

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

INA ROTHSCHILD

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Fred Stamm
Date: November 10, 1981

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Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

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IR - Ina Rothschild [interviewee]

EJ - Elsa Jaeckel [interviewee]

FS - Fred Stamm [interviewer]

IS - Ilse Stamm

Date: November 10, 1981

Tape one, side one:

FS: I'm Fred Stamm, a student at Gratz. I'm interviewing Mrs. Ina Rothschild. The next voice you will hear is Mrs. Rothschild. Mrs. Rothschild, when did you come to the United States?

IR: After the war in 1946.

FS: Tell me, Mrs. Rothschild, what do you remember from the '20s after the First World War? Do you remember, how big a town, where did you live?

IR: I lived in the Darmstadt, there I went to school.

FS: In Darmstadt?

IR: In Darmstadt where I went to school, made my *Abitur* [final test before graduation from high school] in 1921.

FS: Excuse me. Was this a girls' high school?

IR: It was a girls' high school, girls only.

FS: While you were a student, do remember the actions of your fellow girl students? Was there any antisemitism?

IR: In the last two years, yes. Before, I was one of them and then suddenly when that-after the war in '19...

FS: 1919?

IR: 1919 after the war, there were groups that, what shall I say, poisoned the minds of these youngsters. There was one girl sitting next to me the last year in high school. She was a princess. I don't know where she came from, but somewhere in Hessen. She belonged to one of these groups, and she tried to poison the other girls. She was sitting next to me and always looked in my papers. And one day I said, "Listen dear, with the *Hakenkreuz* [swastika] on your paper. You proved that you don't want anything to do with me. Why do you have to copy my work? From now on, you sit here and I sit here. I don't want anything to do with you." That was the beginning.

FS: You mean to say in 1919 you already saw a *Hakenkreuz*?

IR: A *Hakenkreuz* on this girl's school work, on paper that she constantly painted on. And then I told her and I said, "From now on, I will sit elsewhere."

FS: You don't remember the name of the group which influenced her?

IR: It was M-A mark, mark...

EJ: In Hessen?

IR: Yes, in Hessen.

EJ: I remember it was a...

IR: M-A... No, that was a former officer who was naturally out of work and they started these antisemitic groups. That was before Hitler.

FS: Was this group led by Ludendorff?

IR: No, no, not Ludendorff

EJ: It might be Ludendorff. Ludendorff was a...

IR: No. no, it was something with M-A, a former officer that she knew, and they had started these groups. And after I was out of school, I had no connection with any of these girls any more. It was suddenly in '21 over. As a Jew, you had nothing, you didn't want anything to do with gentiles. You had deep down that feeling they don't want you. And then I wasn't there any more. I couldn't go on with my studies. Because actually, I wanted to study medicine but money was impossible. In '23 and '24, there wasn't enough money. So I did the next best thing. I had permission to teach the first three grades with the *Abitur* in Germany. You had already one year college in America. It was 13 years of study. So I could teach the first three grades. And there was always a need in Jewish families for a governess who could teach children. So I had always positions. There was one girl that had a club foot and couldn't go to work. In another town...

EJ: School you mean.

IR: To school. In another town I had a little Pincus who had tuberculosis. I had to bring her to Davos to Switzerland. From there I was in another family in Halberstadt where the girl was a night-walker.

FS: Approximately what...

IR: How many years?

FS: Now you were telling us about the various jobs you took when you could not enter medical school because there simply wasn't any money in your family to send you there. Now do you remember--can you tell us a little bit about the inflation itself. What did it take to live under such horrible economic conditions? How did you buy food? How did you buy clothes?

EJ: I can tell you about this. When I was in home, I lived in a small town with maybe 45 Jewish families. And most of the Jews, they were *Viehhandlers* [cattle farmers] or they had...

IR: Small business.

EJ: Business. We had what you call a...

IR: A dry goods business.

EJ: A dry goods business. And we had imported parts, in the inflation, first, it was everything all right. We could exchange. The people--it was around were more farmers anyway. Then in [unclear] we asked them, "Can you give us something?" They came, brought us bread, they brought us flour.

FS: So it was actually an exchange of goods and services?

EJ: In spite of, we had good business.

FS: The second voice you hear is Mrs. Rothschild's sister, Mrs. Elsa Jaeckel (J-A-E-C-K-E-L).

EJ: L, L.

FS: J-A-E-C-K-E-L, Mrs. Jaeckel. if you would continue.

EJ: And it was everything fewer but it was enough. We had around us not too many factories. It was a big--they make...

IR: Rubber.

EJ: Rubber wheels for *Fahrräder* and for autos. And then the people got laid off from the business.

FS: When did that occur? Which year?

EJ: It was during the inflation, 1921-22-23.

FS: And what did it take in those days to support a family? How many marks did you have to have?

EJ: We had to count in billions. The dollar was--I still remember. In the morning we didn't open the store before the paper came in. We saw how high the dollar was. There was not a radio on that we could hear. So we had to wait until the paper came. The paper came from Darmstadt. And then we saw how high the dollar was and then we had to multiply with our German money.

FS: And what did the average...

EJ: This was why neither of us could go to college because if you sold, but what you sold today the next day the prices were much higher when we went to Frankfurt wholesaler to buy, it was much higher than we sold it two days before.

IR: You couldn't replace...

EJ: You couldn't replace, but in another way, we had it. What we had before, we had good business. It was mostly farmers around and the people who worked the factories.

FS: And what happened when the inflation finally came to an end?

EJ: Lots of people were poor. I know our neighbors [unclear], you remember? Across from us. Our father went to the [unclear]. I want to tell you something. They were very rich people. They built [unclear] an *Apotheke* [pharmacy] for 100,000 mark in bar [cash] before the inflation. When the inflation...

FS: In pre-inflation Germany money?

EJ: Yah. And so we were close friends. The name was Harper, gentile. When the inflation was over, they were so poor that in between the son took the *Apotheke* over--where he was born.

VOICE: A pharmacy.

EJ: Yes, a pharmacy. But the parents had to go on welfare. And then both sons had to support the parents. They had to take care--they had their own children. It was a bad, bad time for everybody.

FS: Do you remember in connection with this when the inflation came to an end, was there a lot of talk about Hitler or these Nazis?

EJ: Yes. It started right away. All the people were without work, especially the poor people who worked in the factories. And lots of communists...

FS: Could you pinpoint the time a little closer?

EJ: I will be 75. It's very far back.

FS: Would you say '22 or '23 or...

EJ: Yes. It was the inflation from '21 to '23 I think.

FS: But the time you're talking about now, would you say about '23?

EJ: '23 it was over maybe. Yah. Then we started again.

FS: You say that people were out of work.

EJ: Yes.

FS: And did they turn to Communism or Nazism or both?

EJ: Lots to Communism and a lot to Nazism. This is the first time when we heard about the Nazis. But like we, we had to lots of antisemitism. You know, our father always told us from 18...

[Multiple Exchange]

IR: There was antisemitism in Germany. In the 1890s they had already started, but it had nothing to do with Hitler; there was antisemitism under Bismarck. And at that time already they had signs on some stores or houses, "No Jews or dogs allowed." Our father told us that he as a young man...

EJ: With the best friends.

IR: All right. It was in the '90s. At that time they fixed shutters on the windows outside the windows because the youngsters or oldsters, nobody knew, threw stones into the houses. So they put shutters on. That was before 1900. And then it disappeared. And as far as I remember as a child, I went to a so-called private girls' school that was in the parsonage. They asked my parents as Jews to send me there.

FS: This was a Catholic school?

IR: No. It was gentile. It was Protestant.

FS: A private Protestant...

IR: A private Protestant school in the parsonage. That was all right until 1916. In '16 I went to Darmstadt in school. There was still no antisemitism to be felt in school, nowhere. I had gentile friends; I had Jewish friends. And it started after the First World War, especially all these former officers who were out of work -- the war was over. They had to turn somewhere, and they found their *Führer* in Hitler. That's where it started. They had no jobs. They had no future. They needed something to do and he started the SS. He gave them jobs. He put them in uniform.

FS: You mean Hitler, Hitler started the SS.

IR: That started in the 1920s, '21, slowly.

EJ: But he...

IR: In '23.

FS: It was in 1923.

IR: In '23 when he had to go to Landsberg, was in Landsberg prison. That was the other side who revolted against him and his force. It was in 1923 when our nephew was born.

And that night they threw stones in my oldest sister's window in the night when the boy was born and no doctor dared to come to the house.

EJ: In 1923.

IR: '23.

FS: You said before that both Communism and the Nazi party grew. Were there street fights?

EJ: Yes.

FS: What do you remember about that?

EJ: There were street fights. I knew that the Nazis had [unclear]. The Communists came in and they [unclear] shot one another. It was always one against the other. But the Nazis got more and more support from people and the Communists had to go down. You know, the Nazis got the overhand.

FS: Would you say that it was a matter of the Nazis being numerically superior or was it just a matter of better organization among the Nazis?

EJ: Better organization from the Nazis. And the people expected more from the Nazis. They already started to promise, "If Hitler comes to work, you all will get jobs." And these were the people, the people went out--he never would have got such power when the people had jobs. From my opinion, what I know, he never would if the people wouldn't be out of work. If they had work, they wouldn't have followed him like they did. When he came to work...

IR: To power.

EJ: When he came to power, they all got jobs. He put [unclear]. He started already before the war to work.

FS: Let's just for a moment go back to the '20s. Perhaps you remember some of the elections prior to 1930. Do you remember some of the elections, electioneering in your town?

EJ: I know. I went with my mother. We went to vote. And at this time [unclear]...

FS: Do you remember the year?

EJ: Maybe '25, '26. I don't know any more. I knew we already--we were democratic. We knew we were the only ones who couldn't go to the Communists. We were not Communists. But since we are democratic, we are in between. I knew the day I had a green dress on with the red flower. *Favus*, to show. But afterwards...

FS: To show what?

EJ: To show that we are democrats.

IR: Social Democrats.

FS: And the red was then a symbol of loyalty to the Social Democrats?

EJ: Yes. And then afterwards, the next vote when Hitler was [unclear] to vote for Hitler, we had to vote open. We had to vote for Hitler.

VOICE: You mean with an open...

EJ: We were forced, yes.

FS: Do you remember ...

EJ: I know we had to vote. They came and picked us up, and said, "You have to vote for Hitler." And gave us in the hand and they were watching us that we put it in.

FS: This was when?

EJ: This was before '33, 1933.

FS: Before Hitler came to power?

EJ: No, no.

FS: After Hitler came to power?

EJ: We had to vote for him so he came to power.

FS: Do you remember, did the Zentrum party, the Catholic party, play a big part in the life of your township?

EJ: No. We didn't have much Catholics.

IR: We had mostly Protestants.

FS: Do either of you remember any street fights between the Nazis and the Communists? Do you remember anything about the *Stahlhelm*? [rightist war veterans' organization]

EJ: Yes.

FS: Tell me what you remember about the *Stahlhelm*. Were they active against the Nazis? Who belonged to them, working people, Jews? Who belonged to the *Stahlhelm*?

EJ: I don't think Jews.

IR: No, no Jews belonged to the *Stahlhelm*.

EJ: It wasn't not apart from Nazis, *Stahlhelm*.

FS: It was led by Ludendorff.

EJ: Yes.

FS: Do you remember the *Reichsbanner* [Social Democratic war veterans]?

EJ: Yes. The Jews belonged to the *Reichsbanner*. I know I went to the masked ball of the *Reichsbanner*, [unclear].

IR: The *Reichsbanner* was the beginning of the Weimar Republic.

FS: Was the *Reichsbanner* organized like the *Stahlhelm* for example? Were they organized for street fighting against the *Stahlhelm*?

EJ: No.

IR: It was only founded as the opposite to the *Stahlhelm*. It was a Social Democratic Party's youth group, men and women. And they had their own, what shall I say, culture compared to the *Stahlhelm* who wanted to be followers of Ludendorff and the, what shall I say, *Junkers* in East Germany.

FS: By *Junkers* you mean the Prussian Officers [unclear]?

IR: Yes.

EJ: But I think the *Stahlhelm*, they went together with the [unclear] party [unclear].

FS: After 1932, yes. Of course right now we are only discussing the period up to January, 1933 before Hitler took power.

EJ: I knew about the *Stahlhelm*. You know, you didn't hear so much about the *Stahlhelm*. More you heard about Hitler. And I knew that some fight were between groups, but in our small town between the--what do you call it? What was it now?

FS: The S.A. [Nazi stormtroopers]

IR: The *Reichsbanner*.

EJ: There were fights.

FS: There were fights, street fights, between the *Reichsbanner* ...

EJ: Maybe the *Reichsbanner* had some [unclear] and the *Stahlhelm* came in and they'd start fighting.

FS: Now before 1933...

EJ: It was before '33.

FS: No, no. My question is this. Before 1933 did you ever hear of the S.A. or did you also hear of the S.S.?

EJ: Sure, the SA was marching.

FS: I mean did you hear of both organizations?

EJ: More SA. SS came first after '33.

FS: Do you remember who was the leader of the SA? What's the name of the township you come from?

EJ: Darmstadt.

FS: Do you remember the name or what kind of background this person had?

EJ: This I really don't know. I know that one was something. He was [unclear] but it was in Rheinhessen. Hessen/Darmstadt was here and Rheinhessen was across the Rhein.

IR: Mainz.

EJ: Mainz. The headquarters were in Rheinhessen. I know the names but something stops...

FS: What I'm really trying to find out is where these leaders originated from. Were they trash, were they college people?

EJ: No, no college people. I don't think so.

FS: These early Nazi leaders that you know of, what way of life did they come from?

EJ: Middle class. In our town. Hans--you know, he had a father with a brick wall...

IR: Yes, I know.

EJ: They were middle class people.

FS: Do you remember anything about the early Hitler youth movements? Do you remember anything?

EJ: Yes, this was everything in our town. They had Hitler youth. But first came the *Arbeitsdienst* [workers' corps] but this was after Hitler came to power.

FS: No, before, before. Do you remember anything about the Hitler youth movement before 1933?

EJ: I couldn't say.

IR: You married in '33. You know what was before.

EJ: Yes, but I don't know whether there was a Hitler Youth, not before.

FS: You don't remember.

IR: Think about...

