So when and where you were born.

I was born in a very small town in Germany, near the French-German border on the German side. And the place was named Wittlich. And I was there from 1921 to 1937. Actually, at the end of '36 we left.

Can you tell me a little bit about your education in Wittlich?

Ah, there were, I think, three or four years. I don't remember that exactly. Jewish volksschule.

Jewish volksschule?

Right. And from there, I had to go to private school. And it was Catholic lyceum.

When you say you went to the Jewish volksschule, what was the Jewish population of Wittlich?

There was actually a big population, compared-- the city had about 7 to 8,000 people. And there were about 80 Jewish families, which was quite an amount for a small town like that.

Were the 70 or 80 families all members of one congregation?

Yes, there was just one congregation.

And was it more Orthodox or liberal?

No, that was a very conservative synagogue. And the teacher was a rabbi, and he was a cantor. He was everything.

Was this Jewish volksschule affiliated with the congregation?

I don't believe so. I think in this part of Germany each religion had their own volksschule, which you had to attend, whether you're Catholic, Jewish, or Protestant. And from there on, you could go to realschule, what they call realschule, high school. Here it's not high school.

No.

It's a private school. Or you could stay on in Jewish school for eight years, right? But I went to a Catholic school.

Besides, there were very few Jewish children at my age left, you know. There were a few younger ones, and a few much older ones. But just my age, there were very few children.

When did you start to attend this realschule?

When did I start school-- wait a minute. I was born-- probably from '20s, 1927 to 1930.

That's when you were in the--

Jewish.

--Jewish school. And after that?

And then I went to a Catholic parochial school. I mean, this was Ursuline order. And there I spent the years from '30 or '31, I don't remember that exactly to '36.

How would you characterize the relationship between the Jewish children and the non-Jewish children in Wittlich

before Hitler came to power, in your school years?

In my school--

Early.

--early? A very, very close relationship, there was actually no difference between the Jewish children and the others. I mean, maybe I myself felt very, very young almost like an outsider.

So everybody was nice to us, but I was very Jewish-thinking always. It was very deep-rooted in me. And certain things I just went along, but not with all my heart. But I was accepted there.

When you went to this Catholic school, did you notice, after Hitler came to power, did you notice a change in attitude among them?

Tremendously, from one day to another.

How would you describe that change?

I would say this is, let's say, I feel my greatest loss in my life until today. You know, I feel these few years, were devastating to me. I feel today, I still think, I'm a person without a normal-- without childhood.

Because let's say the teenage years, even later, after I was out, I just couldn't adjust. There's like a loss, a lack, a loss in the middle of my life. There's something which is missing.

And this was the years when I was-- actually, it started already before Hitler that I had fears. And it probably came-- my father was from Saarland, which was at this time status quo between France and Germany. And we were always listening to the radio, what will be, for these people.

Father, for instance, left Saarland one year too early. Otherwise, I don't know exactly the date or what the year, one had to be in Saarland to still be a Saarlander. And Father left, I think, 1917, if I'm right. I've forgot that. His brothers and sisters were still there.

So when Hitler came, they were called Saarlanders though they lived in Germany. And they were able to leave the country. My father could not because he was considered a German. Yeah.

So this sitting there, listening what will be, provoked tremendous fear. You know, I was very young. I was, maybe-- I was nine years old.

That's right.

But I was afraid what would be. And then from then on, it was constantly listening quietly to the radio. And this is so deep, now still, nowadays in my mind, in my memory, sometimes I think it's crazy. Why can't I forget this?

Well, what happens in one's childhood is very often with you.

Oh, yes, yes.

Did these girls that were in the Catholic school with you, were many of them members of the BDM or--

All of them.

All of them?

All of them.

I was the only Jewish girl in the class.

That must have had an effect on you. How did that--

And this affected me, I think-- I mean, thinking back now, I think I probably would have needed later on a psychologist, somebody to help me to get over this. But who had money? And we just went on, and we went to work, and you did this and that. But it's affected me so tremendously that, like, now I think, probably it could have been helped to overcome that.

How did they act towards you?

Towards me? That, first of all, nobody ever came to me anymore. I was not able to-- I went to classes. I had to sit in [GERMAN]. I had to send in every week speeches for the schools in Germany, radio. Goebbels, Himmler, whatever we had learned about.

