

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Gertrude Scarlett Epstein
November 17, 2011
RG-50.106*0193

PREFACE

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GERTRUDE SCARLETT EPSTEIN

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Dr. Hannah Starman: So this is the interview with Scarlett Epstein in Hove, England on the 17th of November 2011 and the interview is conducted by Hannah Starman. Professor Epstein, thank you very much for accepting to give this interview. Tell us a little bit about your family. Where were you born, when, siblings, parents.

Gertrude Scarlett Epstein: Ok. Well I was born on the 13th of July 1922 which makes me ninety years old next, next July and my parents had two sons already. So I was the apple of my father's eye because he always wanted a daughter and there I was. So I couldn't do wrong. But he came from what was then when he was born, Moravia, in Czechoslovakia. And his great grandfather was actually an illegitimate child because that was during the period of Queen Theresa who ruled and very anti-Semitically the Austrian empire. And she introduced a law under her rule, they were always introduced rather, that a certain number of Jewish weddings took, could take place. But once that number had been achieved no more Jews could get married. Well my patrilineal ancestors wanted to get married so in a sense my grandfather was an illegitimate child. And I guess if you want to go down the generations we're all successive generations, we're all illegitimate. And he was Jewish. But they were not Orthodox. And but they came actually from a place, he was born and grew up in a place, my father, in **Boscowice** which is near Brno. And Boscowice has the oldest Jewish cemetery in the whole of that part of Europe. So it must have had quite a large Jewish community. And there was –

Q: Excuse me. What were your parents' names?

A: Well my father's surname was **Grunewald**, Greenwald.

Q: And his first name?

A: **Siegfried**.

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Q: And your mother?

A: My mother was Rosalia **Buber**.

Q: Do you remember their dates of birth?

A: No, I don't.

Q: And your siblings?

A: Oh my father and mother's date of birth. Yes, I remember that. I thought my grandfather. No, my father was born on the 20th of October 19, no 1895, 1895. And my mother was born on the seventh of December 1895.

Q: So your father was born in Moravia. What about your mother?

A: Yeah, my mother was born in **Stukova** in what is now Slovenia.

Q: Slovakia?

A: Yeah, Bratislava.

Q: Yeah, Slovakia.

A: I have actually met, I'm likely to remember that. When I was a little girl she took me on a trip to visit her uncle, her paternal uncle who had lost a leg during the First World War which I find very strange. And he walked on one leg. And he was a lovely old man.

Q: And he would have fought for the Austrian army of course?

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A: Yeah, yes so had my father too. He had actually got a medal.

Q: For bravery?

A: Well he was with the medical. He had to take the bodies, retrieve the bodies from the field. And all the hurt were in the middle, soldiers. And he actually, I mean I have the story and this was a, helped me to understand the relationship between my mother and her children. Because her first born who was ten years older. In my autobiography. He became my role model. But he was born on the 20th of November 1895. No, 96 a year after. And then came the war and my father go, and so my mother had this little boy. And she always showed him photographs.

Q: What was his name?

A: Otto. Otto.

Q: That's your eldest brother.

A: Yeah, and she always showed him photographs of his father because he was a very good looking young man and she was madly in love with him. And she was, had the brain in the family. So it was good looks married good brains. And George Bernard Shaw once I don't know whether you knew was approached by a very good looking lady who said I would like to have a child from him because having your brain and my good looks. And he said well but what if it, if the child has your look and your brain. And my look. That would be just too bad. That's, I've always liked that.

So she, so my little brother, when he was three or four years old, he could, he would say this is my daddy on the photograph. And then my father got home because he was really -- he had shock because he always had to collect the bodies. And so he got home and they had a doctor who was a friend of the family. So the doctor said to my mother, well you must. That was in 1917. Cause my other brother then was born in 1918.

Q: And what was his name?

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A: The second brother. Kurt.

Q: Kurt.

A: And so my father came on home leave and they lived in a small apartment in the district which was full of Jews in Vienna. And so he went out and he came back and my mother had gone out so there was the little boy. My brother left on his own and my father knocked and said hey it's your daddy. Open the door and he said you're not my daddy. I know who my daddy is. And he brought to the window, brought the photograph of what he thought was his daddy. That was his daddy. But the real father wasn't his father. And this was quite interesting. There was always a strained relationship between father and son.

Q: Do you remember your grandparents?

A: Do I remember?

Q: Your grandparents.

A: Yeah, I remember my paternal grandparents. I actually was at the funeral of my paternal grandfather, but my paternal grandmother perished and first went from **Theresienstadt** to Auschwitz. All my relatives.

Q: What about your mother's side?

A: Well my mother's side. I stayed with her sister. Many of these younger ones died before Nazism occurred.

Q: First of all how many were they in your mother's family. How many children were there?

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A: Well there were 13 births. Some miscarriages in between so she was continuously pregnant. But then some died of typhoid and so on you know when they were children. So actually that I remember there was only Uncle Willie, Paul's father, uncle **Gego** who was a brother of my mother, was living.

Q: Where did he live?

A: In Vienna. He then actually Paul's father arranged for them to go to one of the, I think Argentina. Actually Paul told me that. I never knew when he, they both, they had no children. He was married. I know that. So there was two and there was a younger sister who was a bit older than Uncle Willie. Paul's father. Who, Uncle Willie sent money every month like as if she was working for him. She was a neighbor for us. She never got married.

Q: So what was her name?

A: **Taya**.

Q: Taya.

A: Taya.

Q: And there was another sister in Zagreb, **Ulla**.

A: No in Zagreb was **Ulia**. Ulia was married to **Nulios Rosenman** [ph]. She became Ulia then.

Q: So there were five surviving children.

A: Yeah. And Uncle Willie actually helped but while we stayed with uncle Nulios and Auntie Ulia. I kept saying get, they were Yugoslav citizens. They had Yugoslav passports. I said get yourself visas now. While you can. And they thought this poor traumatized young woman. She thinks the world will all fall for Hitler. But --

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Q: Wasn't the problem also that Kurt their son was –

A: Became a partisan. And he was killed as a part –

Q: He was also eligible for draft which meant that he couldn't get the exit visa from Yugoslavia.

A: Well they never applied for it.

Q: They never applied for it?

A: They never, they never thought they needed to go. So, so they perished in an Italian concentration camp. I don't, we never found out where they died. The Red Cross didn't have their name. But they did.

Q: Just go back a little bit before the war. So you had family in Vienna. The majority of your relatives was in Vienna. Then you had Uncle William in Maribor, just across the border and you had grandparents in Czechoslovakia.

A: And an aunt and uncle in Zagreb.

Q: In Zagreb. So how much were the contacts maintained. Did you travel to those places? Did they come to visit you?

A: Well with the one, and I -- while we lived in the 20th district in Vienna where I was born, there the neighboring apartment was and again by that time Uncle Willie had already got money. So and there was his father, my grandfather. So he lived there with his young daughter. Now when he died and I still remember when he died because my mother was terribly, she was -- to me what she always told me about him I always compared him with Fiddler on the Roof because he was selling agricultural machinery. And he always, he always told me that, he always talked to God because he would have to go plow a field.

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But you know when Pesach come always in spring, right, when fathers have to buy agricultural machinery for their field. So he would say now will you get them to buy from me? You must. I've got all these children. I've got to buy clothes for them. And it all costs money. Where do I get it from? From you. You must do that and then obviously he always managed to get some orders. Because that was a time when farmers wanted. And he would then say well thank you very much. You've done it again. Now remember. The year, next year. They'll want the same service. You know he was very much, to me he was always representing Fiddler on the Roof.

Q: How was your childhood? How do you remember your childhood cause these were the years before the war, Hitler's rise to power?

A: I was you know we lived in this 20th district which was all Jewish. And when I went into primary school there wasn't a non-Jewish child in my class. But as I, when these things as I told you, my father was one of the early free thinkers in Vienna. This was quite an important thing. And so he reasoned and because my mother came from very old sort of background so she was very keen to bring her children up as good German. But my father had reined(?) her and he kept arguing that you want our children to have a moral behavior. But you don't need religion for that. You can bring them up as moral citizens, that they care for what their society, this was the early socialism.

I mean and then and he was involved in the abolition of the monarchy. And also he, when the First World War, when the Austrian empire lost, there was no demobilization. Wherever, whoever had survived, wherever they were, the soldiers I mean, they could just go home. Nobody would help them. There was no telephone. Nothing. So my mother was then expecting her second child which was created when he came home on this special leave. So she didn't know whether she still had a husband, which you know I never could understand when I was a little -- this brother of mine, she always favored. And I always was very jealous of him. First of all he was a weakling because she had been pregnant for then, very difficult period. And I was very strong. I was born in 22, when Uncle Willie was already supporting us. So and he would say, he would sit his children next to each other and he would under the table pinch me and I would go plunk. And my mother would say now don't hit your brother and he would sit there like with an angel face. He hadn't done anything. He would, nothing.

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So he was never my favorite brother.

Q: That's your brother Kurt? It was Otto who was your favorite brother.

A: But Otto, Otto on the other hand was -- the age difference you see when you are six years and your brother is 16, you think he is an old man. And you're a child. But then when he was 80 and I was 70, it was no age difference. The age difference disappears once, and he has always been my one. And he has always been very innovative. He has been a fantastic. I really miss him.

Q: So how were you brought up? You said you weren't brought up in the Jewish tradition but you were brought up in this humanistic?

A: Yes well we were all very left wing. Kurt actually had an article published in the Vienna Worker, which was newspaper of the left wing when he was about ten years old.

Q: That's precocious.

A: Yeah.

Q: What did he write his article about?

A: Yes, he read the newspapers and he wrote an article and you know obviously an article written for the Worker by a ten year old. And they knew my father. And also when I was at school, in primary school. By that time we had the first social democratic government. And they were really wonderful. There were many Jews involved. So the education minister knew my father. But my father by that time had a job working for his brother in law, Paul's father.

Q: What did he do for Paul's father?

A: He was a salesman. He sold the textiles.

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Q: And he was a salesman in Yugoslavia or –

A: In Yugoslavia.

Q: Did he speak the language?

A: Well he spoke Hungarian and he also learned different Slovenish and Croat but I guess he can't have been very fluent. But he knew enough to sell.

Q: So when did Uncle Willie get rich?

A: Well because he had this family.

Q: When?