EJ: It was long before that, children, groups, people who never came out of the town. They took buses brought together by *Kraft durch Freude* [strength through joy]. This was for young people. [unclear] and it was grown-ups. They were enthusiastic about something else that they never had seen before.

IR: They saw another kind of life that they didn't know at all, from childhood on to the older ones who got work. They were suddenly happy. They had money. They had work.

EJ: They didn't have very much money.

IR: They had more than they had before.

EJ: What made them happy was that the party paid for this. They didn't have to pay.

IR: All right, but still they had enough to live, more than they had before. Now I don't remember these things because I was in complete Jewish surroundings. I had nothing to do with gentiles. I was in these families with these children, with sick children. I was in Halberstadt with Orthodox Jewish people who were among themselves. I didn't even hear much about it. I only knew later on that Hitler came to power. That was in Halberstadt.

FS: That was when, approximately when?

IR: That was in '28-29. And everybody said, "Don't go in the street. Hitler will march." That was before '30. I was in Halberstadt in '28. No. I was in [unclear] in '28. So it was '27 already. You wouldn't go into the street when you knew they were marching. You closed your doors.

VOICE: Who warned you against going into the street? Was it organized Judaism or who was it?

IR: The Jewish families, the congregation. The young people would go to work to *minyan* in the morning. They came back and said, "We heard today they will marching. Stay home." That was far back. I remember the years.

EJ: One day the march was Hitler. The next day it was Social Democrats. It was between this. But the Social Democrats, they didn't have so much money like Hitler. They got from groups, from all these big factories.

[Multiple Exchange]

IR: They were the working people. And the educated, what you would later call the Democrats, the teachers. They were Democrats.

FS: And you said they were persuasive to get these people into the Nazi party?

IR: Yes, they tried.

EJ: Sure they tried. A lot of people went in it to get business, you know. I was underground by people--remember the man was in the S.A. because he had a restaurant. Otherwise, we didn't go to the restaurant. So he went to the S.A. and the people came in his restaurant. And then they closed it and moved to Hamburg and I was underground by these people.

IR: ...in that small town. It was near Darmstadt, about an hour away. So she lived and grew up with gentiles like I did, but I left when I was 14 to go to school out of town. So she knew the gentile people. She went to dance with them, too at that time.

EJ: Two or three years later, you remember, you were home when we went to [unclear] and danced with us and the Nazis, came in and said they weren't allowed to dance with us. You remember.

FS: The gentiles were not allowed to dance with you?

EJ: They always. We went to dance, you know...

FS: These are not just Jewish dances?

EJ+IR: No.

FS: Social dances.

EJ: No, not at all. This was just [unclear]. This was in summer. You know what this was? Like a fair, a county fair. And it was maybe two hours away. They were all college students. They came and danced with us. They liked always to dance with the Jewish girls. The Jewish girls were prettier, they were more elegant. Then came the Nazis in and called them out. They came in and said, "I am sorry. We cannot dance with you."

FS: Now would you remember when this occurred?

EJ: This was maybe '27 already.

FS: In '27?

EJ: So early.

IS: But you must say here that Hessen was one of the known as one of the worst antisemitic areas.

FS: The second questioner, the questioner besides myself is my good wife, Mrs. Ilse Stamm.

Tape one, side two:

IR: [unclear]

FS: So actually what you're telling me now is that the leadership of the republic was assassinated.

IR: Yes.

FS: There was an election in Germany I believe in 1930 or '31 in which the Nazis went from, I believe, from 2 million to 7 million. Then in 1932 there was an election where the Nazis took a tremendous shellacking. Do you remember anything about these? This second election was just a few months before Hitler was appointed chancellor by Hindenburg. Do you remember anything about these two elections, ladies?

EJ: The first election I know, but the second I really don't remember.

IR: I don't know anything about it.

FS: Do you remember a comment of your parents or of your friends or of some elders what they said? When Hindenburg wanted to appoint Hitler to be chancellor and Hitler set conditions which Hindenburg did not accept. Consequently he appointed Schleicher as chancellor. Do you remember any comment from your parents or elders on this? Why Hitler wasn't appointed chancellor? Do you remember anything on that?

IR: I really don't know.

FS: Do you remember any comments by your parents when Hitler was appointed chancellor? What did your parents have to say about it?

EJ: My mother was sick already at this time.

IR: I was in Hessen already and everybody was shocked.

FS: Was there any fear among the Jews?

IR: Fear. Because my husband and I were house parents in the orphanage, a Jewish orphanage in Esslingen near Stuttgart. And that moment everybody knew there would be difficulties to send these boys, the 13 and 14 and 15 year olds, to evening schools for learning a trade. What had happened before, they were carpenters, they were bakers, and so on and after school hours they were sent to learn a trade. From that moment on, my husband would not let them go any more. He got the impression from all these people, "Don't send the boys any more. We will have difficulties with the authorities."

FS: By all these people, you mean the masters of the trades who employed them?

IR: Right, the gentile masters. And we had always about 10 or 12 boys in that age where they had to go to so-called evening school to learn a trade.

FS: Now do you remember anything? I believe April 10, 1933 [April 1, 1933 is the correct date], the stores in all of Germany were boycotted. Do either of you ladies remember any particular incidents or what happened in your towns?

EJ: Well, we lost a lot of customers. This I know.

IR: We were closing. They had a sign on, "Do not buy in Jewish stores. *Kauf nicht by Yuden.*" So who dared to come in?

EJ: And already a person had a sign on, "Jews are not allowed."
FS: Jews are not permitted to come in?
EJ: Yes. Some butchers had it on. A lot of stores had it on.
IR: Some were fighting against it.
FS: You mean gentiles?
IR: Yes, gentiles. With the result they lost their stores or they worked so against them that they were glad to put the sign on in the next few days because they lost their customers.
FS: You mean the Nazis?
IR: Otherwise they lost their customers and their business was gone.
FS: Do you remember the behavior of gentile professional people, doctors, dentists, judges? Do you remember the behavior of this group of people in the early Hitler days?
IR: Very well.
FS: Can you tell us a little bit about it.
IR: I can tell you about Esslingen. It was a small town. The doctors all told my husband, "If you need us, we come. If you want to come to our office, send the children with a grown-up. They will not dare to do anything if a grown-up will accompany these children." We had children in the hospital at that time that I remember were wonderfully taken care of by the nurses, by the doctors, by everybody.
FS: Gentiles?
IR: It was '33-34. Because Jewish people--we had about 12 families. Some of them left already at that time. One shoe store closed right away because they knew nobody will dare to come in. It's a main street. There were bakeries who had resisted all that. They baked the challah every Friday night for us like they did before. They delivered to us like before. We had three cows. The surrounding farmers would bring the hay and everything like they did before. One or the other would come and say, "I don't know whether I can do it any more. I'm afraid." So my husband would tell them "Don't. I don't want you to get into trouble. I will find another way."
FS: Do you remember any reaction in the very early Hitler days by German professionals?
EJ: In the beginning, no. They were good friends what we had there. We didn't feel they would be against us. But a lot of people didn't come in.
IR: How many professions were there? A doctor, a veterinary, and a pharmacy. Who else?
FS: Could you go to the doctor?
EJ: Sure.
IR: And he would come to the house.
EJ: He would come to the house. He decided that.
FS: In the early Hitler days, there was no evidence.
IR: Our mother passed away in '33. The doctor came to visit in the house.
FS: Do you remember your mother's funeral?
IR: Yes.

FS: Were there any demonstrations against Jews?
IR: No.
FS: At the funeral?
IR: Nobody came to the funeral.
EJ: But nobody came. And we had a lot of friends before, but only was Jewish people there.
FS: Hitler came to power January 30, 1933. When did your mother die?
IR: On Rosh Hashanah, September.
FS: So in other words, it took approximately six months, seven months for the atmosphere in the town to change completely?
IR: That's right. And the stores were pretty much bankrupt because nobody...
FS: The Jewish stores?
IR: The Jewish stores.
EJ: Because nobody could come in. People couldn't come in any more.
IR: They were afraid to be seen.
EJ: Each one knew the other in a small town. [unclear] they boycotted in Darmstadt, Rothschild.
IR: That's our main store.
EJ: But a big department store.
IR: And one that was at least 150 years.
FS: Tell me who had become the leaders of your town. Was it intelligentsia? Was it trash?
EJ: Yes. No trash. They were people with culture.
FS: Do you remember anyone in particular and what they did before?
EJ: Yes, I know. What they did before they had a big business in bicycles.
FS: And what office did he take?
EJ: He was maybe the leader. What is that called, the *Obmann* [Chairman] I don't know any more what they called it.
FS: But the leader of the local Nazi party?
EJ: Yes.
IR: The Nazi party in a small town.
EJ: A couple of years ago they were dancing with us. We didn't say hello any more. They looked away when they saw us.
FS: How about the *Bürgermeister*?
EJ: The *Bürgermeister* was still *brav* [decent].
IR: To that day, but what was afterwards?
EJ: I don't know. I was married before. I really wasn't at home anymore.
IR: There was a Social Democrat mayor for many, many years.
FS: Do you remember what happened to him?
IR: No. I wasn't...

EJ: I think maybe he had to go when the Nazis came. I'm sure he had to go.

IR: I don't know who the mayor was later on. I never came home any more after my mother's death, after '33.

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FS: Now you were telling us the friendship was over.

IR: The moment we separated after the *Abitur*.

FS: Which was which year?

IR: '21. And I corresponded maybe twice with some of the girls. And then suddenly no answer. So I knew it's over. Then after about ten years I got a letter. I don't know where I was, somewhere in Germany. There was a reunion. Would I come? Question--not we invite you, would you come? I wrote no, I will not come, no reason, no nothing. I just refused to go. That was in the '30s, the beginning '30s before Hitler came to power. And then I didn't hear anything anymore from nobody. I remember that evening when Hitler was announced, that January evening.

FS: January 30, 1933.

IR: I was sitting in a café in Esslingen with a group of people, two Jewish girls and two gentile young men. One was an engineer. Another one I don't know any more. And I still see the radio in the corner and everybody was sitting there like a ghost. And I said, "Let's go home." That was the end of the friendship with these gentiles. [unclear] We were through.

FS: This was just after Hitler took power?

IR: That evening when we heard the announcement, then we knew now it's over for us. We didn't expect any phone calls any more, and we didn't get any.

IS: What did you think as far as the Jews are concerned?

IR: That was the end for us. From that moment on, people prepared to leave. One girl was an X-ray technician at the [unclear]...

EJ: I knew her.

IR: She's in Israel. By the first of April, she got a letter...

FS: First of April, 1933?

IR: She got a letter that she was fired. So she prepared right away to go to Israel. There was a couple with a son who went to college and a younger girl, they went to Lima in Peru and they came to say goodbye to us. And my husband said at that time, "They actually have nothing to do. His business is gone. What should he do? If he has a chance to get out now, it's the best thing what he can do. But we have the children in the orphanage." Not only did we have about 60-70, we got more every day because the schools in small towns where Jewish families lived told them right away, "It's better you take your children out of school. They are not safe any more." Our nephew who lived in a small town in [unclear] there was a Jewish school that had to close, or was forced to close. So my sister sent her boy who was about 11 to us to Esslingen to the orphanage. We suddenly didn't have orphans any more or problem children. We had children from Jewish families who lived in small towns who couldn't go to school any more. They were not thrown out, but the parents were told, "Take your children out. It is safer. They are not safe

in school any more." So the *Waisenhaus* in Essen, the orphanage, had about 100 children instead of 60. And they came mainly, what we never had before, from southern Germany.

FS: We are speaking about the Roehm affair in 1934.

EJ: They said, what shall I say, he was not assassinated. They said he shot himself. But the people said all, who were not in the party, you know, the party said he shot himself. From Hitler out. He was assassinated.

FS: At the time they said he was...

EJ: He was a big shot in the party.

FS: He was the leader of the S.A.

EJ: Yes.

FS: And at the time they said that he was a homosexual. Do you remember this being discussed among the people, the you knew, among *goyim* or Jews, what his crimes really were? Do you remember any details what people said?

EJ: No.

FS: Do you remember anything, let's say from...

EJ: They said always Hitler was a homosexual too, people said but nobody knew for sure. They said in fact Hitler and Roehm were good friends in this way.

IR: I want to tell you one thing.

[Multiple exchange.]

FS: We're talking about Rabbi Schorsch who wrote a book on Germany Jewry.

EJ: The Gestapo stands with the people when they pack their lift.

IR: That's how it was done before. They left already when we came. He was a few weeks in Dachau and Buchenwald and the lift was packed before.

EJ: When he left in '38.

IR: But the lift was packed before. It was in England.

EJ: Not in '33. They didn't send a lift.

FS: Do you remember anything when the Nazi convention took place in the fall of 1935 when the German racial laws were passed? Do you remember any details about that when Jews no longer could have German maids?

EJ: I know. My girlfriend, my best girlfriend from a number of years before that got in jail. She still had the maid what she had for 18 or 20 years. She got in a year, for a half year in jail.

FS: This was a Jewish woman?

EJ: A Jewish woman who had a gentile husband. Her husband was director from [unclear].

IR: But she had a gentile maid.

EJ: A maid.

IR: And didn't let her go.

EJ: And didn't let her go. And the maid said, "I stay with you." And the Gestapo found out and the maid had to leave and she got in jail.

FS: And she was in jail for six months?

EJ: Well, six months. She was longer in jail, maybe she was a year. And her husband couldn't free her.

FS: And he was a gentile? Her husband was a gentile in a high position?

EJ: In a high position.

FS: And couldn't do anything for his wife?

EJ: Could not do anything. Could not do. But good friends who were in the S.A. brought her out. And a lot came to Auschwitz.

FS: Who came to Auschwitz?

EJ: Other friends. Maybe they were a hairdresser and so on. And they found out you went to a hairdresser, they came in jail too.

IR: Anybody.

EJ: Or they went to a store and the Gestapo went in a store and saw a Jewish woman, she went in a store and the sign was on. They would not allow any situation. I knew a lot. We had to work in a factory. What should I say? We made for the soldiers, for the *Lazarett* [military hospital] we made clothes. They learned us to sew.

FS: When was this?

EJ: This was...

IR: I think it was in '40.

FS: Oh, this was in 1940?

EJ: Yes.

FS: I guess we're getting a little bit ahead but go on with your story.

