

Kindertransport Association Oral History Project
REUNION SECOND MORNING
June 16, 1999

KEY:

- [brackets] describe action in the interview
- *Italics* indicates a word in a foreign language, spelled correctly
- {italics in bracket} indicates a word in a foreign language that may be incorrect
- {brackets} indicate indecipherable words

[99_ROK_A_4_Reunion2ndMorning_6_16_99]

Chairwoman: –in Berlin in the 1920s and 30s. He moved to Amsterdam in 1933, taking the genesis of his collection with him, and then was forced to Amsterdam again in 1939, to go to London. Since then, the library has grown and grown, and {he} has been here ever since. As many of you will be celebrating your 60th anniversary in your adopted country, so the Wiener Library celebrates its 60th anniversary this year as well, and we have a whole range of educational programs to celebrate that fact.

I also teach at the University of Southampton, where there is a marvelous collection established by a contemporary of Alfred Wiener but an Anglican Christian by the name of James Parkes, who I'm sure some of you have heard of.

Woman: He wrote a book about anti-Semitism?

Chairwoman: He did. He wrote several books about anti-Semitism, and in fact was a pioneer in this field. He was a pioneer in pointing to the Christian roots of anti-Semitism, as a clergyman himself.

What I thought I would do this morning is just– I have with me about half an hour's worth of notes. I just thought I would go through them with you, share your experiences of, in this case, non-Jews who helped in the rescue operation.

Another couple of disclaimers. One is that I'm not an expert in this field. I was asked to give this presentation. I have no idea why. My own work, in fact, is on Bergen-Belsen and the liberation of that camp, and on British reactions to that, and British reactions to the Holocaust in general. So I'm slightly wary here that I'm sure you will know much more about this than I do. But you must share that with me at the end.

And I just want to ask if anyone would object if I taped the discussion? The conference organizers have asked that I present not only what I say but also what you say back to me, as a kind of document which then will be {unintelligible} to

all the participants eventually, when it's produced as a whole book, a whole reflection of the conference. So if you don't mind, I would like to tape that, if that's okay. (I'll sit down, if you don't mind. Okay.)

I should also say that what I've got to say today is largely based on Britain and British experience. And so I apologize again to those of you who are from overseas and have experience of non-Jews who were active in rescuing in other countries, perhaps in Canada or Australia. Again, I welcome your comments and your experiences in the second half.

I just want to begin with a few introductory remarks, setting the context. And again I'm sure I'm not telling you anything you don't know already, but just to give the background to what we're talking about. We know, don't we, that between 1933 and 1939, approximately 400,000 refugees (so between 350,000 and 400,000 refugees) fled from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia—the vast majority of them being Jewish, escaping institutionalized Nazi anti-Semitism, implemented first in Germany. Following the *Anschluss* and the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the Reich in October 1938, and the destruction of the Second Czech Republic on the 16th of March 1939, the {expulsion} of some 16,000 Poles from Germany, and then the disaster of Kristallnacht, in succession, led, as we might have imagined, to a sharp rise in the numbers of refugees in the Third Reich seeking asylum.

Many individuals in Britain responded to the plight of refugees fleeing the Third Reich, both Jewish and non-Jewish people. Voluntary committees were established in an effort to aid refugees with both immediate relief, perhaps in the form of small grants and material aid, and also with longer-term help, providing placement on foreign training schemes, for example, or for other emigration arrangements. Much of this aid was carried out on tight budgets, as almost all the organizations working in Britain were self-funding and were without access to government finance.

Obviously, volunteers or those who got involved in this movement were driven by a combination of motivations. Perhaps we can discuss these as well. Undoubtedly, humanitarian considerations were at the fore; also political or ideological beliefs, religious faith, and perhaps also some had missionary intentions. Most were driven by a desire to help co-religionists, although not exclusively, and aimed their efforts at specific groups and subgroups of refugees.

Britain became, in the months before September 1939, the most important haven for those fleeing Nazi oppression. Its alien entry procedures were greatly eased, and rescue schemes increased, and new rescue schemes were created at a point when other countries were becoming more restrictionist. I would say that the obvious comparison is between Britain and France; their refugee policies almost move in complete opposite directions. More refugees were able to go to France in

the early thirties, and places were very much restricted towards the end of the thirties; and the opposite was true of the British situation. Hence then, in the six years before World War II, nearly 60,000 refugees were admitted to Britain. Sixty thousand. Four-fifths of that 60,000 entered in the period between October 1938 and September 1939, just in the space of 11 months.

The first response to the refugee crisis in Britain, as we know, came mainly from the Jewish community, whose leaders undertook to support refugees from Nazi oppression and guaranteed (and this is important) that they would not become a charge on the public purse. The leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community (including people like Leonard Montefiore, Otto Schiff, for example), the British government are guaranteed that as long as people were allowed to come to Britain, the Anglo-Jewish community would make sure that the British government would never have to support them. This led to the creation of several committees. Most notable, under the control of Otto Schiff, was the Central British Fund for German Jewry, otherwise known as the CBF, and its fellow case-working organization, the Jewish Refugee Committee, the JRC. Their efforts were augmented by other active non-Jewish-oriented groups. For example, the Academic Assistant Council, a nonsectarian committee, helped refugee academics, planned their placements in Britain and overseas. The International Solidarity Fund of the Labour Party in the UK and the Trade Union Council were also active in the early stages of the refugee movement, engaging in relief work on behalf of those forced to flee, largely for political reasons. The Society of Friends (the Quakers) shared with the Jewish organizations the main burden of the work for German-speaking refugees in Britain. Its German Emergency Committees, with offices in Paris and Prague and all over Germany, was also established in 1933 for sending {unintelligible} to CBF, and both raised funds and disbursed them on behalf of refugees. In addition, the Society of Friends frequently joined the Jewish bodies in negotiations with the British Home Office and other government departments, on other questions affecting refugees in Britain.

Otto Schiff had a very important personal relationship with the Home Office Minister at the time, and various histories have been written on that particular relationship and how important it was in getting more refugees into Britain. Some argue that it was only because he had this very good relationship with the minister that so many were admitted, and others disagree and say that in fact Otto Schiff could have perhaps done more.

Responses by the established Church and other Christian denominations in Britain were, as one historian has surmised, "more haphazard and occasional" (in quotes). High-ranking Anglican clergy and other church leaders, on an individual basis, did join in public protests and spoke out passionately on the general plight of the refugees. For the most part, however, the leaders of the denominations wanted to maintain friendly relations with Germany and prevent war in Europe at a time of growing political tension. As a result, outspoken criticism against the anti-Jewish

specificity of Nazi persecution was muted. Those clergy and laity who championed the cause of refugees, Jewish or non-Jewish, as an example of Christian aid to the neighbor in need, often found it difficult to engage the sympathies of their respective colleagues and coreligionists at either denominational or collective levels. The majority of Christian leaders empathized more and engaged more in the unfolding German church struggle, rather than with the larger number of Germans who had already lost the struggle to retain political and civil rights. Furthermore, as the various denominational leaders did not develop an unambiguous theological stance on this issue, then no refugee policy emerged among the established church leaders, and thus no corresponding organizational machinery was created to support relief and rescue. So individual members of the Church in this country were active on a personal level, but organizationally I think the response was rather disappointing.

(Do you have any spare chairs?)