And we were sitting there. And then I had, as I said, [GERMAN]. We had special teachers. Because the nuns refused to teach it. And they were actually my good luck. These people really protected us as much as it was possible.

But I had to attend these classes not very long, then I was able to stay out. But it also had a tremendous impact on me through here, there, and after that, you had [GERMAN]. And it was talked about how inferior the Jewish race is, and so on. And you just sat there.

I know there were some people, I know a cousin of mine, who spoke up. She was older than I was. But I just was sitting there, and saying nothing, and brooding, and coming home, and being unhappy.

When you came home, did you tell your parents?

No, not really, no. You see, I wanted to protect them. Why? They had their own tsuris And I didn't talk about it. Later on in life I did.

That must have been very difficult for a young girl to listen to that.

Oh, yeah, I think it was the worst. I think it was the worst.

Were these girls, had they been friendly towards you before?

Yes, very much so. There were very few who didn't do anything. I mean, nothing against me. But they didn't tell me, either, you are still my friend or so.

They just were afraid. I would say it was fear on their part and not that they disliked me or hated me or Jews, in general. But they would just be quiet.

Children always like to be accepted. You know, by--

Yes, right. Here in, for instance, in-- when we had, for instance, one hour of games, I was not allowed to play with them. They pushed me out, ball games, anything like that.

Did you ever have the feeling that you didn't want to come back to school the next morning?

Oh, yes. Oh, sure, naturally. But I did go. And I went until I think one teacher once came to my parents and said, why don't you take her out? I see what's going on.

And so I was 14 only when I left that school. To the regret of the teachers, because they really were very, very good to me.

Was it a nun who came to your parents?

No, no, it was a lay teacher.

A lay teacher?

Yeah, but she was very, very nice and understanding. She was not my teacher.

When she came to your parents, how did your parents react to what she told them?

I don't remember that very well. I only know that I quit school afterwards, very soon, and went to some relatives in another town and went to what they called berufsschule. It was a very, very short time.

Was this berufsschule organized with the purpose of emigrating from the [INAUDIBLE] or--

Right. I couldn't take many courses there because I didn't live in that city. And I just took English, I took some Hebrew, and did some sewing, which I hated.

[LAUGHS]

And then I had to go back again for some reason, I forgot. And then my parents saw to it that I went out of Germany. And it was for a short time, but a very, very short time, in Luxembourg with some of my relatives who were Saarlander and could get out.

And had gone to--

Yeah, and until we got our visa to Israel, our certificate. And then I had to go back to Germany, which I was afraid, again--

To go back?

--to go back.

Let me just backtrack for a moment. In the years that you were in school, how did your father earn a living? Was he in business?

Yes, we had our own business. But this business went down immediately in '33. April '33, we had-- April 1, '33, we had the boycott.

And what type of business was he in?

We had a shoe store.

And retail?

Retail, right.

Were most of his customers Gentile or--

Yes, yes.

And they were influenced by the boycott?

Yes, very much so, because this was a city where the district courts were. And around us were villages where farmers lived. And the farmers were threatened. If you buy there, you cannot get this and that.

But the district court workers, and there was a tremendous jail building there, too, they all were, how you call you know employed by the government, government employed. So they were threatened. They'd lose their job. This was the main population there. And so they just didn't come anymore. And we had to keep all the people who my father employed though the income was going down, down, down, and we were not allowed to fire a non-Jewish employee. Right.

Did your father ever have any problems with non-Jewish employees who were party members?

No, no, no, no, they were not. They were pretty nice.

But coming back to this day of boycott, I still consider this my worst day in my life. I mean, I went through quite a lot later on. But this was a day which comes back sometimes in my dreams, after all these years. Not often, but it was such unbelievable fear, this.

And I have friends who went through the same thing and forgot about-- not forgot. It's the wrong word. But it didn't affect them so much.

But I was a young child. I was in school that Saturday morning. And I asked before whether I could go home earlier. And they said, yes, sure.

And the school was a little bit out of the district there, middle of the city where my parents had their store on the marketplace. And there were different roads you could go down to the street to our store. And I came from school and was permitted to leave an hour earlier.

But they started earlier, too, marching, which I didn't know. And I heard these drums. And I think this was unbelievable fear. And I ran, just as my school friends, down the street and ran into them. I thought they would walk the other street, and I went by them.

