

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Drejer, Miriam

Date of interview: 6/15/1999

Summary: Lisbeth Kaufman was born on May 26, 1923 in Vienna, Austria to Alfred Kaufmann, a jeweler and radio-store owner and Ella Politzer. She later changed her name to Miriam Lisbet-Kaufman. Before the war, Miriam lived a privileged life. Her family belonged to the upper class and attended synagogue two times each week as a social function. When the Christian socialists came into power in 1933, the first signs of anti-Semitism became known in Vienna. By 1935, Jews could not fill state positions or be teachers. By 1938, Jews could not sit on public benches, and Vienna was under Nazi rule. Miriam was taken to the Gestapo for sitting on a bench. After seeing the movie, "I Accuse" in 1934, she joined a Zionist youth group.

Miriam immigrated to Israel in 1938 and her brother Kurt joined her in 1939. Miriam married a man from the English Army and had two children. Miriam's father was sent to Dachau, but he had a visa that allowed him to go to Shanghai. Miriam's mother stayed to take care of her grandmother and was sent to Minske, where she died. Miriam reconnected with her father in 1945, which led her to leave Israel and take her two children to the United States where she remarried.