

**IMPORTANT**

**This transcript is copyright Association of Jewish Refugees**

**Access to this interview and transcript is for private research only. Please refer to the AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.**

**AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive**

**AJR**

**Winston House, 2 Dollis Park**

**London N3 1HF**

**[ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk](mailto:ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk)**

**Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it. Should you find any errors please inform [ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk](mailto:ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk)**

**Interview Transcript Title Page**

<b>Collection title:</b>	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
<b>Ref. no:</b>	136

<b>Interviewee Surname:</b>	Finkelstein
<b>Forename:</b>	Mirjam
<b>Interviewee Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Interviewee DOB:</b>	10 June 1933
<b>Interviewee POB:</b>	Berlin, Germany

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	6 November 2006
<b>Location of Interview:</b>	London
<b>Name of Interviewer:</b>	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
<b>Total Duration (HH:MM):</b>	2 hours and 53 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:  
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****INTERVIEW: 136****NAME: MIRJAM FINKELSTEIN****DATE: 6 NOVEMBER 2006****LOCATION: LONDON****INTERVIEWER: BEA LEWKOWICZ****TAPE 1****Tape 1: 0 minute 5 seconds**

BL: Today's the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2006, we are conducting an interview with Mrs Mirjam Finkelstein, my name is Bea Lewkowicz and we are in London.

BL: Can you please tell me your name?

MF: Mirjam Finkelstein.

BL: And where were you born please?

MF: I was born in Berlin, Germany in 1933.

BL: Thank you, Mrs Finkelstein for having agreed to be interviewed for Refugee Voices. Could you please tell me something about your family background?

MF: As I said I was born in Berlin and the youngest of three, and lived there with my father and my mother. I was very small when what was going on and didn't realise what was going on around of course, but it was just the start of Hitler's coming to power. My father was already very worried about it and trying to take steps to see what he could do to avoid a further slide into anti-Semitism, which of course was very difficult and he didn't really succeed. He went to see Göring among other things and all sorts of steps. When nothing came to any fruition of this, he decided that he would have to leave Germany and so, in 1934, I was only eleven month old, we went to Amsterdam as a family.

BL: Can you tell me a bit about the background of your father's family, and what was the name please, also?

MF: My father's name was Alfred Wiener. He was born in 1885. He did a... went to university...He did a PhD in Arab literature as an Orientalist. He fought in the First World War, even getting a medal of sorts, and then worked for Paul Nathan, the

philanthropist, as his secretary, and eventually worked for the Zentralverein as Syndikus, a sort of Director – Executive Director. He also worked as a journalist and was figured in the Jewish community, though he was not an orthodox Jew at all, but the Zentralverein deutscher Juden jüdischen Glaubens'. That was very much his feeling, as it were, at the time...

**Tape 1: 3 minutes 21 seconds**

BL: How long did he work for the Zentralverein?

MF: I'm not exactly sure. He stopped in '33 or '34. Probably something like 10 years I would have thought. Something of this order anyway, yes. Quite a while, yes.

BL: And what about his parents, what were they called?

MF: His parents were... Now what was my grandmother called? I never knew my grandfather. I knew my grandmother. For the moment her name escapes me. It'll come back. His father was a haberdasher. They lived in Benzin. They moved from Benzin to Potsdam for a while and had a shop there. Also his cousin and aunt and so on lived there as well. But he really broke away from this particular kind of background to go and study and his mother eventually...his father died when he was only about 10. His mother came eventually to join us in Holland and died there, I think just before the war started.

BL: What about your mother, please?

MF: My mother. Her name was Margarethe Minna Zalman. She was born in 1895 and she was the younger of two sisters. And they lived in Hamburg and she studied, and most unusual for that time, went to Bonn and did a PhD in economics. And though she only married – they married when she was 26, which at that time was quite late - she did not then have... I don't think she ever had a job as such but she wrote, she wrote articles and so on, presumably freelance, and continued doing so. It was very unusual at that time; once one had children it certainly was not on to have a job as well. But I think she always kept writing and kept in touch.