EJ: But this was before. She came out from the jail and had to go to work. This was before.

IR: We had to let, in Esslingen, in '38, the gentile cook and everybody go. We had to work that whole house with youngsters, with people that we had to teach from Swabia [unclear] the girls from the department stores. We were about 16, 17, had to cook for 100 people. We all worked together like horses because the trained cooks and maids had to go.

FS: What do you remember about the assassination of von Rath in Paris by Grynspan which brought on the Kristallnacht? What do you remember about that?

EJ: I lived at this time in Frankfurt. I was married and I lived in Frankfurt. And the store--you mean before the Kristallnacht?

FS: No, the actual fact.

[Multiple Exchange]

IR: When you heard that news, you knew it was the end.

EJ: It was the end.

IR: It was on that day on the 9th of November.

EJ: They put already when the news came out, they put on the stores--you know, Frankfurt was a big town then.

FS: Two hundred thousand Jews.

EJ: No.

IR: Maybe more.

EJ: No.

IR: In '38, I know that.

EJ: And they posted Nazis in front of Jewish stores. When somebody came over, you were not allowed to go in.

IS: That happened long ago. In '38 you couldn't go in the store any more.

EJ: On the Jewish stores, they put Nazis in uniform. They put Nazis in uniform.

[Multiple dialogue]

FS: Now were your husbands taken to the concentration camp?

EJ: I had a gentile husband.

FS: Oh, you had a gentile husband?

EJ: And my husband was ordered after this to the Gestapo and they said, "Do you want a divorce from your wife? You can get it without anything right away."

FS: And what did he say?

EJ: "Or you have to give up your business." My husband was an importer. And he said, "I knew my wife was Jewish when I married her and I knew her for years before we got married. The parents were against us. But I don't want a divorce."

FS: This was?

EJ: This was after, right after Grynspan. They took the license away from his business.

FS: And how did he make a livelihood after that?

EJ: Somebody who was in the lodge but not the Jewish lodge. He was a gentile. His manager was *eingezogen* [drafted].

FS: He was drafted into the army?

EJ: Yes. He needed a manager. So my husband got the position. He knew he was against Hitler. He was not in the party, this man.

FS: Could you just pinpoint the year.

EJ: '38.

FS: 1938?

EJ: It was '38.

FS: And this business made clothing for the army?

EJ: No, they don't make nothing. They had a coal yard, a wholesale coal and anthracite.

IR: Then your husband went in.

EJ: And then my husband went in, yes, and he was the manager in this place.

FS: And how long did he stay there?

EJ: Until he had to go to the army. I think he was drafted in '40. All the men with Jewish wives. And he went right away to Finland [unclear]. He was already there and then he should come down to South Africa or something.

FS: North Africa.

EJ: North Africa. And at this time he came out. All the men had to go out of the army who had Jewish wives. My husband had always--he wrote me, [unclear] I come home before. He wanted to get out of the army. He was over a year up there and they had only three days of daylight up in...

FS: In Finland?

EJ: Yes, in Finland.

FS: Did he ever write to you anything about contacts with Finnish Jews?

EJ: No, no. They were in a camp. They were in a camp to watch the ships, the boats who came from America and elsewhere. They watched, and then the war went on between the United States and Germany I think.

FS: So these were ships going from the United States to Murmansk, is that correct? Did they try to torpedo them or was it just watching?

EJ: Watching what they did. My husband was by the airport and they had camps there in Finland. He never could write anything about what was going on.

FS: Was he permitted to write to you?

EJ: Yes.

FS: Did you get any kind of a stipend from the German government for being the wife of a soldier?

EJ: Yes. But I had in-between my name on, Sara is my name. Did you notice we had to put my name on, Sara. My husband didn't tell this, but I had to put my name Sara on.

FS: You mean you didn't tell your husband?

IR: He knew it but he didn't tell his officers.

EJ: So if I would have gone in to pick up my monthly--what you say?

FS: Stipend.

EJ: Then I had to put Elsa Sara. If I wouldn't do this, they would find out and they would send me to a concentration camp. So my mother-in-law, my husband's mother...

FS: Who was a gentile.

EJ: Was a gentile, did that for me for as long as my husband was in the army. I gave her the *Vollmacht* [power of attorney] and she could pick it up.

FS: And then he was dismissed in 1941?

EJ: Yes. That was maybe a good year. And then they were for four or five months when they came back. They came in the winter in the big ice and were for four months they were lost. And I was--I can't tell you what I did.

FS: In Finland?

EJ: On the way home the boat was frozen in. But nobody knew. I got a letter...

FS: He was missing.

EJ: Yes, the boat is missing. They didn't know where the boat is for four months.

FS: Were you being persecuted during this time when your husband was in Finland?

EJ: No. I'll tell you one story. We lived in a house in Frankfurt and the housemaster was, it was a Jewish house before. And the people all were from the concentration camp.

[unclear]. They came all to live there. One morning in October, it was a rainy morning, I think the 18th of October, the Gestapo came. We were in the western [unclear]. And across the street the Gestapo had their *Hauptquartier* [headquarters]. I'll tell you what we hear, about the people there [unclear].

IR: Elsa, don't go into it.

EJ: And this morning they came and took all the people. Finally somebody rang my bell and it was two Nazis, standing. [unclear] across the street.

FS: Across the street.

EJ: And then they had parties and bands and anything. And the people...

FS: You mean the Nazis had parties.

EJ: The Nazis, the SS.

FS: In the same building?

EJ: In the same building. And we lived across the street. It was before a big Jewish apartment house. And then they came and I said, "You must be wrong. My husband is *beim Militar* [in the army]. They said, "We don't know about this. We'll come again." They didn't come any more. But I sort of shook for three days until I thought it was over. And then one day this house master was before, got everything from these Jewish owners before. And the owner went to the United States over *Russland* [Russia].

FS: Vladivostok. The Trans-Siberian Railway.

EJ: Yes. In house lived a couple. He went to the United States and his wife was a cousin to Ribbentrop. And she was here with two children and the children were not only Jewish but had the uniform on from the Hitler youth.

FS: Ribbentrop was a German Foreign Minister.

EJ: Yes. And this house master, when I came he said, "Where did you go buying? You are not allowed to go buying." And they bothered me so much, you know. They looked at me when I came...

Tape two, side one:

EJ: Shall I say in English or in...

FS: Whichever way you want.

EJ: ...was not the janitor. He was a maintenance, he was everything. He lived in the attic. And I have a complaint about this man. My husband is in the *Wehrmacht* [German army] and I don't know what to do. He bothers me every time. Then I told him. Another man came and I had to tell him my story.

FS: Another Gestapo man came to listen to you?

EJ: Yes, came to listen to me, somebody who he said, "You go home. We will take care of this." And I heard later that they had ordered him over. I didn't hear any word any more. It was only because my husband was in the *Wehrmacht* [German army].

FS: You were permitted to do your shopping?

EJ: Yes.

FS: And you were not bothered?

EJ: No, I was not. He couldn't bother me anymore. I was permitted to do my shopping.

IR: You didn't have to wear a star.

FS: You didn't have to wear a star?

IR: No.

EJ: I had to wear a star.

IR: In Frankfurt?

EJ: I sure had to wear a star. I didn't have children. Only the people who had children didn't have to wear a star. I had to wear a star but I didn't wear it all the time.

FS: Tell me...

EJ: We had to wear it. We went to work. We had to wear it. We had to go to the Gestapo to work. We were maybe 100 women from, you know...

FS: Mixed marriages.

EJ: Mixed marriages.

FS: Now let me just ask you this. Would you feel free to tell us when the Jews were deported from Frankfurt. Do you remember that time? Can you tell us.

EJ: [unclear] ride in the back of--everything in a jeep. And the Gestapo in front and I saw them very [unclear].

VOICE: Gustav Flörsheim's mother went from Frankfurt and they never saw her again.

FS: Gustav Flörsheim is the cantor of Tikvoh Chadosh in Philadelphia.

EJ: I saw very often.

FS: These groups that you saw, where were they marching, in the street?

EJ: In the street to the *Ostbahnhof* [East Station] to the train.

FS: Men, women and children?

EJ: Men, women and children, and the Gestapo was around them.

FS: Did you have any contact with Jews prior to their leaving? Did you speak to...
EJ: Anybody who had to leave?
FS: Yes. Did you speak to these people? What did they feel like?
EJ: I could not. I could not. I know one night 17 together. In Frankfurt in the new Jewish cemetery they're all buried. And one night 17 people who should come away. They got a postcard from hell. They got a letter, "You will be..."
FS: Deported?
EJ: Yes.
FS: And how did they take their lives?
[Multiple Exchange]
EJ: They hang them or they shot themselves with a revolver. They didn't live far from me. They all took their lives.
FS: Which year?
EJ: This was '41 I think.
FS: This was 1941. This was before the Germans invaded Russia.
EJ: Yes.
FS: Go ahead.
EJ: And I thought it was the 18th of October and all in our house they all came away. There was maybe five, six families or more in our house. They were standing all day in the rain and in the evening they took them away.
FS: And how much notice did these people have?
EJ: None at all. In the morning they came and in the evening were standing outside in the field, a field under the apartment. And I saw later on, days later, when the Gestapo came, took the [unclear] and took the *Teppich* [carpet] out and took all the valuables. I saw it.
EJ: I saw it and I saw people you never would have thought who were in the party, who would take it. Big businessmen.
FS: They came and...
EJ: Opened the seal and they sealed it again.
FS: They went in there and stole whatever they could?
EJ: Yes. They belonged to the S.A.
FS: Do you know any Jew who remained in Frankfurt who hid there?
EJ: Yes, we were.
FS: I'm not speaking about mixed marriages.
EJ: No, nobody. I don't think anyone was there anymore. Maybe some were.
FS: But none that you knew of?
EJ: No. And when the war was over, you know, we were close then together. But I didn't know one Jew who was married to a Jew.
IR: They were all mixed marriages who came back after the war.
EJ: They didn't come all back.
IR: But the ones who came back...

EJ: A lot were in Auschwitz. Came before in Auschwitz. When we worked, every day they took somebody away. Every day somebody said, we had a man from the city, he came and he'd say, "You know, you Jewish girls, somebody did something and she will not be working here anymore. She is deported."

FS: These are people who worked with you?

EJ: Yes, all Jewish women.

FS: And what kind of work did you do?

EJ: I had to repair and sew. They learned us sewing for the *Lazarett* [military hospital].

IR: For the hospital.

EJ: Yah. For the hospital we made hospital clothes and for the surgeons the clothes. And it was before when my husband was still there. My husband called me one day and I was in the office from this lady who had [unclear]. She said, "What job is your husband doing now?" And I told her. She said, "Oh, I need coal. I'm so cold at home. Would your husband--if it would be possible if he could bring me brickets and coals and I could give you a lot more privacy."

FS: These are people where you lived?

EJ: No, where I had to work.

FS: Where you worked.

IR: A gentile was in charge.

EJ: A lady was in charge of me. So I got--you know, it was for me. I could stay home a day, you know. I could come later. I could have an excuse because my husband...

IR: Brought her coal.

EJ: Yes.

FS: And when did you see your sister and your brother-in-law, Mrs. Rothschild and her husband? When did you see them last?

IR: In '41.

EJ: In '41. My husband and I..

IR: You were there when the war starts.

EJ: I was there in the Russian war.

FS: That was in 1942. No, '41, the 2nd of June, 1941.

EJ: My husband had come to Bitburg. He wrote me. He was not away at this time. He was not away and this is when I came to Stuttgart. They shipped them from here out to any town to make--this was before he came to Finland and it was in an outbuilding. I came back. I was chopping something for Ina and I hear on the radio--we couldn't have radios. We were not allowed to have radios any more. They took the radios on Rosh Hashanah in '38. They came in the morning in our house in Frankfurt. They took all the radios from the people. The Gestapo...

IR: We didn't have a paper, we didn't have a radio.

EJ: My second oldest sister, they had two parakeets. You did not allow to have parakeets or a pet. Can you imagine that? It was unbelievable.

FS: What were the relations between your husband and your sister's husband, Mr. Rothschild?

IR: We were friendly.

EJ: We were friendly. My two other sisters' husbands--my two sisters you know died in concentration camp with their husbands. Our husbands went on New Year 1938 or 1939 to Luxembourg to look for my two older sisters. They couldn't bring them. Somebody tried to bring them over the border to Belgium or to Luxembourg. And we had heard that if they could come over, it was a [unclear]. And we heard from somebody for money took the people over to Luxembourg. From Luxembourg...

FS: Across the river into Luxembourg.

EJ: The Rhine. They could come to Luxembourg and Luxembourg took these people to Paraguay. And my sisters could go. And my husband went and had everything arranged. And they said, "We have our houses. We don't want to go."

FS: Your sisters didn't want to go?

EJ: Didn't go, and both had to go to the concentration camp and die. And my husband could save them. My husband was with Ina and her husband. He went up and had...

IR: That was later.

EJ: When you came away.

IR: But you came before, a different time.

FS: What were your husband's--did he have any patriot feeling? Did he want Germany to win?

EJ: No. When he came he was in a *Lazarett* in Riga. He came and cried and said, "If you would know. The *Kinder* [children] and Hannah all the sisters should come away. If they cannot get out of the country, take they should their life. But I saw..." He told me. He said, "Don't tell them." I said, "I have to tell them," because he saw when the Jews in Riga all were shot and had to shot themselves and had to fill their grave. He told me this.

IS: How come he was in Riga?

EJ: He was in the *Lazarett* in Riga.

FS: Was he injured?

EJ: He had [unclear]. And he said not all the soldiers were Nazis. He said the soldiers came and told them crying, crying what they saw. And Jewish girls had to clean the floor from Riga, from Jewish families, the floors in these *Lazarett*s and so on. He said they gave them bread and everything. And one day the girls didn't come any more because they were killed. But today I cannot understand that they didn't know.

IR: Because they were not farsighted enough like so many people.

FS: You're speaking about your sisters?

IR: Yes.

FS: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

IR: They could have gone. They had nothing to lose. But they were not informed enough because they didn't know...

EJ: They could get papers for the United States but they didn't get it--on the other hand, shall I tell you one thing...

IR: Elsa, you know, Roosevelt didn't do anything.

[Multiple Exchange]

EJ: ...there was a consulate, American, they stole the papers and sold them to other people who'd pay maybe \$20,000. Jews who had so much money and they got from other people...