A: When. Long before I was born. Because when I was born, actually his mother in law came because there was this age difference between my elders ten years and you know he was 1912 and I was 19 --. She came, she met Uncle Willie in Vienna. And she met my parents and she said to my -- couldn't you have taken care having another child. Why do you need another child because she wasn't really keen on her son in law to having all these burdens. He was very good.

Q: So was he supporting his family?

A: She helped him. She said you will go to Yugoslavia and start making textiles.

Q: But after he made it in Yugoslavia, was he supporting his brothers and sisters as well? Was he sending money to your --

A: No, she didn't have a say in –

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Q: No, no. Your Uncle Willie did he support his brothers and sisters? Did he send money for example to your mother or to –

A: No she didn't, he did.

Q: Yeah he did, yeah. Did he?

A: He did but she didn't.

Q: Did he do that on regular basis?

A: No we were not her favorite. I mean obviously she wanted her daughter to --

Q: Yes, yes but I'm talking about your uncle. Did your uncle regularly send money so to your family and to Taya and to his father.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And to the family in Zagreb?

A: Always and he came to visit and that's where I remember that we were going into the poshest expensive restaurant. You know we were living in this you know middle to lower middle class Jewish district.

Q: Do you remember any special occasion when he would come. Would he come for holidays or would he come for birthdays?

A: Yeah and then he took us to some, and there was dancing. And Auntie Taya who never married and her role was always unlucky in love. That much I – she was in love with a father with a man who was the father of four daughters and lived below us. So and he had a son so when she couldn't get the father she fell in love with the brother and it was the son. So she was

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always unlucky in love. But she didn't want to admit this in front of the brother who was supporting her. So we went to a restaurant where there was dancing. So there were gigolos. So she went. We thought she had gone to the loo but then she left, she left the table. She talked to the waiter that one of the gigolos. You didn't of course know who would come and ask her. And we were all saying you know – she was a bit fat. She wasn't very attractive. But she felt she had to show her brother and you know when I heard my father, when once she was dancing, Uncle Willie was saying, I don't think he really wanted her, don't get excited. You know this one, Paul won't remember that because he was a few years younger.

Q: Where would you go for a posh dinner. Do you remember any --

A: Yes, in the center, you know in the stadt, in the inner city. I mean with all the, **Sacher**, Sacher Koffle.

Q: And he would take you there for any special occasion or just every time he came?

A: When he came. I don't, I can't remember why he would come. And I mean he, I think he was really, very, very fond of my mother because to him she was like his mother. She had brought him up. So you know you can understand.

Q: Did you go to **Maribor** when you were children? Did you go to visit them?

A: Yes, I also remember that my aunt, Uncle Willie's wife had a sister, you know the daughter of this older, earlier one in fact. And she came. We were then in **Rovas Goslate** [ph] now and Uncle Willie asked my father to be responsible for the running. He had another factory in r, no, that was what was the place. I can't remember now.

Q: It was in Maribor. There were two factories in Maribor.

A: No, but it was in a different place because my father, he asked my father, put my father there to run that place. Actually I learned the song, **Chacharano**, Chacharano [ph] because we heard

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the soldiers walk past and sing it. And so and then after my, after the director of this factory came back from his summer leave, my father took us to Rovas Goslate and at that time the sister of my aunt, uncle Willie's wife had a, she was married but not to a rich man. And but she was always the pretty jealous of her sister who had done so well. And she had a little girl who was a year younger than I was. That, well actually I think it was two years before the Nazis, before, must have been in 1936.

Q: Do you remember what their names were? The sister and the daughter?

A: No, whatever.

Q: Cause Paul's mother was called –

A: Paul will remember. Paul will remember. And so my aunt then thought well she'll take her sister for summer holiday to **Spoletto**, to Split, which was a sea side. And she would have to take her sister and her little girl. So these were two young women who were a team to be admired by men. And so we were staying. And so she needed somebody for this niece of hers. And I suited the bill. And so they asked, she asked my parents and they asked me and I said yes, of course I'll go. I was keen to go. And for me it was a (inaudible) to herself. She was about my age. We'll have a good time. But this, so we had the room together. I had the room with this niece of hers. And they were two sisters. So every evening in a very popular town. For me this was heaven. And we'd have dinner in this restaurant where there was a lot of dancing. And these two women were very keen to be asked to dance and they really were. So this younger little girl, whatever her name was, was very worried that her mother was betraying her father. Because there were men. We all had (inaudible). And this young girl always stood at the bar because the two sisters had the room next to her, also had a (inaudible). And they were all men calling. Hello. Hello, hello. Go for walks you know. And she'd say I can't. What does mother do? And then one of them -- I mean still were men (inaudible) with her. He and one of these guys who were interested. I mean these were holiday flirtations came and she must have told him that she had this daughter. And he came and brought a doll.

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Q: A dog?

A: A doll and when she saw this doll she goes (sound effect) and the head of the doll fell off and I was like poor doll you know and she was very, I mean that was very stupid. But that man obviously had no children and wasn't married. And then she told him. Did you tell him that I like playing with dolls. And but she had, she was much smaller than -- I was a tall girl and looked much older. But she looked like a little girl. So her mother got away with it, saying she had a very little girl. So this guy was obviously trying to endear himself to her and bringing dolls. But the little girl wasn't that little, not very young. But then one evening, I also remember so they were, we were sitting and eating and the music played for dancing. And a young man came walked, so that he looked that he was coming to our table, so these two sort of you know. And do you know who he asked. Me. So. And I wasn't there you know for me, it was -- I wasn't going. I couldn't dance. But that really was infradig.

Q: So this was still sort of the good times before everything went, so when would that be roughly, in 32.

A: Well it was in 1936.

Q: Oh 36. Ok. Yeah. But how did you were there, you came from a family where father was politically engaged, so how is that commented in the family, Hitler's rise to power and the rise of Nazism in general. Was that something that you discussed with your father? Was that something that worried them greatly or did they think it would just pass?

A: No my father was so committed to this and actually there was a, the guy who was called **Tambour**. I don't know whether that name means some -- he was one of the major politicians, a Jewish. And he was in the government and the Social Democratic and actually he arranged for us to move then. Because we only had a very small apartment. When my father came home every month. He was home for at least one week because Yugoslavia had a law that only Yugoslavs could work for Yugoslav firms. So my father was an Austrian citizen and he was working for a Yugoslav firm. So Uncle Willie actually got him a certificate that he was working for a Czech

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firm. So you could, a foreigner could work for a Czech firm. But and that was actually the reason then that when the going got bad, when we were expelled from Yugoslavia that my father was taken to prison. Because before that, he had that certificate and he'd write the politician and the police in these places where he was selling because you couldn't hide that you were selling Yugoslav produced goods.

Q: But that happened after the Anschluss and after you fled Yugoslavia.

A: So before that he would come. And he would still be friends and this was this guy who was in the, he was never in the government because he was in Yugoslavia. But he still had this friend and when the minister of education came to visit the primary school where I was, he looked, he went into the classroom and he looked at the register. And he saw my, Trude Grunewald. So Trude Grunewald. The minister of education and what does he want and he said is your father Siegfried Grunewald? And I said yes. And he said give him my best greetings. I am very fond. Was I (sigh) you know when I told my father you know he was thrilled. So then when the, Tambour, then we got an apartment in the Karl Marx which was then a new. I don't know whether you realize that this Austrian social, first social democratic government pioneered council housing. They built these council houses which was then followed, and I remember seeing King Edward who then resigned because of Mrs. Simms.

Q: A love story.

A: So because anybody, any important person that came to him, they always took them to the Karl because it was a fantastically planned building.

Q: So this was the Karl Marx **hof**?

A: Yeah this was a, remember being and you've been to Vienna.

Q: I've been to Vienna yes.

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A: But you haven't seen the Karl Marx. It was in **Grinzing** so I then had to change schools. And this is where you saw me, when I was at the play.

Q: And this was a non-Jewish neighborhood now?

A: There was no, there were just a few. You see sort of the reverse, the government wanted to put a few Jewish middle class families with all, because all the others were people who they had taken out of the slums and put them into brand new bright apartments. And I mean the conservatives would say, they will also be black. They will all be turned – but they kept it and in a sense that saved our lives. We never had very atrocious persecution because most of them were in a pro, I mean the whole -- there was **Dollfuss** before the Anschluss and also what nobody knew. We didn't even know that when we left there. That there was sort of the top floor was supposed to be for hanging up. There was one building in the center which had washing machines in 1930, automatic -- well you just pressed the button as we do now and it washed. And it even had ironing. I would go and every apartment had two days per month in the washing machine to do their wash.

And my mother would take her sheets down, put them in the washing, take them out and I would then come to help her iron them because she would just put them in the roller and I would take them out the other side. And so all the important people, the VIPs that came were all shown. And King Edward was shown when we had our, there.

Q: Was there an elevator as well?

A: No it was ground floor. Actually there was a first floor where because there were no baths. You couldn't have a, you had to go to this public bath. Again you could go however many times you wanted as a, you have an apartment there. But there wasn't a lift there, the stairs.

Q: But you said that this was about the time when you started feeling anti-Semitism in school?

A: Yes, I had never experienced. I mean my mother was terribly upset because she took me to

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this new school because I had gone to school in this very Jewish area. So anti-Semitism, and I was a very unfriendly little girl. I never you know my mother she was very friendly. She knew everybody and everybody knew her. When she went shopping, she would take me. Well when I was little, I would say, when her female friends say well hello little girl. And my mother said, well say hello. It is not my friend. Why should I say hello. And I made up a story that I am not really my parents' child. I loved the sea and I have been for one summer we had been to **Tsir Granitsa** [ph] which is a holiday resort. And that gave me the idea, I must have been a child of gypsies.

Q: Why?

A: Because I was born by the sea and I made up that the gypsies were living by the sea because I liked it. They were, I would be the child of gypsies. But then my parents paid for me and so I am now adopted. I still remember my mother's face was always so upset and she always used to say, why do you tell me this story. I said well you're not from the family, you're not from the seaside and I love the sea. So I must be. I was very logical really. But not to the, you know clever or what not.

But my father was all right because I was the apple of his eye. I couldn't do wrong and particularly when I brought him greetings from the minister of education.

Q: What would you say was the turning point where, when you and your family really realized that things would go terribly wrong?

A: Well, Otto my brother, ten years older, he went to the technological college in Vienna, not really (inaudible). And he was there as being at you know technical and this was I mean Austria was always anti-Semitic. There was a special police for, that looked after the universities. And every year when the students come and those who came from Jewish parents, they had to walk through a court on both sides anti-Semites and they would just run and be beaten. And the police would just stand there and not interfere.

