https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

STEFFI SCHWARCZ

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Eva Abraham
Date: June 5, 1989

© 1998
Holocaust Oral History Archive
Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

This page left intentionally blank.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS - Steffi Birnbaum Schwarcz[1] [interviewee]
EA - Eva Abraham [interviewer]
Date: June 5, 1989

Tape one, side one:

EA: ...Steffi. Do you like Steffi or Stephanie?

SS: Steffi.

EA: Steffi. Steffi also came from Germany to England on the *Kindertransport*, and hopefully we will find out something about your experiences, Steffi. How old were you when you left Germany?

SS: Eleven...the day after I arrived. In other words, I was ten, and I had my eleventh birthday on the day...after we arrived in England.

EA: So you didn't have your eleventh birthday any more with your family.

SS: No, it was two days later, in the new country.

EA: Oh my. Did you celebrate before?

SS: No, I don't think there was much celebration. It was a week, as far as I remember, of...sadness. But...

EA: You already knew, when did you know that you would be leaving? How long in advance?

SS: About a year, I think.

EA: A whole *year*?

SS: Approximately, but I...

EA: Let's start a little earlier on. I, we'll come...

SS: I can't vouch for that exactly, though.

EA: No, of course not. Steffi, you were not the only child in your family, am I correct?

SS: No, we're two sisters, and my sister is nearly two years younger than I am.

EA: Is it indiscreet to ask what year? You don't have to say exactly the age, just what year you were born.

SS: In 1928.

EA: 1928, so, and then you lived with your parents, and your siblings, your two sisters?

SS: No, only one sister.

EA: Oh, there were two of you, so...

SS: Two of us, yes.

EA: You, and only one sister.

SS: Only one sister. And there were never any other brothers or sisters.

[1]née Birnbaum, nickname Babett.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

EA: Did you have other relatives living near you?

SS: My grandmother.

EA: Mmm hmm.

SS: My grandmother, who was at that time in her 70's.

EA: That's mother's mother?

SS: Mother's mother, yes.

EA: And where...were you born?

SS: I was born in Berlin.

EA: And were both your parents born in Berlin?

SS: My mother was born in Berlin, but my father was born in Niederschlesien [Lower Silesia], in Sagan.

EA: So but, they were both...

SS: Which is now Poland.

EA: And would you say that you remember a happy childhood?

SS: Extremely happy, and harmonious, and warm, and lovely, and...wise, as far as my parents were concerned.

EA: In what way do you think they were wise?

SS: Let's say wise in their rearing of children, I would say. There was a very, very well balanced and firm relationship between them, between my parents...and, which lasted to the end, right up to the end when my father was very ill. And, when I say wise, I think no favoritism between the two of us, and a very good...we...were educated in a, let's say, I can't express it exactly, maybe we had a very good foundation, in every respect, up to the time we left. A very good foundation as far as human living is concerned.

EA: Were...

SS: We weren't a wealthy family. My parents were not wealthy, but comfortably off.

EA: What did your father do?

SS: Well, at the time when we left Germany, of course, he had been thrown out of his...job. He was thrown out of his job in 1933 when, the year Hitler came to power. He was the Director of the, of a big international advertisement, advertising agency called *ALA*, *Allgemeine Annoncen Expedition*.

EA: And he was thrown out in '33 already?

SS: He was thrown out initially when the first dismissals came about. And...he also acted as Vice Council for Brazil...there in Berlin, but this was before Hitler came to power, in the '20s, before I was born, for a few years, as far as I know.

EA: Did he serve in the First World War, in the German Army?

SS: No, not at, I think he was, he did something in a journalistic capacity, as far as I know. But...not active service, because he had bad eyesight.

EA: Tell me, would you describe your home as religious? See, were you Conservative, or Orthodox, or what was your direction in Judaism?

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Reform. *Reformgemeinde*. There again, it's a disparity between my parents. My father came from a traditional but very tolerant home background. And he...grew up with general observance. Whereas my mother, from an ultra assimilistic [assimilated] background, where I think they knew nothing about Judaism, the brothers, I believe, were not even circumcised. And all they knew approximately, I think, that they didn't go to school on Yom Kippur. And, they knew vaguely that they were Jewish, but no...emphasis was put on it at all.

EA: What do you recall, if anything, of course you were very young, about the Nazi regime in Berlin, as a child? What do you recall?

SS: I recall very little. Strongly the marching up and down in the street of the S.A.

EA: How did you feel about that?

SS: Anxious. Anxious. I recall the *Stürmer* caricatures in the, which were put up in different places, caricatures of Jews, which of course I didn't go up to read. But I mean they existed. In the latter period I remember that we couldn't go to the cinema or couldn't go to the theater and couldn't sit on park benches. But I think most of all, I remember my parents in the early years telling us, "*Du musst vorsichtig sein, was Du auf der strasse sagst!*"

EA: "You have to be careful what you say in the streets."

SS: Yes. You have to, oh, you want it all in English, eh? And we...

EA: No, no, that's quite all right. That's quite all right.

SS: O.K. What you say in the street, and of course in the early years, that, you ought to strike that out, that doesn't make sense.

EA: What doesn't make sense? Everything makes sense.

SS: Everything makes sense. O.K.

EA: You're not writing a book. We are just talking.

SS: O.K. Well, of course, I went straight away to a Jewish school, and didn't attend another school.

EA: So you were born in '28. So you were five in '33 already.

SS: Yes.

EA: So you went to...

SS: So I went straight...

EA: Straight to a Jewish...

SS: To a Jewish school, which was, of course, a sheltered environment.

EA: Right. Was it an Orthodox school?

SS: No, not at all.

EA: Oh.

SS: The...elementary school I attended for four years, I believe, from the age of 6 to 8. It was run by two...ladies—it was a *Familienschule*—who were converted to Christianity but remained, but all the Jews and half-Jews in the neighborhood attended. In other

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

words, it was a, the...half Jews, *Mischlinge*, attended there. We [?] were taught the New Testament, and we were taught only the Old Testament. But it was...a school run in an extremely, in a wonderful way, I would say. They were ideal teachers, the two of them, and humanitarians. And we were a mixed bag of...assimilated Jews, can't say observing Jews, but not Orthodox, and half and half. I mean...