IR: [unclear] my husband's number to go to America. We were never called. The consulate people from America had more leather pocketbooks and champagne and money and everything than they could handle because they sold the numbers to the Jews who could pay them. And the others didn't know about it [unclear].

EJ: They didn't know about it. I heard from somebody after the war...

FS: Now, Mrs. Rothschild, please tell us--bring us up to about 1942, until your deportation from Germany.

IR: On the 9th of November, they came to the house...

FS: Which year?

IR: It was the so-called... [unclear]

IS: Excuse me. Start telling a little bit, who organized the home, when it was started. That is interesting.

IR: Of course we were in peace with everybody because the houses were...

IS: No, you don't understand.

IR: In '38.

EJ: No, they want to know when the home was started.

IR: In 1831. It was 150 years old already. It was started for orphans in 1831. My husband was house father there and I married him later on when I was there as a governess. He was a widower.

FS: Who supported this home? Where did they get the funds?

IR: The Baden-Württemberg Jewish communities and was always regarded as one of the best and finest in Stuttgart. They'll give all the information in the world. They all know them. My lawyer, gentile lawyer, in Stuttgart was a friend of my late husband's. He does everything for me. I just need to write one letter. I met him later on. The house had a wonderful reputation. In that small town we could go anywhere, we could do anything. Everybody helped. Like I said, doctors and lawyers and everybody for nothing.

FS: Could you just repeat the name of the town please.

IR: Esslingen am Neckar near Stuttgart. And everything was fine until that day when the Grynspan affair in Paris happened. We heard it and we were afraid--what will be next? And by 1:00 they came, "What do you have on the table in the home?" In uniform, without uniform, into the dining room where we were sitting with the children, came in like a hot oven. Bandits threw the tables over with everything and "out of here," and drove us out into the rain. It was a day like raining, drizzling, a Thursday afternoon from 1:00 on. There we were standing out in the open with the children. Who wasn't there? There were two younger teachers, Samuel and Jonas. They weren't there.

FS: Male teachers?

IR: They were Jewish teacher.

FS: Male teachers?

IR: Male teachers. My husband and I were standing in the back with the children. And suddenly we saw that they threw out of the office and out of our apartment and out of the synagogue everything--*Sefer Torahs*, books, the silver candelabras and everything--and let it go up in flames. And here we were standing with the children in that rain. And the children cried in fear. And one of these monsters came over and said, "If you are not quiet, we throw you in the flames too." And here we were standing until it was almost dark. Then they suddenly came and said, "You can go into the house, what's left of it." So we went in. The children were wet from up and from down. Nobody could go to a bathroom. And when we came in, there was no gas, no electricity, no water. Everything was turned off and everything full of glass. The windows, the little synagogue, completely destroyed. And we found there Samuel unconscious, beaten to a pulp. That other young teacher in another part. And no telephone. My husband sent one of the boys over to neighbors, a gentile neighbors. The house was on a hill, and said, "Call Dr. Spade, that's what his name was, he should come or should send. The two teachers are dying." And this doctor came and took these two men into the hospital on that afternoon. I don't know who else came to help. We had help. The gentile gardener came and said, "Wait until these guys are out. I turn the lights on. I turn the gas on. I turn everything on again. But I have to wait until they are out." This man was more than 20 years gardener, but he was a gentile man. He couldn't do anything as long as they were there. And he went and called Stuttgart and called for help, what to do with the children. So some of the children didn't even wait. In groups they went with nothing on, with nothing with them, walked to Stuttgart. On the way people picked them up and took them. They knew about that, what was going on. That little synagogue was something else. A few Jewish families were mistreated. This little synagogue downstairs everybody saw and heard what was going on in the orphanage in [unclear]. And we packed for these children as much as we could. And about midnight--meanwhile, my nephew was there. We packed him something and sent him down with money, "Go to the train and go to Elsa's."

FS: To where?

IR: To my sister, Elsa. Because his parents and my other sister were too far away. We knew it was all over the same story. And shortly afterwards two former inmates, boys who were working in Stuttgart, came with a truck and with a car, took children and took us as much as we could, took them to Stuttgart and we had relatives in Cannstatt. They took us there. So we left the house with nothing.

FS: Do you know what happened to the children?

IR: They were taken in by Jewish families. They were taken in by gentile people. Some tried to get home in these little towns, like I sent our Ginder to Elsa.

FS: Ginder was your son?

EJ: No, he was our nephew, my oldest sister's.

IR: We sent these children--we told them, go with them, here have a slip, go to [unclear] go to this one, to this one, to that one. My husband was, what shall I say, clear enough to do

everything he could for the children, to organize them that they could get--and to the Jewish congregation in Stuttgart, not knowing that it's destroyed and everything's in flames. So these two older boys took us and the children and worked all night to bring these children to Jewish families. And we were in Cannstatt in this relative's house. And when we came everything was terribly upset. What happened? Hugo just left an hour ago before the Gestapo came to arrest him. I hoped he will be out of the country.

FS: Who was Hugo?

IR: His mother said. It was a sister-in-law of my husband. And we were there during the night. The next morning they came and arrested my husband. Yet before I have to say in Esslingen these guys came, took my husband after beating him and I don't know what, he should open the *Geheimarchiv* [secret] where the papers are. He said, "What do you think we are? We have an orphanage. We have no archives. Here are the papers, all the papers of the children in my office if you let me go in." But they had torn everything apart. Naturally there were all the files of the children torn apart, thrown around. And they were--we get out, let's say that. And we came to this relative's. The next morning they arrest my husband.

FS: In Stuttgart?

IR: In Cannstatt. The children were meanwhile part in Cannstatt, part in Stuttgart. Whoever heard about it, took these children in. And my husband was taken away, the way he was. So what could I do. They came and said, "Help us with the children. What should we do in our small apartments with children?" And for days I went from one office to another to ask them, let my husband get out so that he can organize it. I can't. I don't know all that, what he knows what to do with them. And after about five, six days--I don't know, it could be a week--he suddenly stood at the door. Don't ask me. A beard; the pockets in that gray overcoat full with bread. He hadn't eaten--he said, "That's what I got, bread and water." He hadn't eaten and that's the way he looked. He said, "You did one good thing. You said the children need me. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here any more."

FS: How did they get out...

IR: The Gestapo in Stuttgart reported what I wanted him for, what I needed him for. They didn't want the children. And the Jewish families said, "We cannot keep them. What shall we do with them?" The Stuttgart congregation and all the facilities were torn down too, so there were more children to take care of. So he came back and his first work was to start the school for children in Stuttgart, and bring the children together.

FS: Where in Stuttgart did he start it?

IR: In the...

FS: [unclear] house?

EJ: I know it was in...

IR: I don't know any more what the name of that was.

FS: Doesn't matter.

IR: That office that belongs to the--it had a Hebrew school already, and there we collected them. So we had them on the floors with straw, with mattresses, with everything we

could get, and started them and a kitchen was started and all the women worked together to keep these children together as long as we could. And that was November, '38. And meanwhile we had to go back to Esslingen to go to the police, report what was stolen. The police said they don't know from anything. "That was a private group. We didn't know anything. You tell us. You tell us what to do." We said, "Let us go back to the orphanage. Let me take the children back. We cannot leave them there in the street." And by the beginning of January, '39, we brought our children back. We opened the house again, and Elsa came to help. And we had to find people, Jewish people, who would come and help us. In Esslingen there no Jews any more. They had taken the Oppenheimers away with their little boy. They had taken Mrs. Lindenbaum with Ilse and that young couple with their little boy. And they were all gone. We were the only ones left. And I went from Pontius to Pilatus to beg, "Give us food." The former baker said, "Naturally. You get your bread. You get your challah. You get everything like before. Let them come to me and I will tell them you are my livelihood for the last 20-25 years. I worked only for the orphanage and I won't do that." And he never, never let them take that away from him. There was a gentile butcher. The name was Strauss. They came in the evening and brought us meat. "I assure you it's not pork. You can give it to the children." But who would cook? We had to clean. We had to do everything. Neighbors, gentile neighbors, finally came in the evening and helped.

IS: How many children did you have?

IR: Sixty again. Slowly they all came back, whatever could come back. Did Ginder come back?

EJ: No, he was in Aschaffenburg with his parents [unclear].

IR: Our older sister lived there, that boy's parents.

EJ: I came to my other sister in Aschaffenburg and my other sister--what would you call it?

IR: The brother-in-law.

EJ: The other guy's Rudolph. In the First World War he collect intelligence. And they took him away in the Kristallnacht and they put him in the in the concentration camp and he died in the concentration camp with my sister and her husband. They had to pay for it. They had to pay when they left, 100 mark for the [unclear] and the dog.

FS: For the part where?

[Multiple Exchange]

EJ: In the concentration camp to get to...

IS: You mean when people were taken to the concentration--now this was in '38. They weren't taken to Dachau.

EJ: This was later. The money for their train ride... [unclear]

IS: They had to leave money for their train ride.

[Multiple Exchange}

EJ: [unclear] and everything lying on the table. They had to sit it on the table and for each person who had to go away, 100 marks.

FS: The last few minutes on the tape. Can you tell us a little bit about your husband, what kind of person he was. He must have been a very dedicated person to do this, sacrifice...

IR: I can give you letters.

FS: Why don't you tell us a little bit so that people will know.

IR: He was a teacher all his life. He started as house father and he was a father to all these children. I have letters. I have people you can ask for in Stuttgart, New York and everywhere what kind of man he was. He just lived for his work, that's all. He didn't go to England. He could have taken a transport with children to England. That was in '40-41. But he didn't go because they didn't let me go. He said, "Either you let us go together and we are willing to leave everything here and take the children to England."

Tape two, side two:

FS: Could you tell a bit more about your husband.

IR: I was asked then to bring a group of children, retarded children, somewhere to the east. And I said, "Not without my husband. We go together to live or go to death together."

FS: Did you realize that...

IR: We knew that. We knew that these were retarded children in a home that was founded by nuns and they took care of them. We had Jewish children there and there were gentile children there. And they had hidden children there, Jewish children, for years. They wanted to take that away from these nuns and wanted me to go with them. I knew I wouldn't come back because before they had taken a group of children and the nuns asked, "Where do you take them?" There were enormous aluminum trucks completely covered except maybe little windows. And these nuns asked, "Where do you take the children?" "If you want to know, come along." And two of them went with them and they never came back. So we knew the answer. The doctor of this home sent to my husband, because he didn't have anything to wear any more, from himself, coat, underwear and suits. He knew him personally because he came very often there. There were Jewish children to visit. That was Kenenborg [phonetic], a home that was built I don't know how long. Rich people sent their retarded, mentally not normal, grown-ups and children there. He was the doctor and the nuns worked there. But he did that for my husband. He knew him. He sent them that he had to wear something because he had only one suit, the one he had when we left the house.

FS: I think we should quit for the night.

[Tape recorder off and then on.]

IR: In '39; until the war started with Russia. That was in September '39. Then we had to leave just the same way again because they needed it as a *Lazarett*, as a hospital for the soldiers. We had to leave everything.

FS: So you were there about six months.

IR: About six, seven months. They gave us a few days.

IS: A few days for where?

IR: To bring the children away and get away.

FS: And where did you go then?

IR: We went back again to my relatives in Cannstatt. We took the children to Stuttgart. It was meanwhile built up that they could be there. There was a school and there was a gymnasium where they had beds, where Jewish people and gentile people sent beds, and the possibility that the children were taken care of. And then the transport started to England for children. People took groups of children out in the country, out to Holland. The ones in Holland, or on their way to Holland, disappeared. Others had relatives in America, had influence and could get them to America. And we were there to the last minute to '42 to August '42. And that's what you have the story there.

Tape three, side one:

The army.

IR: They made out of it a soldiers hospital for, they said at that time, infectious diseases. And because it was located above the city up higher, it was more or less isolated. They made it as a *Lazarett*, as a soldiers hospital for infectious diseases. So we had to go right away.

FS: And you went back to Stuttgart.

IR: We went back to Stuttgart, found an apartment. We tried everything, couldn't get one. Then finally we shared an apartment with a young couple. The man was paralyzed, had multiple sclerosis, and an old lady.

FS: With a Jewish couple.

IR: Jewish. And I had to take care of this old lady at the same time, was bedridden. My husband took over the Stuttgarter Jewish school because the director of that school went to South America, and we had more and more children there. And they had to live there too, not only to go to school, because they had no home.

FS: Who supported these children?

IR: The Jewish...

FS: Communities?

IR: What shall I say, congregations, communities, the Jewish communities. There was no support any more from the state. It was all in Jewish hands. And we all worked together. They opened at the same time a kitchen because these children had to be fed. And people who couldn't afford, we had young employees who didn't have anybody, couldn't afford to go elsewhere and they couldn't go to a restaurant. They could eat there for a small amount of money. So women worked there as volunteers like always. The kitchens were taken care of. And we, one after another, would take over other jobs. I was a trained nurse. I visited sick people.

FS: In the community?

IR: In Stuttgart. And we couldn't do any shopping, marketing in any store. So there was one small store. They called it a *Juden* [Jewish] store. When you say West Philadelphia and we lived here. So we had to go with heavy shopping bags at a certain time with trolleys, had to stand, not allowed to sit inside, like it was years ago in the south with the colored. We were standing on that platform, summer, winter, all the time.

FS: To buy your food?

IR: To buy our food and I bought at the same time for three, four older people.

FS: Did you have ration cards?

IR: Yes.

EJ: Everything was rationed.

FS: Oh, everything was rationed.

IR: Everything. It was war anyhow and we got even less. I remember that we had once a week meat, [unclear] *fleisch*, 100 gram, the tiniest piece. And a good thing was that many Jewish people had some gentile friends who would bring something quietly at night. My sister brought

us something from Frankfurt. We had people who had worked for the orphanage years ago and they would come in the evening and bring two bottles of milk or would bring something. Then there was one man, he was a conscientious objector, Seventh Day Adventist; he would bring us from his rationing rice, cream of wheat, a little bit of flour in tiny little packs that he could carry in his pockets. And now they had to be afraid to go into the house because on the first floor lived gentile people. Meanwhile, we had moved twice, not with a moving van but with little...

EJ: You had to move.

