, they weren't very well off, and my mother, pre-Nazi, always had given them clothes and this and that, you know. Orpheus (?) was his name, the one German I really hate. And so they were both taken to prison that night, and my mother was released the next day. And incidentally, at that time, once we had no more maids, my parents had divided the flat and let out the front part of it. This is important because of what's going on. So my grandparents were there too, and they decided to go home again. And I remember, we also had, by that time, the, the ordinary German people who lived beside us had got another flat, I think that was probably a year before all this happened. And this was a Jewish family who my parents gave the house up above, they lived in a little village and they were, Leiser (??) was their name, and they sort of sold horses and things like that, you know, they traded in animals, you know, farm animals, and I think their business was completely closed down, so they lived above us, and, but he wasn't taken to, that man was not taken to prison or anything, nothing happened. The thing is, they probably didn't know they were living there. And so anyway, my mother was released, and I remember some non-Jewish person, during the day, came to the house, Brandt (??) was her name, (??) Brandt, her husband actually, at one point, had been sent to concentration camp because the son had

blurted something out in school, you know, you've heard about that, he says, "My father doesn't agree with Hitler does", or whatever, "thinks it's stupid", or something like that, so her husband had been in concentration camp. I don't know whether he ever got home, I've no idea, but that had happened. And I remember all these little things, sometimes you sort of heard the grown ups talking about that. She, anyway, this woman, somehow or other, managed to come at night when it was dark, to our house, and she told my mother that she'd seen my father and the rest of the old, in some open cart, taken away, you know, and presumably to concentration camp.

This was your father?

This was my father, with some other Jewish people from the town, you see. And, as I said, my parents, my grandparents went away, and I was left with my mother, and my mother, of course, had a nightmare the following night. And I still remember her hammering against, there was a glass partition, a partition between the front part of the house, which we had let, and she was standing in her nightie, hammering against that door, and I was saying, you know, and she managed to calm her down, and phoned round for one or two doctors to come, and of course, none of them dared to come at the time. My mother couldn't remember it the next day, you know. This went on, several times she tried, you know, she had these nightmares, she was trying, and eventually she did actually commit suicide, but I mean that went, she was still, till my father came home, you know, nothing had happened. At that time, you know, she just had these nightmares. And then she made various suicide attempts.

Was this shortly after this?

Well, my father was probably away for about three weeks. It was November, and I remember she took a huge dose of sleeping tablets, she must have taken. And Christmas, you know, we were having a dinner there, and she sort of fell asleep there, but she, everything, I mean, you name it, she tried it, you see. And became just completely melancholy. And then there was still a Jewish hospital in Hannover, and by the time, sort of, possibly middle January, you know, it just got worse and worse, and they decided to send my mother to this Jewish hospital, and actually, the, the chief doctor there was a cousin of my mother's, and in Germany at the time, you had these three classes in hospitals, you know, and my mother went first class, which meant room on her own, and she just committed suicide there. So, of course, the shop at that time was closed, you know, and had to be sold. I mean, you haven't got time on this tape anymore, to sort of tell you all these things.

We'll do that next time.

F456 - End of Side B

F456 - Side A

How long did your father, how long was your father in concentration camp?

Three weeks.

So what month does that take him?

Well, it would have been some time early December, I would imagine, yes.

So it was three weeks after the Kristallnacht?

Yes. And, he brought, actually, another man back with him, from our town, whom he rescued.

I see.

Uh huh, and he was a sort of a dentist. And this man was very ill with dysentery, and he brought him back with him. My mother, before that, had actually gone with another woman, to Buchenwald. You see, these things, I'm sorry, I keep forgetting these things. During the time that my father was there, she and another lady from, a Jewish woman from Bucherborg (??) tried to get Buchenwald, and I don't know, on hindsight, I don't know what they were thinking about. And, but, they went there, but of course, they never got anything, you know, they were lucky to get home again.

Yes, how long were they there, do you think?

They just, they were away for about three or four days. I think they hired a car and just went there.

And then they came back?

They came back, yes. And my mother still was very melancholy obviously. Then my father came back, three weeks after. He brought this friend of him, really rescued him from the concentration camp. And I still remember the smell of their clothes was unbelievable. But he himself didn't really speak much about the concentration camp. And so then, as I said, I just sort of mentioned to my father that my mother wasn't, was very unhappy, you know, that she had tried this, and he obviously thought that she would be all right again, seeing he was home. But possibly, about a week afterwards, she again made another attempt, and then he rescued her once or twice with it, then the shops were not allowed to be opened any more. And my mother kept saying that one of these people in front of whom she had to dress at the time, had said to her that she was "in our way", if she wouldn't be there, my father and I could get out of the country. I couldn't tell you the reason why she believed that, you know. And so, as I said, she tried several times to commit suicide. And then, in January, after she was sent to hospital, she died in hospital, and somebody said she actually

hung herself. And then the funeral was really dreadful, because all the Jewish people in the district came to it. One or two of the local people came as well, and then, at that time, there was still the Jewish cemetery, and you could still use all that. And, so then, we had to take, my father had to write down everything that was in the shop, you know, an inventory, and my aunt and uncle who came and stayed with us as well, they came from Dusseldorf, and they sort of lived with us there, and so that I would say, was more or less the main time, at the time, just business to try and sort the business out, and that was then, they were forced to sell it, and the money, when it was eventually being sold, didn't really, even though it was put into a closed account, you would call that, you were only allowed so much money per month after this, from your own money, to take out. You know, just from housekeeping. And so that's really all there was, you know, life just went on very very quiet and very subdued.