EA: But not fully Aryans.

SS: Children from...mixed marriages.

EA: But not total Aryans.

SS: No Aryans at all. Only the mixed, children of mixed marriages.

EA: O.K. And that remained open up to...

SS: It remained open but I think it closed quite soon because they escaped to Sweden, the two...teachers who, owners of the school, I mean...*Schulleiterinen,* escaped to Sweden.

EA: So you had...

SS: But that, I didn't stay there till the end, because I moved to a Jewish high school after, I think, after the age of 8, which was one of the largest Jewish high schools in Berlin—*Goldschmidtschule*, where I could, if times hadn't been, stayed normal, taken the *Abitur*... The English matriculation certificate. And that's what some of the older girls managed to do, the ones who were already in the higher...forms. Before emigration they took the matriculation.

EA: Irrespective of their age? Because eight years in high, if you're eight years old and you went to high school, that's very early. You must have done the...

SS: Well I'm...

EA: You must have been a smart kid.

SS: No, it wasn't that I'm smart. I know, because I only had two years of high school before emigration. And if I emigrated at 11, practically 11, 10, 9, or maybe 9 of course.

EA: Yes.

SS: But they, it was probably intermediate and high together, so...

EA: Right, right. But you feel you had a good basic education?

SS: Very good, yes, yes. But I, then there was this...break in England when I again missed quite a lot, I would say.

EA: Yeah. What do you remember about your parents talking about any possible emigration, and staying in Germany, or not staying in Germany? Do you remember anything at all in that...area?

SS: Well, one must take into account that my father was suffering from Parkinson's disease, for several years, and I think it started more or less in 1934. And he gradually deteriorated. And although we were not told, I think this was the main reason that we didn't all get out of the country together, with my parents and the two of us. Because many, many

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

years later, after the war, I...was told that there were visas to South America for all of us, and, yet, because of my father's illness, he couldn't have used them.

EA: He would not have been admitted to South America?

SS: No, no, or...

EA: Because of this.

SS: To any country for that matter.

EA: Because of this disease.

SS: And, my mother, of course, didn't want to leave him. And...

EA: Oh, what a dilemma.

SS: So, that was the decision they came to, to send my sister and I, and myself, with the Children's Transport.

EA: How do you, how did they prepare you for that?

SS: I think it came very quickly. I may make a mistake that I knew a year ahead, but I really can't quite honestly remember now. But it was quite soon after my parents read about this advertisement of an English Jewish doctor who wanted to guarantee for twelve children. And consequently they contacted the person who was dealing with it in Berlin. And then the ball started rolling. And so, I think, about a year before, or some months before, I remember my mother saying to us, "*Was denkt ihr, wollt ihr vielleicht nach England gehen?*." [What do you think, would you maybe like to go to England?] And that's how it started. But it came all very quickly, so that the events tumbled one on top of the other more or less. So, I think we were given to understand that they would follow us, even my father. That's what they gave us to understand and to believe. "*Wir kommen nach.*" ["We are coming after."]

EA: So, what month are we talking about that you actually left?

SS: In March the, I left, we left Berlin on the 15th of March, 1939, and arrived in England on the 16th of March.

EA: So you were in Berlin at the *Kristallnacht*?

SS: Yes. I was in Berlin for the *Kristallnacht*. And...

EA: Do you have any recollection at all?

SS: I think that...yes, I have very sort of vivid recollections, sitting in a class in the *Goldschmidtschule*. I think we were approximately thirty children in the class, boys and girls. And suddenly most of the children said their fathers had been arrested. And then we suddenly heard that the synagogues had burned. And how, somehow this was a sudden, this was a, like a general calamisis [must mean 'calamity'] I would say. And I never went to see...our synagogue *an der Prinzregentenstrasse*. I never, I didn't go to see it after it had been burned down. And I think that was, and then things happened...very quickly. And as far as I remember, we had one meeting of all the children who were coming as a group, to try and get to know each other, the twelve of us, but only eleven because one came from somewheres in the Harz mountains or somewhere, from a different part of Germany. And...

EA: So you did meet the other students...

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: But only once. Only once. So, we, I think we only got to know each other better on, when we got to England afterwards, really.

EA: Have you any idea how you were selected?

SS: Only very, very, very vaguely, or generally. I think Dr. Schlesinger, who was...the guarantor, was looking for...Jewish children from educated homes, let's say aca-, not exactly academic, but how, good Jewish homes with education, and the one very strong factor was where it wasn't sure that the parents would be able to get out.

EA: Did they have any specifications as to what religiosity they would belong to?

SS: None at all. None at all.

EA: So that wasn't a discriminating...

SS: That wasn't a factor.

EA: So they just had to...

SS: That wasn't a factor at all. The Schlesingers themselves were very, very assimilated Jews. Very conscious, but very assimilated into English society.

EA: Did your parents know them?

SS: No. No. They didn't know them at all.

EA: They just...

SS: They were in England...

EA: Yeah, but...

SS: And they never came to Germany.

EA: They just read the ad?

SS: They had an inter-, they had a mediator in Germany to select the children.

EA: Ah ha, there was a mediator.

SS: Yes. And that was Frau Kaufmann. I don't know if she's still alive. And I don't remember her first name.

EA: Do you know if any monies were exchanged at all?

SS: No. As far as I know, no money at all. But there had to have been an *ausstattung*. [equipment] Our parents bought a great deal of chinaware to contribute to the hostel, and...I remember very strongly that they were all colored, Bakelite plates and cups and saucers. And, of course, the linen, bed linen and clothing, up to the age of 16. That we all had with us.

EA: How, you, how, I mean, you obviously couldn't carry it.

SS: No, that... Was sent by a lift. That was sent separately afterwards. But each parent...

EA: And in...

SS: Had to provide that. Yeah, in other words, the parents provided for their children... As far as clothing and bedding and everything, household goods are concerned, up to the age, for several years, yes.