[Multiple Exchange]

IR: *Bismarck Strasse*, but that was a former Jewish house with Jewish families. But we had to leave there too. They took that over. And we moved in an apartment, don't ask me, we were seven different parties in one apartment with one kitchen and one bathroom, and each one had one room. And we were privileged that we had two outlets extra so we had a little burner, electric burner, where we could cook a little bit something for ourselves. We didn't have always to stand in the kitchen and wait until this one is finished or this one is finished.

FS: Did these people get along with each other?

IR: Yes. We all got along. We can't say otherwise. One family had two children, the Cahns. He was in prison, a Jewish man had a gentile wife and two children.

EJ: The other one, he was a Turk.

IR: The Turks, yes. And they had two daughters. They had one room. And then there was a Jewish couple, the Greinsheimers. Their children were in America, and they were one of the first who had to go with the transport. And we were there until August, '42.

FS: Which year?

IR: 1942, August 22, 1942 we all left with the transport. But there were three or four transports before.

FS: Did you know where the transports were going to go?

IR: My husband working in the school system and in the congregations knew about. And he every time was with these people helping, putting together that they had something to eat on the way, that they had clothing.

FS: And where did these various transports go?

IR: To Riga. I don't remember where to any more. I had that one paper. I don't know whether I gave it to you, so I still have it.

FS: It doesn't matter.

IR: And when there was a children's transport, and I remember my husband came home in tears. He said, "Today I know I sent all my former students to death."

FS: He knew then that they...

IR: We knew already these transports go to gas chambers.

FS: And that was when?

IR: '41, all year '41. It start in '40 already.

FS: You knew these children would die?

IR: We knew.

FS: Did you know where this children's transport was headed for?

IR: I knew it.

FS: But you have forgotten.

IR: They were mostly to Riga, to Poland, Lublin and these neighborhoods. There they had built gas chambers beforehand. Our sisters had to go in April, '42. The only thing we knew was one postcard that you got.

FS: When did you first hear that Jews were being methodically killed in gas chambers or otherwise? Can you recall that?

EJ: I know it from my husband. When he came back from Riga [unclear] and he came back and he told me. He had heard about it. And he said to me, "I will tell," this was my two older sisters still were here. "The moment when they have to go, they should take their lives. Better then to go where they take your life." I said, "Don't tell them." He said, "I have to tell them. I know so much about it. I heard it from all sides."

FS: I believe that you told us that on the last tape.

EJ: They didn't believe it. They didn't believe it.

FS: Your sisters did not believe it?

EJ: They didn't believe that that--they believed it but they had a hope. It wouldn't happen. Something would, a miracle would come. Then they came away in April--just before you.

IR: April, '42.

EJ: On the 18th of April.

FS: And where were they sent to?

EJ: Aschaffenburg.

FS: No, I mean where to?

EJ: They came...

IR: We had the name last week.

[Multiple discussion.]

FS: Well it doesn't matter.

IR: Near Riga.

EJ: It was Gratnikov [phonetic] or something--what you call?

IR: The destination, the camps.

EJ: No, no, where I got the card from. It must be near Riga.

FS: When your sisters wrote to you what did they write?

EJ: One. It was a postcard it must be somebody brought out.

FS: What was in the postcard?

EJ: And the postcard was, my sister wrote in German. *Ich sitze hier auf meinem Koffer und hab bitter* [unclear]. [I am sitting her on my suitcase and have bitter [unclear].] Do you know what that means?

FS: Hunger, hunger.

EJ: Yes. She wrote it. *Sieben Stunden sind wir marschiert im Schlamm bis an die Kniee. Wenn nichts dazwischen kommt* [unclear]. [We marched for seven hours through mud up to our knees.] And I had to give it in Aschaffenburg for the *Todeserklärung* [death certificate]. I want to know something. I took this card with me.

FS: This was after the war?

EJ: After the war.

IR: That you could prove that there they were dead.

FS: Now let's go back. You sent off the children's transport? Then what happened after that?

IR: We never heard anything from them any more.

FS: What happened to you after? How much...

IR: We had to work. We had--at that time--in '40 or '41 the American consulate closed. We had, still had a few weeks ago our number that we had for America. We were never called. And we had to stay because my husband was needed. I worked--instead to work in a factory, I worked, was recognized as nurse being needed in Jewish families. The old age homes were there. They had to be taken away from these Jewish homes, beautiful homes that the community had built, to a small outlying old *Schlosse* near Heidelberg.

FS: Castle. An old castle.

IR: Yes. And they had one enormous fireplace. We brought these people there in the snow. I know that I just couldn't go further anymore. There was one woman who helped me up and she said, "If you don't go, I'll have to hit you now. You have to go on. You cannot lie there. Think about your husband who is waiting for you." We brought these people there. We cleaned that whole *dreck* [dirt] up. We had no beds. We just had old mattresses, whatever there was for the old...

FS: And you slept on the floor on these mattresses?

IR: Yes. And then they started these old fireplaces. Rieka, my friend who passed away last year, the other one in South Africa, they took care of them with a few other helpers, all Jewish younger people who were not yet called to transports. And this woman who was, what shall I say, a student, a pupil in the orphanage 20-30 years ago meanwhile had married a gentile engineer. That's why she's still there. And she had written to us if we ever need something, they are willing to help us. Here I didn't know her. She was with me and she said, "You go home with me. You sleep at night. Tomorrow morning I will bring you back. Then you can help." And the next morning when we came, we saw flames out of these enormous old fireplaces that hadn't worked for many years, and all the old people sitting out in the snow, until we finally--there was no telephone--could send somebody who could walk better to the next village and tell them, "There is a fire. You have to come. You have to help." Now slowly we could arrange--I guess I was there for about two weeks, my husband alone at home in Stuttgart--and arrange that we could take care of these people. And in these small hamlets *Dorfe*, they helped.

FS: You mean the people helped?

IR: The people, gentile people. They would come and help, brought beds, brought food, helped with wood that they could use in these old kitchens and so on. And that went on. That was in winter '40 to '41, '40-'41. And so were different places. *Tante* [aunt] Clara was in elsewhere. I don't remember the names any more. Everywhere where was an old dilapidated castle or old whatever you call it, or a wealthy farm was, that was used for the old people until they collected them and sent them away.

FS: And when did you first hear that you were going to be sent away?

[Multiple Exchange]

IR: We expected it all the time.

EJ: When the transport started, you knew. Look, my sisters in Aschaffenburg they were informed maybe in March they should put everything together. They should make big *kiste mit Lebensmittel...*

FS: Boxes of food.

EJ: Yes, and everything, and clothes [unclear]. Just they would take these with them. But they wanted only that they wouldn't give the things away, that everything was packed, but they never got something. *Nun das ging bis an Die Grenze.* [that went just to the border]. I saw in Frankfurt auction after auction every day where they auctioned these things from the Jewish people. Some people bought like *Sofakissen* [sofa pillows] and opened it and found rings, *Brillant* [diamond] rings, golden watches and everything.

FS: Let me ask a question. The people, the gentile people, the majority of the gentile people, were they glad that the Jews went?

IR: Some.

EJ: I think some who were Nazis. But a lot of people, they couldn't say actually. They must be afraid the neighbors would tell the S.A. and they would be taken away too. Everybody was afraid of the others. Nobody [unclear], you know. But they knew, the people knew what was auctioned was from Jews.

FS: These auctions were advertised?

EJ: They were advertised in the paper, not that they were from Jews.

FS: But people knew it. Had you ever been at one of those auctions?

EJ: Never. [unclear] I wouldn't have gone. But I heard from people who told me what they found.

IR: We packed. We had the same thing. We were told a few days, maybe ten days before, on the 22nd of August will be a transport to the old age home, Theresienstadt.

FS: The 22nd of August. Which year?

IR: '42. And we knew all the time that these people never sent a card, never [unclear] the ones who had gone before. I had mentioned to you that these children, retarded people and retarded children were packed up in these enormous aluminum trailers and put away. And these nuns who had asked, "Where do you take the children?" they said, "Come along. You will see." They didn't come back.

FS: Did they kill them in Germany? Or do you know where they killed them?

IR: We know they went up...

EJ: Ravensburg was German; Ravensburg was in Germany. It was a big concentration camp with the gas chambers.

FS: And they took these children to Ravensburg?

EJ: And the grown-ups too. I know a lot of people who came into Ravensburg and never came back.

IR: Do you know where Ravensburg was?

[unclear exchange]

FS: In Southern Germany. Now where is this place where you said that some of the people complained of the awful smell?

IR: That was in Wurttemberg. This is Heilbronn...

FS: You're looking at the map here.

[Discussion]

IR: This was an awful summer *Stelle*.

FS: This is where they collected the Jews to send them away?

IR: No. They collected them in Stuttgart.

FS: In Stuttgart?

IR: In Stuttgart. They came from all these small towns and sent them further up.

EJ: But I never heard about them this.

IR: Elsa, I know this.

EJ: To tell you the truth, after the war I found out all over where they were.

IR: I heard it and I know it.

FS: Okay. Now you got notice on August 22...

IR: That we have to leave on August 22 and to be up there, I guess it was on the 20th, at the [unclear] that is the *Aussichtsturm* [Observation Tower], what shall I say, a beautiful place up there. All to be there.

FS: And what were you to bring?

IR: We had to pack separate, like my sister said, not only suitcases but little boxes with food and household items, a broom, a dustpan, a pail, pot and pan. And it was closed and had to be collected the next morning by the uniformed police or whatever it was and taken away. We ourselves could have a small suitcase and rucksack.

FS: Now these boxes, Mrs. Jaeckel, these boxes were auctioned off?

EJ: It was not boxes. The people, like in Aschaffenburg, they could take other things, not only food, like a *Kiste*.

FS: Like a big box.

EJ: I knew. I was there. I came every day. I went down. They knew two or three weeks before. They took everything what they think it would be valuable that they would pack. In *Kisten*.

FS: In boxes.

EJ: Yes.

IR: They would get it at the end station.
EJ: They took everything. They believed...
FS: That it would go with them.
EJ: That it would go with them, and they never--you heard what I said. [unclear] and they never heard anything and we never heard anything.
FS: And you say these things were then auctioned off to the German public?
EJ: Absolute.
FS: And who got the money for this?
EJ: The--bank?
FS: The German government.
EJ: The government.
FS: And would you say that the people were aware of...
EJ: A lot of people were aware.
FS: ...of where this stuff came from?
EJ: Sure. How should I know? Otherwise I couldn't tell anybody else.
FS: Had you actually been at one of those auctions?
EJ: No, no, I never. But I know people who went there and told me. They said, "You know, we find a golden watch in that..."
FS: In that pillow?
EJ: They had to have money, you know. Money, or they thought, maybe they could get this for later on. Put money in...
FS: In pillows and in clothing and in various items.
EJ: People went away and put it in their coats.
IR: In the seams they would sew money in, jewelry, whatever they had, valuable things that they thought maybe [unclear], we can use it.
EJ: Everybody had a hope, you know.
FS: That they would live. Now let's just step back two months. This was on the 22nd of August, 1942. On June 21, I believe, Hitler invaded Russia.
EJ: I was there. On this day I was in Stuttgart.
IR: But that was in '39.
FS: In '41.
EJ: It was '41.
FS: Tell me what you remember about that day.
EJ: I was in Stuttgart with my sister. And I went out shopping for her because I didn't wear a star. I was in the stores and I bought something what I could buy for her. And I went up, in *Bismarkstrasse*, I went up the street and I heard on a radio where a window was open--we didn't have a radio any more, you were not allowed to have a radio--that the Russian...
[Multiple Exchange]
FS: There was no declaration of war at all. But that's how you got the news, you heard it through an open window in the street?

EJ: We couldn't have a paper either.

FS: Now where was your husband...

EJ: My husband...

FS: No, no. At the time of the invasion of Germany to Russia, was he then in Finland? Still in Finland?

EJ: My husband was back already.

[Multiple Exchange]

I have to think about this. He was not away. Was he away at this time? I don't remember any more. I wanted him to meet me in Würzburg but I came to Stuttgart.

FS: Did people think that Hitler could conquer Russia, from what you heard in the street?

EJ: Yes, people believed it. German people were so sure.

FS: That Hitler would conquer Russia?

EJ: Yes. They can conquer everybody.

FS: You were in Germany during the entire war. When would you say was the first rumbling that Hitler might not win the war?

EJ: I think the winter of '42 or '43. [unclear]

FS: In Christmas, 1941--I believe it was '41--Hitler's troops were on the outskirts of Moscow.

EJ: And then they got--the Russians drove them back. They got the first hit from the Russians.

FS: So would you say that people--was it after Stalingrad or before Stalingrad?

EJ: It was before Stalingrad already.

FS: That people thought they might not win?

EJ: Yes.

FS: Okay. Let's go back, Mrs. Rothschild, and you tell me what happened when you were deported.

IR: We had to bring together...

EJ: Well, my husband was home already. He was home.

IR: Elsa, we talked about '41. It's '42 here. You came and you left us. [unclear] Wait a moment. My husband had to go to work in the morning from that apartment to--it could have been a [unclear] to that Jewish former synagogue where now the congregational offices were. He was not allowed to go straight there. He had to go to the red light circle in the morning at 6:00 in order to go to the *minyán* and then start school. And once on an awful day he thought, maybe nobody will see me in rain and bad weather. He tried to avoid that.

FS: To go where it was.

IR: To go straight there. And such fresh guys saw him and beat him. So he never dared to do that again. That evening I don't know how late it was until he came home. [unclear] to come back and I was standing behind a window and it was almost dark until he came home because he was afraid. Either to go there or there. And every few days there was something else going on

that he'd get afraid. These people were called. They were collected [unclear] in small groups, in bigger groups, it was constantly. And then we found out in time that there will be a big transport of Jews from all over Wurttemberg going to that old age home in Theresienstadt. We should take along as much as we can because there we will live. We had to give all our money, take out of the bank whatever there is, write it over to the bank where they had opened for the...

FS: The Jewish accounts.

IR: The Jewish accounts. And it was nothing but a fictitious name. The Nazis took everything. And we packed what we could in suitcases, a small suitcase that you could carry, each one. We had a rucksack. That's why I remember.

EJ: My husband.

IR: Her husband came and opened the rucksack.

EJ: He heard about Riga from people who came from Riga.

IR: He opened them, put folded 20 mark bills in all along.