Whilst it became increasingly clear from September 1935 that Nazi racial policies made professing Christians (many of whom had Jewish ancestry) as much a target for persecution as German Jews, action for refugees remained limited still nevertheless. The Bishop of Chichester, George Bell (quite important figure in this country in the Christian world), made a number of attempts to organize aid for these so-called “non-Aryan refugees.” This was the terminology that Bell used, unconsciously perhaps adopting Nazi terminology to describe Christians who had been born Jewish, Jewish people who had been baptized, and labeled them “non-Aryan refugees” as opposed to Jewish refugees. One such example was in 1936, when an appeal to raise £25,000—which was a reasonable money in those days, but if you think that the Jewish community at the same time was raising £1,000,000 for the Palestine appeal, then you’d think that the much bigger Christian community might not find very much difficulty in raising £25,000 in 1936, just a year after they had been reading about the passing of the Nuremberg laws in the newspapers. In fact, the appeal failed to garner one-third of that amount, and was deemed (quote) “a humiliating failure” (unquote) by the self-same James Parkes, radical Anglican clergyman and campaigner for refugees.

The creation of the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany in October 1938, when things were getting very critical in Germany, did seek to change the situation, but did limit its remit to helping these non-Aryan Christian refugees, rather than the refugee per se. This was based on the assumption that the resources of the Jewish community were sufficient to cope with Jewish refugees, and Christians would be more interested in aiding their own coreligionists. There was also the recognition by the Council’s founders that interest in any group of refugees, including Christian refugees, remained the province of a limited number of Christian clergy and laity. The plight of refugees was not seen as a major Christian concern in the 1930s. Christian responses in Britain to Jewish and non-Jewish refugees before 1939 therefore remained the work of individuals, who

tried hard to bring the weight of their respective denominational machinery into action, but obviously could not do very much on an individual level.

Just as a breakdown of what each of the organizations saw as their remit, I'll just run through it very quickly. A Catholic Aid Committee aided only fellow refugee Catholics, but not "political" (their word, i.e. socialist or Communist) Catholic refugees, which is quite interesting. So the British Catholic Aid Committee was very conservative and it would not be seen as being involved in politics. Straightforward Catholic refugees who wanted to come to England, it would help. The Thomas Mann Committee funded intellectuals and writers. The Save the Children Fund and the Inter-Aide Committee and the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany directed its relief efforts to all refugee children. They were nonsectarian. The Academic Assistance Council concentrated on refugee academics, as you would imagine, again across ethnic and religious divides. The British Quakers aided their coreligionists, {unmarried} Christians, pacifists and politicals, and those in mixed-faith relationships, marriages between Christians and Jews, as did the Unitarian Refugee Relief Committee but on a much smaller scale. The International Solidarity Fund and the International Peace Council aided their fellow activists only. And the Jewish Refugee Committee finally and the Central British Fund also aided their coreligionists as well as those in the same multi-faith marriages and relationships.

As I hinted earlier, the refugee situation in Britain changed dramatically in late 1938-39, particularly as a response to the November pogrom in Germany and Austria. Just a few months before, in summer of 1938, in July, at the Evian Conference called by Roosevelt to discuss the pending or increasing refugee crisis in Europe, the government's representative at the Evian Conference, Lord Winterton, was reassured that Roosevelt did not expect any significant change of policy from those attending. So this conference was basically called {as talking shop}. Even the convener, the President of the United States, really didn't want to rock the boat. Winterton, attempting to preserve the image of Britain as a tolerant and decent country, explained that its (quote) "traditional policy of granting asylum could now only be applied within narrow limits." So this is post-Anschluss, post occupation of Czechoslovakia and the Sudetenland. "Traditional policy of granting asylum could now only be applied within narrow limits."

Yet the widespread revulsion of the Kristallnacht pogrom in particular was an opportunity for many pressure groups to call for a more generous refugee policy in this country. After Evian, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had stated that on the government's behalf, (quote) "it is largely public opinion which must be the determining factor" (unquote) in deciding how new refugees would enter. So a high-up government official basically handed over public feeling as a determining factor.

In the House of Commons debate on refugees, called at the end of November 1938, after Kristallnacht, it was remarked that (quote) “Since then,” (i.e. since the Duchy of Lancaster made that remark), “Since then, recent events have caused public opinion to move forward positively with a leap.” So in fact, lobbying did work. And as a result, immigration procedures were relaxed, especially in granting domestic permits. And a new scheme came into operation that we’re concerned with at this conference, the Refugee Children’s Movement. This was the specific organization set up in 1938 to bring the Kindertransport to Britain. Campaigners locally and nationally were empowered by the more sympathetic response of the British government and public, becoming directly involved at the time of {protest} crisis.

I said earlier that most of the refugee organizations of Britain have no government finance. There is one exception to that, as I’m sure you know. In a unique gesture after the Munich Agreement, the British government, perhaps as guilt money, gave the Czechoslovakia government £10 million in order to help with humanitarian issues. But some of that money was used to set up the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia. And later that became Czech Refugee Trust Fund. And so sections of the Czech Jewish population were able to be assisted by actual British government money.

There were, of course, many hundreds of individuals, non-Jews, working abroad or at home in an official or an unofficial capacity of helping refugees, and specifically involved in the Kindertransport. And I’m only able to skim over those vast numbers of people in this very brief paper. But I’d like to break down groups that I talk about into three. Perhaps I’ll try to fit all three groups in: the first groups, called the lobbyists, an important non-Jewish voice in Britain; the second are called actually refugee workers; and then the third group were people who actually received people into their homes, obviously the mass of the people involved in this operation, and perhaps the ones that are least recorded in history books and the ones that are least acknowledged in this whole process.

First the lobbyists. I just want to cover them very, very briefly, but I think it’s important not to leave them out altogether. These people, who are not necessarily active on a grassroots level in receiving Kindertransports, but it was their hard work, persistence of argument and compassion, and their campaigning at a public level in the years between 1933 and 1939, which paved the way for the widespread acceptance of refugees in this country after 1938. Here I’m thinking of figures such as the MPs Eleanor Rathbone, Harold Nicholson, Josiah Wedgwood, the publisher Victor Gollancz, the clergyman James Parkes, and intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell. Bertrand Russell, for example, argued consistently that we need to bring pressure upon our government to be hospitable to refugees, and not to be too niggardly in granting them permission to earn a living amongst us. And that was really the message of all of those campaigners. The involvement and influence of some of these activists in Britain was made possible by their access to privileged society, undoubtedly: government circles,

the media, and the intelligentsia. Nevertheless, they chose to bond themselves to the fate of people who by nationality, ethnicity, and religion had no connection other than a common humanity. I think we need to remember the role of their {unintelligible} in forming public opinion.

Within Christian circles, the Bishop of Durham, Herbert Hensley Henson, was a consistently outspoken critic of Nazi anti-Semitism and played some part in neutralizing the voice of pro-German apologists such as Bishop Headlam, for example, of Gloucester. Also Reverend Henry Carter was {unintelligible} amongst the Methodist congregation. He was the chairman of the Christian Council for Refugees in this country. And he also, amongst this lobbying group, continually sought to raise the profile of refugees and the refugee movement.

The second category I mentioned is refugee workers, and perhaps this is one of the most admirable categories. It encompasses a wide range of people, from Lord Gorell to Nicholas Winton, two names that {unintelligible}. The movement for the care of children from Germany, which became this Refugee Children's Movement that I referred to, was founded in 1938, as we mentioned. Originators of the Refugee Children's Movement were Norman Bentwich, who had been with the United Nations Commission for Refugees, also a famous historian, particularly historian of the Anglo-Jewish community, and a great supporter of Palestine and {unintelligible} education. So he was a founder member, along with his wife, who was very involved in social work issues. And together with Sir Wyndham Deedes, who became co-chair of the Children's Refugee Movement, with Viscount Samuel and representatives from the Quakers (the Society of Friends).

In December 1938, following the establishment of this committee, the former Prime Minister, obviously a well respected figure, former Prime Minister Lord Baldwin made a radio broadcast in 1938, saying that on behalf of refugees—and this was a lot more successful than the Christian appeal—raising £500,000 (a quarter of a million pounds), half of which was to be placed directly at the disposal of the Refugee Children's Movement. In February 1939, Lord Gorell, himself a Christian, became chair of the movement, representing the Church of England, and working with a small committee made up of representatives from the Jewish community, Catholics, and {nonconformists}. On a day-to-day basis, many non-Jews worked in the central office at Bloomsbury House, supporting the {unintelligible} work of the main case workers of Bloomsbury House, including {Elaine Brody} and {unintelligible}.