EA: So as late as February, '39, lifts could be sent?

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Even later, I believe, yes. But not all of them arrived, you know.

EA: Did your lift come?

SS: Ours arrived. All the lifts of the children arrived, yes.

EA: And what was the address to the, I mean there was a definite address, the Schlesingers' address, do you remember where it was sent to?

SS: No, it was sent I believe to the hostel, where we were...already in the hostel. And that was in Shepherd's Hill in Highgate. I mean we didn't live with the Schlesingers. The Schlesingers had their, lived by themselves with their big family and they opened a hostel for, just for us.

EA: For twelve children.

SS: For the twelve children.

EA: For the twelve children, more or less.

SS: With a Jewish staff, all from Germany themselves. And one was the cook, and one was looking after the girls, and one was looking after the boys.

EA: And they lived nearby, the Schlesingers?

SS: Not exactly. They lived in London, but it wasn't so close by.

EA: They didn't supervise the living...

SS: No, no, they didn't supervise, but they took a very, they had us visiting, and they paid visits themselves, and they took us to the beach. And they, but, on the whole, they passed over the care, the day to day care to these, to the staff there.

EA: Do you think they were refugees themselves?

SS: Yes!

EA: They were all...

SS: I don't think, they were all refugees.

EA: They were all refugees. Young?

SS: Well, they were young at that time. I mean, they were, I suppose, about 18 or 20, something like that, maybe a bit more. And they were all trained in the *Liegnitz*, how would you call, *Internat* for care...of...children, child care. They all passed a child care course, I think.

EA: So they did have some training.

SS: They had training in Germany, yes.

EA: Well, this is interesting, because a lot of the hostels were run by youngsters who really weren't much older than the children themselves.

SS: No, they were, these were quite a lot older than we were. Maybe they were in their early 20's, somehow.

EA: Do you remember the journey at all? Is that very painful?

SS: It's not painful now. I can re-, I remember it very well, and I can talk about it, the most painful and sad, it's more than sad, heartbreaking part is, of course, the leaving home and going to the *Bahnhof Zoo* [train station zoo] where we met all the others. And as far as I remember, my mother took us there. My father, the last...memory I have of him is,

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

although he was bed ridden, he got up, and he blessed my sister and myself. And...that was that. And then how we got to *Bahnhof Zoo*, whether it was in a taxi or not, I don't remember. I just remember that we all, we were all assembled there, together with hundreds and hundreds of children who, of course, we didn't know, because they all were going on the Children's Transport. And then the last I know of my mother—Shall I go on?

EA: Yes, indeed.

SS: My mother waving while the train, and I think my mother even raced, or some how, from one...railway station to the other. I have forgotten what the other railway station was called. One was *Bahnhof Zoo* and the other one was another railway station, to catch a last glimpse of us. That was, of course, the hardest part, except for what happened in the years to come. Maybe, I suddenly remembered,...a few odd little things before our leaving. I remember very strongly the collections the Gestapo made, or the police made, of all the valuables in the...house, like the candles, the silver candlesticks, all the silver and all the jewel-, whatever jewelry there was, although, of course, I as a child didn't see it. And, but all the...household valuables, stands and everything, whatever we had to...give up. That was all standing in the...salon, in the, I think in the dining room on the floor, before we left. So that was a bit depressing, too. But that's, no, we didn't pay much attention to that. There are so many things I remember as far as the general, going back a bit. This is not exactly with the day I left, but going back before, the last two or three years, what the general atmosphere in...Berlin, the sort of congestion, if one can put it that way. We all felt that, we felt a need to...run away, a need to get...away. And it, but events happened so quickly that we weren't really get, given much of a chance to think. I think my sister even remembers much less, because she was younger, and many things were kept from her. But I, talking personally, I knew very well what was happening. We didn't, all we knew, we didn't know, of course, what happened in the concentration camps. We didn't even, all we knew that the stet-, the fathers were being arrested. Not my, our father, because he was an invalid. At that time they didn't arrest him. But the other fathers were sent to camps. But we weren't, we didn't know what was hap-, what exactly was happening there. But this was still in 1938, before the war broke out. And some of them were released quite...quickly after that. We knew that there was persecution and...discrimination going back for years, and that we were hampered from our, from...various pursuits, and that we...had to give up our valuables, and that we had to... And we also knew very well that we could only escape the country with about five marks in our pocket, with not any more or less. And coming back, going back to the journey to England, to the...escape from Germany, we were all somehow numbed, I would say. Some were crying. Some were just numbed, some, many of the children. And we passed through...we somehow, through all the German territory, passed through it without hardly saying a word. I must add here that maybe some did say things, but after all there were hundreds of children...in the railway carriage.

EA: Was it night time?

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: It was, in the beginning it was...day time. And then we got to the Dutch border. And the last, at last, the last German official examined us and our baggage. And suddenly we passed the border into Holland. And I'll never forget the change and the difference, and suddenly the feeling of release. We suddenly saw a whole lot of women, Dutch women, standing at the platform, with grins, with smiles, with food. It was like going from darkness into light. And, it's one of those things which I will never forget in my life. I don't think we stayed there very long. We passed through the...stations pretty quickly. But suddenly we felt we could breathe. I might add here we, that my sister and I waited for my uncle, who about a few months earlier had escaped to...Amsterdam to join his fiancée . But he was completely illegally in...Holland and somehow couldn't get to the train. Somehow he was...hampered to get to the train. And so then we got to...the *Hook van Holland*, and the journey to England went, was by night. And all I remember from that was that I got to know the other girl who, from the twelve, who didn't come from Berlin, Vera Thayer who is now...Ellis and lives in Buffalo. And somehow, and then we got to Liverpool Station the next day, on the 16th of March, and were met by Mrs. Schle-, Dr. and Mrs. Schlesinger, with two cars, and brought to the hostel.

EA: You, of course, didn't know the Schlesingers.

SS: No, we didn't know the Schlesingers.