But when I came to our house, they, of course, were standing already. We had a very large entrance to our store. And on each side was one man standing. And this is the plat that the Jews had, Juden central zone [GERMAN] or whatever it was.

And I had to go under that sign, through. And my parents were standing in the store and they had locked. And they saw me coming. And later on my father and my mother said they never saw me as white as I was. And I went in there and I started sobbing, and my parents, too. And that was the worst--

Day that-- at that point, did your parents-- you felt it earlier in this small town than many people did in larger cities.

Sure, my husband was in Berlin. Here in the small town, everybody knew everybody. You know, I probably knew every person, not by name, but--

By sight.

--by sight. I knew the people. And I knew many people by name. And my parents were very, very well-liked.

And when we left Germany, many came in the back entrance and said, we didn't mean you. These are Jews in Berlin and in Frankfurt am Main, yeah, they are bad people. But you, we love you, and come back, and so on. Yeah.

When you saw these, when you came home that day, when you saw these-- I don't know if they were SS men, but whatever, were you afraid of physical--

For my father.

For your father?

For my father. Because I saw before that Jews were beaten in our town. Yeah.

You had witnessed that yourself, that Jews were beaten?

I did not witness it, no. But I saw, later on, after that, I saw Jews were beaten. Not Jews, I saw one man beaten. But others were beaten, but I saw one.

Did you ever see any signs, Juden UnerwÃ¼nscht in stores around?

All over, all over.

Was it possible for you to buy what you needed, or your family to buy what you needed?

Yes, yes.

Living in a small town?

We were able to buy things, yeah.

For a young girl, how does that feel to-- it's a difficult question. But how does one feel to be kind of rejected by the girls in school that you're going with and not to be able to go, to see a sign, Juden [GERMAN]?

It was a time, which really destroyed, I would say, a young person if he wasn't very strong. Right? It seems to me that I was not very strong, you know. Now, later on in life, you think, compared to other people, you really didn't go through much. If you compare, we didn't.

But at 12 years old, that's not an easy thing.

I remember they built a stadium. And I went with a girlfriend, Jewish girlfriend, who went there looking. And then the first thing we saw, Juden [GERMAN]. Juden [GERMAN].

So this was also not-- this didn't affect me so much because I didn't need it. There were other things which were much-- or, for instance, little cafe houses had it there. But this didn't affect me so much either because I didn't need it. It was much more what went on in, you know, school at that time, which I had to go to, and the fear for my parents.

You heard about what happened to this and that person. There were people, friends of my parents, who fled overnight. And I don't believe they did anything wrong. I mean, they were framed or whatever. And--

When was this that you were sent-- that you left for Luxembourg?

Probably beginning of '36, 1936.

Between the time of the boycott in '33 and this time that you left for Luxembourg, did your parents discuss emigrating?

Oh, yes. We tried to get out already '34. That was always. I mean, we tried very hard to get out just anywhere. And we were one of the first people who decided to leave. And my father's friends just said we are absolutely out of our mind.

There was one man. He said, we are going to Holland. Why don't you come over? And we will find work for you also. And they didn't come out any more. They went to Holland. But when we said, at that time, we go to Israel, people just

came and said, you will be back very soon. You are just overreacting.

And I wouldn't say that my father never was Zionist. It was just my father knew or had the feeling it will take quite a while, and we cannot afford it. I mean, we just couldn't afford it financially to stay on.

It was impossible. And besides, my parents were just as unhappy as I was, maybe more about my-- I have a younger brother. Our school and everything was actually almost-- you know, came to an end.

Right.

So we had to leave.

Did your parents consider coming to America at that time?

Oh, yes. It was actually our first choice. And my mother had also some relatives here who, I guess, left after or before World War I as young children. But everybody in the whole family wrote to them, and they gave some affidavits.

But when we wrote, it was already, we gave already so many. And we cannot take the responsibility. And it took us quite a while until we found this people. And we tried to get just out anywheres. And to Israel, we applied pretty early. And this was still, that time, Palestine, naturally.

Palestine.

And there were three possibilities for Jews to get in there from Germany. Either you had to have a trade, which father did not have, you had to be a farmer, which he was not, or you have to be a capitalist, which we were not either anymore. I mean, before, my parents were not rich, but we were pretty well-off. And so the question was how to get this money to get out because we were unable to sell the store.