In response to this national initiative, the creation of this committee, some 166 local committees were set up in Britain, most formed spontaneously in a response to the crisis. Immediate steps were made to pull them together, and these local groups were formed into 12 regional committees based around large settlements, cities in the UK, and reporting to the central organization. Practically all these

regional committees had non-Jewish secretaries (or as we call them today, directors)—so you can see it was a multi-faith operation—such as Elizabeth {unintelligible} in the Cambridge region, or Mr. {unintelligible} Gibson was involved, working in the west country around Bristol. These individuals tirelessly worked to raise money and raise the profile of the campaign, whilst also seeking to gain guarantees and guardians and homes for children coming over from the continent, and of course working to facilitate their arrival as well.

The Christadelphians were just one group who responded generously to this call, for example, funding a home (this is just a minuscule example of what they did) for boys in a town in the East Midlands, Rugby, which became a social center for the wider community of children at weekends; and also an organization called Elpis Lodge in Birmingham, which was managed by the Birmingham Jewish community but entirely funded by the Christadelphians, and became home to 48 boys from Germany-Austria in his short life.

Some individuals also worked outside of the committee system. For example, {Greta Becker}, who acted independently. She was just so moved by the situation she as reading about in Europe that she started to run a house which was donated to her by Jesus College, Cambridge, and she ran a house there for 17 German teenagers. She was sort of a left-wing journalist. She was German-speaking but non-Jewish. And yet she dedicated many years of her life to running this place, organizing education for these boys, and seeking jobs in the university for others who were older.

Just as important as the work at home, of course, arranging reception for the children, was the work abroad which helped facilitate the flight from the continent. Many of you will be familiar with the name Frank Foley, the British Passport Control Officer in Berlin before the war, who's become a celebrated name in Britain in the past few years, not least because of his rather exotic history of using his position at the British Passport Control Office in Berlin as a cover, as a role as an MI6 head of station. So he was a British spy operating under the guise of a British Passport Control officer. But he's been labeled as the man who perhaps did more than anyone within the British Civil Service to help Jews escape from Germany. Quite a remarkable character. Although he was not covered by diplomatic immunity himself, he took tremendous personal risks on behalf of thousands of Jews. Immediately after Kristallnacht, he took Jews into his home, actually into his own private residence, and also made trips to concentration camps in person when visas for people who were recently interned arrived. So when visas would arrive from the British Home Office and the person he discovered had just been sent to a camp, he would go to the camp personally and lobby for that person to be released and allowed to travel. In response to the huge queues who formed outside the Passport Control Office, he wrote strongly worded cables to the Palestine Commissioner of Immigration, pleading for additional {break}, visa certificates, and issued many Home Office letters guaranteeing Jews temporary asylum in Britain. And he did this without the strict authority of the

British Home Office. So he was acting on a humanitarian level, really making up official documents, it has to be said, and often offering visas to these desperate people without a supporting guarantee. In the words of Benno Cohen, co-chairman of the Zionist organization in Berlin at the time, (quote) “Before all else, Foley was humane. In those dark days in Germany, he told us he was acting as a Christian, and that he wanted to show us how little the ‘Christians’ who were then in power in Germany had to do with real Christianity.”

Foley, however, did not work specifically with Kinder, although he dealt with some children. Another individual who did, and whose name has also become familiar through the media in this country (in Britain) over the last few years, was Nicholas Winton. (I don’t know if {unintelligible}. He was here yesterday. I saw him yesterday.) Then a young stockbroker, he was one of those “ordinary” people who was {meant} to become involved in a refugee relief effort. He allied himself with the British Committee for Refugees for Czechoslovakia, and traveled to Prague independently. Not empowered by any government, he worked closely with the Quakers and other volunteers in the committees in Prague, and gathered together a list of children able to make the journey to Britain, also organizing the relevant paperwork. The next step was then to return to London and to raise money and support in London and across the country to receive the children. So he was working at both ends. What a remarkable achievement for a single individual. He collected guarantees, in association again with the Society of Friends and Unitarians, and allowed the safe passage of over 100 children to this country.

Meanwhile, another volunteer had arrived in Prague, this time a teacher, perhaps known to you as {Gerda Mayer}. Now, {unintelligible} Gerda Mayer is here at the conference, and she’s trying to get this man, Trevor Chadwick, recognized by Yad Vashem (I’m not sure how her case is going) as a Righteous Gentile, but perhaps {unintelligible} to hear some time today. Trevor Chadwick was a close colleague of Winton, and indeed adopted two Czech children himself, and then also met the {unintelligible} to see what he could do. Again just an ordinary teacher in Britain. He met Winton, offered his services {unintelligible}. But when Winton returned to England, Chadwick was left behind in the Prague office, and according to Winton, deserves all praise for the work he did. Chadwick was working in Prague, by all accounts, even after the German occupation of the 15th of March 1939. And it seems it was he who organized the actual trains {that} left Prague with the children on board. Like Foley, he was impatient often with the slow bureaucracy of the Home Office. And when essential documents failed to arrive from the Home Office in time, to allow the trains to leave on schedule, he again simply manufactured documents. The transports were effectively then illegal. The children’s transports that left Czechoslovakia under this informal, independent scheme were effectively, in British eyes, illegal. But he felt sure that the authorities in Britain wouldn’t have the heart to turn these children away, so he took a risk. And indeed the transports were allowed to land.

Another example of a Christian individual who helped with refugee relief efforts abroad was a Unitarian minister, Herbert John McLachlan, who is still alive, retired and living in Sheffield. We know about his contribution because he kept a diary of his time. He spent a whole month in Prague, working on behalf of the Unitarians, who had an office there, and who again worked closely with the Quakers to find children and refugees, to register them and find documents are them.

And I stress to you just how important these local family papers really are, for us to understand what was happening on a local, small level in Britain and abroad at that time. If you know people who kept diaries at that time, I must ask you to try and persuade them of how important historical documents they are, and how they should be looked after and perhaps eventually donated to an organization that will look after them forever and a day, whether it be the United States {unintelligible} in Washington or something like the Wiener Library. So we ultimately pieced together this Unitarian Church action in Prague because of this man's personal diary.

And then finally the third category {unintelligible}. I'll be very brief. What is there to say? You will be aware of these people, who often came from humble backgrounds, sometimes more well off. {unintelligible} was telling us yesterday about his family's response to the refugee crisis. That was repeated across many, many families, and even in those families where {unintelligible} much more scarce. I'll skip {unintelligible}.

I just wanted to share one story with you. I was reading recently the memoirs of {Elizabeth Leicht}, who gained a place on a Kindertransport to Holland, and later was able to rejoin her mother, fortunately, who got a domestic job in Britain, in fact was working at Ham House (for those of you who come from this country), the big house near Richmond in Surrey. Her 17-year-old brother, {Pieter}, was also eligible for a Kindertransport directly from his home town to London, even though he'd actually managed to secure a job for himself. He'd been looking through *The Times* occupation ads (they received *The Times* in Germany) and had found a job as a chef, even though he had absolutely no experience as a chef whatsoever, and quickly looked up on a cooking course. He was only 17. So on the one hand he was looking for a job; on the other, he just managed to fit into the age limit for Kindertransport.