EA: Did you know, get to know the other eleven children, or were you all lumped together?

SS: Where, do you mean?

EA: You said there were hundreds of children at the...

SS: Ah, no, no, we got to know each other. [chuckles] We were, that, I think, on the boat we more or less were a group. But I can't guarantee it. Now it may have only been after...we reached London.

EA: This lady you mentioned, Mrs. Kaufmann, do you think she was accompanying you on the boat?

SS: No, I don't think so. I think she st-, I don't think so, no, but there were many social workers accompanying the children.

EA: Do you remember any faces. Do you remember any importance. Did they interact with you?

SS: No, I don't remember. No, I don't remember that at all, from, as far as the Germans are concerned.

EA: You don't re-, you just remember the children and the silence and no adults present, particularly.

SS: Not in particular, no.

EA: Nothing that stands out in your mind.

SS: No, no.

EA: It must have felt very, very difficult. Was it eased by the fact that your sister was with you?

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Not necessarily. I think maybe she was eased that I was with her. I think it was more a case of that.

EA: Did you feel responsible for her?

SS: Yes, very much. And that carried on like up to, for another several years, as a matter of fact.

EA: Did your parents sort of say to you, "Now, Steffi, take care of your sister?"

SS: I think they did. They said it in few words somehow.

EA: That's quite a responsibility, isn't it, for an eleven-year-old.

SS: Yes, but I think there were in our group some older children who also felt that responsibility towards the younger children. And, the positive side of it is that as soon as we got to the hostel, and we were all together, that we were there as a family, as a substitute family. And so, right up to the time of the outbreak of war, when we were evacuated, we were like a family unit, a rather large family unit.

EA: Boys and girls.

SS: Boys and, five boys and seven girls, yes.

EA: What ages, would you say?

SS: At what time, or, I mean...

EA: No, where were, all right, you were eleven, your sister was nine. Were the others...

SS: Yes, I think most of were, the eldest one was...fifteen, I believe, and the others were more or less all the same age. My, I think the youngest one was perhaps only...eight. So it was...

EA: So they were...

SS: The youngest one was eight, but most of them were...around about eleven and twelve, I would say. We all were approximately the same age, but I think there were one or two, I think the, Walter Blütek was at that time fifteen, I believe.

EA: And, were there other siblings other than the two of you?

SS: No, no.

EA: Just the two of you.

SS: We were the only ones.

EA: The others were all single children.

SS: All single children, or they had...brothers or sisters who sometimes...who came out later with the parents.

EA: I see.

SS: One or two cases like that.

EA: Are you still in touch with any of them?

SS: I'm in touch with some of them, yes.

EA: Really. After so many, fifty year later.

SS: Oh, I'm in touch with one or two, and they are in touch with others and so on.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

EA: Tell me, did you know any English?

SS: Yes, I knew English, first of all, because both my parents were English speaking. I mean, they didn't speak to us in English day by day, but they did give us a few, let's say songs and even earlier on, quite apart from the emigration. But I learned English at the *Goldschmidtschule*, for two years. And so, but I couldn't speak when I got there. I don't think I could speak but we picked it up very quickly, after three months or so.

EA: And so the others were, the hostel parents were also refugees. What was the main language spoken, German?

SS: I think it was German for quite a time, yes. It was German, but then we went to the local council school [local public elementary school -ed.] and then, of course, we all felt we wanted to assimilate very much. And then when the war came, we didn't want to be German any more. In fact we didn't want to be German speaking anymore.

EA: You wanted to feel the same as the English children at the school.

SS: Of course, very much. But we couldn't...

EA: Do you remember your first school days?

SS: Yes. The first school days were in London while we were still in the hostel. Not straight away, because I think first we had a few private English...lessons because we weren't really, couldn't fit in straight away. So we had a few private English lessons and then went to the local council school. I don't, remember the teacher introducing us not as Jewish, but as young, as children who have now come from Germany. And we weren't very happy about that. But we didn't really get to know any of the children and then we were evacuated and dispersed all of us in Cuffley, Middlesex [directly north of London].

EA: Wait a minute. That's six months that you were at the, in Highgate?

SS: No, we were in Highgate from March to September.

EA: Right.

SS: A few days before...

EA: That is six months.

SS: Yes.

EA: Let's talk about those. You had contact with your parents during those six months?

SS: Yes, very much by letter, many, many letters. I think every...week, and a minimum of every week, and one or two telephone calls. But I think my mother on purpose didn't phone very much, because she knew my father would be terribly, terribly nervous, and we might even be more unhappy than happy, in a way. And we might...be more, it might upset us even more, to talk on the telephone. But, she wrote to us practically every day. And I have many of those letters.

EA: Do you? That is great. Do you remember changing from German to English?

SS: I think it was a gradual process, in a way. But I think when we changed, we didn't fall back into German, as far as I remember.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

EA: It's unbelievable, isn't it?

SS: Only when... When older people came, new refugees who escaped and came to, friends of my parents who arrived in England. And of course they didn't speak to us in English. They spoke to us in German.

EA: And they looked you up and there were...

SS: Yes.

EA: Several...

SS: Yes. There were one or two, not many. But one or two. Because not everyone got to England.

EA: Of course not, yes. And at school you said you didn't make much, have much contact with the English children, and you were, were you ashamed of being German?

SS: I'm only talking about the elementary school.

EA: Well, in the first months.

SS: In the council school.

EA: For six months.

SS: We were... A bit ashamed, but I don't know, we kept together as a group, because we had quite a...backing in the group somehow. And we felt safe there somehow. But, I don't think there was time. The English take time to get to know anyway, quite apart from...any refugees...or anything like that. I mean, generally speaking the English get time to, you have to take time to get to know them. And that goes for many non-Jews too. So I don't think one needs to say that was discrimination necessarily.

EA: So, what you're saying is it may have been, on your part, that you perhaps did not accept them as more perhaps than they wouldn't have accepted you? Would that be true?

SS: I think it was lack of the language to some extent, that we didn't know enough English the first few months, and we felt a bit hampered as a child, to make friends somehow.