I was going to ask you. At that point after the boycott and in the next few years, did your father attempt to sell the store?

Oh, sure. Immediately. Nobody came. And it took a few years. And then we were able to sell for a very, very low price, but we had to get out. And it was probably enough to get us out of Germany. I don't remember exactly the financial standing, but I only know that the 1,000 pounds were not available at the moment when we tried to get out. We didn't have-- sold the store yet.

So we were lucky enough that we had one relative here in the United States already, a brother of my father, who deposited 1,000 pounds in a bank in Israel in our name. It was never our money because he helped many people to get out with the same money.

Right.

Yeah. But with that money there, we got a certificate, what they call at that time, an affidavit, to get into Israel.

Now, when you went to Luxembourg, that was in the beginning of 1936. Did you go to relatives there?

Yes. Yeah.

You mentioned that you had a brother.

Yes.

Did you go alone, or--

I went alone, yes. He still was in first or second grade.

How did you react to 1936? You were 15. How did you react to leaving? Did you want to go or--

Where to?

To Luxembourg?

I wanted to be away from the small town where I was. I was not crazy about going to Luxembourg for personal reasons, but I went anyway and made the best of it. I was not very happy there, but it was better than-- I missed my parents tremendously. For many years, I was the only child. And then my brother came, and I was what they called [GERMAN].

And, yeah, it was not the way I wanted it to be, but it was better to be out. And it was, anyhow, for a few months. And I was called back.

Went back.

And we went to Israel.

On the day that you left your home, you mentioned that some people came around to the back. Did any of your friends that you had gone to school with, either Jewish or non-Jewish, come to say goodbye?

Oh, the Jewish children, naturally. Yes. I belonged at that time to a-- this was the only really good thing. I belonged to a Jewish Zionist movement. And this was the only thing which we really enjoyed very much. And you forgot when you were there all your troubles. And they naturally, we-- in fact, I got a party at that time. And we left. And it was good things that happened.

This was the Habonim that you belonged to?

Yes, yeah.

Do you ever remember discussions within the group about the situation in Germany?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Sure, sure. We had also people coming from bigger cities to talk with us about it. And I was actually supposed to go to Youth Aliyah, but our visa came earlier than my going to Berlin for Youth Aliyah. So I went with my parents.

And how did you get to Israel? Let me stop just for a moment. Did your father serve in the First World War?

Yes.

How did he feel towards Germany?

My father was a super German.

As a child looking at one's father, how do you think that the growing Nazi pressure changed him?

It took him a long time to change. It was just for him almost unacceptable to be suddenly seen by other people as a non-German. He, in fact, it went so far-- and as children we always were laughing about him in Israel. Father took his Eiserne Kreuz to Israel, yeah? And my brother put it on and marched around and sang German songs.

That went over big in Israel.

But I found it now, whether you believe it or not. My mother passed away last year, and we cleared the apartment here.

And I found this here with a few letters from German government. Disgusting, absolutely, but he had. No, he changed completely later on when we were in Israel, yeah.

No, but I meant really in those beginning years.

In the beginning years, it was really--

It was unacceptable to him.

It was absolutely unacceptable, yeah.

Did he think there was any chance that this wouldn't last long?

It was probably hoping more than believing because we felt it so badly, this antisemitism, in our town. And he knew, also, what was taught in schools, you know, that this cannot go over very fast. I mean, what these kids at my age were taught in school must have gone deep in them.

And they will carry it on to the next generation. I'm sure, certainly. I mean, even if, nowadays, they say the youth of Germany is better now, I'm sure there's still quite a lot of in them what their parents were taught.

When your father-- when you all left Germany that day, how would you describe your feelings about leaving?

My feelings were absolutely mixed. If I think today, something was not right with me that I still had bad feelings of leaving. On one hand, I was happy to be out of the Nazi mind, but Germany was probably-- I was-- I loved that land.

Because though I was very, very young, I loved German poetry. I still read it. I mean, this is the only thing I read in German, but I loved it. I was the best student in German and German history. And there was other things I was not so good, math, was--

But it affected me deeply. It was something like a tremendous loss. So I was happy to be out. This is where this conflicts, tremendous conflicts. And you were part-- [AUDIO OUT] we were, as I said, accepted and loved everything around us.