Q: When did that start, which year did that start?

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A: Well it was as long as I remember that my brother. That was long in 19, he must have been he was born in 12 so he must have been about 22, 24 so in the early 30s but it might have been before because I only know because he -- a knuckle duster. You know what a knuckle duster. He joined when the Jews joined what was called the **Schutzbund** which was the organization to defend the social democratic government. But there was a schutzbund for workers and there was a schutzbund for students. And he was with the schutzbund for children. And he came home and he showed me his knuckle duster. And he said I will not just be beaten. I will also return it and I was greatly impressed.

But then and do you know we had Dollfuss, does the name Dollfuss. Well Dollfuss there was a in February 1934 there was a general strike because it involved, there was a Chris -- Dollfuss was. You know what I find very interesting, all the partisan were socialists. You had Hitler was a national socialist. Dollfuss and **Schuschnigg** were Christian Socialists. Every party was socialist. It was the thing to be, but they were quite different from the -- but they didn't. So we then had the general strike and the Schutzbund the fighting unit was then and what they never told that I mean but the Schutzbund means that. My brother also knew what but he never told them that the Karl Marx, all the top floors you could walk. It was one kilometer, a sort of oval building inside gardens and playgrounds and wash house and you know bars and everything. It was all in it, but you could walk. Of course you could go up one stair and come out another. And this enabled a lot of them, because there was lots of fighting.

Now my brother Otto being, having been with the university students come fighting unit, and but he knew my father was, and Schuschnigg. No, then that was later. In 1934 there was a general strike and so there was fighting. They wanted to defend and Dollfuss and the Karl Marx building is a the flat ground, but there is the **Hoinvalta** [ph] which was a high, when there was a big football ground and this is where Dollfuss put cannon to shoot them so they couldn't, they only had machine guns. But they fought and so they were -- I was then 12 years old and all the schools were closed. And when I turned up at school, my friends always thought oh there comes the heroine. But this was when the first, that the first should you know kill -- because and also, so my brother had to report because they all knew their players were the reservists.

But then my father was already traveling in there as well, so he knew that my mother was home with two small children. So he got permission to go home. And when he came and we were

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sitting because we were glued to the wireless because everybody wanted to know what's going on. And we were deadly silent as my mother was very worried that her son she knew he was with them. And there he came and she was all over him. And he said I've only come, leave to find out how you all are coping but I've got to go back. And my mother, you can't go back. I mean she depended on him to help her you know in the household. He was her big help. There was a wonderful relationship. He was very close to her. She was very close to him. He wasn't very close to my father.

So when he wanted to go and was going to there, she knelt. I still, and clutched his legs and didn't want him to go. And he tore himself loose and he walked out. And we were all sitting you know the two of us, Kurt my brother and my mother was tears and crying. And I didn't know what to say.

And then we heard the first shot and of course we sat there and we thought he had just gone. He's dead. A few minutes later he came back. I think I wrote this in my auto (phone ringing)

Q: Ok.

A: It sort of is the basis for my concern for the poorest and for my sort of left wing politics began then.

Q: In 43, no in 34.

A: In 1934. Because my brother, then my father was in Yugoslavia and couldn't reach us because we had no telephone there. And but he had a colleague who was also from Vienna, also a Jewish family and they lived in the second district which was all Jewish. So there would be no Schutzbund by it. And he told his colleagues to bring his family in Vienna and get them to contact us that we could stay with them. We should get out of this dangerous because there were times driving. If they saw a face coming to a window, they would shoot and of course we were all keen to look out. And anyway we then went to this family and my brother when we listened to the radio, they then executed some of the leaders of the strike which were some of his friends. So you know this was my first sort of real experience of how awful and how extreme conservative, extreme fascist governments can be.

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And then Otto said to me, now listen. Little sister, listen carefully. When somebody comes, he won't tell you he's a policeman but if he asks you any question, you just say I don't know. So a policeman came and my mother sort of just looked at me. She didn't say anything. And he then said what's your name little girl. And I said I don't know. How old are you? I don't know. This policeman must have thought this poor kid doesn't even, must be crazy. For every question. I just said I don't know. I mean just as well that he didn't know. And he didn't ask me why you would say -- I might have said well my brother told me to.

Q: But logically you should have said I don't know.

A: So this was when I sort of the first experience because and I mean he said to me. Because if you said that I you know had gone out to, go back to the Schutzbund then your brother might be put into jail and you don't want that. No. So I always said no, I don't know. And well then came of course Dollfuss was assassinated. And Schuschnigg came.

Q: When was that?

A: And that was in 1937. Dollfuss was, Schuschnigg. And I mean both of them were really extreme Christian socialists. And they were both anti-Semitic and they were the, followed -- I mean very much the same policies as Hitler. But they didn't want Austria to be part of Germany. And so that was why Dollfuss was assassinated. Then his buddy Schuschnigg became the chancellor and Hitler asked, by that time Hitler was in government in Germany. And of course he being an Austrian and having been in jail in Austria, obviously now he is a, I mean **Gotitmaster** fell and it was such a pity that he committed suicide but they couldn't you know put him in jail and really in --

Q: Who? Hitler?

A: Yeah because he must have been. Because it was so obvious. He was a little guy who would never dreamt of being Hitler and people would shout Heil Hitler. I mean when you now see the films when he made his speeches. He looks like a maniac.

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Q: How did it seem back then? You saw him. You saw him when he came to Vienna in 38. How did it feel? How did it look?

A: For me it was really a mass hypnosis. I had never been subjected. I mean for me this was a turning point altogether. Again it was Otto who rang me and developed a story. He told me to go to the Yugoslav embassy and ask for Mr. **Miderman**. Take our passport. When you meet Mr. Miderman, he rang home. He was out. And he was very clever because he was, you know there was Bloomsbury house in London. Have you heard of that?

Q: Yes.

A: This is where all the refugees had to register. Right. His registration number was 257. He got here very soon. And you know how? Because the year before in 19, summer 1937 he went with Kurt, my two brothers went hitchhiking. And in Switzerland, a lift, asking for a lift. And this was the thing for students to do. And they got a lift in Switzerland from an English Jewish couple who were driving around Europe. And they quickly established that they were also Jewish because by that time it was also already on the cards that we were going to be part of Germany. And Otto was always innovative. They were driving in a car. And they then went to Salzburg. And of course a Jewish couple stayed in a posh hotel. But they stayed in the new Salzburg. But he said to Kurt look we get up early tomorrow and we wash their car. Make it look clean, sparkling. When they come down they see that. And they saw that and they thought these two are nice lads. You know. Washed our car. And they were driving to Vienna so they took them to the, they showed them around Vienna. We were in Yugoslavia when they were there. And so Otto then -- when Hitler, when Austria was annexed wrote to them and said please can you send us, send me a fraudulent correspondence. Say that I am at the, what they were doing in London was to buy second hand cars and sell them and he said you write to me as if I was your, working for you and your agent in Austria in buying old car and shipping them to you. And they did that. And he was so early so and then he always liked English. He made his what would be called school leaving certificate and they had to write a long essay and he wrote it about Jack London in English.

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Q: So when did he go to England? Which year? 38?

A: In 1938 before. He was the first one of us.

Q: So before the Anschluss.

A: No after the Anschluss.

Q: Just after.

A: But a few weeks after because he immediately -- and also I mean there were so many interesting things. We had my youngest uncle, my youngest paternal uncle was a very nice guy. During the First World War he went onto the allied side. He went over from the Austrian Empire and he was in China. They went to China then. From, from Russia and my grandparents didn't know. There was no communication. There was no register where he was or whether he was still alive and he turned up then so and he was quite a, I mean I loved him.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: **Amin**, Amin Grunewald and he had a very attractive wife who walked out on him. But anyway he came to Vienna after the Anschluss and said I'll take you all to Czechoslovakia. You'll be all right there. They all perished in Auschwitz. At first in Theresienstadt. I have still got cousins in Czechoslovakia. In Czech.

Q: But did they think that Czechoslovakia was safe?

A: Yeah and untouchable because said well the Czechs give us visas. And he said I'll tell you what. I marry Trude. He wanted to marry, I mean just as a formality. He didn't want me as his wife but and I worked out, I would be my brother's aunt and would be my mother's sister in law

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and I had great fun. But ultimately the dream of that. He said you'll be next and so they were. So Otto was very clever.

Q: So what was the plan. So obviously Otto was the mastermind of your escape.

A: Was the mastermind.

Q: What was the plan in 38?

A: Well the plan was that he would go to and he did go to England and he would get us English visas. And he did but much later.

Q: Did, who financed all this? Did he have money?

A: Well he just, you know he worked as a packer in this slave labor. I mean he had a degree as an electrical engineer. But they would not employ him that way.

Q: And how did he get to England? Did he hitchhike or?

A: No, no. He went by train. But that was very early. But then he, it's interesting. All my life that's why I say he's been my role model. Because he would then write to me what I should do. He wouldn't write to Kurt. Because Kurt was just weak. He was a sick, sickly child so he was afraid to go out. He stayed home. Only I and I was, he told Otto said, you dress yourself as one of the German girls and then you go and see Mr. Miderman. And on that day, was a day as you saw, Hitler came to Austria, to Vienna.

Q: So Hitler comes to Vienna and you go to the Yugoslav embassy dressed up in Hitler **Jugend** outfit.

A: And a –

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Q: But you ended up in the crowds as well at one point. Can you describe that?

A: Yes. Yes, because you see the thing was, he didn't he said well you just go by the underground. We have them. There was an underground already in Vienna and that went right to the **Ringstrasse**, you know the circular road. And that's where you go out. Have, will have to get out and then you walk along and that's where. What he didn't know and I didn't know was first of all, all the Nazi government that quickly took over and welcomed Hitler, was offering free transport to all the Austrians. To come and welcome the Fuhrer. That's why there were all the people there. And I didn't know that. But I went on when everybody went onto the underground so I followed. And then I got into a carriage and there was an elderly lady and there was a place next to her.

So I sat there in my nice uniform and she said you're also going to welcome the Fuhrer. And at that point I wasn't quite sure what to say because I was taught you know a moral way and you must never tell a lie. And that was sort of not, but then I -- and I must say on that day, as I sat there. I kind of, I was catapulted into a little, I felt now I have to make decision, lie or no lie. And that's what I did. So then when we have got to the circular road and we all got out. There were these masses of people already there. And just then his carriage came and he was standing there. Like you see in the film.