EA: And the English children were not encouraged to make, take care...

SS: Not all together, but I can't really say much about that because I don't think I felt it so important at the time. I think at that, those six months, were in one way a very good atmosphere at the home. And we were very dependent on our, on the people who looked after us. We had a...newcomer who...contributed a lot to our education and Jewish education, a young rabbi who escaped Poland, and, I think, which the Schlesingers also got him out. Erwin Zienit, Z-I-E-N-I-T. And he is now in Poughkeepsie, I think, the rabbi. Does that mean anything...

EA: In Poughkeepsie, New York. Oh yes.

SS: Now he just recently married a young couple, the daughter of one of...us, of the twelve.

EA: Really! Oh, that's beautiful.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: So, but I haven't seen him since he left for the States...with his wife. And his wife was one of the people looking after...no, she was a, I think in the Schlesingers' house at that time. But we, that is by the way. But to just recap on social contacts with English children in the Heintz school I went to, the boarding school, I went to afterward, of course, we made friends with all our fellow...pupils there. I mean there were many, many difficulties, and many...different I think, a lot of heartaches, but not as far as...making friends with other children. That was, so we felt more...assimilated, and then we made more friends, with one or two, not with everyone.

EA: Right, certainly.

SS: Yes.

EA: But, do you think possibly the beginning was so hard because of the language?

SS: Yes. I think that was the determining factor perhaps. But the time, there wasn't enough time. I mean, we were mainly in the hostel. We only went to the...school maybe for three hours a day.

EA: Oh, O.K.

SS: Just for the morning hours.

EA: Your sister and you were, became closer, would you say?

SS: Maybe right in the beginning, but many years later we...didn't have a lot in common. I think now we are very close to each other.

EA: That's interesting. Tell me about the coming of, how the preparation for evacuation...

SS: Well, that came again as a shock. There was, but the hostel was being dissembled and...broken down. And we were all, the twelve of us, dispersed in different places. There were one or two parents of the children who managed to get out of Germany, and they took their own children. And then we didn't see them for years and, or years, years on end.

EA: You did not lose touch with them even then...

SS: Well, we did...

EA: Even though...

SS: I think we lost touch to some extent. No one exactly knew where the others were, but five of us got, were settled in one village.

EA: Oh!

SS: Five of us, five girls.

EA: Where was that?

SS: That was Cuffley, Middlesex, close to Potters Bar in Hertfordshire. And there we were for the first time with English Christian people.

EA: As evacuees this time...

SS: As evacuees.

EA: Not as refugees.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: As evacuees, yes.

EA: You went with that elementary school?

SS: With the elementary school.

EA: Yeah.

SS: Yes.

EA: Yeah. So you changed your status.

SS: Yes. But we felt, there we felt very much as refugees, and not evacuees.

EA: Tell me about that.

SS: Well, this was a village, and I think Jews had not been seen there, ever, really. And...

EA: In your class—excuse my interjecting—with your class from Highgate, were there any Jewish English children?

SS: I don't remember that there were. No, no.

EA: Oh.

SS: I don't remember. I don't remember anything about the other children at all. I mean nothing, no contact or anything. But in...London it didn't matter, because we were as a family all together.

EA: Correct. Correct. I understand.

SS: And we also had Jewish education. We had...a very strong background. And then we were...that all sort of dissolved, and we...were all up in the air again, as one would say. And there my sister and I got landed with one young couple, who was certainly not prepared to take, prepared to receive refugees. And they thought they were getting London evacuees. So the first few days were very strained. And my sister was completely shocked. In fact, she didn't say a word. She didn't speak for practically a month. So I had to make all the, to talk for her and to explain, and the first thing that we explained to this young couple—they'd only been married a year—that we were, we came from Germany...but we were Jewish, and we had to escape from Germany. And I think at that time they really didn't really understand. But gradually they did, and it was while we were staying with them that my...father died, and my mother *nebuch*, still wrote to us about it. And they were very, very understanding. And they are Mr. and Mrs. Albert Kelly, K-E-L-L-...

EA: Y.

SS: Y, who are now in their early 80's, late 70's, early 80's, and I can only...say that within the five months we stayed with them—it was approximately another five or six months until we went to boarding school—they treated us as if we were their own children, although we came from a different world all together, with different beliefs. They even made us say the Hebrew...*Barachot* [blessings] at meals so that we shouldn't forget it. And we have warmest memories of our stay with them. She was strict, but she was loving. And they had no children of their own at the time. And we had our first knowledge of English Christmas and so on. And they were...

EA: There were only two of you?

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Those, the two of us stayed with them, and we are in contact, very close contact with them up to today.

EA: Oh that's...

SS: And with the next generation too, with their children and their children...

EA: Oh, they did have children later.

SS: They had two girls, and they have approximately seven grandchildren.

EA: Oh, how wonderful. What a wonderful, I think we're coming to the end of the tape.

SS: Yes, I'm coming to the end of the tape.

EA: That's a good place to stop.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Tape one, side two:

EA: So you stayed with the Kellys in ...

SS: Until January, 1940. And then we had to, then it was decided by the Schlesingers and the Jewish Refugee Committee that we, becau-, so that we could get a better education, that we would go to boarding school in Cornwall. Not only my sister and myself, but also four of the others. In other words, there were, I think, five of us girls who went to Kingsley Boarding School in Cornwall, which originated from London, where it was a day and boarding school, run by English Protestants. And it went up to the higher sch-, higher...

EA: School.

SS: What do you call it?

EA: Yeah, sixth grade...

SS: High school.

EA: Upper six.

SS: No, yes, something like that. It was after, up to matriculation and you could take your higher... School certificate.

EA: Right.

SS: And go to a university.

EA: But it was a non-Jewish boarding school? That's interesting.

SS: A non-Jewish boarding school. I think they felt, it was more decided by the Schlesingers maybe, but I don't know all the ins and outs of it. I, it had a good...academic reputation. And I think it was felt that we would be far away from the bombing. So that we got there...

EA: Oh, so it was part of, because you were still in Potter's Bar in London, that it was also a safety factor.