You mentioned about your mother's jewellery, people coming to take that?

Well, that happened after my father came back. I believe they came to, that was another one of these sort of fines, or something, I don't know, I can't remember what the Nazis called that. At various times, you had to give so much of your personal, you know, your savings, everything you had had to be paid to the State. You know, it was always sort of 1000 marks, or 5000 marks, or something like that, a certain percentage, and then they would give up all their jewellery, and from your silver, you were only allowed to keep, per person, in the household, so with us, three knives, three forks, three spoons etc., and everything else was taken off you. I had, I mean, you tried to get things out of the country, and this aunt who stayed with us was very handy with, you know, she could do things, and a little bit of my mother's jewellery was actually smuggled out to my relatives in Holland, but I never, I mean, it was left there, and then eventually the Nazis got it just same, during the War. I never took it when I emigrated, you know.

Did this law apply to non-Jewish people also?

No, no. No, no, no, no,

This was just the

No, all to Jewish people, yes, uh huh. I can't remember what these laws were called, but it was several times that you had to pay so much from your income, uh huh.

So the household items, per person, that you were allowed, the knives and the forks,

The silver only, only silver.

Only silver.

Pure silver, yes. And the same jewellery, only, you know, gold and silver, or platinum, whatever you had, was taken all off us, yes.

This was all taken?

Uh huh, uh huh.

So after your mother died, what did you do?

Well, we just, on the one hand, prepared further for this emigration. and, on the other hand, we were busy with the house, trying to get things packed up, and everything, I mean, my father handled all that. I mean, I sort of helped and kept house, uh huh, but it was, do you know, then, a law came, this Britain then opened it's doors, to come over here, for us to wait, we could go into America, yes, I don't know whether you know about that.

No, tell me more about that.

Well, I always understood that that happened after the Munich Agreement, that Britain opened the doors. You see, like most German Jews, I think, tried to get into America, as far as I know, and America only allowed so many people from each country, as a quota number, to come there, so the German Jewish, the German quota number was filled up for years could, so you could, so Britain opened it's doors to us, provided we didn't fall on their, you know, the economy of the country, because there was unemployment. So you could either come on a domestic service permit, which most of the girls did, or, you would need to have a guarantor here. Did I tell you about this?

No.

This is actually quite an interesting story. You want to hear that?

Yes, yes.

My father's, my mother's father, my maternal grandfather, remember a story which had been published in one of the Hannover papers, unfortunately I can't trace it. And it concerned one of my ancestors, who was, when he became a journeyman, you know, after he served his apprenticeship, was given a gold coin, ducaten (?), by his father, to go into the world, and see if he could get his experience. He was told, "Never spend this coin unless you're in dire need." So, somehow or other, he landed in Britain, which was at the time, it's quite dramatic this story. This was at the time of the highwaymen, so one night he found himself on, somewhere on one of the highways of Britain, and it was foggy, the usual story, and he, he didn't know where to spend the night, saw a light in the distance, and tried to get in, and he asked could he spend the night with them, and do some work for him, and he sent him up to the hayloft, and when he was there, he heard this moaning and groaning, and then this other person said " " and my own ancestor answered. And it turned out that this was an older Jewish person who had been robbed of his horse and all his possessions and didn't know how to get back to London. So my ancestor gave him this gold coin. And eventually, he gave him his visiting card, and when he come to London, visit him, so, as things go, he went to London, turned out they were very rich people, they were merchant bankers. And my grandfather traced this family, and they apparently were either Birmingham or Manchester, and they guaranteed for my father to come over here. This is the story, I've tried to, I mean, I must get down to

Hannover some time, and try and trace this story, yes. So that's only a little aside there. So anyway, people paid that (??), and in actual fact, I was supposed to wait till my father was also ready to go. He got his visa as well, and I had work in London, and, but you could get what was called a "Packerlaupnitz" (ph ??) which is a permission to take a certain amount of your furniture, and a very little money with you. But, being the Nazis, they made that all very very difficult for us, you know, and so it just went on and on, and eventually it came to August, and in August, they said, "Oh, another week", "another week", and then one night, late August, my father must have heard the Nazis going round our little town, calling up all the young boys to come to the "Luka" (??) Barracks, because they were marching against Poland. So my father, even though he had a visa and his passport, took me to the Dutch border, but wouldn't come with me because he was wanting to get some of his belongings with him, and I was, went across the border, and we had relatives in Holland, who were on the other side, and just sort of picked me then from there. And I was supposed to stay with them, to wait for my father. But that must have on a Friday, possibly. On a Monday they took me to the Dutch Authorities to get permission to stay. And the Dutch wouldn't let me stay, and so I was again, they took me to the port in Amsterdam, and I came over here. So that is really more or less the gist of what happened there.