Q: So you saw Hitler?

A: Yeah.

Q: How close were you?

A: Well I was because I was a young girl in a marching uniform they let me right through you know the sort of barricades.

Q: Where did you get the Nazi uniform?

A: A Nazi uniform. My brother, Otto had told me at that time was a white blouse and navy skirt,

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white half socks, black shoe. I had that. I mean that's, I guess why they made that their uniform because every girl would have that.

Q: So it wasn't a special outfit?

A: No, no it wasn't. I just there you go.

Q: And you had platinum blond braids?

A: My mother was terrified because she knew from the radio that everybody could go free and Hitler would make us welcome. He made his first speech and that speech was on the **Schwarzenberg Platz** which was opposite the Yugoslav embassy.

Q: Did you listen to the speech?

A: No I didn't. After I, I had shouted Heil Hitler and then I stopped and I thought what had I done.

Q: Why did you do it?

A: (both talking) Hitler. Everybody and in a sense with hindsight I think I would have been lynched if I hadn't shouted Heil Hitler. In the first row. So it was, but I didn't do it as a survival strategy. I was literally hypnotized. There was millions of people screaming their heads off so you know what do you do? You join them. But then when I got to and there's this Jewish queue in front of the Yugoslav embassy and they all looked at me. What do I do now? You know Otto hadn't sort of prepared for me for, all he had said was take our passports, get our mothers to give you all our passports and go and ask for Mr. Miderman. That's all I knew. But he didn't tell me how he knew him. And you know what should I say when I meet him. So at that point really I became another one. I told my second lie. You know when I saw this and I managed the guard. And the guard, my second lie was. I still remember. The guard said well what do you want. I said I want to see Mr. Miderman. And he said do you know Mr. Miderman. And I said yes of

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course. You know but you know at a moment's notice. And then when I saw Mr. Miderman and he even said how did you know about me. Why did you come here? So I took out my passport and said to him I've come to collect visas. He said who told you about me. And it was at that point that I thought, but before this I had seen that he was packing so I thought I didn't know what he was but he was packing. He didn't seem resident there. So I didn't know. Otto hadn't told me but immediately I said Otto can't have known him. He is obviously somebody that is going somewhere now. And then he told me he was the ambassador for Yugoslavia and since Austria was no more an independent state he was moving back to Belgrade. That was all and he couldn't give any visas then. But he said well who told you. And I think Otto. I don't know how but ultimately you know how he knew. Did I say that in the – he signed the waivers. We'd been to Yugoslavia. He signed them so he read Mr. Miderman signs the visas. So she must go and see Mr. Miderman. And for him it was simple. But that I wouldn't know what to say didn't occur to him. So I thought at the spur of the moment if I say my brother had sent me, he would say well who is your brother. And how do I explain that? So I then produced Uncle Willie. And said my uncle rang me last night. I was lying right left and center. The sort of moral behavior disappeared.

Q: And he knew your uncle.

A: But that I never found out. But once I had said he rang me and he had said I should meet Mr. Miderman at the embassy, he didn't ask me anymore. Whether he knew him or not but I think I don't know. But I've worked out that he might not have known him but might have thought he should have known him. And he was I said to, he is one of the biggest textile manufacturers in Yugoslavia. You must know him. What he, what went on his mind I don't know but it was that, that he then put his arm around my shoulder and he said well I'll try and find it. And he walked me to the counsel and just knocked and (inaudible) pushed me in and said I am bringing you a young friend. She needs visas. Help her. Well it took three months, but I went there when you know and then when I got the visas he said, the counsel said well how did you know Mr. Miderman. And I said he was just a friend.

Q: Did you tell him that you were Jewish?

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A: No.

Q: Ok so you got the visas for Yugoslavia, for the whole family.

A: The thing is at that time before that Otto was in England. My father was in Yugoslavia and we, there was supposed to be a plebiscite for the Austrians to vote yes or no, whether we want, Austria wanted to be in West Germany. Now I think now when I remember that crowd that I saw that Hitler needed have no worry. He would have been voted in anyways. But he didn't wait for that. But all the Jews, by that time, my father knew. I mean he had known that he was Jewish. But he also knew what the Jews were suffering in Germany. So he then knew, you know he must come, all the Jews who were outside Austria, but were Austrian citizens were all making back to Austria to cast their vote in the hope that they would influence the result.

So my father had rang us by that time. We had a telephone and said I am just going on the train but just then about five minutes before, we had just heard Schuschnigg's last speech. And that was horrifying because he was always, he made a lot of speeches, all Austria must vote and must vote for independence. That's what he knew. And he was making another speech and all of a sudden you heard as if things were knocked about and you didn't know. I mean you listen to the radio and you heard knocking. And then you heard him say, people are just coming in and they are taking me away. This is the end of Austria. God bless Austria and **Horst Wesselneed** [ph], you know the German which goes today Germany, belongs to us. Tomorrow the whole world. So we knew the Nazis had, but what had happened was that the Nazi, German troops Hitler had already arranged for the German troops to cross the river, I mean Austria didn't have a (inaudible).

So this was the end. And my father then rang. And Otto answered the phone. My father said I am just going to the station to catch the train to be home. And Otto said well you know it was interesting. Immediately you felt the Nazis would be listening to what you say. I mean they weren't that efficient to hacking, phone hacking, right. Murdoch now has been doing. But this was sort of mentality. So then Otto said don't come back and my father said but I must be with you. Listen to me. Don't come back. Finish. I can't tell you anymore. Listen to what your radio is saying. And my father was never in Austria after that which was very difficult for

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me because to him, I remained his little girl that can't make, little girls don't make decisions. You know important what you should do, what you shouldn't. But before that after that, when Otto was in England, he wrote to me that he had a network of friends also Jewish. But they were all social democrats. It was that that bound them together, not their (inaudible). And one of them, he actually died in England, last year. He was a close friend of Otto's. And he was married already and he had, they were living in Italy. So he wrote to, Otto was trying to get Kurt out but he couldn't get him. Otto then flirted with one old lady who worked in the British home office who was in charge of giving visas. And he had a reason why he flirt, and he ultimately got a visa for Kurt. But he didn't, couldn't get it quick enough and he too knew that Kurt was really very frightened and it was hard there. So this friend said, because Austrians didn't need a visa for Italy but if you went by train you could cross the border. But not if you had a passport with a big red J. The Italians didn't want that.

But ordinary Austrians, not Jewish could just go in. So he then, this friend from him, who settled in Italy, wrote to Otto and told him send your brother. He knew Kurt. And he actually stayed with them in Italy. They said send him by air, because the Italians had not yet realized that you can fly and that you can arrive in the country, the border people, the border police was trained. You see a passport with a red J, back, no you know but they flew. At the airports they hadn't trained police, trained people who spoke there.

Q: So Kurt flew from Vienna to Italy.

A: I got Kurt. Kurt wouldn't go out. I, so Otto wrote to me. You went to the **chet** [ph] the Italian travel there and then book a flight as early as you can for Kurt to fly to Italy. Once you've got the ticket tell me and he will get, arrange that he will be met on arrival. And that's what I did. And I was very cross then when I came back. Kurt then flew to Italy and second week in May and the Anschluss was in March. And he was very cross with me that I hadn't got him a flight the day after. So that's why there was never a very close relationship with him.

Q: So Kurt is off to England. You stayed with your mother in Vienna and your father was in Yugoslavia.

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A: That's right.

Q: With Uncle Willie.

A: Yeah he was, they were still traveling.

Q: But they were preparing to leave already at that time sort of, they converted

A: No they weren't prepared.

Q: Do you remember when they converted, when they changed their names from **Lubel** to **Laditch** cause it was in 38, after the Anschluss.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember that?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you consider converting? Was that ever a discussion in your family?

A: No, no because there were in Austria in Vienna, sharks. When I came out of the Yugoslav embassy, there was one guy that asked me what I had been doing there. And I said I've come to collect visas. I had and he said have you go them yet. I said no. He said well if you convert, I can get you a birth certificate of grandparents, because you had to have at least two, grand, non-Jewish, Christian.

Q: So there were people who were offering those services in front of the embassy?

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A: Yes, yes and I mean I, Otto didn't tell me about him so I didn't bother. But it wasn't only me that he stopped because he knew all those Jews that were in the queue, they are unlikely to get the visas.

Q: So who would be these people, Jews, non-Jews?

A: Well I thought that that guy looked to me as if he was Jewish but I never asked his name or anything but there were quite a lot of sharks there.

Q: But you never considered conversion? Why not?

A: Because first of all to we didn't, you didn't know whether it would work. You'd have to put the money down. Whether you went and then they said well fraud, I mean these were only fraudulent documents. Whether they would accept them because you would have to produce your grandparents.

Q: But you didn't consider converting in a church for example because churches also gave certificates.

A: No but not for your grandparents. No. You have to think of the total implication and yes and they convert you. I mean there was the book Michel, Michel, did you ever see that. A little boy whose parents were Jewish in France. Whose parents gave him in to a convent through the nuns, say. And after the war, the parents perished but some relative were in Israel and they then went to find him. They had to fight because the nuns wanted to keep him. And this little boy obviously, I have here actually a very interesting thing. I go swimming to the Metropole which is a hotel here. Have a leisure center and they usually have fire alarms and usually they have training. So if you are in the pool, you go and just put the dressing on and you have to go upstairs to the reception. And then it goes all clear and that's all finished.

But once at last a door. We were all from the pool standing, we were in the, all dressing room. And there was a young woman and I was sort of shaking my head showing that I was impatient. It wasn't, why do they keep us in here. But actually then the fire brigade came and there had

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been an actual fire. And one person had lit an electric fire and that had caught something and so there had been a fire in the room. But there was this young woman who somehow, I don't know why it is when I find a fellow Jew. I somehow feel that they are fellow Jews.

I don't know what it is. Do you know? You feel some sort of affinity and there was this young woman, looking very Jewish. Pale but quite hefty. So I said what do you think and so we began to talk and then they offered us all coffee and we sat having coffee. And she said where are you from. So I always say I am a Jewish refugee from Vienna cause you heard me say it.

