

Interviewee:	<u>LEIFER</u> , Judith	Date:	January 17, 1983
Interviewer:	Elizabeth Geggel		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Audio Record #:	GC00294	Libr. Catlg. #:	D 810.J4 G7 no. 31
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Judith Leifer, nee Loeb, was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in 1932. Her father was a textiles salesman. She shares her childhood memories of life in pre-war Bratislava. She describes a large Jewish community, Zionist organizations, relations between Jews and Gentiles, her Orthodox upbringing and attending a Hebrew Zionist Kindergarten. When the Nazis came to power, her family, together with all Jews, moved into the Jewish ghetto. Her extended family found shelter in her great-uncle's house. She describes life under Nazi occupation: no connection with the outside world, schools closings, children were unsupervised, and they lived in constant fear of being deported to concentration camps.

Judith's father's international business connections and her uncle's position as head of the Jewish Community in Slovakia was the reason this family was able to survive. Judith gives a detailed account of the extremely perilous and complicated escape she and her family managed separately from Bratislava—with the help of Jewish friends—and the subsequent journey to Palestine. While waiting in Budapest for her parents and sibling to arrive, Judith was placed in a Budapest refugee camp. She describes her family's flight from Budapest on the last transport to Turkey permitted by Germans, arranged and financed by the Joint Distribution Committee. She details their arrival in Istanbul and assistance from the Jewish Agency. They entered Palestine on March 17, 1944 with immigration certificates for Palestine secured by her uncle and moved in with cousins in Haifa.

Judith eventually moved to the U.S. and had two children¹. Most of her extended family perished during the Holocaust. She tells a touching story about her grandmother, Emma Beck, who survived Theresienstadt and made a new life for herself. Judith talks at length about how refugees and displaced persons were helped by the Jewish and American Joint and H.I.A.S after the war.

Collateral Material available through the Gratz College Tuttleman Library include:

Judith's grandmother's memoir: journal written in German by Emma Benedict Beck (1876-1973), after her release from Theresienstadt during her later years in the U.S. Donated by granddaughter Judith Leifer.

Photocopy of handwritten memoir of Emma Beck from 1938-1945. First pages translated by Lotte Marcus into English. Donated by granddaughter Judith Leifer.

"Vordalung" original for Emma Beck from Theresienstadt, Original bank receipt from Theresienstadt, 17 June 1943. Donated by Judith Leifer, Annenberg Research Institute.

¹From the interviewer's notes, it appears that Judith spent some time in England after living in Palestine. Her testimony does not go into detail regarding this.

Interviewee: LEIFER, Judith Date: January 17, 1983

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Holocaust Jewish (1939 - 1945) Personal narrative, female
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) - Czechoslovakia
Czechoslovakia - History - 1938 - 1945
World War 1939-1945 - Personal Narratives- Jewish
Bratislava, Czechoslovakia
Jewish Ghettos - Slovakia
Rescue - Palestine
American Joint Distribution Committee
Refugee aid organizations