And this was a year later?

Not even quite a year, no, because my mother died in '39, in February so it was then, just before the outbreak of War. I arrived in this country on 28th August, so it was just, uh huh, uh huh.

And what happened then?

Well, as I said, I had this job so to say, in London, and when I arrived there, it, they were already, had already been evacuated, they were (??) people, I never could trace them. So I had relatives up in Glasgow, and in order to get money out of Germany, what you had done, you bought a ticket to go to America, you bought a ticket to go up to John O'Groats, you know, and then you could sell that ticket, and get a little bit of money, so I did, actually, could use one of these tickets to come then, eventually, up to Glasgow.

Could I take you back just for a moment. Just before you came over here, when you were at the borders of the other side, did, was it any problem with the officials, actually with the passport, or the visa?

I had that.

You had everything.

I had that visa in the passport, my father must have got that for me.

So you just went for,

Well, they came, the Nazis obviously went through the, through the whole train, but they didn't in any way, even say anything to my father, or my aunt and uncle, who were also on the train, they all came with me. It was really a, I still remember going to the station, one or two of my father's friends, the Jewish people, they all appeared at the station to say cheerio to me, you know, it was dreadful, my father was crying, it was really awful. I don't know whether he, my father was, you know, as I said, my parents had a very good marriage, you know, they were very happily married, and he went, every morning, and visited that grave of my mother's, so whether he, maybe he wasn't actually keen on leaving, I don't know, you know, to that. Another thing we had done, actually, in order to work, we went once, my father and I went to Hamburg, to learn making carpets, you know, the production of old masters, you know, old Persian carpets, and, you know, you tried all sorts of things, to learn something, because obviously, in business, he had no other trade or anything, you see, so we learnt that, and I think I learnt making suites (sweets??) and things like that, you know, bits and pieces, you tried, so you could maybe make a living eventually over here.

And where did your father, did your father come?

No, no, no, no, no. He was in, what I heard was, that once the War broke out, eventually our house, of course, was sold. And they made all the Jewish people stay in one house, you know, some other Jewish house, in Bucherborg (??), all together, and I think possibly by that time, they had to wear a star, you know, we didn't have that, of course. And so that is the last I heard, and then he was on a transport to Riga, and was killed there.

Did you hear much about that time, what did you hear?

No, it wasn't, not till after the War that I found this out. This friend of mine, well, another Jewish girl who lived in our house, wrote me a letter and said that my father was shot there.

... communication, letters,

There was nothing. There was one Red Cross letter from my father once, on this transport, but that is also lost. Could still be in among my aunt's papers, I don't know.

So now you're in England.

In Scotland, I came to Scotland, I was only three days there.

You were only three days in England?

Only three days, yes, uh huh. Scotland, yes. What I also did, of course, I had private lessons in English by that time, then. You know, there was a Jewish lady in Bucherborg (??), who gave me more private lessons in English, uh huh.

So this, of course, helped you.

Well, I was told I could speak very good English, you know, I was told I could speak it, and the first person I met was a, the first thing was getting coffee, which was plain awful when I came off the, I asked there to get coffee, and it came out of a bottle, you know, and I tried to explain what is coffee, because I'd never seen coffee coming out from a bottle, there was this railway station. And then I arrived in London, and the first person I spoke to was a London taxi driver, and I could've spoken Chinese! So my confidence in English went then! And then I had a cousin in London, and he sort of arranged for me, there must have been hostels for refugees like us, and I stayed one or two nights there, and then got on a train, and arrived in Glasgow.

And this hostel, was this people of your own age group?

There were all sorts of people there, yes, uh huh, uh huh. I mean, there was such a, you know, upheaval at the time. I know I shared a room with other girls, yes, for two nights, you know, but I think we were all busy trying to get our own life arranged then, you know. We were definitely all very unsettled, of course, to begin with.

Generally, you felt quite welcome?

Oh yes.

By the British Authorities?

Oh yes, oh yes, uh huh, uh huh. You see, when you are 17 or 18 years old, you do everything with a bravado, you know. You know, you're not, you don't really feel sorry, at least I didn't feel sorry for myself in any way. This was a new life for me. I would see, this is how I looked on to it.

And what happened, it was Glasgow you came to?

I came to Glasgow, and I stayed for possibly about half a year with my aunt here, and my uncle, you know, they had a small factory here in Billington (Hillingdon ??), a (??) factory. And I stayed with them. They also had a son and daughter, but they were still of school age, so they were then evacuated to Lark Hall, so I stayed with them, but quite honestly, it didn't work out, because they were very, different way of being brought up, the children there, it just didn't work out at all, and I met, eventually, another girl who'd come from Germany, a Jewish girl, you know, like myself, a refugee, and her mother. And I would say, in many ways, the mother was influential and making me go, you know, leave my aunt, and get, then I went into domestic service.