**Tape 1: 5 minutes 50 seconds**

BL: What was her field?

MF: Her field was economics and exactly what branch of it I'm afraid I don't know, yes. We do have some of her writings. So I have to go afterwards and have a look.

BL: And what about her parents? Do you remember them?

MF: No I don't remember her parents. Her parents died in Germany. I know that certainly they were still alive when we were in Holland because I know that she went with my older sisters to see them. But they died before the war started of natural causes. And I never met them actually, no. They continued living in Hamburg.

BL: What are your earliest memories?

MF: Certainly nothing of Germany of course. My earliest memory is playing, I think in Holland. Playing – we played on the street as one did in those days with friends who lived in the street. Holland was a very pleasant place to live. The worries were there for the adults but not really for the children. And I suppose that is what I remember first of all, being out together with other children on the street. Probably it was an event the first time I was allowed out like that. Then after that of course memories are like snapshots...certain – you know – the day I fell in to some builder's hole and certainly I remember the outbreak of the war eventually...the day the war broke out. That was 1940, so I was coming up to my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday then, just before my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Tape 1: 7 minutes 37 seconds**

BL: Where were you in Holland?

MF: We were in Amsterdam. In a straat called Johann Van Eyckstraat in Amsterdam South. And that's where the library, my father's library then called the Jewish Central Information Office, where all the material that he bought and brought was there above us or next to us, so we really lived on top of the shop almost, as it were. And we lived quite comfortably there. My father travelled an awful lot because he was collecting material and got in touch with all sorts of people. So he was not there that much. But I then remember going to school and being quite happy there, learning Dutch and speaking German at home. Speaking Dutch outside and eventually speaking Dutch to my sisters, though always German to my parents, yes.

BL: Obviously at that point you didn't know, but what were the circumstances of the emigration in 1934?

MF: I think my father, first of all, had been agitating against the regime. And also then started, already earlier than that, even before 33 I think, to collect anti-Semitic material. He believed very much in sort of condemning people for their own material there or from what they had written. So he collected books and newspapers and material and I believe even things like telephone directories and all sorts of things like that and he couldn't possibly stay any length of time in Germany with these things. So that is how he came to move to Holland and I think he chose Holland because it had been neutral in the First World War, so that many people were lulled into this sense of security. Also, especially when I went to see Berlin, I realised that the place we lived in Amsterdam was not at all unlike the place that we lived in Berlin and Charlottenburg, and of course I can't remember, let's say, how my mother felt about this. I was not yet a year old. But we certainly all moved. I think my grandmother followed a little bit later and we also had a mother's help who eventually came from Germany and lived with us. But I think my aunt also came, I'm not quite sure when, which made my mother happier, you know to have her sister there – her much loved sister who lived not far from us. But I think that move went smoothly. He had prepared for it beforehand. He had gone to Amsterdam and he had set up the possibility of such a library, the finances and so on, certainly to me and my sisters we settled down quite well in Holland.

**Tape 1: 10 minutes 49 seconds**

BL: You said they were similar - similar in which way?

MF: It looked similar. You know, it had a park nearby. The streets looked similar. The language is not all that dissimilar or so people think more than actuality. I doubt whether my mother felt it. I think she did feel displaced, but she also settled down there as best she could. I can't remember any difficulties with that. I mean the first years were reasonable and peaceful, but then of course as time went by it got more difficult. More people kept coming from Germany and sometimes staying with us and moving on somewhere else, sometimes settling down and so on, so as the year progressed, I remember that too, there was a restlessness among the adults, not really among the children. You know they tried not to impose it on us but children always feel something isn't quite right. You know, but we had a happy enough childhood, really. I've got some nice pictures to prove it, yes.

**Tape 1: 12 minutes 1 second**

BL: So could your parents bring out...? Did they bring all their household to Holland?