And then the sudden, the very sudden, change must have felt were, many young people tremendous--

That's hard. It's leaving home, you know? I mean--

Yes, yeah. I remember that I cried when we left. And on the other hand, I was so happy to go out. Yeah.

I don't know that a child watches their parents' reactions at such a time. But how did your parents feel?

I know that they didn't talk at all until we were out of Germany. It was just--

When you say they didn't talk--

On the train, nobody talked. It was probably inner turmoil.

Did they leave family behind?

Oh, yes. Yes. My mother had many sisters and brothers, and very few came out. A few came out, but the others were all in concentration camps. And--

Do you remember going to-- I don't know that you did. But did you go to say goodbye to some of these aunts and uncles before you left?

Oh, yes. Yes, yes. We went.

Do you remember a discussion of, well, urging them to find ways to emigrate?

We didn't have to urge them. They all wanted to get out. They all wanted to get out. And this was also, I would say, very frustrating that we got later on letters from some relatives. You could have helped us to get out.

You know, they still had in mind that my parents were once very well-off. And they were not so much. But they see you, with your money, you could have helped us. But it wasn't so. We didn't have it any more.

Were you--

But father probably was much too proud to say, you know, I'm at the end of the--

Yeah. You were you only able to leave with the 10 Reichsmark?

No. We were able to take-- since we left early, we were able to take out furniture and the belongings, the household belongings. And I don't remember how much we were able to take out, a certain amount, but more than that. We were able to live in Israel for, I'd say, four years on the money we had.

That's what I-- how did you get to Israel?

Not much.

You mentioned that you took the train to--

Oh, yes. Yeah. No, actually, the first thing was that one Gentile man took us, picked us up early, early in the morning before the people got out. Not that we had-- we had a visa. We were free to go. We had all the papers.

It was not like fleeing, but my father didn't want to have any commotion. Because it happened that one family who left before us, they all came to the house and screamed and say get rid of you or something like that. And to avoid that, there was one Gentile man.

I am sure he risked quite a lot of things. He took us by car to the next city, larger city. And from there, we took the train to France. And then from there, from Marseilles, we went to Israel.

By boat?

By boat, yes.

When you came to Israel--

Yeah.

--how did you find Israel? As a young girl, did you know anybody in Israel to go to the first--

Very few, very few people, no, not that I know.

What happened to you those first few days when you got off the boat?

My uncle helped us. He had an address where we went to, strange people. And they had what they call pensione. We had one room for the four of us.

And then we knew it was much more money that we could afford. And we rented a room in a rooming house, all four of us, again, in one room. If people say now, you cannot-- you know, one has to have space. So we needed space, too, believe me. But it wasn't there. And I was the first one who worked.

How did you get a job? You were at this time 15?

15.

How did you get a job?

How did I get a job? There was a man in the same place living where we were. He was a lawyer, and he worked as a waiter.

He was a lawyer in Germany?

In Germany, right. He worked as a waiter in the cafe house in Haifa. And he came to my mother and said, I have a job for you in the kitchen. And I nearly jumped at his throat. My mother working in the kitchen? I take it. And my mother said, no, you're too young.

And I went. Next morning, I was in that kitchen. And it was very, very hard work. And I was this skinny little thing. And I was very upset with everything which was told-- well, people told me what to do. I had not the slightest idea how to do it, and he screamed at me. And it was very, very unpleasant. But I stayed until I got something better.

Did you know either English or Hebrew?

A little bit, a little bit, what I learned in school and that was all.

How did you make yourself understood?

They all spoke German.

Oh, they did speak--

Unfortunately. I would say, unfortunately, yes. This was a German place. And they took tremendous advantage of us, unbelievable. And what made me-- I'm not sure-- let's say what was hard for me to understand when I came to Israel-- because I was in the Zionist movement.

I was looking forward to come to this land and be free and have the same rights and not be looked down as a Jew, which is fantastic, but suddenly to be looked down as a German. It was very hard to accept. You know, we came-- I had to because of the job, to become a member of the Histadrut

Yes.

And everybody got a job, but the German Jews. This was also, again, a conflict, which I was absolutely unable to understand.

Was this as a result of the fact that most Israelis at the time were of Eastern European background?