Well, you say it didn't work out, it's not something I want to pry into.

Oh, you can pry into that, I don't mind!

What do you mean by that?

Well,

Was this ...

I would say my aunt was the youngest of the family, and as probably the Wertheims (??), which is my maiden name, were quite a proud Jewish family, and my aunt was still very much like that, it was Wertheim (??), even though she was called Goldschmidt, she was still a Wertheim, sort of Victorian. "We Wertheims do this", and "We Wertheims don't do that." Right? So, she also, actually, never quite could throw away that sort of, well, this middle-class, you know, how much money you earn and how much you save, and all this. I wasn't, I was much more a protected child in these ways, I mean, it didn't, these things didn't, everything was always there for me, and here was my aunt, and I was suddenly became their domestic servant. They didn't treat me the way I hoped my parents would have treated, and I was the poor one, they were quite, already quite comfortable off at that time, because they'd money got out of the country. They also had some money from my relatives in Holland, and they'd opened this factory here. So they, in many ways, treated me like a servant. And what had happened is, that I kept house for them, did all the cooking, then I went to the factory, or they brought work home for me and they made me, I mean, it was paid very very little at that time, I mean, I just got the same wages as any other home worker, but they always made me pay that into the bank account, you know, so it was so different, the way I was brought up, and one of them, they also said to me that I would never have to talk to my cousins how my mother died. I mean, they were old enough to know, because they were 15 and 13, or something like that. It wasn't till years and years after that my cousin, he had found out how my mother died. This is how they were brought up, and also, I mean, it's all laughable, it's so long ago now.

So this would also be a further strain on yourself?

Possibly was, yes. I've got a nature, I'm sort of happy-go-lucky, you know, I can get over things, yes, uh huh. I mean, nothing sort of, "it will get better tomorrow". But it was really more through this Laupheimer (??), was her name, this girl Laupheimer (??), and I remember what really got her, that we were, once or twice, we went out to other houses of refugees, you know, Ruth and I, maybe in the afternoon, or when, you know, I'd done my housework, and I went away. But I could never stay, because I had to be home for, to make my aunt's dinner, and this Mrs. Laupheimer really got annoyed about that, you know, she felt I had the same free, and they were working already in domestic service at the time, and so she sort of influenced me to, eventually, I left my aunt and got myself a job.

And where did you stay?

With these people in Giffnock (??), in Giffnock, (??) in Giffnock (??), went down also.

And what happened then?

Well, we also, Ruth, this is my other friend, and I, there was already a youth club, which, I think the name was Dr. Beck (??) had started that in Glasgow, you know, for young people, young refugee people. We met in their house. The parents, I don't know whether you know Mrs. Leipholtz (??), it was her parents, I'm sure it was Beck

was their name. And they had sort of young people together already, and I think we probably talked about our work and everything, and a bit of German culture was thrown into that, you know, reading books and things like that. And then we heard, Ruth and I heard about this other refugee club, the, it was just called the Refugee Club. At that time there were Austrians, Germans and Czechoslovakians in it, and they said that that was much better youth club, you know there was more fun in it, you know, and everything, and there was many more people in there. I think there were probably eight in this one, so some of us eventually went to this other club, which first of all, met in the YMCA, which was, at the time, down in Bosford (??), not the YM, the YWCA, which was down in Bosford Street, uh huh. And was the same thing again, you got a cup of coffee, you know, the usual cup of coffee and everything. There was either music, or some sort of cultural things, and talking about our own situations. Then the Club moved to, some of them moved to Pitt Street, and there then the Czech boys were here, Czech students, and they sort of begun to play the leading role in there. There was one for adults met there, it still was international, more or less international, you know, the three together, and then we started having a youth club. And these Czech boys, at the time, were, they were all, while they were Jewish, but they were very strong Left-Wing, you see, so we came gradually under this influence, you know, it was the first time we ever heard there were people who were against the Nazis and all this sort of thing happened then. But we were still in domestic service at the time, and as I said, we met probably every Sunday, in, in Pitt Street, and then we started getting, they sort of formed little groups, we got a bit of political introduction to that, you know, things were explained to us.

Was this a Jewish club? Or refugees from various countries you mentioned.

I think at that time, they were mainly Jewish. There could have been one or two political refugees in among them as well, but most of the men, of course, were interned, you know about that?

Well, you can tell me more.