And she said you know my father is also from Vienna. Well her story, she is called Popper, P-O-P-P-E-R and she is a lovely young woman. So she also told her parents about my autobiography. Her paternal grandparents had a restaurant in the center of Vienna. It might have been one of the restaurants that Uncle Willie had taken us. But certainly were well off. So they bought immediately as the Anschluss occurred, a holiday ticket I think to Cyprus and off they went, before they introduced a red J on the passports. When you had money you could go. So they went there and then they went from Cyprus they went to Kenya. And in Kenya his parents put him into a monastery school and he converted to Catholicism. And he is, he looks like the **stricher** [ph] Jews. He has been, she brought them here. Her mother is a good England British, I think an Anglican but not a Jew. He is a devout Catholic and he brought up, she has a brother so two children. And both of them were forced to go to church on Sunday and confess and all the paraphernalia. And she is now claiming everywhere, she is second generation Jewish. And we had her you know Michele, the adopted daughter. And we always have a big Seder because there were other couples from Sussex University. Jewish, who also had children of the age as ours were. So we every year it was at a different house.

But then was my husband conducted the Seder. My husband had died so Michele said mommy don't because we were usually 30 or 40 people. So it was quite a lot for me. She said I (inaudible) it will be just our family and (inaudible) since then she has (inaudible). So this year too and so I said Michele can I bring this Popper. I asked her, would you. She said I'd love to see her so she came and she is now, she wants to convert. She feels very ill at ease (?).

So you know there are cases but he feels but here, I had him here when DT Rolner this poet from Israel was staying with me. Just coincidentally her parents came to see her so she said can I bring them along. I said yes, bring them along. And we'll see how your father feels about meeting an Israeli poet whose mother had been to Auschwitz and who was (inaudible). And I have never

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seen him so ill at ease. I said well is this all new to you. And I sort of pretended I didn't know anything about anti-Semitism. Well I feel very sorry for her. So some, I mean obviously there are some who even became bishops.

Q: Oh yeah of course. There was even a pope allegedly.

A: Yeah. But do you know, that you don't know. You know Kate who was just married Prince William. She's, her mother is Jewish.

Q: I didn't know that.

A: So actually

Q: So we'll have a Jewish British king one of these days.

A: No, Michelle's husband found it out I mean. Kate is his wife's name and she's now Princess Kate, but her grandmother was a (inaudible) Jewess. And so her mother is obviously Jewish and so is she. So that'll be the first Jewish queen in England.

Q: That's good news. Ok. Let's go back to Yugoslavia and how you fled cause we need to get to Albania. That's the important part of the story. So you got the visas eventually for Yugoslavia and then you traveled.

A: Well that was also very interesting you see. When we arrived there Uncle Willie, we had my mother had from her father had been given some gold pieces for each one of us. When we were born her father presented. And that she kept and she didn't want to leave so, I mean I decided. And she wanted, she thought she would get her furniture back and all her household. So I had to find packers and in Vienna we called that a lift. You know big case and things, put all the, and so I had to decide this doesn't go, but this can. And my mother wanted, on top of it, she wanted the awards that my father had got at the First World War. And I said look who will look at them. Even if they're saved, that won't change them. And so and actually I gave a lot to our neighbors

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in the Karl Marx building. And then when we, before we made back from the Ring, I wanted a film that will show that people helped her. So the film director who I told you is a Bronx Jew and now is married to a Swedish woman, who made the film without getting any money out of it. He thought that we needed money because we needed to pay expenses. It costs things to process them. So we're meeting the (inaudible). We each put some money in, but not enough. So he then said well he wanted to sort of build the whole film and he thought we could get the money because I say and this is true the first society that has made me feel I belong. The first group of people. Because sociologically you know that none no individual can live as an individual, we all have to belong to a group of people. Feeling we belong.

And in Vienna I thought I was a girl, Austrian girl. They didn't think of me like that. I was thrown out of school. And then I came to Yugoslavia. And of course I wasn't a Yugoslav citizen but my father and my mother then wanted to bring those gold pieces. I had a boyfriend as I (inaudible) and it was really when the, you know when our teacher at the last minute gave us our certificate at the school which was a catchment school for all the Jewish kids. And the teachers weren't trained teachers. They were real Nazis. They were SS. They turned up in SS uniforms. And his speech was when he distributed our last certificates. I think that's in my autobiography was I am sure that very few of you will manage to get out. But those few who will get out will die in the gutter. That he told to 14, 15 year old kids.

So and I had this, I had you know we were, my mother never had enough money to give me a birthday party. But my school pals were all kids from Jewish parents. So I always got my mother to let me have some presents because I was invited but I could never (inaudible) around. So but in this school they made it a catchment school. The words and it was a high class, high Jewish class, the rich Jews had their children in this school. That school they made into a catchment school. So well some of them were kids that had been there and my boyfriend who wooed me, he sort of was the first one that I saw that way. And we were, and we were not allowed to be out. Jews were not allowed after work. So I would stay the night in his house. A nice (inaudible) for me this was. And he would sort of put his arm around me and he said well even in the gutter I will love you.

So I then met him in London. By that time his father had a little money, put me. That's another thing. I don't know whether you read this. Why there was, I'll come to Albania. In Albania, I was the only young girl. And there was a group and they joined you know about them. They

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were wonderful. Wherever Jewish refugees turned up they would provide subsistence money. As long as there was a resident Jewish family.

Q: So they were present in Albania? The Joint?

A: No, well I was in Yugoslavia for the time. And we went, we took my mother took this gold pieces and I then came up with the idea, how do you get, she said well if the Nazis, if they see us with our passport with the red J, the border control, they will search our luggage and if they find our gold, they will take them. And that's my most precious gold. So I came up with the idea we will have rolls, have rolls and in the rolls I'll put the gold pieces and we got them nine bolts of (satin?) at one end. But at the station in Maribor, my father and uncle where they waited for. And fortunately the border we were at one end of the train and the border control started at the other end. So Uncle Willie said come on out and we got out and we never went to the border control didn't see anything.

But then the first night, I mean now that I'm old I can understand. For my parents it was their first stay together after horrible months for my father who was always worried, how do we survive and he knew my mother (inaudible) and I, this boyfriend had come to the station in Vienna to see me off with a big bunch of roses to show me. And these roses I took with me. By the time we got to Maribor they had wilted but I put them in a, I asked Uncle Willie. Auntie, his wife wasn't there. I can't remember where she was. She may have been in England. Because Paul and his brother were in school in England. And so I said can I have vase please. And of course they have an army of (servants?) and so I got the vase and I put these old sort of looking roses into it. And I put the photograph of my boyfriend there. And I cried my heart out because my parents, you know for them this was the first night they spent together after you know. And he couldn't understand that I had grown up. That I had now come to be the decision maker. I, in a sense was the head of the family. Otto was in England. He was in Yugoslavia. Kurt was in England, in Italy. And I was with mama. And so who didn't dare to go and he treated me like his you know little girl. And I said

Q: So what did you do in Maribor? You stayed in your uncle's house. Do you remember the house? Was it a big house?

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A: Yes, I remember that. It was a lovely, it was big house and it had many rooms. I had a room to myself.

Q: Was that in the center or was that the house next to the factory?

A: No it wasn't next to it. You had to drive to the factory.

Q: So it was in the center and it was a house?

A: In a nice area.

Q: A family house?

A: Where other people who were equally wealthy. So –

Q: Did your uncle help you in any way to travel to Albania or to with, your visas?

A: There were difficulties. I don't know whether Paul knew about it or whether he told you. When my father was a traveling, I told you was an illegal salesman. So before he bribed them but then once the police knew that he couldn't go back because he'd always gone back to Austria. And now they knew, he couldn't go back so they wanted big bribes and he refused to pay. So they put him into jail.

Q: Your father?

A: My father. In **Novizant** [ph]. You know Novizant? Where there were Jewish customers of him. Now this he told the Jewish customers that we were with my mother's sister. So they contacted us and told us that he was in jail and we should arrange. So of course my mother contacted Uncle Willie and said my husband is in, you must do something. So he did and he got a, he then wanted, and they said well get him to Zagreb. So that we can be together at least. But

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he would have come as a prisoner. But Uncle Willie paid for a private detective to bring him to travel. So he wasn't traveling but again you know you must think that all these men who were after me but it really was very strange. I was 16 years and there was a, there were in Zagreb also sharks. But there was one guy who had been with the police and he came along when he heard that my father was coming with a private. He contacted us and said you don't have to leave, I can help you to get permits to stay. What did he want to do? He told my mother that I must go with him to a small place by the seaside and stay with him a few days. He will arrange our permits. And my mother said no. No, no. But he then, so then he came and he, I mean he said to me, will you kiss me. And I said you don't look like that I would kiss you. And he then said well if you kiss me, I go with you to the train station when your father arrives. Well I did kiss him because that was very important for me.

My father got out with this private detective and my father, you know I was his little girl and there he was. He said that's what your father has come to. He went on his knees in front of me. Your father came as a prisoner. And I said don't be so silly. I've seen worse things happening. You were lucky. You haven't seen all those things that I have seen. But he was crying then.

Q: He was humiliated.

A: He was feeling and we had to, and so he came. He then, this shark took us in his police car to my aunt and that's where we stayed. But then the thing was that it was obvious that my father, we would all have to go because the police came to check on us, our tourist visas were finished so they said if you can find another place, another country that will have you we don't mind. We are not against you but if you can't find anyone, we will ship you to the border. And we knew. So my father and my mother were really so (inaudible). I mean they said to me what do you want to get out of life. There's nothing. We have not (inaudible) so why should we move. And you know now I think I should write something about my parental generation because they were the ones that were hit most. They had lost everything. They had no future, they had nothing to look forward to. So you know and there were suicides and one can understand it. But I didn't. I wasn't when I was 15 or 16 years, you are not ready.

Q: So how did you travel through Yugoslavia? By trains or –

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A: To Yugoslavia. We came from Vienna by train to Maribor.

Q: But then from Yugoslavia, when you went to Albania you had to cross Yugoslavia.

A: Again Uncle Willie paid for a private detective to travel with us. Otherwise we would have had to – who got the police, agreed they would, he would take our passports. We weren't allowed to have them.

Q: So he accompanied you –

A: We went by train from Zagreb to Spoleto, to Split and there, from there we went by ship. To Durrës, the port in Albania. And the private detective handed over our passports to the captain. So he fulfilled his commitment. But again we were, I mean the whole, friends of my aunt and uncle, everybody came to see us off. And there were so many boxes of chocolates and you know everybody felt very sorry for us. We were going, we were so (inaudible). And my mother said to Uncle Willie, tell us we can't take it. So I then said, look. And money we could take only the equivalent of 50 pounds. And this is what my father said to me. He said, he told me he said you know you are a young girl. You are really lovely but we arrive in a country that we don't know. We don't know a soul there with 50 pounds. How long do you think we can survive? Can you think at all? So Ivan and you mustn't take any more. So I then remembered how I had taken the gold pieces out. So I did the same with the chocolates. I hid, took them you know big box of chocolate, a bag of chocolates and put at the bottom money. Also we had 100 pounds. We took the next of it.