And on a lighter note, I just wanted to share what his sister wrote in her memoir about him: He had managed to secure a job for himself through *The Times* as a chef, but he was no cook. Perhaps {unintelligible} crash course. In the application, he gave details of his education. And as the ad had included laconically "{auger} cooker," something of a mystery to us (she adds), he added for good measure after his CV, "I am also an auger cooker," [laughter] which I thought was just wonderful. It sums up the cross purposes. For those of you who

are not from this country and are not {unintelligible} auger cooker is, it's a special cooking range. They were very much {unintelligible} in the twenties and thirties, large cooking ranges found in big houses. It's a type of oven, an auger. So he described himself, trying to make sure he got this job, as an auger cooker. Indeed. And lasted about three months, by all accounts.

Similarly, she tells us in her memoir, her mother had no clue what to make of an instruction from the lady of the house (because her mother was a domestic worker, cooking), no clue what to make of the instruction that the custard was not to be made with birds, [laughter] (Birds, brand name of custard). These are the kinds of difficulties that children and adults were facing, just on a lighter note.

I just want to say, on a more somber note (and I don't want to expand on this but {unintelligible}), it's taken many years to recognize, I think, that a significant minority of those who took in children in this country and elsewhere were actually highly inappropriate to do so. And we know the treatment of children varied immensely. On the one extreme, there were those providing unconditional love and support, alongside sensitivities to the specific psychological and spiritual needs of these children. And then of course we know on the other side, unfortunately, those of you who were listening to {Susie Bechhofer} yesterday will perhaps—I wasn't there but I've heard her speak before—{will be aware} of her own sexual and physical abuse. And many domestic workers and refugees have given testimony to feeling economically exploited by the {positioning} as well.

Indeed as early as 1944, the Refugee Children's Movement, in their first annual report, admitted that the Movement had been (quote) "imperfect in many aspects," but went on to say, "But without it, these children must have suffered death. Compromises were made in order to expedite the arrival of as many children as possible before the outbreak of hostilities." But I think there is a balance in the debate there. And I think the major debate on this rather negative issue was largely around the religious position, wasn't it, I think. Particularly, the Chief Rabbi in this country was very upset at a campaign against the Children's Refugee Movement for allowing Jewish children to go to proselytizing Christian families, and so that they were lost to the community. And indeed that's Susie Bechhofer's experience there again.

I'm going to finish there. I guess that some of you people who've come in have come for a session that starts at eleven.

Woman: {unintelligible} ask her more about this. Then the other thing, I don't know, lots of people were {unintelligible} and the other man that actually came to a non-Jewish family. They were very educated people. Actually they had been missionaries in the past in India, but they didn't really try to convert us. I mean,

{unintelligible} they actually tried to help us to keep {unintelligible}. They're very good.

Chairwoman: I think in fact, across the board, that was probably the majority experience.

Man: Lord Gorell interviewed me and I never knew who he was. I was at a very Christian school and they were very worried about me becoming a Christian. I was called into the headmaster's room and interviewed by this man. I knew it was Lord Gorell. I've always remembered his name. Who exactly was he? You were very quick when you mentioned him.

Chairwoman: He was {unintelligible}

Woman: I never met him.

Man: Who was he head of? What was he?

Chairwoman: He was a member of the Church of England. He was an Anglican. But he was in the House of Lords. He was a minister— {unintelligible}

Man: I think Lord Gorell, but he must have been head of some organization. Was he head of the Jewish Refugee Committee?

Chairwoman: No, no, no. The Children's Refugee Movement. He became—

Man: You said he was chair of something.

Chairwoman: Yes. He became chair of Children's Refugee Movement in 1939.

Man: Right, that's all I need. Thanks a lot.

Chairwoman: And continued to run it almost single-handedly thereafter.

Man: Thank you very much.

Man: You mentioned Bishop Bell of Chichester. He's a very interesting character—

Chairwoman: Very complex.

Man: —for other reasons. I understand that he opposed the mass bombing of Dresden. {unintelligible} at that time. He was a pacifist.

Chairwoman: Yes, absolutely.

Woman: And then from the report, the {Bentwich} Report, {as you said}, that Lord Gorell especially addressed this proselytizing, and how very careful they were not to— And they oversee of the thing— One of the Jews overseeing the Quakers— There shouldn't be any— He himself said there'd be enough trouble after the war; as it is, we don't want to put the religious factor in it as well. I think what happened in some cases at least, as the war went on, and there were evacuations and re-evacuations, and {unintelligible} and children went from one place to the other, {unintelligible}. I don't think they meant it to happen. Obviously nobody meant it to happen. But it was just, the whole {unintelligible} of the population from one place to the other, they just got lost.

Woman: Yes, yes.

Woman: The smaller and {unintelligible} you were, the worse it was.

Chairwoman: It was really down to the very local refugee committee members to try and keep an eye on their individual guardians, their individual children. And {they were} inevitably moving around.

Woman: I got my dossier of where I'd been in the hostel. I never realized how they'd been looking exactly that I went off here and I came back there. That was the {unintelligible} idea they ever had. We are Big Brother watching you. [laugh]

Woman: [inaudible]

Man: [inaudible] Very nice. {unintelligible} Palestine. And we had {unintelligible} illegal immigrants. Why did they {unintelligible}? {unintelligible}

Chairwoman: Sorry, I didn't quite follow your question. Were you talking about why was the American—

Man: [inaudible] Palestine.

[many speak at once]

Chairwoman: —that question because obviously the {unintelligible} is long enough as it is. But you're right to raise it. It was obviously a very big problem. And it's a very, very complex situation. I don't think we have time to go into it in detail here. But certainly Foley was working with Zionist groups and with the {unintelligible} organization. He was obviously a British spy, but also was aware of Jewish underground movements, and turned a blind eye to those so-called "illegal" boats

which went into Palestine before the war. He was aware of that. But fair point. I think we'll make this our last question, I'm afraid.

Man: [inaudible] Can you do some sort of maybe semi-quantitative indication of how many studies are actually being made on the basis of the evidence {unintelligible} videotape and so on?

Chairwoman: Right. In terms of the Kinder?

Man: Yes.

Chairwoman: Yes. That's a difficult question. I know from my own experience that lots of the material is being used in education, both in school education and on a higher level, people studying undergraduate degrees, M.A. degrees, and Ph.D.s. People are actually using the information—

Man: Can you give some sort of—

Chairwoman: It's impossible. The major centers in this country, for example, that study this period, this specific subject, are Southampton, Sussex, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and London. There are major centers studying the Holocaust in all of those cities, and all students are really using this material. At a more academic level, at a professional research level, there are studies going on. I have a colleague who's writing on the British Christian reaction to the refugee crisis, {unintelligible}, where colleagues such as Louise London, {unintelligible} Sherman, {unintelligible}, who've written books on this period. But on the Kinder experience in particular, I would say at this stage probably there are three studies that I can think of off the top of my head. But more inevitably will be done. I encourage you all to get your memories down on paper or on tape, and leave your own individual testimony for the future.

Woman: But where {unintelligible}?

Woman: Yad Vashem.

Chairwoman: Very many centers around the world, but if you're stuck, then give me a call. [laughter] Okay, I think we need to {unintelligible}. [applause]

[End of First Session]

Chairman: Well, you're all familiar with the digest, very brief digest of what I'm going to talk about. I have chosen five refugee authors, some of whom had established their reputation before they emigrated, and some of whom were too young to do so. Erich Fried was 17 when he came to this country, and Jakov Lind was, I think, seven when he left Vienna for Holland. So we are looking at a disparate group of refugee writers. In fact, the people that I have chosen to talk about are all of them people who came to the UK. A larger number probably went elsewhere. Certainly the people that I've chosen are not in the front rank of refugee writers. Although Elias Canetti got the Nobel Prize, he's not a household name. The most famous of refugee writers were Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht. They were neither of them Jewish, and both went to the United States. So the people that I have chosen as my topic are not really in the front rank, but nonetheless they're important and interesting figures, and some of them, even though they didn't achieve great fame in the UK, are names to conjure with in the old countries. For instance, Erich Fried is made much of in present day Austria.