Okay then. The beginning of the War, we all had to go through a Tribunal, so this, we were, I can show you some of these things. When you came to this country, you had to register. Everybody got a police book, yes? And you'd a register. Then we were all sent for, and got, there was some tribunal for us, and to begin with, we were all classified as enemy aliens, because we came from Germany. You see, what Britain was worried about, and possibly it happened that some fifth columnists came over to this country, and masqueraded as Jewish refugees, you know, Nazis, infiltrated. Probably that was true, you know. So I remember sitting for this tribunal, I'm sure it was in the, you know where the fruit market is, one of these big halls there, well, there was at that time, you know, it doesn't matter anyway, and we were all sitting there, and there were, and what really amazed me, there were a very lot of older, older Jewish people there, who turned out to have been Polish Jews, who had been living in this country for donkeys years, but never taken out, you know, the families had never taken British nationality, so they were there as well, with their books, and we all had to go through these tribunals. And to begin with, they said we were all enemy aliens, and then we were eventually classified as friendly aliens. And some time, in the beginning of the War, well, the War started '39, it was probably maybe only '40,

maybe even before that, a lot of the men, and some women, all got interned. Some of them were sent to the Isle of Man, and stayed there. Some came back about a month or two afterwards again. Then a lot of them were sent over to Canada, most of them, I don't think, the ones who came back, the rest were all sent to Canada, and some of them to Australia, actually, one of the boats sank, which went over to Australia, and one of my husband's friends was drowned on it. And even from Canada, a lot eventually came back, some of them stayed in Canada, some of the boys, like this cousin of mine who was in London, he now lives in Canada, he just stayed there. And the people like my husband, who were political refugees, they, I think, were probably the very last ones who got out, and, do you want to know a wee bit about these internment camps?

Yes.

Well, the internment camps were very well organised, because, obviously

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... our own people there, you know, talked to them, and they said external university exams, also, on the other hand, there were, these were possibly mainly the non-Jewish refugees were there. Most of them had been in Czechoslovakia first of all, and then from Czechoslovakia they eventually came here. I'll tell you that another time, that story. And, but most of them were probably just ordinary craftsmen, you know, they weren't, you know, university trained, they were working class. And they also built huts there, which, for army, or for prisoners of wars, and they were, you know, they came out of the camp. So I remember my husband who also, he left Germany when he was very young, also about 19 or so, so he didn't, gone through the unemployment, and didn't really have a trade either, he worked in the mines for a while. But there he learned joinery, and so did lots of the Jewish people, learnt the same thing, handicraft, you know, and everything like that. So, in many ways, internment camps did some of the refugees a lot of good, you know. They also learnt English there, everything. It was quite high-powered, the university. I have one of the papers here from the, one of the last, you know, I just happened to have one, you know, and I'm holding on to that.

And where was this internment camp?

In Canada.

In Canada.

But, in their camp, he was with, and there was Klaus Fuchs(??) was in among them, but then they also brought in some of the German prisoners of wars came there, and they came there, and I think there was objections to that, and they eventually segregated them. But they were kept very well, foodwise. We sent them, you know, some of our food from our, you know everything was rationed, so we saved some of our coupons to send them some cereals and things over, and they didn't like to say that they didn't need it, because, apparently, it's a law that prisoners of wars, or internees during the War, doing work, and have to get the same standard of living, like the troops of the country, so the, so they had huge lumps of butter, and God knows what, and everything over there, so they had more than they could use. And we sent them stuff over.

When was this? What year was this?

That would be right up till the last month, came home in '41 when the Soviet Union entered the War. The reason why the Communists, the Soviet Union entered the War, called the War, a "Capitalistic War". I mean, you can argue about that nowadays in hindsight, but to begin with, they weren't for the War, they were anti-Nazi, but they considered that the War was a capitalist war between two capitalist countries. I mean, we're going into high politics and all this just now, you see. And once the Soviet Union entered the War, then, by that time, of course, they were, then they got released

and they came over here, they did everything they could to help the war effort. I mean, on hindsight, some of them said that it was wrong, in the beginning, this opinion, you know, but ...

And did you say that your husband was in Canada?

Yes. He was a political refugee.

So, tell me more about your husband, how you met your husband.

Well, they came then back to Britain.

This was before he was your husband?

Oh yes. Oh yes, for goodness sake, yes.

Tell me more about how you met.

Well, what happened is, that, you know, there was, they were what you would call the Communist Party in emigration, right? And, of course, once they sort of were sent all over the country, possibly to, so my husband found himself here.

Where was he from?

He came from Upper Silesia.

And where is that?

That is now Polish, on that side of Germany. They came, and they fought the Nazis very hard. I don't know whether you want that all mixed up, this is actually a difficult story altogether. And they, then, as I said, he was, came over here, he was in Cardiff to begin with. They also, when they came over here, had to have families who sort of looked after for them, and it was mainly, you know the Left, Labour Party and Communist Party families who would look after them, and they came. Then they were all interned, every one of them was interned. And they only got out once the Soviet Union entered the War, they came over here. And then whoever it was, how will I say? The Higher Ups in the Party, how would you say? Well, the hierarchy, you know, there were a couple of

The officers?