But then I was standing. My parents, they sat in one of the apartment, compartments of the train and I stood on the, in the passage with the detective who was traveling with us. And so we started chatting. And I then said opened the door and said to my mother, I would like to offer our friend here chocolate. She thought I must be crazy you know. He'd discover something but I didn't – but the thing was, this was you know and this was another one who I feel saved my life. But my life inasmuch as my confidence that there are people who want to help because he asked me why. He didn't know why we, why he had to come with us. Why are we being thrown

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out. So I told him and I told him about a few things that I'd seen in Vienna. And so he then said look, he said I'll marry you. He said now don't worry. You will not be in any problem and we will not have any problem and I will ask your parents and I said no, don't ask them. But he said if I marry you, it will be you and your parents will have automatically permits to stay.

So there was a guy who worked for the police who was prepared to help us. And really he may have been in difficulties, likely to have been difficulties if he married, go in the next day and if we got married. So there was another one like Mr. Miderman who didn't really know what, why and what he was doing. So as you have heard me say to my granddaughter when she asked me what does swimming upstream mean. And I said it means that I had to fight all the way in my life.

But every time somebody cropped up and helped and that's quite true. So and then we arrived by ship. Now that was another thing. On that ship was a German couple. Because they had bought the journey on that ship on the premise that they would just take them to Greece because that ship was going to Albania and further on and so on.

And they couldn't get ashore to get to resort, to Greece. And they had a little baby and that little baby was, they couldn't pay so the captain didn't know what to do. He didn't have, and he kept them. They actually helped in the kitchen. And they cleaned the ship. Whatever became of them I don't know. But they were going up and back (inaudible). so this was (fortune?) .

But then when we landed in Albania, the port, my father said well where do we go now. You are the decision maker, tell me. Where do you want us to go. And I didn't know, but then as I walked down the plank, I saw two men who were obviously Austrian refugees. From the clothing were there. And they recognized us and they welcomed us. And said one thing you may be sure. You've come to a very friendly country. And they were. And I was then you know I was the only girl because all the other, there was one German couple. Her husband was a senior engineer, had been a senior engineer in a German factory. So she insisted when anybody wanted to talk to her, you had to say Frau Ober Engineer. We were all, had no money, nothing. All stated but we had to leave Frau Ober Engineer. And this and that's where I stole money and stole bread. And I was hungry. Because you know we had, it was a very orthodox church rule there. And I now saw the first Jewish wedding. There was a couple in their 30s from Germany who were married under German rule, but not under the Jewish religion. And they wanted to go to

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what still is Palestine. And they had to have a Jewish wedding certificate. So we had a proper Jewish wedding. I mean it was fantastic to see the bride with the handkerchief .

Q: Did you make pictures?

A: No we didn't have a camera. No, well I didn't have a camera. This is now, didn't have a camera then.

Q: Stop for a minute.

A: Well the photographers of the wedding and in Budapest of King Zog. King Zog married a Hungarian aristocratic young woman. Her mother was Hungarian aristocracy. And her father I think was an American. And I don't know how she got, when she got them. They told them. So they told us we are welcome here and so we were. And now you see the grandson regards me as his grandmother and he said you haven't seen a photo. He's a very nice young man. Imperial that he sends me. Because I told him I felt I owe my life to Albania. Because when I went round as I told you to all the consulates asking for visas, none was prepared. But Albania, the counsel said, I mean when they received me and all the uncles were. They put the door in my face when I showed the guard –

Q: Which consulates did you go to? Who closed the door in your face? You went to the American consulate.

A: The British, the Norwegian, the Swedish, the Danish. All the countries where one would have thought they would have some empathy.

Q: Did you try, I don't know, Australia, Canada.

A: Yeah, no. So because by that time they were all we had to let (inaudible) the passport.

Q: And that was in Yugoslavia already?

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A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You were trying to get the visas for the next --

A: Yugoslavs were slowing as well. And they said unless we can leave to another country and they will have us, they will send us back.

Q: So when did you arrive to Albania?

A: In, just after the Kristallnacht. On the 20th of November. On my Otto's birthday.

Q: 38? 39? 38?

A: Yeah. So in 30 but the British then Otto then worked to try and, he got a visa for Kurt. Kurt was also in England. But then to get us not in time to get the British visa so that we could get here before England really opened up. Because England, only Churchill who realized because what was his name, Chamberlain who went to Germany and came back waving the peace treaty.

Q: Peace of our life time in 38.

A: Yeah so. Then they were prepared to have unskilled female labor.

Q: In the United Kingdom.

A: In England.

Q: And that was end of the year 38.

A: No that was beginning February 1939.

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Q: How long did you stay in Albania?

A: Until there were, until birthday. No we were three days before –

Q: So from September 38 to sort of April 39. What did you do all those months in Albania?

A: Well I'll tell you what I did. When I got there even the Greek Orthodox and even the Christian women would all go around veiled and would not go in the street, except prostitutes. Other women would not go in the street without a chaperone, a male chaperone. So there was I coming with socks, short dresses. I mean my school uniform and what I used to wear in school. And there was a girl. And you see the richer Albanians sent their children into boarding school for education to Italy. So then they came back so there was a group of young Albanians who really didn't have to work. They didn't have to do anything to get money. And they really didn't know. They were bored stiff and when they saw me they came and they surrounded me and I didn't know Albanian. They talked Albanian and I didn't know Italian or any and, and I felt scared and they touched my shoulder and then I said in French, I could do colloquial in French. And they spoke French and I said what are you doing? What do you think? And they said well are you a real girl. I said I'm a girl. I know that you know why am I? So then they said well women don't go like you so I then said well I come from a different culture. And there was a famous actor, an Albanian called **Moishe**. They knew him, who was very famous. I knew of him. He played in drama performances in Vienna. And he was very good and had a big reputation. So they asked me did I know him and I said yes, I know of him. So I then, they wanted to know for them it was sort of Austrian in general, and Vienna in particular were sort of the center of sophistication and education. It was, they built up Vienna in like a dream setting. Not the way I remembered it.

Q: Did anyone speak German?

A: No, no.

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Q: So how did you communicate, in French?

A: French. So then one of them who was called **Dowana** he said well his father had died just before I arrived in Durrës. And he had two younger sisters that were in boarding school. But the mother now, since the father has just died, doesn't want to send them back. Would I be prepared to teach them German, French and mathematics so that they would have some edu. So I said yes. I said well how old are they? Well I was then 16. Going on for 17 and they were 14 and 15. So that I wasn't much older than them. But I wasn't going to miss out on that. So he then took me to his home which was right opposite the sea, opposite the harbor. It was lovely and they had like the Muslims, the women live in purdah. You know there's women, there's a female section of the quarter, living quarters and the male one. And so obviously the girls were in the female one. And I fitted into this. So I remember I was really very cheeky. I did, I mean I knew French. I had done colloquial French, but I wasn't perfect, by any means. And there are many things that I didn't know the French for.

Well I was teaching it. Well how do you teach a language to others when you have no language in common. If you and I know English and I want to teach you Albanian, well I can tell you the English words and learn like I said. But if, if we don't have a common language it is very difficult. So what I then did was to point this little chair and I would say the English, the French and the German word, if I knew the French. The German I would know. And they would write it down. And the next day I would say what is this? And I'd expect them to know. Well sometimes they asked me for the French word and I had no idea. So you know what I did. I invented French words. But I said the words so quickly that they couldn't write them down. So the next day then I went back and I had a dictionary all right. I knew the word. Next day I would say well what is this, French, German. You know it in German, yes, you know it in French. Now we have. Well write it down now properly.

Now I have been trying to find the heirs of this Dowana family. Because they were wonderful to me. The women of the house, their mothers and aunts and all the relatives that were there, they were all very nice to me. First of all they always served me with coffee, Turkish coffee and biscuits which was great really for me. And secondly, from their house, their house was a lovely big house right opposite the port. I sat there with looking out well obviously this is a chair. And

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I would look out at the port. And I always loved the sea, and I told you. I told my mother I was born at the sea.

So and they were all so nice to me and I had a nice environment and I had regularly something to do and they paid me there. But I was the only refugee that they all saw

Q: Where did you live? Was there a place for all the refugees to live or did you stay with families?

A: Well that's where the Joint came in. These two men that met us, told, first of all they said, they took us to a hotel which was the dirtiest and filthiest place. I mean this was for my parents you know we had to say go and have a bottle of **eau de cordel** [ph] which we had to the loo. I mean it was, and the linens were dirty. And it was really awful. But these two men had said you must just stay there for a week because we will look at your credentials. But if you pass, which we think you will, you can then move, because what they had done, the Joint, there were some Jewish shops around. And there were also Jewish salesmen from Salonika, selling to these Jewish shop keepers. And the Joint was sending money. However many refugees turned up and lived because they had rented a house next to the police station. And they got, and the shop keeper that got the money from the Joint always had to get a piece of paper from the board of guardians. These were elderly Polish or Austrian Jews and to send it to the Joint that they would always continue sending.

It was very, very little. I mean really as a growing girl I was starving. And I, and there was a larder which was always locked and once they had forgotten to lock it. And I saw it open and I sneaked in and I got a big piece of bread and I was delighted. But next day I was hauled before the board of guardians. That you don't do and my father burst into tears. You know his little girl. He couldn't supply enough food that. I mean it was natural, but I didn't feel terribly guilty. I was angry. There was bread. Why shouldn't I?

Q: So the Joint was paying for this house where the refugees were living. How many people were there in the house?

A: Well when we got there, there were about 35.

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Q: 35. Did you manage to either keep in touch with any of those people or to find them after the war?

A: Well now you see after we left, then Otto got visas.

Q: So you left for England?

A: We left but wait a moment. He got me one as a hairdresser apprentice and my mother as a domestic. Well we weren't terribly delighted but better going to England was good. So but not for my father. So we tried to delay leaving him because he was really suicidal. He would go along the shore and was ready to jump in. And you know it was very difficult. So we felt that my mother didn't want to leave her husband and I didn't want to leave my father. But Otto kept extending our visas, but then he sent me a letter and he said listen, unless you arrive before the end of April, 1939, in England I cannot extend them. You will never be able to come here. So you better come with mother and he said I promise you and mother, you talk with mother and tell her he will do anything just to get a visa. And he did. My father came a week before the war started.