MF: Yes. Yes they brought their things with them. Yes. Interesting I hadn't thought about that but yes. They brought their household with them. Because I was so little I wasn't involved in this, but my father had his collection which he collected when he was in Egypt, which I now have some of the things here. He had his books of course and furniture and so on which definitely came with him from Germany. Yes. Yes. It was a very pleasant home which we had, yes.

BL: So that by the time you moved your father had already quite a collection of materials?

MF: He already had, yes. I must say I wasn't aware of that at the time of course. But, I have since then found out that yes, he already started collecting really quite early, that he started collecting newspaper articles – all sorts of things, you know, - quite early, even before '33 apparently.

BL: What was the incentive for him to do that? Did you...maybe later discuss it or...?

MF: Well, I mean the politics always interested him. I think he found, you know probably, that some of the material was so crass and so one needed to hold on to it. I don't know when the idea of forming this into some sort of library came to him. He certainly started collecting it earlier, probably with this sort of idea in mind. I mean the anti-Semitism in Germany was very rife even before Hitler actually came to power. Yes. But I was only a child so exact motivation is difficult to fathom at this time. Yeah.

BL: What sort of school did you go to in Holland?

MF: We went first to a Montessori school, very nice actually. They recently had some sort of reunion where they put up a plaque of how many children had actually died – you know, Jewish children who went there. When the war started, sometime after, we couldn't stay there. The Germans waiting nicely until all the children were in school

in the autumn and then removing them to having to go to a Jewish school. And by that time we also then moved from the original place we were. But we were happy in school. Certainly my sister, who is six years older, remembers much more. She made friends and so on and was happy there. Holland's a good place to live on the whole, you know.

**Tape 1: 14 minutes 49 seconds**

BL: Were there any other refugee children in your school?

MF: Yes, there must have been. I was too little you see. When I started going to school I was five maybe six. I probably went to kindergarten at five, so I really can't remember. But my sister did have refugee friends, yes. There were a lot of people who'd moved, you know, from Germany and settled in...in Amsterdam. The Frank family is a typical example. They did exactly the same. They moved early and settled there. Yes.

BL: You said you remember the outbreak of war. What do you remember?

MF: The outbreak of war, the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1940, was the end of it probably and the Germans overran Holland within days. A terrible lot of consternation, of course. I remember standing on the street in little groups and talking and people worrying. Standing on the street is what I remember, in groups. And then of course, at first, we were not allowed to leave the house. And for a while there were curfews and so on. And then there were all sorts of restrictions, especially for Jewish people. Bit by bit they... But it was the actual day of the outbreak that I remember. And then of course some time later we moved. You know, once war started then one after the other things deteriorated basically you know, so...We wouldn't be allowed to use the sports field. We weren't allowed to use the swimming pools. We weren't allowed to use public transport, which was actually a very important thing. I always tell school children that I had a scooter, a nice one with big thick wheels, these big ones. And it used to be the family Rolls Royce. Anybody who needed anything on the other side of town, adults and children, would take my scooter and use it as a means of transport because bicycles were taken away. Even bicycles eventually of non-Jews were taken away. What the German Army wanted with these bicycles I can't fathom, but they took the bicycles. Even nowadays, I believe, maybe not so much now, but after the war any Germans who came to Holland, the Dutchmen would yell after them, 'Mijnheer, waar is mijn fiets?!' 'Mister, where is my bicycle?!' You know, for a long time that rankled with the Dutch about bicycles, like taking their legs away. Lots of things which were not allowed and that of course did impinge on me and us generally. We had a curfew in the evening, and we had to move schools. Though that of course had the effect actually of bringing the Jewish community, perhaps closer together. You know when you are in adversity and once you are closer together it gives more a sense of community.

**Tape 1: 18 minutes 15 seconds**

BL: Do you remember the Jewish school?

MF: Oh yes. I remember the school. Yes. Yes.

BL: Can you describe it a bit?