FS: Into the leather of the rucksack? Into the straps of the rucksack.

IR: Into the straps of the rucksack and taped them together. And that was for a long time our help because that we had, the rucksack.

FS: How much money were you able to take along?

IR: A few hundred marks, that was all. And then, when we had to go with our bundles in a collective trolley car to be brought up...

Tape three, side two:

IR: They were responsible that nothing would happen, that everything would go in peace and quietly and in order. And that boy came up to us and said, "Let me have your suitcase. They take it away. Let me carry it for you."

FS: What kind of a boy?

IR: He was a former student of [unclear].

FS: A gentile or Jew?

IR: Half and half. We had many illegitimate children, a gentile father/a Jewish mother, and the other way around. And he helped us all day long. That was one of the things that I could keep, my nurse's scissors, knife, and all kinds of things. He said, "They will take it away. Let me have it. I'll go with you." They called my husband Herr Father and Frau Mutter--and he left. He was allowed. He had volunteered before, to help. There were such children. And then he said, "Lisl and [unclear] are there too. They will come and help you. You won't lose anything. Can we bring you something?"

FS: And they stayed with you, these children. How old were these children?

IR: He was by that time 14 or 15. And they helped us in every way, these boys. They didn't have to go because they were *Mischling*.

FS: Half Jews...

IR: Half Jew, half gentile. And the next day we were all loaded into old fashioned trains.

FS: You don't remember the date?

IR: It was on the 22nd of August when we left, with the destination Theresienstadt.

FS: You knew that you were going...

IR: That we were told. These three men who were in charge knew that. They had to have a list from everybody. They had to have--they were responsible for everybody. We were more or less loaded together. Each one had that much room.

FS: Yes, very tight.

IR: On these old-fashioned wooden benches. And we had sick people. And for these we had again straw. They were *Viehwagen* [cattle cars].

FS: You mean the sick people were put into cattle cars.

IR: The sick people were in a cattle train and we had to go through and help, that we were five nurses from Stuttgart. There was my friend Rachael and I as nurses, registered nurses, in charge of so many. Others were elsewhere. And there were, as far as I remember, about 1,000 people.

FS: In this train?

IR: In this train. In [unclear] came one nurse with about 50-60 amputees taken out of the hospital, Jewish men and women in awful condition. It was Helga, the only nurse with all these people. And some of them died on the way. And when we came to Leipzig, what I mentioned, we could open one window and there were nurses outside marching by. We called to

them, "Give us water. We have no water for the sick. We don't have a sip to drink nor can we flush a toilet, neither can we wash anybody." "We are not allowed to do anything."

FS: These were gentile nurses?

IR: This was in Leipzig.

FS: And did not help?

IR: No help.

FS: Gave you no water and no food.

IR: No nothing. What we had, all right, but how long can you have water? We had a few such big pitchers with fresh water. That was gone in 24 hours, but we were on our way two and a half days.

FS: Were there stations where you could relieve yourselves?

IR: Toilets, yes, like always but no water.

FS: Then from Leipzig you went where?

IR: Further to Czechoslovakia, passing Prague. We were I think here.

FS: We're looking at the map again.

[Multiple exchange]

IR: Maybe we came from here.

FS: From Karlsruhe, from Heilbronn?

IR: Yes.

FS: Württemberg. In Prague you changed, you were...

IR: Nothing changed. The train was never opened. Outside Prague in Czechoslovakia was Karlsbad.

FS: Outside Prague is Theresienstadt.

IR: But in Czechoslovakia not far from Prague. It must be further over.

FS: About 10-15 kilometers would you say?

IR: That I wouldn't know.

FS: Okay, when you arrived in Theresienstadt tell me what happened.

IR: We didn't arrive in Theresienstadt. The end station was... [Skip on tape.] the living and the dead. And the ones who couldn't walk any more were loaded on old-fashioned trucks.

FS: Who did that loading?

IR: Czech police who spoke German, and German. And they loaded the ones who couldn't walk. The others had to walk. And the police on each side with the *Reitpeitsche*.

FS: With horse whips.

IR: Walk, walk, walk. How much you can walk? And from Witzhausen we had a few old people where my husband came from and they couldn't walk any more and they fell down on the side. We had to walk at least one and a half, two hours. And my husband went over to help that man who was his age. I cannot tell you how they treated him. You let them [German].

FS: You let him...

IR: We had to let them lie there. You couldn't help this man.

FS: You just had to let him lie and die in the street.

IR: And die all along the street. And the ones who couldn't make it until there collapsed. And when we arrived in old *Kaserne*--what do you call it?

FS: The soldiers' barracks.

IR: Yah.

EJ: And it was in warmer weather.

IR: We could do one thing, take their clothes off and try to let them get fresh air. How many fainted I cannot tell you. Then some people had heart conditions and had a little bit of schnaps with them.

FS: Whiskey.

IR: Whiskey. We would like to give them a sip. No, these guys wouldn't allow it.

FS: The police didn't allow it.

IR: No, they took everything away. And then they started and took our knapsacks, our rucksacks and looked through if there was anything in it that they could confiscate. And among other things, I had one shoe. The other one was left.

FS: One shoe, beside the ones that I had on.

[Multiple Exchange]

I had a pair. It was a slender man. I had a pair of good shoes. I had three pairs of stocking in there and these shoes. Now it was August. It was hot. And when I finally had my rucksack and I wanted to put a pair of shoes on, I had one shoe left. You know, they took everything, dumped it down [unclear]. For weeks I had nothing but this pair of shoes.

FS: Were you assigned to certain kinds of work?

IR: We were assigned right away, after we were fingerprinted, to an attic. We were given attics of old dormitories.

FS: Could husband and wife stay together or were they separated?

IR: No, no. They were separated. First of all, there were three or four or five different old buildings. They couldn't all go in one. And they were separated. [unclear]. Your husband, your wife, or somebody else. But we Württemberger could stick together and we were all together on that...

VOICE: But only women?

IR: Yes. But my husband was in that [unclear] and a few other men because they were in charge. They had the lists they kept. But my husband had a few weeks later the severest pneumonia because in that attic there were no windows. They were open [German].

FS: Yes, just open holes for air.

IR: Open holes. And they would lay on boards, wooden boards or straw day and night.

FS: There were no blankets?

IR: No blankets. What he had [unclear].

FS: Did people really think they would get out?

IR: The moment we were in that train, we knew it was over. Nobody returns--for a human being from such place under such conditions. We knew right away that was the end. But

we lived there. It was better. It got better in the moment where the International Red Cross was interested in the so-called old age homes.

FS: When would you say that was?

IR: In winter '42-43. We arrived in August.

FS: You're a nurse. Were there any children born? Was it possible for young people, for boys and girls to find each other? Was there any sexual intercourse?

IR: Yes. Young people found each other. They had to work. Right away they were assigned to outside work. The young girls in the kitchens, the young girls working for the soldiers.

FS: For the German soldiers?

IR: For the German soldiers, for the Czech soldiers. They were not German. *Czechoslovakai*.

FS: Czech soldiers.

IR: Yes, but then most of them spoke German. And under supervision of these people, they worked. They had to start kitchens. Now in Theresienstadt were before Jews from Prague.

FS: When you came they were there already.

IR: When we came there, they were there already. They had started to organize, but they had taken for themselves the best. What was left over, we got. And we had to work as nurses under these Czech nurses. But finally, like I said, either we got used to the *shlemozel* [unclear] or it got better. When they heard that the International Red Cross will supervise that, we could put in claims, suddenly there were doctors.

FS: Jewish doctors?

IR: Jewish doctors from Prague, from Brünn, from Linz, from everywhere. And they could bring a great deal of their own equipment.

FS: Yes, medicines?

IR: After a few months, it was already in December because I had my ear operated in December, '42, on the 23rd of December, there was the Munich hospital, a Jewish hospital arrived a few days or maybe two weeks before with their oldest equipment. And they...

FS: From München?

IR: From München.

FS: From Munich in Germany the entire Jewish hospital arrived in Theresienstadt.

IR: Not the entire but part of it with their equipment, doctors, nurses and...

EJ: Like the [unclear] came from [unclear]. Nobody came back, no doctor, no nurse, not one [unclear].

FS: Now you worked as nurse there.

IR: I worked as nurse there from the very first day. We all did what we could for them. There was food, but don't ask me what kind of food. You had to stand in line--soups, you wouldn't give a pig what was in there, the potato peels, the straw and everything cooked. And the men were standing there. Everybody got a *Blechteller* [tin plate], a spoon and a tin plate.

FS: Now tell me if you know. It is said that there were 150,000 children-- or 15,000 children in Theresienstadt.

IR: Not at one time.

FS: Wait. In the entire existence of the camp, of the 15,000 I believe 150 survived. Tell me what you know about the children in Theresienstadt, the children you took care of or the children you saw.

IR: In the beginning I didn't take care of children at all. I was with our people from Württemberg. And then I was in so-called [German] where 20-28 women were together.

FS: Mini hospitals.

IR: That was no hospital. They were rooms. And at that time we got wooden bunkbeds. Then suddenly came mattresses from Germany that belonged to our transport. For each bed there was one piece. Do you remember the German beds? There were three parts mattress. One piece. I even found one of ours.

FS: You don't remember anything about the children in Theresienstadt?

IR: Later on, after my husband's death--that was on the 10th of July, '44.

FS: Did he die of natural causes?

IR: No. Natural causes and so-called malnutrition and the severest pneumonia without any help. He had no medication.

FS: How old was your husband when he passed away?

IR: Seventy.

FS: Were you there when he passed away?

IR: Yes. I worked daytime and at night I could go there. My friend in Israel--she lives there now--she took care of him. They were just the same--20, 28, 30 people in one room. And whenever I could, I had to work my 12 hours and then I could go there. And he knew and I knew it was the end. How soon? He would ask me again and again, "You still have some morphine. Why don't you give it to me? Don't let me suffer any more."

FS: Your husband asked you.

IR: I had it but I wouldn't do it because I had many things with me. I even took them to--I had them here. I didn't use them not because I was, what shall I say, afraid. I didn't want it on my conscience all my life. And at that time in the first few weeks people died every day and night and day and night. From our 1,000-1,200 people, there were 300 left. They either died or were transported right away.

FS: Were there many people who committed suicide?

IR: Every night.

FS: How did they? What methods did they use?

IR: They jumped out of the windows. Some had medication hidden somewhere, would take it.

FS: Who had the supervision...

IR: In Stuttgart already there were so many suicides before they went.

FS: Who had the supervision? Was it the SS or who supervised...

IR: The SS; it was Czech or SS. And they would come constantly and check, day and night.

FS: Were they brutal or were there decent ones among them too?

IR: There were decent ones when you could give them something.

FS: Do you remember any incidents where you found SS men who were good to you? Can you think of any incidents?

IR: Yes. Like I said, we had money. They wanted money. You could give them something. Or from the people who passed away, their ring fell from their fingers. We were supposed to collect them and give it to that special supervisor, Czech supervisor. And they came and they knew that, they asked for that, some of these.

FS: You don't remember--or let me phrase it as a question. Do you remember any single Czech SS man or any single German SS man who helped a Jew out of the kindness of his heart, not for money or gold or whatever?

IR: That I cannot tell you. it was before, yes, in Stuttgart.

FS: I mean in the concentration camp.

IR: In the concentration camp, no. We were afraid that we would leave anything when we went to work. We had a nail in the wall where we would hang our things. [German phrase] [unclear] And anything of value we would pin to us or I would take it. There was a woman from Frankfurt--what was her name, Elsa?

EJ: [Response is unclear].

IR: Under her mattress I hid all whatever I had precious--money, a watch, a ring, whatever it was. Because that they didn't do, they didn't touch the dying, the deathly sick. But the others...

FS: By they you mean the Czech SS?

IR: The German *Weiber* they called it.

FS: Oh, the German women.

IR: They came if there was anything they could...

FS: Where did these German women come from?

IR: From Germany. I don't know.

FS: They were in your camp.

IR: They were there to supervise.

FS: They were there to supervise you.

IR: They were there to supervise. They were always German. There were no Czech women. Like this Frau--what was her name? That sort.

FS: Ilse Koch.

IR: Yes, that kind. And we knew there was a camp for children. And there were newborns. They had nothing to wear and they would not take care of them, these German women. The girls who worked with these children would as much as they could take their dresses and their shirts and whatever they had to dress these little ones. They made a joke out of it. They said, when they are born, the only thing we have for them is--what you call it...

FS: A diaper?

IR: To put over the navel [pause], a band-aid. I couldn't find the word band-aid. Then later on as soon as somebody died, we collected what that person had in order to sew, to knit, to do something for these children.

FS: Were the children near? Did you know where they were? Did you have any contact with them?

IR: Where they came from? From...

FS: I mean did you have any contact with the children?

IR: Not at that time. I had contact with them, like I said, after my husband's death. There was a transport from Holland. There's 50 children who had come with typhoid or near typhoid, completely neglected, in a condition that we had to cut their clothes from them. There was a question: Who will volunteer to take care of these children? After my husband's death, I said, what do I have to lose? I will go. And Frieda, a woman she was from Vienna. She was a baby nurse. She said, "I will go with you."

FS: You were not afraid that you might catch the disease?

IR: What could happen? What could happen? We saw death every day, day and night. At that time already most of the other Stuttgart nurses were gone already. Two were called. One, Elsa, at that time had some fresh remark to one of these German *Weiber*. The next day she and the other one were called for transport and there were four. The two other ones said, "We lived a lifetime together as nurses. We go together."

FS: And then all four went?

IR: All four went with another transport to Auschwitz.

FS: Did the people who went from Theresienstadt on the transports, did they know where they were going?

IR: We knew. It's Auschwitz.

EJ: Everybody knew where they would go.

IR: There was one transport called, children will go to Switzerland. Who will volunteer to go with them? Only nurses. It was the end, nothing any more. No word from the nurses nor from the children.

FS: So this was just a fake.

IR: It was a fake to get another few hundred away. The ones you saw everyday, trucks going by loaded with men in striped prison uniforms. We were not allowed, there were police standing on the trucks that were loaded with guns so nobody would look. Nobody would look. Otherwise they would shoot right away into the windows. We could hear them coming and we knew nothing else goes by and we knew they go to death. Where or why nobody knew. I only know one thing. This guy that was hanged in Israel was in Theresienstadt.