Q: Wasn't there also a story where you were giving language classes to the Italian counsel or ambassador that become very important later on?

A: Yeah, yeah. The Italian counsel heard that I was teaching German because these were elite families and I guess there were evening dinners and they must obviously have been together with the local elite.

Q: So there would be what associated with the royal family or the aristocracy.

A: Yeah so and he was a very nice guy and he said, they told him you know that I was teaching their daughters. So he said tell her I want to see her and so they told me and I went. And he then told me that he wanted me to, he wanted to learn German because Mussolini and Hitler were in

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Italy and it was when they were together, Germany. I mean Mussolini was Hitler's role model. He really, he wasn't anti-Semitic at first, for a long time but in terms of his – you know that Mussolini invented the term **fascisma** [ph]. So you know he was the role model. So this counsel thought it would help him in his career to know German. And so I started teaching him. And I think you must remember this out of my autobiography. Then we were still there when Mussolini occupied Albania. And this counsel became the first governor of the coastal region.

So the war, the Jewish – we thought that Mussolini would hand us refugees like a present over to Hitler. Because it seemed obvious. We were the only thing that Mussolini got out of Albania. That Hitler may want. So we were all terribly -- I mean they were just everybody. We were sitting in a cellar when the fighting was going on. And what was really moving was the next door policemen were worried because they told us. I mean you could see the big warships on the horizon. It was a port and Italy had big ships. The only ship that Albania had was the private yacht of King Zog. I mean that couldn't defend. And the policemen told us all they have to defend Durrës against the Italian onslaught is three machine guns. And there, the roof of their police station was flat. And one of these three machine guns was standing there. They told us that. And they said well when the Italians will come ashore we will have to shoot. That's our job. And the Italians will want to knock out these three machine guns. And if they fail, if they miss, then they will kill you. And we don't want that. And we thought, we sat together. And we thought we would, Hitler would throw us out and treated us like nothing. And here were these little policemen worried about our life. It was really very moving. And I tell them that now too so they then said well tonight they told us, the onslaught was coming. They would come ashore. So first of all you have to find a house with a cellar because not many houses had cellars. Only the richest. And the richest had gone inland, the Albanian. But they left their servants to take care of their – but we you know we went in and we checked that they have a cellar. The servants wanted to stop us or they weren't too strong, strong enough to do that. So we found a house not too far from where our house was.

But before this I must tell you, there were Salonika salesmen, Jewish salesmen selling goods. And well one of them was called Major. Very nice. He was 45 years old. For me he was like he had two feet in the grave because you know when you're 16, 17, 45 seems – but he fell in love with me. You must think everybody fell into, that was my life. And so he asked my father for give information so that he could marry me. At first he had asked me and I said I don't want to

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marry anybody. And then he asked my father and my father said no, she was far too young. But he, then he also came to see -- but he had money. So he was always getting me presents and I didn't want them because I thought that make me dependent. And anyway when it comes then a little story and a little lie. So we stayed in the cellar during the onslaught and we heard the shooting. And they then said we, our guardians had a meeting. And said let's surrender. Let's not be sort of taken, but let's surrender. Let's say we know we are going to go to the next concentration camp, but let's do it with our heads up. Let's show them that we have courage. So ok. So they said well then the shooting stopped and so they said well now we will go and somebody who has, who can speak Italian must lead us. Well who could do that? I was the only one. In teaching German and French I picked up, I'm not fluent but I picked up. So they gave me a stick and a white handkerchief for army and I should lead. So I led and I was trying to say in Italian, as best as I could. We are a group of German and Austrian Jewish refugees and I kept repeating this in my mind as we were walking along. And we must have been a really crazy lot, looking, you know these old men and women were shuffling along and wearing different kind of clothing.

Anyway, and then came three Italians, one an officer with two guys from around the corner and saw us. And shouted halt. So I said stop. So we stopped. And then as I had expected, he came up to me and said who are you? And so and he did. So I then said in my, in the sentences I had rehearsed. I said we are a group of German and Austrian -- and he didn't let me go any further. I didn't get, have to say Jewish refugees. He put his arm around my shoulder and said Tedeski, German. Italian, friends, amigo,. amigo. I didn't disillusion him. And so in a sense that was another saving. So then he put his two soldiers in charge of walking. He said where do you live? And I said over there. I didn't say that was the police station. And so he walked us back. But on the way back I thought well if they look through our rooms and if the police had wanted to hide their guns, then they might have put some into our rooms and if these Italian soldiers find them then the friendship will be off.

But they didn't. They let us go. They looked through them but the soldiers said the police hadn't hidden anything. But then I heard somebody knock at the back, where we had the window looking out at the wasteland and there was a guy standing in Albanian uniform because they had a very small unit of soldiers. And he made me understand that he wants clothing. He wants to get

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rid of his uniform. So I gave him one pajama of my father. And he stuck, changed there and this was my contribution to the freedom fight of Albania.

But then the next day the, who was then the governor, the Italian ex Italian counsel, his car came to our residence and a uniformed driver, chauffeur had a letter And he had, the guardians went to the door. And it was addressed to me. So they were all excited. Says now we mean, we are being sent to the concentration camp. And I opened it and it said now I need you even more and he sent me a letter with so many stamps and he sent every day his car, was picking me up and there are so many guard posts on the way because they had just occupied Albania. I actually went last July when I made this film because King Zog's car was at the top of the hill and of course King Zog had fled. So this new governor of the city had moved into King Zog's castle. So we went, I got in touch with the grandson and I said well they want to film it. So they allowed us in because there weren't many people. So this is and then I have to -- and then my Greek boyfriend said, and he knew we had the -- among the young lot who were my sort of I was the pied piper and they followed me was a travel agent. Because I had gone, since we had the visas for England, I went to the French ambassador and said can I fly because Air France was the only airline that would fly from Albania to Paris, fuel, stop there for refuel and then go on to London. So that's the plane that I thought we were taking. But they told me I should go to the French ambassador to make sure and do you know they were bastards. We would have, my mother and I would have just stayed the 20 minutes that it would have taken them to refuel. But they did not. And they said we do not want refugees in our country. At a later date they may have had different stories.

So then among this lot of young men, was one travel agent. So I asked him. I said well how can I get from here because I can't go by train. I have to go you know flying there. I can't fly. So how do I get there. So he then said there is one cargo ship that goes from Naples to Southampton and if you board that, there was one coming that would get you to Southampton on the 25th of April. So that was all right. So and we paid him and the Joint sent money for our friend. I had one. But this Salonika guy said my dear I want to give you 500 pound. I want to do it. And I thought no, I'm not being bought for 500 pounds and said no I don't. He then said well look don't be so silly. I'll give you the 500 and you take it. If you do not need them. If you don't have to use them I'll give you my, the details of my bank account in London and you pay the 500 pounds into that bank. And that is what I did.

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But I am sure because all the Salonika Jews went into Auschwitz and it was this, he was the general secretary of the you know, the Austrian . He was then the officer for the German army. And they occupied Salonika and ordered them all out. So I'm sure that this, not only he had an account that I know because, but I can kill myself for not writing it down. Because I am sure there is a lot of Salonika money invested in the British and American banks. But no, I mean the heirs. This guy was not married. I don't know how many were married, how many had children. But the second generation wouldn't know the details . So why don't the American Jewish -- I'm trying here the Jewish community, why don't they sort of write to the -- they said I should do it. Well I can't do it. But a Jewish community representative can say you know the Swiss banks. The American and Britain have really been very tough and gotten a lot of money out of it. But they themselves have never said we also have some money. And they must have it. Because you know the rich Jews in Europe and particularly a country like Greece, Salonika will have invested, will have bank accounts here. So the Swiss had to pay up. Why don't they, why don't the British. Or the American money. But no, nobody wants to take that on.

Q: So then you did eventually come to England, the both of you, your mother and yourself. But tell us about the journey to England.

A: Well that's what you want. So my brother said I must be arriving with my mother before the end of April so this travel agent in Durrës gave me a voucher. I paid with part of the Joint money for the journey and I had a voucher for two cabin, for two people to have a cabin on this cargo ship that was supposed to arrive in Naples about 25, about in the first week of April. So off we went. And my mother, Otto had said you must come because if you do not arrive in England, before the end of April you won't be able, whatever it is. So I wrote (inaudible) for him to do. So I took my mother. We were crying a lot and she, you know it's very sad really if you leave by ship because the land gets smaller and smaller as you depart. You know air flight is quick.

Q: Did you like traveling by boat?

A: Yes I do, but not if you leave somebody behind who you would like to have with you. And my father was getting smaller and smaller.

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Q: But there were other refugees who stayed behind. You weren't the only two who left then?

A: Yeah, it was on that day. But most of them were hidden during the war. For most of them you can see it. You want to see the rescue in Albania. Most of them were hidden. And there is actually one who married an American. She is called Joanna Newman with whom I am in touch. She said, I can't remember. She said that she arrived with her parents also from Yugoslavia. They were from Germany, but then they made it to Yugoslavia and from Yugoslavia they were thrown out and they came to Durrës. But I had, I must admit I have no recollection. But that doesn't mean that, she was obviously there. And in that film you can see her in fact. She seems a very nice lady.

And now I'm on the Albania Mafia and so because there is a lady in New York who is called, she is a dentist, a doctor, Anna Cohen and she now also wants me to come and tell my story to her American Jewish lot and we are on very friendly terms but I have never met her. So I now know quite a lot of them. And they all, she you can see her on that film. She was born in Albania during the war and her mother was saved because they also -- what she has been doing for Albania is when there are youngsters who have been diagnosed with a disease for which they don't have any treatment in Albania. There are quite a lot of such individuals. That she will arrange, she will get the medical report. And if she knows, she will then establish whether if they are in New York they can get the treatment that will make them well again. She gets money, she's got money in her fund. She pays for them. They fly to New York. She arranges their treatment. Once they are well again, back they go. So also during the war. She also feels in a sense she was born there. And if the Albanians hadn't saved her mother, she wouldn't be there either.

Q: So then you arrived to Naples. By boat.