MF: Well, the first thing was that we didn't have enough rooms and probably also not enough teachers. So we had to double up, you know, with other age groups. I remember that because that is of course very important to children whether they're younger children or older children in the same class. But, on the whole, we were taught reasonably well. And there was also summer school. In the summer they had a place where we could gather together and I remember learning songs which to my sister's surprise I still remember now, sort of like a summer camp idea, you know, to get us off the street basically. But my elder sister went to a higher school. She went to what we would call a secondary school...and so she wasn't with us. But Eva and myself were in the same school together and I think we learned all right but of course it was overshadowed by what was going on outside. There were even one or two sort of...once there was a dogfight overhead with airplanes and a bullet came through the window frame and hit one of the children on the leg. Nonetheless she managed to run out of the room. You know, things like that which children find exciting but frightening of course at the same time. But that was perhaps a little bit later. Before the war we actually...yes there were things – there was coming and going and there were... obviously that adults were worrying, before the war started, that is. But once the war started it impinged much more on us - on our own liberties and so on. A lot of shops we couldn't go into. 'Verboten voor Jooden,' - and then of course the star. That very much impinged on us, as it were. We had to wear the star and it had to be on our – whatever we wore outside; it had to show, so it had to be sewn on. Incidentally, those stars – I've always thought it very strange: You had to actually buy those stars. One had to go...you know; only the Germans could think of this. You had to purchase these stars and then sew them on to our clothes. I've got one or two stars actually. My sister kept some and gave them to me, yes.

**Tape 1: 20 minutes 56 seconds**

BL: By when was that? By when did you have to wear the stars?

MF: I'm not sure of the date, I'm afraid. I don't know. Not immediately. I would say probably some time in '41 I would have thought... or maybe even '42, '41. I'm not actually sure, no. I have to look that up.

BL: You said you moved from...?

MF: We moved because my mother had little money because of course my father couldn't send any money. And she hadn't...wasn't earning. She then went to work, actually. She worked for the Joodse Raad - the Jewish Committee as it were, and as a secretary. I don't know what she did there but she worked for them. At the same time, it gave...working for the Joodse Raad it gave one some sort of immunity which meant that we were taken away later perhaps rather than earlier, which of course every day difference, every day could make a difference between life and death. But she worked there to earn some money and the reason we moved there was because of the rents. It was difficult for her to manage, so we moved to a new part also south in a flat which was quite comfortable. It was nearer the school actually too.



**Tape 1: 22 minutes 21 seconds**

BL: Where was your father?

MF: In 1939 my father decided that – or maybe he was disgusted with people obviously - that it was not really on neutral soil. One couldn't really have such a library. And so he decided to take the library to... England. He got permission to take it and there are all sorts of fanciful stories about Churchill sending ships, but I don't think any of them was quite true. But most of the library was indeed shipped over some time in 1939, March or something or maybe a bit earlier than that. He took the library and took the books and so on. There was some vestige library and one or two people still working in Amsterdam. But most of it went to England and he then immediately set about trying to get a visa for us. My mother was not terribly keen on moving again but he was getting a visa and he did get a visa. And again I can show you the visa. It is dated – it was written on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May and arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, on the day that we could no longer get out. I mean some people did at the very last moment manage to get out, but we didn't basically. It was very difficult. And so we got stuck there and my father was here in London, where he did everything he possibly could to do things to get us out. That was impossible. However, first of all, he got us some papers, some Palestinian - at that time it was not Israel – papers, and then he asked somebody in Switzerland, a friend in Switzerland, to purchase Paraguayan passports for us. Again, I have the passports now and it was really in the end these Paraguayan passports which were extremely helpful. But of course they did not get us out of Holland at the time, but it did I think actually save our lives in the end. But he was quite desperate. You know, there was nothing much he could do, but that's the situation.

**Tape 1: 24 minutes 54 seconds**

BL: Where did he live in London and where was the library?