EJ: Eichmann.

FS: Eichmann.

IR: And Hei--Hei...

FS: Heydrich.

IR: They would come. There were no hearses. There were old-fashioned hearses. The men had to pull these hearses. There were no horses. The men had to pull them. The men were the [unclear].

FS: They carried the bodies.

IR: They carried the bodies on that thing. They had to carry them out. And there were mass graves.

FS: Had you actually yourself seen Heydrich and Himmler?

IR: That's what I just wanted to say. After my ear operation, my husband came--it was in winter '42-43--and said, "You'd better start to work whether you can or cannot. We all are on the list." His brother, his sister-in-law, his sister, and me too are on the list to go in the next few days. Dr. Loewenstein told him. It was a doctor who did everything for us, a Czech who was...

FS: A Czech doctor?

IR: A Czech Jewish doctor who was in Karlsbad Marienbad, one of these elegant doctors. He was there too. And my sister-in-law knitted for me or sewed for me an *altmodische Kapuze* [hood].

FS: Old-fashioned hat.

IR: Whatever you can think of, to cover my bandages because I still had the bandage on my operated ear.

FS: And this operation had taken place where?

IR: In Theresienstadt. And I was standing and we all had lice and fleas, and standing--when somebody died you went out and there were such big balconies all around. The steps lead up. And I was standing there shaking these things out from somebody...

FS: What things?

IR: Clothing. When somebody died, you had to take it back and they were taken away in a shirt. And I think, my God, what's going on down there? The men standing there like sticks pulling their caps down. And the one who didn't, he shot. It was Heydrich.

FS: Tell me. I didn't understand.

IR: As soon as he saw one of these guys, the men had to stand still, take their hat or a cap, whatever...

FS: The Jewish prisoners had to stand still?

IR: Yes, the Jewish inmates. And if they didn't do it, they would shoot them right away.

FS: Yes, and Heydrich shot...

IR: Heydrich and his five, six guys behind him.

FS: They shot this man right in the [unclear]...

IR: They shot these men right away if they didn't stand straight, left everything they had in hand stand still, take their hat off and stand there like soldiers. And if they wouldn't do it in that split second, they shot them, let them lay there. This was at Theresienstadt. Now can you imagine what other camps were? Now I just wanted to tell you. We went there and these children came with two 16, 17 year old girls from Holland and one old doctor, a Jewish doctor who was years ago in the tropics like so many in Holland were. And we were given a small house. That

was at the time when it was a fortress, a tuberculosis hospital. And these children were put in there and we even had beds for them because that was still there. Naturally we were scared to death that they'll all catch tuberculosis, and we too. And this old doctor said, "As far as I know, there is one thing we can do for these children--blood transfusions." They had typhoid fever. And he did what he could. He went from everywhere that we got bread, that we could put on a stove, a wood stove, dry it this way. And he said, "This and cottage cheese will bring them through. Bring me what you have, money or what it is, that I can give it to these guys down there."

FS: The guards?

IR: To these guards, they will bring it. They promised me we will get cottage cheese, we will get bread for these children." And I can tell you not one of them died.

FS: The children...

IR: Had typhoid fever.

FS: ...pulled through?

IR: Pulled through. And he gave every day direct blood transfusions from us to these children.

FS: And how long to the best of your knowledge were these children in the camp?

IR: What age?

FS: No. How long were they in Theresienstadt until they were...

IR: When we left in '45.

FS: They were still alive?

IR: They were alive. They were well. And there were children from 8 months up to about...

Tape four, side one:

FS: Can you just repeat quickly how the doctor gave the transfusion, the blood transfusion?

IR: He gave blood from us to the children, direct transfusions, something that isn't done anymore.

FS: And you said he collected money.

IR: He collected whatever we had in valuables to bribe these guards to give him plain bread.

FS: These were Czech guards?

IR: Czech guards. And we could have that and boiled our water, no milk, the cheapest cottage cheese that they could get and rye bread. And that was what we fed these children and they pulled through, to stop this awful diarrhea. That was what they had day and night, diarrhea. Completely dehydrated bodies, little bodies.

FS: And you say these children had no names.

IR: Some of them knew their name, but they all had only one, a first name, around their neck on a string. And there were little ones that couldn't even talk yet. So we knew this one was Magda or Lisa or whatever, Holland names.

FS: You gave them names?

IR: No, that was their name around their neck, the first name, but no family name. Because the families had given these children to gentile people to hide them without names, and the younger ones didn't know a family name.

FS: And how many were in this transport?

IR: Fifty children.

FS: And you say all 50 children survived?

IR: Yes, all 50 children. Some went with us to Switzerland that people asked, "We have no children. We would like to adopt these children." And a few among other ones was this Schwester Rita [unclear] in New York. You know the story. When she came to New York where afterwards her husband lived with another woman. He wanted a divorce.

IR: She had a little boy taken along. And that one couple in Chicago that I met later on had that little boy. I have a picture of him still there. And the others were adopted by Jewish people and gentile people in Czechoslovakia after the war.

FS: By gentile people too?

IR: By gentile people too. All these children were saved. We knew that. We found out about that from Switzerland because there were a few nurses who had worked then afterwards.

FS: Did you stay in Theresienstadt until the end?

IR: No. In February, '45 we were liberated, about 600 people and I was one of them.

FS: How were you liberated?

IR: That nobody ever knew correctly. We were called one night. We all had to come to that special like city hall what they had there, had to come there because there will be a transport

to Switzerland and we are called--my name, my friend Rike Schmaltz' name [phonetic], my sister-in-law. I didn't know they were elsewhere. There are different houses, old houses. And when we got there...

FS: It was an assembly point where you had to go?

IR: We were called in the middle of the night. And my friend Frieda, who was not called, said, "I promised your husband I will not let you go anywhere alone. I will go with you." And she went. And we both--they said, "Your name isn't on." And she said, "I go with my friend. I promised. I won't let you go alone." He said, "All right, if you want to." So we thought, all right, we know already what that means. Then not far away was my sister-in-law. I said, "Helen, what shall we do?" And she said, "You can refuse but did you ever have a chance to say you want to go and you can't go? I go. It might be a chance that we are safe."

FS: Did you expect to go to Switzerland or did you expect to go to...

IR: We didn't expect anything. They told us Switzerland because...

FS: Did you believe them?

IR: I didn't. Some people had hopes. And we were the next day called again and told from all these many that they had called, 600 will go. And we friends and my two sisters-in-law were in the transport.

FS: How many were called?

IR: About 1,500.

FS: And 600 went?

IR: Six hundred went. But at the same time what we didn't know, the same amount was released in Bergen-Belsen and was there too then in Montreux [phonetic].

FS: This was when?

IR: In February, '45. We knew already that it was going down with Germany. Some of these Czech police were decent. They told the Czech Jewish people, "We are afraid what will be." They knew already there were revolts in Germany against Hitler. By the grapevine you would hear such things.

EJ: [unclear] the 20th of July... [unclear]

IR: That was '44.

EJ: Then the people got suspicious.

FS: All right. Now you got on this transport. Did you get any clothes or anything to go on?

IR: Whatever we had while we were there in Theresienstadt. We could buy our own stuff. I showed you the money. Everything we had taken was taken away from us and then they opened a store where you could buy with paper money, with ghetto money, something that you saw.

FS: Now you got on the train? When you got on, this was a train?

IR: In '45?

FS: Yes, when you went to Switzerland.

IR: That was a train, a normal train, like these third class trains in Germany were.

FS: Now how many people--there were 600 people altogether.

IR: Six hundred people.

FS: Out of the 600 people, how many children?

IR: About ten.

FS: And the rest of them were what age?

IR: They were still there. They were about between 4 and 8.

FS: Now out of the 600 people, how many children? You say only 10 children?

IR: Only 10 children.

FS: And the rest of them were older people or younger people?

IR: Older people, middle aged people, and we were in our 40s.

FS: How did they select them?

IR: Ask me.

FS: You don't know.

IR: They asked you questions--what did you do before? What did you do now? How long are you here? Do you have relatives? The shorter you answered, the safer it was for you. They would say, "Go to this side. You are taken." As soon as you started to tell them a story, you were out. What did you do before? I was a nurse. Where? Down there. How did you come here? Whom did you have here? I had my husband; he died. Finished, go. They didn't want to know more.

FS: Now tell me about the trip from Theresienstadt to Switzerland.

IR: The trip. Each one got a loaf of bread--what else? At that time there was water in the train. Something else to eat. I don't remember. Everybody got something to eat. The men got razors. And when we came to Friedrichshafen, no, before, my sister-in-law who was a Württemberger and Rika my friend, we were from Nordheim they said, "We actually come closer to the Schweizer [Swiss] border." Suddenly everybody thought, all right, maybe it really is true after 24 hours. And then they came and told us not far from Friedrichshafen, somewhere, I think I wrote it down, that all the women--we all had short cut hair for the one reason everybody had lice. And there so many people died, what I never mentioned before, from these *kleider* [clothing] lice, from these--what you call that...

FS: Lice which nested in the clothing.

IR: And they died from that, eaten up by that. And then they had DDT. When DDT came and they could spray--what you call it, when they come to the house, what do they do?

EJ: Exterminator.

IR: Exterminator. Then suddenly the health was better. People could live. People who vegetated before couldn't go on living because they were full of lice all the time. And there was so-called baths. What did they do? They took a cold shower. The next day they had pneumonia and died. So we came near Switzerland and these Czech police changed to German police. And they came and said, "Here is soap. Here are razors. Who of the men has a razor?" Nobody said they were. They were afraid they should kill themselves with razors. "Here are razors. You shave yourself." The women had to comb their hair. "Here are combs. You make yourselves decent

looking. We are coming to the *Schweizer* border. You have to leave this train. Take everything you have and change over to a Swiss train." Then we knew.

FS: And then you got out where? In Friedrichshafen? It doesn't really matter.

IR: In Kreuzlingen, the other side of Konstanz.

FS: And then you got onto a Swiss train?

IR: To a Swiss train.

FS: Were there nurses on this train?

IR: No, the first nurses we saw, we got food.

FS: On the train you got food?

IR: On the train. I can tell you that in Kreuzlingen we were standing at the windows. My sister-in-law Helen had been in Kreuzlingen before and she had relatives there. And she called out to one of these train men and to people out there, "Do you know the Marxes? They have a corset factory here in Kreuzlingen?" Yes, over there is Benny. And that man ran and said, "Benny, Benny, there are people coming from Theresienstadt." And there was like a fire running through. The women came with baskets with apples and all kinds of things bringing us to the train. We were still locked in the train, in the Swiss train now. And I know that Benny said to me--he didn't know me, I was standing next to my sister-in-law Helen--"I have some stamps here. If you want to write to somebody, write right away. Nobody knows that you are still alive." And that was how I wrote to Frankfurt. I had stamps.

EJ: I didn't get it. Next November I got your...

IR: And then from there we came to St. Gallen. In St. Gallen we were three days in full quarantine because they couldn't let us go. They didn't know if we have lice or fleas or what else, and we were in full quarantine there. And there we had nurses. And there were the Steiners from St. Gallen and a friend of Rika we saw the whole Jewish community coming, helping. And from there we were transported to Montreux. And in Montreux, what we had, our packages, we went up in the highest snow, on the 5th of February, up to the Matterhorn. Do you know the Matterhorn?

FS: Yes, I was in Montreux twice.

IR: That was in February of '45. And that was from August.

FS: Those that didn't have relatives, with whom did they stay?

IR: Nowhere...

EJ: You all had to stay there.

IR: We all had to stay there. You couldn't...

FS: You all had to stay there?

IR: We all had to stay there. The war wasn't over. We were still in quarantine. But we started to work there just like we did before because we had old sick people. And everything was...

FS: You took care of your own sick then?

IR: We nurses Paula Rotschild, Rika *und ich* [and I] and then we had one doctor who came with the people from Bergen-Belsen. And we opened right away--what we could do at that time, it was unbelievable. Everywhere we had sick people and we took care of them.

FS: These people from Bergen-Belsen physically what kind of shape were they in compared to you?

IR: By that time they were there a few days already in pretty good shape. [unclear] through the high snow.

FS: What you're telling me now is the experience in Theresienstadt.

IR: In Theresienstadt where we still would--we worked there for about three months, three and a half months until the children were so far so much better that we were relieved by other nurses.

FS: These 50 children came from Holland you're referring to?

IR: Yes. And then we worked there in daytime and could go back to our own room in that *Kaserne* [barracks] Hauptstr. 8. And we would take with us, because at that time we would get better food there for the children. And I remember and I wrote to Freda last winter when it was cold here, "Remember when we went back with our boiled potatoes and had them in a towel or something packed in our coats and went through that park and it was so frozen that we stumbled and lost our precious potatoes." We had nothing to eat that night. I know in the beginning when I was here I cannot throw a bite of bread away. You ate your potato with the peel so you don't lose anything. And I have letters that my husband wrote as a birthday present, that he had given away his weekly ration of margarine--that was that much, that high--to get a few flowers from boys who came in from the outside ghetto. They had to work there in the field.

FS: Are you saying flour or flower?

IR: Flowers. A few flowers that they had found in the field. He had given them, the two boys, his sugar and his margarine ration that he would have something for me for my birthday in May. You would try to do everything for each other. I worked nights because I got extra rations of something like *Lebkuchen* and I would bring it the next morning to my husband. And he wouldn't eat it alone. He would share it with his brother who was next to him. It was a life that brought you together where the best and the worst came out of people.

FS: Were there many Jewish inmates who stole from their friends?

IR: That's what I was just going to say. The worst came out in many who stole.

FS: Do you remember any particular incidents?

IR: No. And even if I had known, things are forgotten, like I don't know any names. I know the name of my doctor who operated on my ear, a famous, a Dr. Hyatt that everybody in America knows.

FS: We will now finish the story of Mrs. Elsa Jaeckel. Just as a reminder we left off when her husband, who was a German soldier, had been in Finland and he had been transferred to Latvia. And there he had gotten the news that Jews were being killed by the thousands, Latvian Jews were being killed by the thousands in order to evacuate the barracks and the ghetto and make room for the German Jews. The next voice you hear is Ms. Jaeckel.

EJ: Then he got relieved because they said everybody who had a Jewish wife had to come out of the army. And he couldn't wait until he got...