Yes. Right. I mean, they were earlier. There is no question about it that they asked sometimes, did you come from Germany out of Zionism or out of Germany? And we came out of Germany. And there's no question about it. I mean, not that there were no German Zionists, but we were not.

But this I did not know. I mean, I wanted to come to Israel. I was looking forward to live there happily and forget about everything. But to be looked down then again as a German Jew and not finding a job, which other people who were less

time in the [INAUDIBLE] made me very unhappy.

Sure. How did they show this anti-German Jewish feeling?

Oh, you were the Yekkes. Wherever we-- you know, the word Yekkes. I don't know whether you--

Yes.

--heard it. But if you heard-- they didn't tell you openly. No, they didn't do that. But it was hard as a German Jew to-- besides our knowledge of Hebrew or even our being able to speak Hebrew as well as the others was not good. I mean--

And also, no Yiddish.

No Yiddish.

Which I'm sure was--

Right, was beside. All right, Yiddish, we had our next door neighbors were Yiddish speaking people. And they were very, very helpful. They came over immediately and helped us in many things. So my parents spoke German with them, and they spoke Yiddish. And they understood each other--

They could, yeah.

--very well. And they were really very, very good friends.

Were you at all given the option of going to school in Israel?

I would say probably I was given the option, but I had such a sense of responsibility, which probably, if I think back now, was overdone on my part. My father developed, in Germany, a heart trouble and was unable for quite a while to work in Israel. And mother, also, I mean, mother worked. My mother worked very, very hard in the household and in other people's household. And I did. And I did everything what's--

But I should have gone to school. And somehow, if I would have been a fighter, I would have probably would have gone back to school some time. What I did, I took courses here and there. But they were more on the cultural thing than what one learns in school. I mean, I missed out there.

You mentioned anybody actually who went to Israel or who even goes to Israel now kind of was caught up in the idealism, you know, of Israel especially in the beginning.

Yes.

No matter what the condition of Israel was, I'm sure it didn't come up to the idealistic view. How did you feel about that?

No my expectations, right. I expected much more. I expected it much easier. I would say probably, if I would have gone into a kibbutz away from home, I would have adjusted better.

So I was immediately where I was only 15 years in the [INAUDIBLE] of work and, you know, worrying about whether I'd be paid. And you know, I'm the one who is the strongest. My brother was only seven years old when he came here.

Right. He went to school in Israel?

Oh, yes. Yes. And also, then my brother studied. And I had to help, or I had felt I happy to help.

You mentioned also that your mother was working.

Yeah.

What kind of employment was she able to get?

Only household, taking care of children and so on, which I did for quite a while, too.

I was just going to--

It was just actually the only jobs which were available if you didn't speak the language fluently. Later on, I worked in different places, but it was office work. And at the same time, we had also help. It was a factory, and I worked in the office there. But we had to help all over the place, you know? But--

Were you ever able to get any help from any organizations?

No, I didn't. I don't think I ever asked for help from an organization. We were able always to manage all together, to survive.

Yeah. Your intention was to make a life for yourselves in Israel.

Yeah, right.

Was there at the time-- it was a British mandate.

Yes.

When the war broke out, how did the outbreak of the war affect you?

I guess like everybody else. We were in the-- really we were Israelis. It wasn't-- you couldn't call it Israelis. We were affected by everything. Whether my life was ideal or not personally, we lived through so many things there, the riots between Arabs and Jews, between the Jews and the British.

And our hearts were pleading for all the things which happened there. We were in it whether we personally had our struggles. We lived there. You lived the life of-- you know, you lead with this every Jew had to suffer [INAUDIBLE]. But what was the question?

Was there a big German-Jewish refugee community there as the years went by?

Oh, yes. Yeah. We were quite a lot of German-Jews. And we lived in Haifa.

And did you associate mostly with them?

Mostly, yes. But I had other friends, too. Yes, I did. It was not-- let's say Western European, not absolutely German.

German, yeah.

No, I had friends from all the way and--

But people who had come-- yeah.

--from Austria, Czechoslovakia, mainly Western European or middle European.

When you mentioned before the trouble with the Arabs, did that ever personally affect you?

Oh, yes. Yes. I lost very, very good friends, young people. When was that? It was before World War II. They were caught. They built a new kibbutz. And the Arabs built a barrier. And well, I think there were 15 they killed. And two of them were friends of mine. It affected me like everybody else.

Sure.