MF: The library was in Manchester Square just off Baker Street. He set up there. And he was, the library was - I don't know at what stage but very early on - being financed by the BBC and by the Foreign Office or it was not called the Foreign Office then but – I can't recall the exact name – they financed it because they took information from it. It was very, very useful to them. They didn't like it to be called something with 'Jewish' in it because it would then...perhaps the information wouldn't be taken as seriously. So it was them who then called it the 'Wiener Library'. My father didn't like it all that much to be called after his name, but that's what it was called. That's how it took that name at the time. And they eventually sent him to America to look at the...at two things – to look at papers and books of the Bund in America. When America joined the war this Bund became an illegal organisation, the Nazi organisation in America. And they took over the library and so on and my father looked over it so see what would be useful to have. And the other thing he could do there is it was easier there to get material out from European countries – occupied countries went to Switzerland to this same friend in Switzerland, who would then send it on to wherever - either to America or to England. So he was actually quite a long time in America and was in fact eventually in America when we finally got there.

**Tape 1: 27 minutes 4 seconds**

BL: Was he paid by the British Government?

MF: No he was not paid himself. They paid the library for the use of the library and that paid his and other people's salaries. It caused great problems at the end of the war of course they withdrew their support. And it was... my father was kept very busy trying to raise funds. Eventually one of the Montefiores took a great interest and the money came from there and eventually the money came from the restitution fund from Germany. But that was much, much later.

BL: So during the war time it was really part of the war effort or part of the...?

MF: Oh yes, very much so, yes. Yes, yes. It was the Foreign Office then sent him to America and so on and eventually got him back again.

BL: Now coming back to you in Holland...

MF: Yes.

BL: What else do you remember before you were deported in that time?

MF: I remember that life was restless and difficult. Not that I wasn't happy. I was quite contented with life and how it was. Children take things as it is and they are usually quite excited by events because they don't understand the import of it. But that something terrible was happening I did understand. And of course my older sister more so because she was more in the confidence of my mother. Life was difficult mainly because of restrictions and so on. People disappeared, you know. People would be there one moment and gone the next. Either they... some people went underground or were taken away. I mean there was a sort of cat and mouse game - they would pick people up off the street; they would look at their papers and so on; they would take them away. They would disappear altogether to a labour camp or to a concentration camp, or they would suddenly come back again and the whole thing would start again. We always had a bag packed - you know, rucksacks packed for each of us in the hall just in case because one knew that - in a way my mother knew that - sooner or later our turn would come. Young people over 16 were called up for labour camp. That is why again, coming back to the Franks who were part of our synagogue community, that is why they went into hiding then, which of course he had prepared before hand because Margo, the older one, whom Ruth knew better actually - she didn't know Anna so well - was 16. She was just that bit older and she was 16 and called up for labour camp and so they went there at that time. That's when they hid because young people who went to...very few of them ever came back.

**Tape 1: 30 minutes 19 seconds**

BL: But your sister wasn't 16 at the time?

MF: My sister wasn't 16 yet. She became 16 when we were in the camp, which made her then eligible for working, but at least she wasn't sent away from us as it were. Yes, yes. She was not quite...she was born in 1927. So in '40, that's right, she would

have been...we were taken away eventually in June '43 and she was 16 in August 43. Yes, yes. Yes the Germans had their methods, you know, had to be exact.

BL: So you said you knew the Franks from the synagogue?

MF: Yes, they were members of our synagogue. Ruth knew them better because both the children were at her school. Margo was a year above her and Anna a year or so below her. And she knew Margo particularly because they had Hebrew classes together. That's where she knew her from. We can't claim to know them very well, but there is this contact which is quite interesting. And we saw them eventually – we saw them and my sister Ruth wrote that in her little diary. We saw them in 19- it was either December '44 or early January '45, when they arrived from Auschwitz in Belsen, and we saw them in the camp next to us through the wire. And my sister actually wrote it in her diary, which she wasn't supposed to have but somehow she did - little thing. But, unfortunately, they then didn't survive. But I must say, I even remember that they were there because Ruth was so excited about it I suppose. But that is the only contact we had. Ruth tells a nice story when they went for Hebrew classes: there was a young Jewish couple who wanted to get married, which of course they were not allowed. So there was a very quiet wedding held, and they wanted some witnesses and some semi-bridesmaids, and Ruth and Margo went as witnesses and bridesmaids for this young couple. Yeah...long time ago.