Yes, the officers of the Party, whatever they were functionaries, we called it in German. Well, the ones who were, you know, probably older and the ones who were in charge, they were, say the President, or whatever they were, and they then told all these people, "You go to Glasgow." "You go to Birmingham." "You go to Manchester." "And you stay in London", you know. And I would say the ones who were possibly more qualified, stayed in London, and the others were directed here, and somebody slightly more high-powered came to Glasgow as well, and my husband was there too. So he came then to Glasgow. Now, and he had a job to make

ammunition boxes, but, for some reason or other, because he came, he worked in a mine in Germany, the Communist Party wanted him to become a miner, and stay in among the mines, which was the reason, I would say, was possibly to represent, to say that there were Germans, not all Germans were Nazis. I think that was one of the main things that the German Communist Party tried to do. The other thing then, so they came to Glasgow, right? And we were, our club then was in Pitt Street, and we heard about this house being empty on Sockihall (??) Street, which was the little house up on the hill, yes? And then we went, got that. I believe, possibly, the money must have come partly from the Labour Party, partly from the Communist Party, from the co-operative who helped us get that all organised. I mean, I only assume that now. I can't see any other, because none of us had really much money. And that was then opened up, and we moved into that refugee centre. And I would say that then these members of the Communist Party who were there, who, at the time, never admitted to it, and I had a lot of heart-searching since, you know, when this came up. Will I say, because my husband didn't even tell his own children that he was a Communist. You know, I eventually told them that myself when they got older, after he died. And they called themselves "Progressive", because they were frightened that they could be sent out of the country again, you see. And so they never admitted it, but, of course, everybody knew what they were. And anyway, they became, in many ways, the leading lights in the refugee club, inasmuch that they sort of manoeuvred it. It wasn't really a Left-Wing discussion club, to that, but a lot of us came under the influence and heard, for the first time, about politics and everything, and obviously, it was them telling us how bad the Nazis were, and what happened, etc. etc.. We all became to believe in it, you know, we became quite strong Left-Wing, and it was all done in little cells, you know, maybe they picked, you know, one of them had three or four, and we had little meetings. And we read, we had to bring every, we read one or two of these papers there, I can't remember what it was called. It was a weekly, a weekly paper came out, and we read that, and we made a report on the political situation, so we became interested in politics.

Was this a Jewish Club?

No, it wasn't,

Or was it non-Jewish people?

It was Jewish and non-Jewish. I would say the majority of the political refugees were non-Jewish, there were some Jewish refugees, Jewish people among them as well. And I would say, probably about 10 in Glasgow, there may have been more, but I would have to think terribly hard about that. And they then, then the law changed, and we were allowed to take up any kind of work, right? So we were very much influenced by the Refugee Club to take up war work. You see, we didn't come, refugees didn't come under this law that we had to do work of national importance like everybody else had to do during the War. I just don't know how much you know about that, but everybody who wasn't in the army, I think, up to a certain age, had to do work of national importance. I mean, you weren't allowed to work in luxury trades or anything like that. But as refugees, we didn't come under this law. And a lot of the refugees, during that time, made their money, unfortunately. You see, this comes back to the same thing where I got annoyed, and this was actually, this Refugee Club,

being influenced by Left-Wing, you know, were very much totally against the Nazis. I would say the majority of us, the very big majority, all went into national, into work of national importance, and a lot of the other ones had the little factories and things like that, you see. And so we then also went round and made speeches in all sorts of clubs, womens clubs, trade union clubs, co-operative clubs, to press for this National Front.

Did you talk at these meetings?

I talked once or twice, yes, uh huh. Once or twice, I talked about that too, went out, you know, we sort of, by that time we'd learnt quite a wee bit, you know, and we did this. And .. (??) the second front (??) came over, we all thought we'd done a lot for it, it was open, you know. I mean, you can laugh about it now, but at that time, you see, you're young, you get so enthusiastic, I'm sure you have gone through this experience yourself in your life, when you are young, you know, you rebel against everything. And, of course, my aunt and my uncle, they were very very much against all this, because of, they thought it could harm us in any way, this being Left-Wing. And this is how I met my husband.

Were you staying with your husband at this time?

Oh no, no, no, never again, That was just, we were living in digs, in rooms. Most of us had rooms somewhere or other, and just paid and went out to work. I then started, once I could get away from this domestic service, I was always quite interested in sort of agriculture, or gardening, so what I did, I took myself up to the College of Agriculture, which was, at the time, on Blighsfoot (??) Square, or a part of it, and somehow I managed to talk them in to give me a course, they were, I mean, I must say, they were very very helpful. Wherever you went, people were always awfully nice to us, even when I was in domestic service. And so they then said, all right. I went then, they sent me for a course, I think it was about six weeks or so to West Ockencruif (??), the Agricultural College in Ayrshire. Near Ayr, uh huh. So I went there, and I had a course on looking after chickens and hens and all this. So it was really great. And it was all paid for me, you see, I didn't have to pay a penny for that. I was just sent there by this fellow, you know.

Part of your education?