SS: Yes, but I think the factor was mainly educational, because they felt that the council school in Cuffley wouldn't get us very far. I think that was the idea and I believe the Schlesingers contributed quite a lot to the, oh, they never talked about it, but we, they, we do know that they contributed, paid...the school, some of the school fees.

EA: Really? It was not the Committee?

SS: No. The Committee may have...that I don't know. But I know the Schlesingers paid.

EA: All right.

SS: And I believe that we got it at a slightly reduced rate. And we were nev-er...allowed to forget that by our [unclear].

EA: Oh really?

SS: Yes. Anyway, as I say, this were, because the school came from Hempstead, a lot of English Jewish children were in this school. But the school as such was...run by the

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Church of England staff, and attendance at church on Sundays and, in other words, it wasn't, it was an English Christian school.

EA: This was the first time that you'd met English Jews, then, really?

SS: Yes, but very few of them were, I mean I didn't, some of them were not very friendly. But I think I made more friends with the ones who were not Jewish. And...but as I say, we were all not in the same class, the five of us. I think that one, my sister, of course, was three classes below me. And, well, we felt very much like fish out of water, to begin with. And the very first...Sunday we were there I was approached by one older girl to say, "Steffi...are you coming to church now?" Then I said, "No, I don't go to church." "Why don't you go to church?" "Because I'm Jewish. I don't go to church." So she said, "Oh, what does that matter? Look at this one. Look at that one. They are also Jewish. They are all coming to church." Well, I resisted it for about a week or two, and then I noticed really that quite a few were all coming to church. So I went to church with all the others, and instead of kneeling I sat on the...chair. And when they sang about Father and Son and the Holy Ghost, I did not sing. And that's how my attendance at church continued. If it had stopped at that, no harm would have been done. Now comes the comical part of it, although at that time it wasn't comical at all. Pressure was being put upon all of us, unrepentant Jews, become, to become good little Christians. The pressure was put on by our head mistress, Vivian S. Sheppard, who, no longer alive, who had a missionary zeal to convert us all...in some way. And when it didn't work, unfortunately she became very sadistic. I was never in any, she was also the math teacher at the school, and I was hopeless at math. I would have been hopeless anyway, but because of her...terrorizing ways I became even more hopeless in math. And, unfortunately, she was a very unbalanced individual. And although she may have been very good with small children, but with the older ones she was compl-, I think she upset our equilibrium completely. And this goes for non-Jewish children, too. I hate to say it, but there was lesbianism in the school among some of the older girls, and the some of the mistresses. Not all. Some mistresses were very normal and very down to earth. And, from them I learned very well. I mean I...enjoyed history, literature, all the humanistic subjects, and did quite well in them. And, well, we didn't, as for Vera Behr, I was in close contact with her all the time. We were in the same class. That was...I'm talking now from the first...from the hostel. Ilse Solomon was in another class. [tape off then on] Marian Memlok, we were, saw each other from time to time. There were also older Jewish girls, refugees, in the sixth form at the time, who, unfortunately, had to go, were sent off to the Isle of Man and had, they couldn't complete their education. And this made quite an impression on us.

EA: Wait a minute. Cornwall was, they were categorized as C?

SS: A protected area.

EA: Aliens?

SS: A protected area that was, Cornwall.

EA: Oh, oh. I see. Because being under the coast line.

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Yes. And...

EA: And they were over 15 probably?

SS: Over 16.

EA: Oh, 16.

SS: Over 16.

EA: So they were adults.

SS: So they were adults. They had to leave school early, and so on. And well, all this atmosphere, then we noticed that the school was helping itself to some of our...belongings...and the beddings and things like that. And we couldn't do anything about it. And...

EA: You were considered Germans, rather than Jews, do you think?

SS: Refugee...

EA: Certainly the older children were, because they were sent to the Isle of Man.

SS: Yes.

EA: How about you?

SS: Us? Within the school I think we were considered refugees. Refugees. From our fellow pupils maybe not. Maybe they...didn't [?]. But I hate to say it, there was one, there were one or two girls, although they...also escaped became very...antisemitic somehow. So we got, you got, unfortunately anti- prejudice and antisemitism from...some born Jews who wanted to forget they were Jews. You got that. But some of my dearest friends I made at the school, and I have them until today, one or two of them. And well, then who...saved the situation as far, of the conversion, the threat of conversion was...Mrs. Dorothy Waley Cohen Singer, or Singer Waley Cohen. If she is alive today she must be in her nineties. But I, she was the wife of Charles Singer, a scientist and a contemporary of Huxley, of the younger Huxley. And, she looked for children, Jewish children, in schools, in the vicinity...of Cornwall as such, who were, had no home to go to. She tackled our head mistress, and what was said between those four walls, I...think...walls must have shattered. And the result of it—and I think she made mincemeat of her—the result of it being that all the Jewish children, all the refugees, anyone who wants, all of us who were, remained Jews, were invited for the High Holidays to her home.

EA: How about that.

SS: And there it was an ultra-liberal atmosphere. We were there for Pesach sometimes, for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but let's put it this way, Yom Kippur we were presented with a cup of cocoa in the morning, at our bedside.

EA: Oh, you slept there.

SS: With, yes, we slept there. And we had readings from the Bible in English, and we sat around the fireside and we had, we ate with the family. And with, there were about ten or twenty of us from different schools in the neighborhood. And when it came to Yom Kippur and we were presented with the cup of cocoa, we said, "But it's Yom Kippur, we don't...eat." That much we did remember. "Ah, you can start your fast after...breakfast."

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

But, I can only be thankful for her because she started correspondence classes with a liberal Jewish synagogue in London, for all of us. And whatever I know slightly about Sephardic Jews and the Inquisition and all that, it stems from that time. And, that stopped conversion as far as the head mistress was concerned, except she succeeded with several, and they are lost until today. And, especially the very young ones who were far away from home, I mean this far away, not only German Jews, but I mean English Jews who, it was very far from London. And some of the parents didn't...put themselves out. And they thought, and they were being told it would be easier for them in the long run, so they agreed to the conversion, not knowing that they put their children into...a terrible...psychological tensions later on, if I could put it that way. And unfortunately she succeeded with one of us twelve. And I don't want to mention any more.