A: So in Naples we stayed for the first, and while we were in Albania the men made the furniture out of orange boxes. My father made beds. We slept on hearths or in boxes or cupboards and but the Joint money helped us to stay in a hotel. Not a posh one but so I left my mother in the hotel. For her this was, she was still broken hearted, having had to leave my father. But she felt for the

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first time she was sleeping in a bed. We were both there. And I said you stay here. I'll go and get our tickets for the cargo ship. So I had the voucher and I went to this address. I found it and I produced my voucher. And they said oh it's a pity. What date do you have to be in England? I said end of April. They said well this ship is two months delayed.

You know I tell this story always to the kids and when I will say that. It's oh. When you feel you – there's nothing. And I didn't know a soul. I mean how was I to know? And I knew my mother, if I tell her she wouldn't say really that's it. So I went outside and had a good cry for myself. And then I said well then I said I must let me Otto know what the problem is. Because I realized I mean if we can't get to England then he can't do anything but at least he would know what happened.

But then I looked up and you know this Italian travel agency, cit, C-I-T is still was then still working. And it still, you can still see Cit Italian. So I looked up and there was Cit, so I said well maybe this is a sign. So I went in with our passports. And I said I need a flight to London from here. Can it? And he said no problem. He said have you got the money to pay. I mean I was a young one and I got out, I had money. Dollars so, it was safe. So he said no problem at all and so he rang Air France. And he said well the passports I wouldn't be (inaudible). No. We won't tell them. Well he rang other airlines, but of course the planes needed and couldn't fly such long distances. Everyone had to refuel on the way. So we had a tough time. But the only airline that would take us was KLM. But KLM was, we were boarding and we had to go by train from Naples to Milan.

And in Milan at the airport we could get onto the KLM flight. And the KLM flight went, Cologne, Frankfurt, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, London.

So I knew so that is when I wrote a letter. I mean in a sense like Horst Teers mother when she was on the train to Auschwitz, writing her last letter. I wrote a letter to Otto and I said we were on a flight, KLM. We are supposed to arrive in London but if we can't get through Germany, then you know where we to look. But that's all I could say and I gave him the time we were due. But then I said well how do I get it to him. So I went to talk to the KLM steward and that he is another one who had saved my life. Because really when you come and see you know taken every step, it was really true. Somebody turned up that helped. Because I said you know I said you know we are Jewish refugees. You can see our passport and I said do we have to get out when we dock at German ports. They said yes, the Germans don't allow anybody to remain on

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the plane. So first stop was Cologne and I said to mother and as we landed we saw all those swastika flags and all those SS young men and SA brown u – I mean it was really, you know it brought back all we had seen in Vienna. We thought we got out. And my mother was terrified so I said listen. We'll walk straight and we will show we are not scared. So we all had to go through immigration so when I showed our passport, he said (German) you know what are the requirement, (inaudible) have to do . So I said no, we're not returning to your country. I said you can see we have an English visa and that's what our tickets say and that's where we are going. So he said ok and thankful. And we sat down but then when we got to Cologne, we all had to get out of there. And the airport was full of people from passengers from all over the world. And they announced over the loudspeaker **Frau Und** [ph] report. So I then thought well couldn't we disappear in this , how would they find, but then I realized with our passports because everybody had to fill out so then that's when the worst (inaudible) in my life. Because two Nazi bitches, really you can't use any other term. They were in the female SA, SS uniforms, black skirts black, jackets, swastika and they took us into a small room and then said now strip. Strip? I felt you know I couldn't say, but what they were after was what we were smuggling. They went through every seam in our you know skirts and I mean I can't describe and then they were beating us and my mother collapsed and I had to pick her up and they would then say stop helping this cow of a Jew. And I mean it just, I don't want to remember that.

But then fortunately I had this letter. I had forgotten that I had it in one of the pockets in my jacket. The letter from this, what used to be the Italian cultural and it was in the government, with all these stamps and the letter said that you know Miss senorina, senorina Trude, it was all in Italian is a friend of the governor of the coastal area of Albania and should be allowed to pass because that was for their know. And when they saw this one of them said, what's this. And I said, I then so again I must say when I think my daughters or my granddaughters wouldn't have but they hadn't been through everything that I had. I said that's the only thing that we'll say. So I said don't you understand Italian. And they said no. I said well then you're very stupid and I got a big beating but then she said well what does it say? So I then said but I read out something which wasn't there at all. I said and I know the governor. I know that they are on the flight to London and that senorina Trude Grunewald will let me know when she arrives. And if I don't hear I will check up on her. I made that up on the spur of the moment. And she said you're lying and I said is there nobody. I said everybody like you who doesn't understand. Tell him tell me.

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it should be in Italian. Italy is your friend. So what are you talking? I got a lot of bashing, but I don't – so one of them said to the other, look after these two Jews. And she went out and she came back and she obviously had found somebody who had read this and understood that it was the Governor of Italian governor of the coastline of Albania.

So she said get dressed and so we were bleeding and we were not in a fit state. And my mother certainly wasn't so when I helped her to dress, they stopped me from helping her and it was terrible. And then we were dressed and they said now you can go back on your plane. So I said our passports because they had them on the (inaudible). They said you have no right. You can call yourself very lucky that we let you go so don't ask for anything. If I were you two. So we sort of go, went very slowly and trying to get back to the plane and the steward that I had given the letter was standing, of course there were steps up to the door. And he was standing at the door, sort of waving, being very happy to see us. But then I sort of shook my head so he came down the steps and said what's up. So and I said yes, we can go back to our plane but we don't have passports and if we don't have passports I know we will never get in for England. So he said leave it to me and he went and he retrieved our -- so you know I felt like kissing him. But foolishly I never tried to get his name. To say thank you because if he hadn't got our passports we wouldn't be here now.

So there are so many people who all the way have done a good job and have really been helpful.

Q: What would say are the lessons of what happened to you? What would you say to young people today cause you do talk to young people. What do you tell them? What are the lessons?

A: What I would say to people who have had similar experiences?

Q: No, no, no to young people who don't know, what would you say that for you have been the most valuable lessons of what happened to you and your family?

A: Well the most important lesson was I actually at this German airport that if I can survive that then I now feel I can survive anything which is foolish because eventually we all are doomed to die but I don't feel that I'm ready for it because I feel I have so much to do. That I can't give up now.

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Q: When did you learn then what happened to the rest of your family?

A: Well then when we, when my father, Otto rang up because he was sort of courting this elderly spinster who was responsible. I forget her name but I've seen the photograph. He showed me her photograph and so my father was also there. So the immediate family were also there. But then it was during the war. When the first messages came out when the Red Cross had names.

Q: So when would that be during the war?

A: Well after the Evian, when America, when Hitler wanted to sell his Jews, but America wouldn't, wasn't prepared –

Q: 44.

A: So then came the first news because then was actually the time when this final Solution. And I mean how people can say that this is an imagination of the Jews, when the Germans were so systematic, record keepers and you can find out who went on what day into the gas chamber.

Q: Do you remember the first time you heard about gas chambers and concentration camps?

A: Yeah. Because we, the first list came. And my father was after his relatives and my mother but they weren't on that list. But that was about may have been in 1943, in 44.

Q: How did it feel? Did you have a notion of what it meant, of could you imagine –

A: They reported, the Red Cross in autumn that Hit, that the Nazis had tried people killing with, by gas on people who were in lunatic asylums, right. That's when they experimented. When they saw it work, they fairly well you can. You see the thing was which newspapers then reported here that a lot of the German army had nervous breakdowns because they made the young children, women undress, dig a hole and then they shot them into it. This is what they had to do.

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Well you know you had to have a very strong c, you know conviction that this is what you need to do and what you should do. But normal people, I mean they weren't enough resisting but it made them have nervous breakdowns. And it was that, that got the notice then to apply this to not shoot, that these soldiers don't have to shoot. By gas you just put them in and say you go and have a shower and they come out as bodies.

Q: Do you remember the first images after the liberation of the concentration camps? Do you remember the –

A: Yes, I remember because there was Richard Dimbleby was a British, his sons were also now journalists. He was with the British forces who liberated Belsen and they found, actually every Holocaust memorial there, they showed those pictures. Frightening.

Q: But do you remember the first time what it –

A: The first time when you saw this, I mean just. You couldn't even watch it. I mean and you couldn't imagine that your own grandmother, your own uncles and aunts and cousins would all have gone through this.

Q: When was the first time that you saw the other members of the family that survived like Uncle Willie and other people who survived? When was the first time that you met after the war?

A: How did we find out about that. Uncle Willie found my mother. He was, actually ask Paul because he was with him. I can't remember what, how we got together but we –

Q: But you knew that you were alive. You knew for each other that you were alive.

A: Yes, yes we knew that he – they had sailed to India first. And then so that much I know.

Q: Well thank you very much.

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A: But finally I must tell you that this Dowana family where I was teaching, these two young girls. Now this young man that was their brother and who arranged this teaching, while during the Communist period in Albania he was obviously a very rich man and they actually I can show you this. If you've seen my diary, I've got a certificate from the Dowana family which is dated, I can show you that, November or December 1940. Saying how much they enjoyed and appreciated that I taught these two sisters, these two young girls and that they are very sorry that I had to leave.

So I've since then wanted for this film, as you heard me say, you know I'm a Jewish refugee. Do you know about anything? And I couldn't find – when I was making this film in Albania, one of the – I thought well one of, they must also be in their 80s but they would have been married and they would have children. So I thought there must be some heir that will remember so I went around the dock and do you remember the Dowana. No, no, no. so and you heard then, then Rick says well because it's 72 years since. But now this young Dowana was then got married. The brother of those two girls I taught. And they had children who then, but then when the communists came in, he was put into jail and he then died.

But there is now a grand, his granddaughter, a young Dowana, they went to America to Florida. And she is now an American citizen. And I've now found her. I've been looking for her and through the Albanian embassy, where there is one young woman whose parents live in Durrës and they are so keen on helping me find my outcome. So she wrote to her parents and she found that this young woman, she's lovely. She now works for the American embassy in Tirana. But she now has a lot of property because after the communists went out, now they, everybody who had property can reclaim them. So the house in which I was sitting and watching the port, the developers got it and so she got some money from that. But they knocked it down and put a -- I don't know about seven or eight floors apartment building where there are shops. And she said you must come and stay with me. I have three such (boards?) and she is just, I mean she drove me everywhere and she calls me Grandma and I mean I can have everything.

She gave me when I left, you know in Albania they make specially strong brandy. It's called **Draki**. She gave me a large, bottle. Would you like a little brandy.

Q: Scanderback cognac isn't there, Albanian, yeah it's wonderful. Ok shall we stop here.

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A: You are obviously very tired.

Q: Thank you very much

(end)