**Tape 1: 32 minutes 44 seconds**

BL: Which synagogue - was it the main synagogue in Amsterdam or...?

MF: No it was Liberaale Gemeente... Joodse Liberaale Gemeente...I don't think it was the main synagogue. I mean they were orthodox synagogues. But it was quite a large synagogue in the south of Amsterdam where they also lived – yes so we were members. I don't think we were very regular synagogue goers. But went for Simcha Torah and all these sorts of things – yes,

BL: Was it similar to the synagogue – I mean obviously you can't remember that - but what synagogue did your family attend in Berlin?

MF: In Berlin? I'm not quite sure. I think there was something in Fasanenstrasse. One hears these funny words, you know, just like I know the street where we lived - Realstrasse 3. I must have learnt that afterwards. But it was also a liberal synagogue, a liberal synagogue yes. I think one would now call it a Reform synagogue, but, yes, yes. So we are actually born reform Jews. Yes.

BL: So that synagogue...so you remember incidents in Holland? That synagogue?

MF: Oh I remember going to the synagogue in Holland. Yes, yes, that I do remember. Of course not in Germany. But I remember going there, as I say, especially on the High Holy Days. I remember them tossing sweets down – you see children's' memories - you know, on Simcha Torah the women – interesting – they must have been sitting upstairs because I remember them throwing...that's interesting actually isn't it? I'm not quite sure. I remember them throwing sweets down...And I remember also that when we went here for Simcha Torah with our children I felt it

was not nearly as joyous an occasion, somehow we're all too regimented. But, that I do remember, the odd going to services and so on. Yes and going out with my mother just occasionally, although she was very busy and preoccupied. As I said, we had a mother's help who was at home and looked after us.

**Tape 1: 35 minutes 7 seconds**

BL: What was your economic situation? Do you remember was there shortage...?

MF: Well, I think my mother was short of money, yes. I think she borrowed money. We had a... my father's cousin or second cousin, anyway some family who were very well off. And they lent money and also I think she gave them among other things a silver basket or something as some sort of collateral you know, and no doubt she sold her jewellery and so on if she had. She had financial difficulties, not that we felt this particularly. I do know that at one stage she took Eva and I to buy something to wear and it was a big occasion. And, anyway, at that time one didn't go so easily shopping as it were for clothes. And I've got a picture of us wearing our new outfits. And that was quite a big thing to have such new, better outfits. I've got a nice picture of that with my sister Eva, ever fashion conscious, having turned the waistband of her skirt to make it fashionably shorter. Interesting isn't it? Things don't change. Yes.

BL: But in terms of food, there was enough food to eat?

MF: Food there was enough of. I mean food was difficult to get hold of. We certainly did not go hungry. Yes, I mean the difficulty was really not so much getting money it was getting hold of it, because so many shops one couldn't use and there were lots of shortages. And so really they had to go on this scooter of mine all over town to try to get vegetables and so on. There was distinctly a shortage, but we were not...we were not hungry. You know, there was always sufficient to eat. Not much meat, that was for sure, but I know that finance was difficult and, as I say, she did borrow money and some of these debts then my father paid off after the war. And I know about this silver fruit basket that this family eventually gave to Ruth, but there must have been other things as well. Because she earned, but very little and that was a problem. My father couldn't send any money.

**Tape 1: 37 minutes 43 seconds**

BL: Do you remember your father not being there?