Now, the great problem for any writer who emigrated was the problem of language. [recording interrupted]

—started publishing in English. There are those who say that these works of his in his new persona, such as *Scene in Passing*, do not actually represent a genuine form of English but a form of {Emigranto}. Nonetheless, Neumann had quite a reputation. He got very good reviews, and eventually he managed to make quite a career for himself, not only as a writer but also as a publisher. He became well acquainted with the owners of Hutchinson, who in those days were a very large publisher in {the thirties}. And at his prompting, Hutchinson's set up a new branch called Hutchinson's International Authors. And in that capacity, Neumann was actually able to provide a launching pad for a number of immigrant writers.

In the long run, however, Neumann did not choose to remain in this country, and he went back to the continent, spent the rest of his life in Switzerland, reverted of course to writing in German, and also indulged in a pursuit that a lot of writers are given to, that is, taking part in the cut and thrust of politics. And he published articles in newspapers, gave radio interviews, and so on and so forth, and engaged in what one could call political campaigning on the part of the Social Democrat Party of Germany. So Neumann's career was an interesting one whereby he managed somehow to fit into the English environment, but ultimately I think, at the end of the 1950s, decided that this wasn't really the milieu that he felt happiest in, and went back to a German-speaking country and finished his life there.

Meanwhile, he had scored a number of great successes, which I think had an influence on attitudes in this country. I'm thinking in particular of his novel *The Children of Vienna*. In *The Children of Vienna*, which he wrote in English and which appeared in English in around about 1948 or thereabouts, he depicted two themes which were very dear to his heart. One of them was the plight of the

uprooted and orphaned young generation who found themselves eking out a very hazardous life in the ruins of the destroyed cities of Europe. That was one aspect of it. The other one really was an onslaught on the Soviets, on the Soviet regime. He talked about the way in which the hero of *The Children of Vienna* is being interrogated by a Soviet commissar who says to him, “While you were hiding in the sewers, etc., trying to evade the Nazis, why didn’t you make an effort to join the partisans in the forest and actually fight, rifle in hand, against the fascist oppressors?” showing a total lack of understanding and sensitivity to the situation of the hero and the whole Jewish situation as such. So that was, I suppose, Neumann’s classic contribution to the reformulation of public opinion that went on in this country after the Soviet Union had earned enormous kudos for itself by its participation in the war and the defeat of Hitler, and then came these various books that heralded the great dissolution of the intelligentsia {unintelligible} 1984, and I suppose in a somewhat less influential capacity, Neumann’s *Children of Vienna* came to be grouped among those.

Now, my next author, the next person I want to deal with, is Hilde Spiel. She came from a {unintelligible} background in Vienna, and in Vienna it was almost obligatory among the upper Jewish middle class to convert, so she was actually brought up as a Catholic. She went to one of the best schools in Vienna, the so-called *Schwarzwaldschule*, which was launched by a famous Austrian pedagogic pioneer, Eugenie Schwarzwald. And she then went to university and started publishing, or at least writing, while she was still there. So she was a somewhat precocious talent, and managed to get herself quite well known. However, despite her early successes, she did not flourish, or at least did not find the atmosphere in what could be described as clerical Austria after the suppression of the Social Democrats, 1934. Some people have gone so far as to describe the regime set up by Dollfuss and Schuschnigg as clerical fascism. I think that’s slightly overstating the case, but anyway it was an authoritarian regime where the church was very powerful, and liberal ideas were discounted. And she felt that this was not the right milieu for her, so she emigrated. And she eventually came to England even before the Anschluss.

And here, she was eventually plunged into a sort of dilemma. On one hand, she was very Austrian-oriented. On the other hand, she did try to take part in a sort of international cultural life. She became— [interruption] (I think there are one or two seats over there.)

Hilde Spiel felt it was her mission, to some extent, to act as a bridge builder between the European intelligentsia and the English. And so she became International Secretary of the PEN club, and devoted a lot of her time and energy to fostering PEN campaigns and initiatives. Later on, she actually is on record as saying that she regretted having frittered away her energy and her best years in these sort of administrative and political activities; she should have concentrated more on the writing. Nonetheless she was central to a small group of German-speaking émigrés who formed a little colony over here. She married two German

émigré writers in succession, the first one being Mendelssohn, the second one being Flesch Brunningen, both of whom connected with the German-speaking newspaper *Die Zeitung*, which was published here during the war, and also with the German section of the BBC. So she did take quite a part in these émigré literary activities, and she also of course did keep writing. And I would say that her novel *Lisas Zimmer*, which got very good reviews both in English and in German (because it was translated), shows a very moving insight into the uprooted existence of émigré intellectuals, who were too old really to adapt to the new environment and were still pursuing the ideas and vendettas that had motivated them back in Berlin or Vienna, and were living a life of {political} abstraction in a period when the facts on the ground in Europe had changed quite considerably. So anybody who's interested in Hilde Spiel, I would strongly advise them to look at *Lisas Zimmer* (or *Lisa's Room*). It got very good reviews in the States and also over here. It wasn't widely noticed. It was, however, well reviewed in the TLS (*Times Literary Supplement*).

Now, Hilda Spiel is a somewhat tragic story because ultimately she did not feel happy in this country. She had moved, I think, during the war from the center of town (I forget now where she lived in those days), but she moved out to Wimbledon, a rather salubrious suburb. But she always referred to Wimbledon as *das grüne Grab vom Wimbledon*. [laughter] She felt that despite all the greenery, she was somehow buried. She was away from the center of literary and cosmopolitan life there.

And then, after a long period of {wavering}, she took the decision of actually going back to Austria. Now, this was 1964, 19 years after the war. And she had already spent a number of summer holidays in her beloved {*Salzkammergut*} about which she writes in the most rhapsodic prose. And in the end, she decided to make the total move. And when she was challenged on this, she said, “{unintelligible} the English literati went out of their way to cold-shoulder me.” And she mentioned in particular two of them, which I found rather surprising, the particular ones that she picked. One was John Lehmann, who had been an important publisher of Penguin New Writers and had greatly helped refugee authors to become known over here under this imprint, and the other one was Stephen Spender. She claimed that both of these had actually deliberately cut her at PEN receptions. And that, she said, was the final straw, and she decided to go back to Vienna and to spend all her spare time in the *Salzkammergut*.

In Austria she was feted, because after all, the Austrian government was rather keen to project an image to the world of welcoming back people who had been expelled because of their Jewish origins. Eventually, however, she got into hot water. She had been invited as the guest of honor at the Salzburg Festival some time in the late 1980s, and she said she would not attend; she would not perform her function as the opening speaker, guest of honor, if President Waldheim attended. Of course Waldheim did attend, she refused to go along, and she

actually received death threats as a result of this. And she died a few years later, but still highly regarded by the younger generation of intellectuals in Austria.

Now, my next outstanding literary personality (and I suppose he's the most outstanding because he got the Nobel Prize) is Elias Canetti. Canetti was a man with an amazing background. He was born in Bulgaria to a Sephardi Jewish family. His grandfather was a regular subscriber to a Ladino (that is, old Spanish) newspaper that was published in Constantinople for the Sephardic community of the old Ottoman Empire, which was still in existence when Canetti was born. But at a fairly early age, he was removed from this environment and went to Manchester because his father was in the textile trade (or I forget which). But anyway, he had these strong trading connections with England, so he was in fact an English speaker. Eventually he came via Switzerland to Austria. In 1920s Austria, he fell under the sway of Karl Kraus, and he became a regular attendee, what I would say more a sort of worshiper at the shrine of Kraus, and that's where he met his wife, who was a fellow devotee of Karl Kraus. And eventually he had a meteoric takeoff when his novel *Auto-da-Fé* was published in 1934, and received lavish praise from none other than Thomas Mann, who, although he was already in exile, was still considered the leading arbiter of literary taste among the German intelligentsia.