Yes, yes, they just sent me there, and somebody paid for that, uh huh. So I was there for a month, and came back here, because I still was, well, while I was there I didn't do anything with the Refugee Club, but I came back then, and then this Agricultural College, the Director knew this farmer, they had a big farm in Easter Curras (??) near Kirkentilloch (??), so I went there then. And he had various refugees working for him, as you saw on the tape, that fellow, Mr. Finlay.

And

And I stayed then with, on one of these houses there, with one of the farm workers.

On the farm, you mean?

Yes, I stayed there then.

At Kirkentilloch (??)?

Well, Easter Curras (??) it's called, it's near Kirkentilloch (??), yes, uh huh.

And what happened then?

Well, I was there, I don't think it was quite two years, maybe a year and a half or so, well, I actually got your boyfriends, and possibly a bit worse than boyfriends, and I don't think the people I stayed with, were (??) I had a boyfriend, and so they then said I couldn't stay with them any more. But I got rooms then in Glasgow, but I still worked on the farm, and in many ways, this was obviously one of the features of this Club, that we all got our own boyfriends, you know, and vice versa. And, on hindsight, you must consider, we were probably all craving for relationships, we were on our own, and this was then, this sort of went a bit further probably, at times, you know. And I then, I was in rooms in, first in Great Alban Street (??), and then I moved up to Charing Cross, and was in rooms there. And then when these political refugees came back to Glasgow, two of them got rooms in there as well. And this is where I met my husband then, you know, through the Club, through the Refugee Club.

And had you known him when you were at the Club earlier, or was this you just starting to go to the Club. You mentioned the Refugee Club earlier.

Oh yes, but they weren't there, they were interned. No, no, I didn't. I had other boyfriends before, but

When you mentioned your husband, not your husband at that time, but your husband being in Canada,

Yes, I'd no idea,

This is, you didn't know him then?

No, he was one of these Communists who was sent to Glasgow from the London Office, or whatever you would call that.

I'm just trying to, you know, put it all into the right time, when this happened.

Well, they came back, it would be '41.

This is 1941, and then you, after 1941, this is when you went to the farm?

No, I was already working at the farm at that time, because I would need to look at my refugee book. I've got a book, I think, do you want me to do that just now?

No, no.

I can date that to the day.

No, I'm just trying to see, when you came back from the farm, was when your husband came back from Canada, is that what you're saying?

No. I believe they came back in, they came back to Glasgow in '41. I would say during 1940, I couldn't tell you what, now I would need to look it up in this little book. This restriction was lifted on us, that we could only do domestic service. We were then allowed to do work, ordinary work, but we didn't come under the law to do work of national importance, right? So I then went to the farm. Left domestic service and went to, first of all to Occancruif (??), and then to this farm in Easter Cuddah (??), and I, as I said, I stayed on the farm, then got rooms in Glasgow, and eventually in Charing Cross there, but all travelled each day, back and forward to this farm. Then, as I said, my husband came back from, with all the other ones, from Canada, and we sort of got friendly there. We were just friends, yes, uh huh, and eventually a bit more than friends, you know. But I wouldn't have married at that time because you didn't know what happened to your father, you know, you had absolutely no idea what happened at home, so we just went together. The Club also went for holidays to Carfen Hall(??), it's near Stephenson(??), twice we got this, it was a place which belonged to the co-operative, and we got that from, for a fortnight during the summer time, we went there. It all comes out a bit higgledy-piggledy, I'm afraid. So, I worked at the farm. Then they asked me to work for our Club, and I would say that was probably early '42 or so, some time in '42, and then I started working for the Refugee Club. I worked in the kitchen, and waited at the table, and whatever was necessary there. And possibly about half a year, might even have been a whole year. And all the time, we were, I mean, our life, really revolved around this Refugee Club in many ways. We made friends there, we went out together, and to the pictures, theatres, concerts, and just had the Club Meetings there.

So the majority of your social life

Was all there. At that time, we hardly knew any Scottish people. I got to know one family eventually, you know, we're still friends to this day.

And was it just shortly after this that you decided to get married?

Oh no. No, no, no, no. No, no. I then went and worked in a nursery, market garden. I left again, the Refugee Centre. I couldn't tell you the reason for that any more, possibly I thought I wanted to do more war work, found that more important. And I worked in a nursery in, what you call it? That Drum Chapel (??), market garden.

In Drum Chapel? (??)

In Drum Chapel, yes. And we grew tomatoes and lettuces, and things like that. So I travelled back and forward there every day, and I stayed there till the end of the War, in '45, and shortly after that, when the War was finished, you know, the American Army wanted people like ourselves, refugees, who could speak fluent German, I suppose they would have taken other people who could speak fluent, they wanted us

for, to help the censorship in Germany, to censor German mail, so we were offered to do this kind of job. It meant it was the first time ever we got really a good salary. So we went to London.

Was this through the Refugee Centre that you got word of this?