FS: And this was approximately when?

EJ: This was when my sister came away he was...

FS: Approximately, 1942?

EJ: It was '42. It must have been beginning of '42.

FS: Were there many in Frankfurt who were released?

EJ: We had 600 *Mischehen* [mixed marriages]. And I had to work and we had to work, all the Jewish women for the Gestapo. We were called to the Gestapo and had to work in a factory. They learned us sewing. What should I say? We had to go to work with like the people here they work for the welfare, for the welfare, with welfare people, people who got welfare. They worked for this what they got. We had to go, this was in a factory maybe an hour away from Frankfurt. We could go to a certain place with a street car, then we had to walk to this factory. And we worked eight hours there, all the women who had gentile husbands. Then every day something happened. They found out somebody had still a maid. The other one was by a hairdresser. The other one they found something else. There came a man from, he was an SS man, told us in the morning, you know maybe--I cannot tell names any more, I don't know it--they came, "They will not come to work today because they got in jail." They found out something.

FS: You're referring to individual women?

EJ: Yes. You know, they told us. Like my girlfriend, she had still a maid. She was in jail for three-quarter years. And when she came in jail, they were sitting like rats in a cage. It must be terrible, I tell you, what they told us. They got their golden teeth. At this time people had--you know we are all young--golden teeth. They were counting the teeth, because when they came to Auschwitz they had broken the teeth out, the golden teeth, to get the gold.

FS: Did most of these women who were put in jail...

EJ: Mostly to Auschwitz.

FS: They were not all released?

EJ: No.

FS: But some of them were released?

EJ: Some who had connections with the Gestapo and could pay the Gestapo.

FS: To the best of your knowledge, were any of these women...

EJ: I know three who were released.

FS: No, that isn't my question. To the best of your knowledge, were any of the women able to bribe their way out individually by giving sexual favors to the SS?

EJ: No. I heard only when some came back from Auschwitz that they got maybe better food for this reason.

FS: But not in the Frankfurt jail?

EJ: No, no. They were treated not like human beings in the Frankfurt jail.

FS: When you came home at night--your husband worked in Frankfurt?

EJ: Yes. I came home after work.

FS: You came home after work.

EJ: But I was always afraid that there was a card in the mailbox that I have to come to the Gestapo. You know, everybody was afraid of everything. We had to leave our home where we lived. We lived in the West End. No Jews. Where you had a Jewish wife, you were not allowed to live in the West End. We found somebody who belonged to the sector--what do you call it here I don't know any more.

FS: It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.

EJ: And she took us. We got two rooms.

FS: And there you got two rooms?

EJ: We got two rooms. I told you my husband got his license taken away, as I told you.

FS: But he was able to work?

EJ: Yes.

FS: And he got paid?

EJ: He got paid because this man belonged to a lodge but not with Jewish. That was not Jew. And he knew my husband. When his manager was in the army and he was glad to get somebody. My husband was introduced to him from a friend, and he got this position of wholesale coal business out the Main under a Kohlenlager. I don't know what you would call it here.

FS: Wholesale coal business.

EJ: Yes.

FS: Now were you able to buy sufficient food for your needs?

EJ: I had my cards for a Jew. My husband had his cards for him.

FS: For a German citizen.

EJ: So he could buy, but he didn't need these. My husband could, you know, he'd give somebody coal who came. The people were rationed. And we could get from the butcher and everything. And I had some from our ladies where I knew I could trust them and they need it badly. I could very often assist people because we didn't need it all, what we could get.

FS: Did you get German newspapers?

EJ: Yes. We had our radio and everything. But when the *Fliegerangriff* [air raid] came, then my husband--I was not allowed to go in the *Luftschutzkeller* [air raid shelter] in the house because I was afraid I was a Jew.

FS: So you stayed in your apartment?

EJ: We stayed in our apartment. My husband heard the *Auslandsender* [foreign radio station]. This was the only time we could hear it because nobody was in the house.

FS: Now when they had these air attacks on Frankfurt...

EJ: The first was in October...

FS: No, no, no. When they had these air attacks in Frankfurt, aside from having fear, did it give you any satisfaction that the Germans were suffering?

EJ: Yes. It gave me the satisfaction. Then the people--it was whole streets was then in flames. And the people had in a bed sheet the whole thing what they could get out of the burning house. And I thought this is the way my people went away. I saw in Frankfurt so often when the

people had to leave to the concentrate camp. But not like you with a suitcase. They were allowed only to pack in a bed sheet what they could take.

FS: What they could carry?

EJ: And so I saw the people. On the one hand I was afraid that it could be, what shall I say, *mein lieber Gott hat mich* God hid me here in the house. I cannot go for a place to be safe. And on the other hand, I was thinking He could this whole Frankfurt take away.

FS: How often would you say did you have air attacks, once a week, once a month?

EJ: Sometimes in daytime two, three times and at night. In the morning I had to go to work. We had to walk. There was no--the whole street, you can just not think what this was. The street was open with holes like houses in. No street car could go, no bus. And we had to come to work, the Jewish people. Otherwise the Gestapo would come to get us. We had to walk two hours to come to this place and two hours home. What could we work much? It was just to punish us to come.

FS: And this lasted until the end of the war?

EJ: I was then away. I had to go--I wasn't here. I was in Bad Homburg. But Bad Homburg never was except 17 miles away. But constantly they came to Frankfurt. They bombed the *Hauptbahnhof* [main railroad station]. And this was a main line maybe to the Rhine where they put ammunition. And sometimes they got the whole train with ammunition.

IR: Ammunition?

EJ: Yes. You cannot think what we heard, this explosion from this ammunition. This was the main thing, to cut them away [unclear] what they called.

FS: Did you stay in in Frankfurt until the war was over?

EJ: No, I was in Bad Homburg. Because I should come away...

FS: Why did you leave Frankfurt?

EJ: I had to. I should come to Theresienstadt. All Jewish women should come. Everybody first they said the women who had children, I didn't have children, they could stay; who had children who were not Jewish. They would stay. We all worked together, who had children, who had no children. And at this time you could find out what we had for nice Jewish people. We were maybe 150 women who worked there. They were sitting one this machine, two there, and they said, "Oh, we never have to go away. We have children but the other ones pretty soon will be called away." Can you imagine? People were in the same boat like you.

FS: And were any of the women sent away?

EJ: We were only maybe ten who got connections with the Gestapo. My husband got through a friend who was with him in the army who had [unclear]. The other man--I remember his name, his name was Scholl--he got sick. He was released from the army.

(End of Side 1)

Tape four, side two:

FS: Why did you leave a note? You were told to leave a note? A Gestapo agent told you leave a note.

EJ: Leave a note, for him, that he is safe. Nothing that nobody would think, he had given me--what shall I say, advice. Then he had to come to pick me up normally.

FS: OK, now you left a note?

EJ: I left a note.

FS: What did the note say?

EJ: I take my, I go away and I will take my life. I don't want to go to concentration camp. In between I had a note from the Gestapo that I had to go. Because we all there had to go [unclear].

FS: And of the 600 women, how many went to the concentration camp?

EJ: They all--we were maybe ten who could pay the Gestapo. And on this day...

FS: In other words, ten were able to bribe their way out.

EJ: Yes, yes, yes.

IR: And the other ones, the whole group went to Theresienstadt.

EJ: They went to Theresienstadt.

FS: Now tell us what happened. You left this note and then what happened?

EJ: I went to, I walked to Bad Homburg. This was 17 miles from Frankfurt.

FS: From Frankfurt.

EJ: And I left from the house like every morning I was going to work.

FS: To work, yes.

EJ: We were the day before released all from work, we were told we have to go to concentration camp.

FS: And then you walked to Bad Homburg?

EJ: I walked to Bad Homburg and I knew where I had to go. My husband had paid. This man was with the S.A., a S.A. man. But he only had in Frankfurt before a restaurant years ago. And he went to the S.A. because otherwise he couldn't have his business. And he sold his business and went and bought a house in Bad Homburg. My husband went to him and he took me, but for money.

IR: And you were hidden in the attic.

EJ: I was hidden in the attic.

IR: For the whole time.

EJ: For the whole time.

FS: When did you, do you remember approximately the month and the year when you came to Bad Homburg?

EJ: It was in '45, the beginning of '45.

FS: The beginning of '45. And then you stayed...

EJ: Until the end, when the *Americaner* [Americans]--in the morning on *Karfreitag* [Good Friday], '45, the army...

FS: The American army. Did you have a room or where did you stay?

EJ: I had a room but a cold room. I had my ski...

IR: Outfit on.

EJ: Outfit on and warm shoes. And a French soldier, what do you say, prisoner of war worked--they were all with my husband. They were, you know, people there were all in the army.

FS: They worked in the coal yard?

EJ: They worked in the coal yard for my man, for my husband. My husband was not allowed. He couldn't come to me because he was afraid of the Gestapo. They'd come constantly in our home looking if I would be there. So my husband could draft these French men. And he brought me my *Lebensmittel*.

FS: Your food.

EJ: Yes.

FS: This was a French prisoner of war?

EJ: Yes, a French prisoner of war. But the war with the French was to end already. But they were in, like in a camp, and had to work and they worked, a lot worked in my husband's place.

FS: Did you have any socializing with the former SA man who hid you?

EJ: No. I never saw him. I never saw him. My husband knew him.

FS: And who else was in the house where you were?

EJ: A couple, this couple. And later they took a lady in from Frankfurt. She worked; she censored the letters and so was all the letter that came, were people not trusted. They were always opened and censored. And she worked there. And somebody must have--she must have, I don't know.

FS: Given information perhaps.

EJ: Something. And she left too. And she came up to these people. She knows these people, and then she was there in this house too.

FS: Did you meet this woman there?

EJ: Yes, later on.

FS: Did you speak to her?

EJ: Yes. She was the same. She couldn't get out anywhere. She disappeared from Frankfurt.

FS: But you were alone.

EJ: In my room.

FS: In your room.

EJ: In my room. And in the evening I went down and cooked something for me.

FS: You could go down?

EJ: Yes. But the wife from this man, I think she was a Nazi but she was afraid she would be sent to the concentration camp if she was to say something. She liked the money what she got from my husband.

FS: What made you think that she was a Nazi?

EJ: It was a terrible way that she acted to me. She didn't let me go at daytime that I could make me a cup of coffee. There was nobody in the house.

FS: Did she speak to you?

EJ: She spoke to me but not much. He was a very nice man. His name was Ruf [phonetic].

FS: Do you know what happened to these people after the war?

EJ: After the war, each man, I could give my thanks back to him because everybody who was in the SA and so on was later--what shall I say...

IR: [unclear]

EJ: No. He was retired. They had their own home. [unclear] No. Was called, their rehabilitation. If they had done something, then he said, "I hid Mrs. Jaeckel." And I gave him, what shall I say, a rehabilitation letter. I could do it. I didn't say I did it for money. I was glad he saved my life.

FS: That he hid you.

EJ: Yes.

FS: So when the war was over you went back to Frankfurt?

EJ: I couldn't. Before the Americaner came, they destroyed all the bridges in Frankfurt.

FS: The Germans did?

EJ: Yes. And nobody could go. My husband was, our home was across the bridge. Nobody could come. It was maybe two weeks until they made, you know...

FS: A temporary bridge.

EJ: Then he came with a bicycle and he picked me up.

FS: Did you come to America together?

IR: No.

EJ: I was divorced.

IR: I came after the war in '47.

EJ: No. I came in '57. I was divorced in '50 from my husband.

FS: In 1950?

EJ: About a girl from--the mother was Jewish and the father was gentile. And a mother who was three years in Auschwitz and came home was one of these who had to do the favors for--what you call--what you were asking before. I heard it from other people, from some who came back, who had the same reason who came back.

FS: This broke up your marriage.

EJ: And they had a daughter. She was 16. And the mother and the daughter--my husband was a good looking man. And you know, what shall I say. I had lost everything. Can

you imagine. I was not to go out with my husband. My husband was later, the war was over, he could start his business again. But I was not up to this.

IR: So the mother and the young daughter, they snatched her husband away.

EJ: They snatched my husband away.

FS: How old was your husband then?

EJ: My husband was as old as the girl's father. With this girl's father.

FS: It's very sad.

EJ: Can you imagine. I was living there without anything. We had a divorce without anything. I said I want to give you back, you kept me alive. But here I got a fair share you know. What shall I say? At this moment I knew I wanted to go away. I didn't want a monthly...

FS: Stipend.

EJ: I wanted a whole sum and I had a Jewish lawyer.

FS: Thank you very, very much, ladies. There isn't much I can say. There isn't much I can add to what you've told me.

IR: You look so much younger. Were you here in America?

FS: I came to America in 1939. In February of '39. My brother came over in November of '38.

IR: Are you a relative of Dr. Stamm?

FS: Yes, he sent the papers for us. My one sister was killed in a concentration--she was in the Warsaw ghetto with my mother. My father had a heart attack just before they were deported. My mother was a very gentle woman. She wasn't a sickly person but not a very strong woman. I'm convinced today that my mother never got to the to the gas chamber. She probably starved to death on some corner in Warsaw. God only knows, one is as bad as the other. And my little sister was born in 1921. She stayed with my mother and she was also in the Warsaw ghetto but we don't know what happened to her. My brother who had come over was one of the first soldiers drafted in Philadelphia. And the last time I saw him was on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941. On December the 8th he was shipped to Iceland with the American infantry forces or engineers. I've forgotten now. And from there he was sent to England two years later and then to France. He was three weeks in France. He was killed in Lorraine. And I...

EJ: In the war?

FS: In the war. I volunteered for the American army and I was put into the air force. I went to China. I was very [unclear] in the United States and I went to China. And then when the war was over in the Pacific I wanted to go to Shanghai. My outfit was then shipped to Shanghai and I wanted to go to Shanghai but my commander--there was a ruling from the Pentagon that all men who had lost two or more members of their family during and because of the war were to be shipped home and released, and he wouldn't ship me to Shanghai. So I came home and picked up the pieces. And my sister was a kindergartener in Ulm in a Kinderheim. And she was fortunate enough, she took the--you may remember there were 8,000 German Jewish children shipped to England just before the war.

EJ: Yes.

FS: And she was one of the people who took the transport from Germany to England.

[German -- Multiple Exchange]

FS: Thank you very much, ladies.