Canetti came to this country in 1938-39, and the next important thing that he wrote was nothing to do with literature but a major sociological study called *Crowds and Power*, for which he received a grant from an American foundation. Then he carried on writing purely literary works, which included a number of plays, one with a very interesting idea of how people would react if they knew throughout their lives the exact date when they would die, how this would affect their whole conduct throughout life. It had the wonderful German title of *Die Befristeten*.

Eventually, Canetti got the Nobel Prize for Britain, which was rather odd, because although he was an English writing author, or could be (*Auto-da-Fé*, of course, had been written in German originally and was translated by someone else), shortly after he received the money for the Nobel Prize, he left this country and settled in Switzerland. And he also said that he had not received the recognition he felt he was entitled to while he was in this country. But why he should have such a grudge against the British literary establishment, I find somewhat puzzling, because as I said, *Auto-da-Fé* was translated into English, and was translated by none other than Dame Veronica Wedgwood, who was one of the great mandarins of the English cultural scene, an outstanding historian and a very fine writer. And another outstanding {star} on the British cultural family with whom Canetti had a close friendship, to say the least, was Iris Murdoch, as is being made clear in the biography that her {unintelligible} husband is now writing about her.

Anyway, Canetti had this sense of having been harshly dealt with or ignored, and so he left this country, having won the Nobel Prize for Britain. He settled in Switzerland, he remarried, he then had a child at a fairly advanced age, and eventually he got {himself buried}, and in a last brilliant career move, he chose his plot. The plot, his permanent resting place, has been very close to that of James Joyce at the Zurich cemetery.

Woman: He wasn't buried in the Jewish cemetery?

Chairman: Probably not, no. I don't know. Anyway, it's fairly close to Joyce.

Woman: There's another main book he wrote. It was excellent.

Chairman: Yes. Well, I take questions at the end. Now I want to go on to Jakov Lind. Yes?

Woman: I'm sorry to interrupt. Which was the book that he received the Nobel Prize for?

Chairman: He didn't receive the Nobel Prize for any particular book, for the work, the oeuvre as such.

Woman: But his most famous book was *Auto-da-Fé*?

Chairman: His most famous book was *Auto-da-Fé*, yes, which in German is called *Die Blendung*. That's the one. That's *Auto-da-Fé*.

Woman: [inaudible]

Chairman: Right. Now I'm onto Jakov Lind. Although Jakov Lind was a little younger than Erich Fried, I'm mentioning him first because he showed this rather incredible precocity of having been only seven years old when he left Vienna and went to Holland. In Holland he attended school for a very short time, and then worked in agriculture as part of a Zionist training scheme, *hakhsharah*, to prepare people to go to what was then Palestine. Then came the Nazi roundups, and he took the courageous decision of disguising himself as a Dutch worker who actually worked on barges that carried cargo along the line between Holland and Germany. And under this false persona, he managed to survive. He was a very strong, tough looking character, he could easily be taken for a bargee, and survived the war with incredible adventures. Then after the war he went to Palestine, where some members of his family managed to escape to. And after a few years there, he decided that that was not for him. He took advantage of a scholarship in Vienna, where he studied, I suppose, drama and that sort of thing. But after he'd finished his period there, he came over to this country and joined what I suppose we'd call a coterie of German-speaking, younger intellectuals

living in the {unintelligible} Park area, of which Erich Fried as well as the also foreign-born but rather more anglicized historian {Eric Hobsbawm} were leading members. He felt quite at home among these people, although one important issue always {setting} at odds with them; that was that Erich Fried and Hobsbawm, being {unintelligible}, were anti-Zionist, anti-Israel, whereas he was pro.

The then starting writing, and had an amazing, again meteoric takeoff with his first collection, called *Seele aus Holz (Soul of Wood)*, which caused quite a literary sensation in Germany. It was translated by Ralph Manheim into English, was well reviewed over here, but didn't have the *éclat* over here that it had in Germany. And he wrote other shortish novels and one or two plays, and eventually decided to turn himself into an English-writing author. I personally don't think he was very successful at that. Certainly I don't think he ever achieved the level that he had reached in *Soul of Wood*. He also managed to improve his financial position by being made a writer in residence at a number of American universities. While he was there, he also developed another element, which was that of a painter. In this, I suppose, he was somewhat inspired by Günter Grass, to whom he bears a slight resemblance, although, as I understand, Günter Grass' domestic arrangements are not as {disordered} as Jakov Lind's were in his heyday. He's now back in this country and he's enjoying a sort of {urban} sunset, because Professor Timms at University of Sussex has made him the centerpiece for one of the literary symposia that he organized recently. He's also an honored occasional guest of Austria when some of his plays are being performed. But again, he is not a man whose impact is going to be long-lasting, unlike the next and last person I want to talk about. That is Erich Fried.

Fried was, in his own words, an immensely precocious talent. Already at the age of six, he took an active interest in and part in politics, because he had been chosen to declaim a poem by the teacher of his first primary school class at {unintelligible} organized by his school. And when he was told that among the honored guests in the front row of the auditorium was *Polizei Präsident Schober*, who was the *bête noir* of the Left, having ordered the police to open fire on the people who were left-wingers, who were ransacking the Palace of Justice in July 1927, young Erich at the age of six said, "I refuse to go on stage and declaim my poem as long as this blood-stained police president is there as the guest of honor." And so he brought about the ignominious retreat of Police President Schober from the scene. I'm only quoting Fried's own words on this. [laughter]

Woman: [inaudible]

Chairman: Right. He, however, did have a great literary talent and also a strong political commitment. Some have said that he not only had the usual Oedipus complex which precocious adolescents in Vienna are plagued with, but his Oedipus complex overlapped into the sphere of politics. His father didn't at all share his opinions, and he developed quite a vicious hatred for his father, which afterwards

was to trouble him because his father died a horrible death at the hands of the Gestapo in 1938.

Anyway, Fried managed, with his mother, to come to this country. And he was early on chosen to be the poet laureate of Young Austria, some of {whom} may have heard of that organization. Ultimately, he actually fell out with the Young Austria leadership. I'll give you an example which is typical of how things were done in that particular outfit. It was a cold winter of '44, I think. The head of Young Austria, {Fritz Weiter}, was sitting in his office at {unintelligible} House in Paddington. There was a fire in the grate because it was a cold winter. Erich Fried came into the room to speak to the boss, as it were, and Fritz Weiter noticed, popping out of Fried's jacket pocket, the title *Darkness at Noon*. In other words, Fried was now in possession of that book by Arthur Koestler, which was a tremendous onslaught on the Soviet Union. So Fritz Weiter leaned across his desk, extracted the book from Fried's pocket, and threw it into the fire.

So it will not surprise you entirely that Fried was not one of those Young Austrians who went back to Austria to build socialism after the war. But he still remained radically left. And it was out of this committed left-wing attitude that there arose his whole complex about Israel, that he published the infamous poem "Höre, Israel," which is of course the literal translation of the most sacred prayer of the Jews, "Shema Yisrael," and there he really burnt his bridges, I would say.

He also published a book (I've touched on his somewhat weird psyche before) called *Ein Soldat und ein Mädchen*, where he took as the gist of the story the somewhat revolting situation that an American refugee Jewish G.I. is on guard duty outside the cell of Irma Grese on the night before her execution. And he sleeps with her. So that is somewhat typical, I think, of Fried in his more extreme moments. Now, having said that, the book only achieved the sale of about 1,000 copies in Germany. It was never translated.