I'm sure it came through the Refugee Centre, because we had little newspapers and things like that, uh huh. I'm sure this is how I heard about it. And, I mean, we had lots of things, you know, we had contacts with refugees through the Club in, in London. I went down to London once or twice to meetings, and I was actually secretary of the, for a while, of the refugee, it was called "The Free German Youth". I was secretary of that, and for a while I was actually, well, a leader of the young people that were people who had come as children over here, and they also came to the Club. We had a little group for them, and we did handicrafts with them, and again, some sort of, most of it was done in German there, you know, sung songs, and all this sort of thing, you know, and little theatre groups. And I think they had a choir and things like that as well there. And I'll tell you about what I did first. So anyway, I went then, I worked in this nursery. And they were also very kind to us, to me, any time, you know.

This was in London?

No, no, no, that's all in Glasgow.

This was also in Glasgow.

Also in Glasgow. It was up at Drum Chapel (??), the nursery, and grew tomatoes, lettuces, whatever, and served to the customers, you know, served customers with tomatoes. Every week, there was a long long queue of people who came to buy our tomatoes, once or, I think it was twice a week you could come and buy tomatoes there, which was, of course, scarce, all these things. So there was long queues of people there, wanting them, and I sold them to them.

And then you got word about the Americans?

And then the War was finished eventually. And I heard about this American thing. So I went down to London, we had some sort of exam, and I was accepted for that. And

And what did you do there?

Well, we got into uniform. It was, we were actually, sort of lieutenants, range, so we got that type of uniform, all supplied to us, and we went back over to Germany. First I was in Munich, and then I was in Esslingen (??), and the journey was unbelievable, because it was, you went over bridges which had no sides, you know, it was just rails going across there, you know, it was all war-torn Germany, and spent a night over in Paris, and all Germany down, and we just all, all German mail came to these censors, you know. There was one in Munich and one in Esslingen (??), a station, censorship. And these, you sat, you had a leader on your, we were divided into little groups, and

there was one who was the leader, who was, to whom we were, and we just read the mail, and we were looking, obviously for people who had, war criminals, and, or anybody who was Nazi or SS members, and also we were looking out for (??) interesting, anything from industry, which might be of use to the Allies. So we read these letters, and if we found anybody in it, you know, they might have written something about their past Nazi things and anything, you had to make a little report. It was really done like a little newspaper. We had to write a headline for that, and then that was given to the leader of our little group, and she just handed that on, you see. And eventually, you became a leader. You know, you sort of got on with that a wee bit further. But there again

How long were you doing this?

Well, that would be from, possibly November '47, I would imagine from November, not '47, '45, and then I got home, we got leave, I came back to Glasgow, and we decided then that we would get married on my next leave. And so I got married in '46, and went back over, because my husband, at that time he wanted to go back to Germany, my husband in particular.

While you were working in this censorship in Germany, was your husband there at that time?

No, no, he wasn't accepted for it. He wasn't accepted, possibly because of his political background again, you know, they can find out all these things. And so I went over, and

Tell me more about where you were. Where were you ...

I was first stationed in Munch, possibly for two or three months, and then transferred to Esslingen (??), which is near Stuttgart, and we stayed in German houses, you know, which were taken over by the American Army, you know, we stayed, probably all shared a room at the time, and we got all our food and everything there.

Was it American uniforms you had?

Yes. Yes, we all wore American uniform.

Did you know at this time, had you found out about your father, at this time? Had you known before you ...

Yes, oh I forgot to tell you that, sorry. Yes. Lists came to the Refugee Club, of people who had returned from concentration camp, somehow. That was to, came before I left, how that came out so quick, I don't know. It's maybe, I may be a wee bit hazy, I mean, I would need to look up this book about all the dates. It's amazing how quick things have happened. And we got, there were long lists of people were sent over, who had come back from concentration camp, and we obviously looked for that, but no, I didn't know that my father, this girl possibly, how I found out about her, possibly I, of course, I wanted, we weren't allowed to go back to my home town, we weren't allowed to do that, to go from one zone, this was American Zone, and you

couldn't go from one zone to the other, at the time. And I would imagine that I wrote to Buchenborg (??) at one point, to find out whether anybody had come back. I'm quite sure I would do that, you know. Because you always thought, "Well, my father wouldn't know where I was." You know, so I'm quite positive that I would, at that time, have written there. And this girl had come back, Hilda Leise (??), she was this Jewish girl whose parents lived above us. And she wrote back to me at the time that, how my father died, uh huh. I mean, I'm hazy on it, but I can't see it any other way as have happened, because I did write to various people.

So you found out about your father, and then you were working back in Germany. And you say you were in the American Zone?

Yes.

You couldn't go to any,

I couldn't go to Bucherborg, no, no, I couldn't, I tried, but I couldn't. And, to begin with, we weren't even allowed to, what they call "fraternise" with the Germans, and then eventually, that was lifted under certain, there were probably a few restrictions on us, but most of us then got to know some Germans, and, having known all about the anti-Nazi ...

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