I mean, it was nothing personal, but so many things happened. Then World War II came. And we had very hard times, but more or less everybody was in the same boat. Nowadays, I have a friend here. We lived in the same building in Haifa. And we were good friends in there, but we are better friends here, you know.

And when we look back, sometimes we joke about it. We have fun thinking back at these times. I said, we took these things very, very hard. But now, it's a long time back. And--

I was just going to say. That's the perspective of time.

Right. And compared to certain things we go through now in our lives, maybe it was nothing, but still.

What was morale like in Israel at that time?

High, very high morale.

Were there many people who were involved in rescue efforts that you knew in Europe?

Rescue efforts? Let's say, they were not my immediate friends directly in Haifa, the city. But I know people who I know from years back from Germany who were in rescue groups. But they were most of them were lived in kibbutzim. Yeah, they were the ones who really did things.

For your parents, who were older at the time, older than a young person, was it difficult for them to make the adjustment to Israel?

For my father, yes. For my mother, my mother was adjusted to everything in life as most women do better than men, no question about it. I mean, I know of so many people, especially, let's say, the German academically trained man, they really didn't do anything really to-- should we--

How did your father-- you mentioned that he didn't adjust as well as your mother. What things did you see that make you think that?

I would say it was not only my father. It was all the men at this age-- which let's say that father was around 50 when he came there-- who were not used to that. How can one do, you know? One is not used to dry the dishes in the house or whatever if one is a doctor or whatever.

On the other hand, there were quite a lot of them who built villages. And some of the most beautiful villages in Israel were built by Dutch [? academia, ?] you know? There were jokes about it. And they build it up.

And they built the houses themselves from the bucket. They [INAUDIBLE] bucket from one hand to the next one. And we said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. You know, it's-- but Father and all his friends, the people I knew, it took them longer, just longer, to adjust.

He adjusted, father adjusted to life in Israel quite well, but it took him longer than the women. We went out immediately to work. The men usually waited for the opportunity to do the same thing they did once in Europe, which was impossible.

That's right.

It wasn't possible.

But you know, in Europe, a big part of one's standing was based on occupation.

Yes, for sure.

And this was all taken away.

Yes. Yeah.

And that's really what I'm asking in terms of was his morale-- was he depressed over that?

He was very depressed, yes. And I would say his heart trouble he had suffered in Israel from was affected by that. What shall I do? What will people think if I do this and that, which Herr so and so did not do in Germany? But he did. Later on, he did quite a lot of hard work, and just this was harder for him to accept.

Yeah.

Yeah.

When did you come to the decision that you were not going to stay in Israel?

It was actually my father who didn't-- I wouldn't say he pushed me, but his heart was so deeply in it to see his brothers and sisters again who lived all here in the United States. You see, they were, as I told you, Saarlander, and were able to leave Luxembourg where they were, made a stopover. And then they went to-- not to Spain, to--

They may have gone over France through Spain and Portugal.

Portugal, they lived in Portugal for a while. From there, they went to the United States. And he wanted very much to see the family again. And again, I said, you know, I'm the youngest. I'm not the youngest. My brother was the youngest, but he was in the middle of studies.

Maybe I saw it, also, as an adventure, to see something different. And I said I'd go, but I will come back. I will see how I like it there, and maybe you can come over. I bring you over and make money. And--

When was this?

I left Israel, '47.

What was the condition in Israel like in 1947?

When I left?

Yeah.

It was very, very hard. Otherwise, I probably would have refused to go because I got adjusted more or less to life in Israel. And I had friends.

But economically, it was very, very hard. I would say this was probably the reason why I gave in and said, OK, I'm going. But if I don't like it, I'll come back. Yeah.

For a person living in Israel at the end of the war, what kind of things did you see as far as-- at the end of the war, all these people who had been survivors were coming to Israel.

[BOTH TALKING]

How did that-- can you describe that a little bit?

Can I describe? You saw the misery they were in. I saw some-- I had one experience which affected me personally, also, very much because I saw it with my eyes. This was the going down of the Patria, which I saw, really saw.

Haifa is built on a hill. And I had that time a job pretty high up on the mountain. And I took care of two children at that time. And the mother of the children didn't see very well.

And so we went. You could look down at the harbor in Haifa. And we knew there was the Patria. I don't know whether you know the story of the Patria. I'm sure you do. We knew that some--

It was illegal, right? Illegal shipload?