On the other hand, Fried's poems achieved huge sales in Germany, and now in Austria there is a society called the Erich Fried Gesellschaft, which exists in order to perpetuate his memory and to encourage young writers and so on. And in fact, a school in Vienna has been named after him. So Fried (which I have omitted to mention, but I suppose most of you are familiar with), Fried appeared as a sort of substitute father to the generation of '68, of German students, who were in revolt against their own fathers, and he was a sort of celibate older man who said, "I share the tumult of youthful feelings, of people who don't feel at home in the environment in which they've grown up. And I can sympathize with your left-wing aspirations, and we're trying to get rid of all this Nazi bourgeois lumber that we're trying to {unintelligible} out of the university and out of public life." So he was a great hero to the Left. His house in (I think it was) {unintelligible} or somewhere became a stamping ground of German left-wingers, particularly if they were on the run—not necessarily from the authorities, because they weren't

pursued all that eagerly, but from {possible assassin}—for instance Rudi Dutschke, people like that.

So Fried engaged in active politics in Germany, using his great influence on the young in the seventies and in the eighties. And he kept touring, as it were, even though he was crippled by cancer. And it can be said of him that he died in a harness. He was much revered, and his passing was much mourned. And there was even a {memorial} meeting for him in {unintelligible}, at a church in {unintelligible}, nonconformist church. Now, it didn't have any religious significance but it was just a very large venue, and there were probably 800 people present. And this included some of the illuminati of the British Left, like Tariq Ali and {Dean Asherson}, people like that. So that was Fried. And as I say, he's probably the one who will last longest, {unintelligible} because of the activities of this Erich Fried Gesellschaft in Austria, while the others may be forgotten sooner or later. And that's it. [applause]

Now, we have about a quarter of an hour. So I'm quite prepared to answer questions. Please let them be questions, not statements.

Man: You mentioned in connection with Hilde Spiel that it was the fashion to convert from Judaism to Christianity amongst the middle-class intelligentsia. What could have been the point of such a move? Were they such devout adherents to Christ?

Chairman: No.

Woman: Economically, {unintelligible}

Chairman: Could I please try and answer this? A lot of Jewish intellectuals in Vienna felt alienated from Judaism. They felt that Judaism was inward-looking, and if they wanted to be part of the wider culture, they had to be not of that {unintelligible}. Anyway, it was very strong Austria. You'll find that some of the Jewish converts, in fact, made a major contribution to their culture. Hugo von Hofmannsthal wrote *Jedermann*, which was the great dramatic showpiece for the Catholic faith. Gustav Mahler wrote the Eighth Symphony. Franz Werfel wrote *The Song of Bernadette*, although he actually didn't convert but he was always verging on the threshold, as it were. So that was a fact. Karl Kraus also converted, and then, in a typically Krausian gesture, dropped out of the Catholic Church. And the reason was that the Archbishop of Salzburg had given permission to *Jedermann* to be staged in front of the cathedral. He thought that was a commercialization of the {unintelligible}. Those were the grounds on which Kraus left the church again.

Woman: I wanted to ask about {unintelligible} English?

- Chairman: The English is *Auto-da-Fé*. The German's called *Die Blindung*. And it was published, I would say, in the late fifties. I forget the name of the publisher. But the only {unintelligible} translated as {unintelligible}.
- Woman: No, I'm actually asking {unintelligible} because that would explain. There is a book by him which in Hebrew made translation {unintelligible}. I suppose that's {unintelligible}.
- Woman: I'm sorry, {unintelligible}, but I'm not sure who Karl Kraus is.
- Chairman: Ah, right. Karl Kraus was the sort of self-appointed arbiter of literary purity in Austria, from around the time of the century. He said a lot of people write in order to make money; they debase the language; most of the newspapers actually poison the well of truth. So he was a sort of Cromwell of the intellect. He wanted to introduce purity. He wanted to weed out corruption, sloppy thinking, etc., etc. And he was apolitical in that sense, but he just said that any commercial considerations or any sloppy use of language, any concessions to modern advertising methods, etc., are going to be absolutely expunged if you want to create a literature which is pure and truthful. And he created a sort of congregation around him, of people who were immensely devoted to him.
- Woman: You've mentioned Elias Canetti's autobiography, which was widely acclaimed. It always puzzled me what he lived on, because he actually published very little. Do you have any idea? [laughter]
- Chairman: He did receive some money—I would imagine, a quite {unintelligible} sum—from this American foundation, that enabled him to write *Crowds and Power*. What other sources of income he had, I don't know. He didn't live too badly. I visited him once. But I wouldn't say that he lived in lavish style. On the other hand, he was able to make what could have been in those days not inexpensive journeys. He once told me that he had been to see Paul Bowles (the author of *The Sheltering Sky*), who lived in Morocco. So I just don't know.
- Woman: I was going to switch gears a little bit. {unintelligible} more of the Erich Fried and Hilde Spiel. They were still very much rooted in the Austrian past, or {unintelligible} in Germany. The Germans were {unintelligible} the twenties in Berlin. I want to ask about our generation. That's to say, are we doomed only to write about our travels as exiles, as kingdom, or do we other writers still have a foot in the Weimar or Vienna 1900 past? What writers do you feel reconcile the refugee experience with the past and the future that we have created for ourselves in America? I think of people like {Laurie Siegel}, who I know quite well. I wrote down Anita Brookner, because she writes quite a lot about that. Are there any other English authors who have this sort of triple vision, that they have a little bit of this tradition of the past—

- Chairman: I'm thinking now of Rudi Nassauer. He actually wrote a novel which was largely dedicated to Canetti, who acted as his mentor and probably as his sponsor. That was the only thing of his that was published, and that again was really about the past. And then there's Frank Marcus, a marvelous playwright. Now, he made his name with one play called *The Killing of Sister George*, which is of course about {unintelligible} lesbianism and so on. So he chose a {unintelligible}, as it were, as his {unintelligible}.
- Man: In regard to the last one, wouldn't you add Stefan Zweig to the list of people who bridged the refugee phenomenon with the old {unintelligible}? But my main point {unintelligible}: Wouldn't you agree that Karl Kraus today is known mainly for his biting satire of the then society, the bourgeois society, his virulent anti-militarism, and in fact his social struggle, *Die Fackel*, and all the controversies around {unintelligible}?
- Man: {unintelligible} Erich Fried {unintelligible} when he wrote "Höre, Israel." {unintelligible}.
- Chairman: Well, he attacked Israel for what he considered an inhuman policy towards the Arabs.
- Man: {unintelligible}?
- Chairman: Ah. That could have been after one of the wars, {unintelligible}.
- Woman: You said that they all felt cold-shouldered {unintelligible}. But don't you think that might have been a cultural difference between the attitude towards writers {unintelligible}? Because Brecht felt cold-shouldered. Most English writers feel cold-shouldered. So don't you think that's the reason?
- Chairman: Yes, that's possible. Of course as far as Brecht is concerned, one has to appreciate two things. One was that he took employment in Hollywood for a time, and he's actually credited with having either totally or partly written the screenplay for the Hollywood film about the death of Heydrich. The other thing about Brecht of course was that he didn't ever attempt to fit into the new environment. Whereas Kurt Weill tried to write Broadway musicals, Brecht kept writing German agitprop dramas. And he wrote (as he called it) for the {unintelligible}. He filed them all away, in the expectation that after the war they would be performed on the German stage again.
- Woman: What I meant is, when Brecht was in Britain ({unintelligible} first), he tried very hard to make contact with {unintelligible}, and he failed totally. So I'm just saying, all these people felt cold-shouldered. Was Canetti ever invited to

{Christina} {unintelligible}? {Christina Fuller} is about the only one who keeps a record of {unintelligible} who's who.

Chairman: Yes. Well, I would very much doubt that, because he was never a man to {unintelligible}. When he got the Nobel Prize for the UK, the {unintelligible}.

Woman: That's right.

Man: I was a little late coming in {unintelligible}. I don't know if you've talked about the Hilde Spiel book, {Last Voice in Vienna}. If you didn't, could you say a few words?