EA: O.K. So, how do you explain it, '41 you were 14, a very young girl, that you had the strength and the perseverance, how do you account for that, in retrospect.

SS: '41 I wasn't 14. '41 I was, I was 12 in 1940, 13 in 19-...

EA: So it was 13.

SS: 13, yes.

EA: All right. O.K.

SS: Yes.

EA: Still very young.

SS: What strength and perseverance? To...

EA: To counteract the approaches that were made to you and so on.

SS: I can only put it down to this. For the...atmosphere...of Jewish observance we had in our home, although my mother was, as I say, from a very assimilated background and only learned about tradition from my father, but we, all the time we kept *Freitag Abend*, Friday evening. We kept the, we, even before we left Germany, we fasted half a day, I believe, and my father, we knew my father went to...well, while he was well he went to synagogue every Saturday. And he...fasted on Yom Kippur. And, he instructed us into the...elements, the basis. But not in a dogmatic way at all. It was the background of our...home. My mother...cooperated and she lit the candles on the Friday. And I'm sure that all through her, until she married, she never knew anything about it. And, we went to a Jewish school. And so I learned a little, little Hebrew, which I forgot afterwards. But the trauma of...the immigration, of leaving home, and...the fitting in into the, first into the... High gate background into the Schlesinger group where we also had Jewish observance and songs and *Chalutzim* songs, and we...had a strong identification, a very strong ident-, Jewish identification. This helped me to battle the, what was happening in the boarding school.

EA: How, right now—we are sitting in Israel—how do you feel this Nazi era has affected your whole life?

SS: [pause] A loss of youth. I think we didn't have a real youth. I had a childhood. And while the years were not so serious, well until the...big threat came, a very,

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

very happy and harmonious childhood. And then a whirlwind of events and shocks, from time to time. How it affected me is that maybe I...haven't, especially the period in the boarding school, inhibited me very much. But this may have been also...education in a boarding school. Because...I think English, at that time, that sort of education, had an inhibiting factor, the fact that it was made only women and no men. And also, but then I had no, we, in the holidays we had no home to come home to. We were always sent to different places and it was, we felt it very bad, very much on the holidays, the school holidays. And then, when the war finished—well, I left school while the war hadn't finished yet, in 1944—I was, I had various ideas which I wanted to do, but, of course, at that time I was still an enemy alien. I was an enemy alien until the war finished. So I had to give up my camera and to report to the police and to the Ministry of...Works whenever I changed my address, and whenever I changed my work. And so, there wasn't really freedom to choose your occupation. But this isn't exactly relevant. How, there is a shadow over our lives. And, if I can, let's say how it affected us is that during the war and ten years afterwards, there was hate of everything German, a hate of meeting Germans of any kind, a mistrust. How do you say it, [?], a determination not to visit Germany, never to see, *never* to see the place again where I was born, no hankering back. I knew what I was. I knew that we had a new country in England. We were British but not English, accepted on the whole, with good friends and good, a satisfying occupation. But, maybe not completely, completely acclimatized, and always in a sort of...vacuum in a way. And, or religious, I would say this, how it affected me that in the latter part of the war in the beginning, and straight afterwards when I was growing up between the ages of 16 and 18, I lost every belief I ever had, every religious belief I ever had, especially when the news of the camps came out and the search for the families, for our mother and who, and others who went, whether they were still alive or not. And going to Bloomsbury House to look at the lists every day of the survivors, to see whether someone was alive or not. At that time I believed in nothing and no God, no synagogue, nothing. I turned very left-wing. I felt somehow that the only people who had fought the Nazis were the Communists and Socialists in Europe. And I became a young Communist. Not card holding, but...let's say sympathizing and even going to meetings. And, this held me to some time, to some extent, for some time, until...I did watch political developments and then suddenly there...it snowballed again because I, when...Tito was called a fascist reptile, I somehow came to my senses slowly but surely. But, let me put it this way, that I, it took me many, many years until I could...accept Jewish religion as such, or that I could go into a synagogue. And often I...would go into a synagogue, and it wouldn't affect me spiritually at all. And I think that as far as meeting Germans, it took me a long, long time. I started speaking German quite soon with my relations who survived in Holland. My mother's youngest brother and his wife, who also went and escaped by a miracle and through their own courage, and my aunt in Berlin, my mother's sister, who also had extraordinary experiences and survived with her husband. Here I might just comment that there was an anti-Nazi German who helped them with

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

papers. He was a Roman Catholic in the police. But...[tape off then on] and Nazism affected me, as I say, in a nutshell, loss of childhood, loss of parents, loss of inner security for many, many years, loss...it took a long time for me to get *Selbst bewusstsein* [self-confidence].

EA: Accreditations.

SS: Self-confidence.

EA: Confidence.

SS: Self-confidence, professionally and from day to day, maybe it affected that I didn't marry for, that I was...in the initial years, straight after the boarding school, but I think here, the boarding school must be blamed more than the refugee status. Being in the boarding school for so long, that I straight after leaving it was afraid to get into...company and join clubs, and had an inhibition as far as that's concerned. And so it wasn't, I was very shy. I was very shy. But eventually I'd go out sometimes.

EA: Your sister was in the same boarding school, correct?

SS: My sister was in the same boarding school, three classes below me. Her integration was much better than mine. She became very English, very secure in the boarding school itself, and her trauma and her difficulties as far as identity came much later, came much later. I never had any...qualms about identity. I always knew, I had a very strong...Jewish identity, not religiously but, and so I never, I...didn't suffer from that point of view. But...hers was, she was very, she thought she was completely English. She had forgotten her, a lot from home, because she was younger. And so, because many years later she had to face the sudden fact that my mother, what happened to her. And, because we shielded her from quite a lot. And...

EA: Because of her youth.