Yes. Right. The ship was there. And there were some-- illegal ships were coming in. And they loaded the people on the Patria to bring them back to Cyprus.

It was not-- there were other ships. They were going back to Europe, but here it was to Cyprus. And the Irgun wanted to delay the departure of the ship. And unfortunately, they blew out the whole wall of the ship instead of making just a small hole, right, what they intended to do.

And this woman said to me, look, Trude, down there. Do you think this ship is not standing straight? And I looked. I said, my god, you know? And we took the binoculars. And we saw. The ship was very fast, was 20 minutes. The ship was underwater.

And I had friends I knew they were on the ship. We know beforehand that they would come. And it was-- and we visited later on some of the survivors there. In fact, some are here now in the United States. And others, a very good friend of mine, she's in kibbutz in Israel.

And this was one of the most horrible things. But we went to the beaches there. And they looked in the morning for people who arrived, you know? And we were called by Haganah or whatever organization you belong to for clothing there.

And it was actually astonishing how well most of them adjusted, of these people.

Well, after what they had been through--

Right. I always feel, the more people went through, the easier was the adjustment later on. And as I said before, we went actually through very little personal. We didn't go to concentration camps, and nothing happened to our parents. And still, we did not adjust as well as some of the people who went through much worse.

Did you belong to any organizations, like Haganah or Irgun or--

Haganah-- a very short time only, you know. I don't know which-- I think I was maybe one year or so. We were called in for certain trainings, and then they dropped it. And it was nothing outstanding in my mind that I went through there.

When you came here in 1947, did you stay permanently at that point?

I came as a visitor, as an immigrant because I was told at that time it is better. You always can go back anyway. But if you are as a visitor-- and it makes it very hard to stay here in case you would like to stay here.

And I came as an immigrant. And after a few days, I said, in one year, I will be back in Israel. But it didn't turn out this

way.

When you came here, did your relatives meet you at the boat?

Yes.

How did you earn a living in New York in the first few weeks?

I took the job with a newborn baby. I was not a baby nurse, but I worked for many years as a, let's say, untrained baby nurse. But I did very nicely with--

That makes you a trained baby nurse.

Yes.

How did you get this job?

I got the job through either [INAUDIBLE] or [? Selfhelp. ?] I'm not sure anymore. They gave me two addresses. And the first one I came to, they said, you can come tomorrow.

Where did you live?

I lived for quite a while with my relatives, and then I got myself a room.

When you left Israel, you mentioned that your intention was to go back. Did your parents intend to come here?

My father wanted very much to come here not because he didn't like it in Israel. He wanted to see his family again.

His family.

They were a very close-knit family. And I would have had to work a few years, then I would be able to send them the money to come out. And after three years, my father passed away.

In Israel?

Yeah. So that was that.

And did your mother come to the United States?

Much later, much later, she came here in-- 1959 or 1960 she came here.

When you left Israel, after all that you had gone through and moving around at a very early age, were you very lonely?

Here?

Yes.

In the beginning, yes. Yeah. I visited millions of people whose names were still in my book. But with all the people around me, I was lonely, very lonely. And so it took her about, let's say, two years. And then I wasn't lonely anymore.

Well, let's put it this way. How did you overcome the loneliness? Did you join any organizations or--

No, I had personal friends.

Did you live in Washington Heights when you came?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

You were of a dating age, I guess.

Yes. Right.

How did you meet eligible men?

How did I meet them?

Or even girlfriends?

Through friends, probably. I went sometimes, not to often, to the New World Club. They had, what they call at that time, [GERMAN]. I was actually too young for them. They were, in my opinion, very old men. They are at least 40 years.

After having been in Israel where you had adjusted to a more mixed group of Jews from all origins--

Yes.

--when you came here, did you still associate mostly with German-Jews?

Yes, I was more or less forced to it, and I didn't like it. I absolutely disliked it very much. I felt it's like ghetto. I said Washington Heights is a horrible place to live.

I just found it almost impossible until I had a boyfriend or so and it was more pleasant. But, otherwise, I still feel I wished I didn't have to live here.

But on the other hand, you know, I was in different places, smaller towns. And that's not right, not good for immigrants to-- almost impossible to make a living or whatever, right? But--