Chairman: Last Voice in Vienna?

Woman: That's not a British {unintelligible}. [many speak at once]

Chairman: That's {unintelligible}. She did write a book (well, more than one book) about Vienna. She wrote one about Fanny von Arnstein, who ran a literary salon in Vienna, who was very interesting, during the short-lived period of the Austrian Enlightenment. And then she wrote actually one about the Jewish {contribution to western} culture.

Man: Thomas Mann is probably sort of *the* German writer {unintelligible} went to the US, really used his prestige to write anti-Nazi articles?

Chairman: Yes. He had written anti-Nazi articles *before* the Nazis came to power. He had undergone an interesting sort of conversion. During the First World War he was quite right-wing, and he published a book under the somewhat ambiguous title of *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, in which he actually supported Germany and said Germany stands for *Kultur*, which is something profound, whereas Britain and France only stand for civilization, which is something superficial. [laughter] Then, during the twenties, he gradually moved. And by the early 1930s, he was the most influential defender of Weimar democracy. Even so, he {havered} a little when the Nazis came to power. It was actually at the prompting of his daughter Erika they left Germany. He'd given a lecture tour, and he just simply did not return. But then, particularly in the German-speaking New York-based publication *Der Aufbau*, he wrote anti-Nazi articles. And he also spoke on the radio in German, to the German people. He appealed to them.

Man: You didn't say anything about Thomas Mann's son. His mother was Jewish, so I consider him to be a Jewish writer. And he was very popular, and I always used to see {unintelligible} comparing him with his father. And you didn't mention him at all. [laughter] Not his brother Heinrich. I'm talking about Klaus.

Chairman: Yes. Well, of course, Klaus Mann had a very troubled life. In fact, in the end he committed suicide. He committed suicide shortly after a German court had decided that his book *Mephisto*, which was an attack on his ex-brother-in-law (Gustaf Gründgens, the one-time husband of Erika), was considered libelous and was not to be distributed in Germany or anywhere else. So Klaus Mann is a victim of the political situation. The German judges after the war were very conservative and very lenient, as you know, to ex-Nazis. And so this judgment really is part and parcel of the whole Cold War atmosphere that prevailed at the time.

Man: Could he write in English, Thomas Mann?

Chairman: Yes. Thomas Mann?

Man: No. Klaus Mann.

Chairman: Klaus Mann did. He edited a journal in America. Yes.

Woman: I just wanted to mention that Canetti wrote *Die Gerettete Zunge*. I thought that was one of his main works. No? Excellent.

Chairman: Not— I was reminded that I omitted to mention his autobiography {unintelligible}, quite a {unintelligible} throws a wonderful, all-embracing light on the cultural scene in Vienna, both in the twenties and then in England in the forties. I forget now whether that is one of the four.

Woman: I read it once and I was very taken by it.

Chairman: Oh yes.

Woman: Are there four? I thought there were only three.

Chairman: Yes, there are three. Yes.

Woman: {unintelligible}

Man: I know nothing about Erich Fried's poetry, and you said that was one of the things he'll be remembered for. What did he write?

Chairman: To start off with, Erich Fried political poetry when he was, as I said, the poet laureate of Young Austria. Then he wrote political poetry of a freelance nature, where he mainly attacked America and the Cold War sentiment of the time, but put forward the sort of line that although I'm not a supporter of the Soviet Union, nonetheless somewhere within that great big mishmash there is a basic idea, that

of socialism, which is preferable to that of capitalism as represented by the USA. But then he wrote a lot of poems about human relationships, particularly erotic ones. And his erotic poems, for which I think there are little, nonetheless gave him huge acclaim.

Man: I've been under the impression that one of Erich Fried's major achievements was translating Shakespeare.

Chairman: He undertook a huge project of translating most (I don't know exactly how many) of Shakespeare's works into German. There are those who say that the Schlegel-Tieck translation is quite {unintelligible}; there's no need for a new one. There are those who say that when Erich Fried translated a title like *Much Ado about Nothing* into *Viel Getu um Nichts*, he is being less than poetic, and *Viel Lärm um Nichts* sounds much better. But nonetheless his translation work is very highly regarded. Not only did he do Shakespeare, he also translated T.S. Eliot *The Four Quartets*, and *Under Milk Wood*. That was a major translation {unintelligible}.

Woman: Did he ever live in {unintelligible}?

Chairman: He never actually lived there, but he kept touring. He came back to England every so often. Those days, I think {unintelligible}. But then very often he was en route, going from one large town to another and giving readings or {unintelligible}.

Woman: I hate to ask this abstract question, but I'm very interested. I'm just thinking, do you think this world and, say, the world lot of our parents, the world of Thomas Mann and the world of Erich Fried (who's more our generation), do you think that this will all die out? I keep thinking, now there's so much emphasis on the Holocaust and Kindertransport and these things that happened during World War II, which we all went through and we all suffered, but I sometimes think this blots out the larger picture in cultural terms, which the older generation had with their left-wing politics and their interest in civilization and culture, and their spiritual striving. We're getting into a little bit of a stereotypical path in writing too much—Do you think so, or am I saying something that's very wrong?

Chairman: I agree with you.

Woman: I think it's almost turning into a stereotype, and I want to go out and I want to {read} this old world, that I not only talk about our own experiences.

Woman: This isn't a question but just an answer. {unintelligible} and I write about all experience, childhood lots of time, and about other things. And I've published eight books. And I {unintelligible} new relationships, landscapes, and abstract things. I'm still billed as a Holocaust {poet}, and it's the media that does it.

Chairman: Yes. Oh yes. Very good. Yes. This lady is {unintelligible}.

Woman: Just one {unintelligible}. I think it depends what country you're in and what books you wrote. If you go into a bookshop in Germany, all you can see is war literature, Holocaust, etc.

Woman: You go into a bookshop in England, it's quite, quite different.

[several speak at once]

Man: You didn't mention at all the influence of {unintelligible} went back to East Germany, although this should have been their (should I say) natural habitat in some ways.

Chairman: Yes, right. Good point. The person one ought to mention in this connection is of course Arnold Zweig. Arnold Zweig is undoubtedly the best known writer who went to Palestine. Unlike Max Brod, who probably {unintelligible} man, Arnold Zweig did not manage to take root there, and went back to East Germany and became one of the honored propaganda icons of the regime. Nonetheless, one has the impression that he did not really flourish under the regime, and there was one statement condemning Israel, which was issued by the East German *Kulturkammer* {unintelligible}, for which his signature was missing. So I would think that although Zweig went back, he did not really feel happy there. {unintelligible}

Man: Max Brod never left Israel. {unintelligible}

[several inaudible comments]

Woman: I'm not very well educated literally, but I like to read novels, and obviously I come from America, but I was Kind. But this big word *assimilation* is very important in America, and there are many, many plays and novels that bridge the {cap} that this lady over there was talking about, about the generation that came from Europe, whether it was Poland or Germany or Vienna or Russia, and then they keep some of their home culture from the old country. The second generation is more rah-rah about being assimilated. Third generation already is thinking, "Hey, what did Grandma and Grandpa do? What happened to them?" The fourth generation, which is now (generation 3 and 4 is about this time in our lives), they are very inquisitive. And you see them looking for their roots, their culture, books. There are many plays and many, many books about this big jump from the old country and how their families acclimatized themselves, but now it's a little swing back. And it's very, very interesting when they find out who came from so, who was Jewish, who wasn't Jewish. And it's a big melting pot. Literally, you can look at Hollywood and Broadway, what's going on there.

Woman: {unintelligible} more in our— I don't want to {unintelligible} in the middle of Central European, German, Austrian—

Chairman: We've overrun our time. {unintelligible}

Man: We want to thank you.

Woman: Thank you.

Man: It was beautiful. [applause]

[End of Second Session]