SS: Yes. And, that, afterwards she had, many years later she realized she wasn't completely English, and that she...had to learn what she really was, to some extent.

EA: What is she?

SS: Now she is British, with a German Jewish background.

EA: She lives in England?

SS: Ah, my sister lives in England. She stayed in England.

EA: Did she marry?

SS: No. She didn't marry, and she's working as a health visitor in...London. And although she has many Jewish friends and she has some non-Jewish friends, and she's very...much respected and very conscientious in her work, and a very, very generous person, I mean, that she, how can I say it...

EA: Gives of herself.

SS: Gives a lot of herself, yes. She gives a lot.

EA: Did she come and visit you here at all?

SS: She often comes to visit us, yes.

EA: Did she consider maybe...

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

SS: Never considered coming here, and quite honestly lately I really haven't encouraged her. Maybe in the early years we did, because I mean the acclim-, integration into Israel is also not so easy. And she is, and has remained, even so more English, and is happy in her own environment. And I don't think she would be happy here.

EA: What makes you happy here?

SS: I'm not always happy here. I'm not, I mean...

EA: Where is home, Steffi?

SS: Home is here now. Home is here. I have my husband. I have my daughter. And, I know where I belong. I disagree, and, let's, very much, we, politically what is happening here. I, let's say, am, how can I put it, it's, many of us are very discouraged, very... Many Israelis are trying to fight the present situation, and we have to guard very much against, and I hate to say it, bigotry and extremism—I don't like to use other words—in this country. And, I...think, the most terrifying thing, which I have watched within the last few years is that history repeats itself. And...

EA: In what way?

SS: And, history repeats itself and...the...element of...prejudice and hate for another...kind of person, I mean, of another nationality or race, can also pop up from somewhere. I, this is not really, it doesn't really refer to that, but let's put it this way...

EA: Could it happen in Israel?

SS: Not to that extent, but certain things could happen in Israel.

EA: Like what?

SS: Freedom of expression and I...hate to say it, maybe a police state. But I hate to say it, and I hope we don't get to that state. But many instances are very frightening. I'll add to this that the whole, that the...that we are also not in an easy position, and that because of the Six Day War we were put into a position we didn't seek. And that the country and the borders are very, very, very small. But even so, we have...to consider that this is not only our...country, like the whole Middle East. And I mean...well, that accounts bad, white that out, I didn't mean the whole Middle East! But, that, it's that Israel contains and always has contained a large Arab population, and especially from up north. And we have to...live with each other, and we can't lord it over the others. We can't...we have to...stop the Occupation, and come to an agreement, to...treat each other like...a *Ben Adam*, like a *Mensch*. And I, it's difficult for me to talk about this, but I...

EA: But for you personally, Steffi, this is where you wanted to be? You had an option?

SS: Yes. This is where I wanted to be, and I wouldn't leave it here, leave this country. I...have a daughter born in this country. I feel I have molded in here to some extent. I think...Israel is a place where everyone can fit in, to some extent. I mean, it is a, that is the good part, that is the good thing about it, that every Jew, of whatever persuasion or whatever, right-wing or left-wing or every, from every corner of the earth, and from, let's say, every kind of belief and way of life, will find his niche in this country. And so I don't

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

regret for...one moment that I came. And I never will. And I have found an outlet here from, in many ways, which I hadn't found in England, which I wasn't able to...find.

EA: That's wonderful to hear. So, nothing is perfect but you...really feel at home in Israel, and that you've...found your niche, which is great.

SS: Yes. Yes.

EA: Now I have one more question.

SS: Yes.

EA: Do you have the patience?

SS: Sure.

EA: We're doing oral histories, and the purpose of this, as you know, is to document the history of the children who came, unaccompanied, from Germany to England. As you know, Gratz College has an Archive of the Holocaust and Holocaust Survivors. Is there any message that you feel you would like to be documented, other than your personal history and so on, and what we've just talked about? How can that become an educational tool possibly?

SS: You mean just a sentence or two or...

EA: Yes.

SS: Something?

EA: Any guidelines, other than having it lie in the dusty archives...

SS: Yes, I understand what you mean. Well, maybe I can...only mention what I have tried to...teach my daughter and what I think is very important for...the future generations of youth to understand, not only Jewish, but non-Jewish. I mean, I presume you have some...non-Jews coming to your college.

EA: I hope so, because there are a number of people that still don't believe that there was such a thing as a Holocaust. And you know that.

SS: Yes.

EA: And that's why a personal history like yours I hope will document—and many other stories...of the children—will document that...

SS: Yes.

EA: These are real, live people who went and survived.

SS: Let me put it this way first, that I feel it should never be forgotten what some, so many of our brothers and sisters, went through, so much more. And those who were not able to escape to England or the United States, to free countries, before the war. And they had to, they were, they...had to suffer the Germans on the soil and...were either imprisoned or incarcerated, and somehow by miracle remained alive. So, I feel that is the primary...part we must remember, to study how...Jews in occupied countries remained alive, rebuilt their lives, and some of them had all their whole family butchered. As far as our group is concerned, the children who came with the Children's Transport, we suffered much less. We suffered emotionally, because we...left our homes and we...often didn't see our parents again. They were killed, some were. And so, we had...that trauma. Now for the

The audiotaped interview is the primary source record for this transcript which was produced in partnership with Gratz College.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

future generations, I think the main thing is to...not to forget, to study, to make these different histories, to see, to try to learn from them. And most of all, I think it can teach the man in the street how to behave with his fellow man, to respect...his belief, his origin, whether he is rich or poor, or whether he is...academically trained, or let's say a simple man who runs...a shop, or cleans the windows. I think we all have to guard against a superiority complex. Some people have luck, Some people have less luck. And so it's more a respect for your next door neighbor. I think, if you learn that through all these histories and, or if you have, and through day to day life, and are willing to give and...a willingness to help and to listen and to help...help where you're needed. Then maybe we can all make a better world.

EA: Oh, Steffi, how well put. Thank you very, very much indeed. It really was a pleasure, and I thank you for the time and for your contribution.