MF: Oh my father. I do remember my father not being there. My father of course was often absent even before the war broke out because he was travelling a lot. And I can remember more him being there than not, you know when he came and so on, it was a treat. And I remember him taking us out. He looked like Fahrt ins Blaue - you know that? He would pretend, I suppose he knew where we were going, but he would just get on a bus or tram and go somewhere. And so I remember, as it were, his visits. But yes he wasn't there and that made life...my mother was worried and life was particularly difficult for my mother. The financial worries and worries for her children. Adults were aware of what might happen, you know. But children are not aware, in a way, I said before, in a way are quite excited by, you know, what happens. There were also bombardments occasionally and we would go in the morning and

collect shrapnel. Put a tin box with shrapnel and things like that which all made life difficult, yes.

BL: How old was your mother by then in Holland?

MF: My mother...she was born in '95 so if we're talking 1940, say...1940, she would be 45. My children are more than that, you know, not all of them but some. It's not a great age but she had this responsibility you know, which she did her very best to carry out. And people... I don't know, once the war started that so many people came through any more. It was mainly before the war that people kept coming and going. I remember that because it was unsettling. But as I say, I can't say that I wasn't a happy child then.

**Tape 1: 40 minutes 1 second**

BL: And what happened when you were about to be deported?

MF: More and more people were being deported from Amsterdam and more...They used to first of all go with...collect certain families and certain people. But then it became that they would take certain areas. Razzias they were called. And on the day when we were being collected – I don't know if the adults knew the day beforehand – but certainly very early in the morning and this I certainly remember. It was a very hot June day, June the 20<sup>th</sup> 1943. And I remember early in the morning hearing these boots on the pavement outside. The Germans, -I suppose some Dutch police as well – had surrounded this particular area. They had lists of names and already very early they were out. And we ate – we had breakfast with all sorts of unusual things because we thought we might as well... the things one keeps for special occasions one might as well eat them. And we packed, had our bags and were re-packed. And we were all ready and we thought...my mother knew that they would come up. And they came some time in the early morning. They came up to our flat. Raus! They counted us. My mother pleaded with them and showed them our father's war medals and so on. That counted for absolutely nothing. She took the war medals with her however. I must tell you about those later on. And we were told – he counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for 5 - we were 5. The other, the home help au pair, who was called Betty Levine and said: 'Come downstairs.' We went down and we took our bags. We were allowed each to carry one thing. We had multiple layers of clothes on us which my mother had put on. And it was terribly hot - it was very uncomfortable. And we marched down the stairs where I managed to whisper to the neighbours around – not that they could do anything – and told one of the children there to take my scooter and keep my scooter. When I tell this to children before now, I've been told that I really ought to get myself another scooter. It keeps coming up. It's just an interesting thing...

**Tape 1: 42 minutes 48 seconds**

MF: And we were gathered together. There was quite a group of us on the pavement outside. And started marching away. Now I suddenly noticed that Betty wasn't there and my mother must have been terrified that somebody would say...one of us would say: 'Where's Betty?!' But you know we knew better than that. By that time that one didn't say, in front of Germans, anything that wasn't necessary to say. Betty had decided just to stay upstairs. Because they were gathering quite a lot of people, and

not just individuals, she decided to risk it and stayed in the flat. She put all the lights out and she stayed in the flat for about 24 hours, not flushing the toilet and so on and then took off her star and marched away, went to a friend's, went underground bit by bit from address to address to address, and managed with much adventure to actually survive the war. Eventually, she joined her sister here in Nottingham after the war, where we frequently saw her. One doesn't so often hear these sorts of stories but they do exist. It was very brave of her, not on that day, but there were other days when the fact that she didn't get shot was really a miracle. But she did survive.

**Tape 1: 44 minutes 12 seconds**

We went...we were marched with a group of people to one of the 'Plein's, one of the squares where we were kept waiting for awhile in the heat. And then we were taken – and there was no chance of running away or anything. We were guarded by people with rifles and pistols and so on. They would not have hesitated to shoot anyone down, so...Here, again these questions: 'Why didn't you run away?' you know. It was absolutely no possibility of running away. We were marched to the railway station and put onto a cattle truck. It took some hours, the whole thing. We were put on a cattle truck and we were then transported – very crowded, very uncomfortable – the same story as one often hears - no water, nothing, no sanitation. However, in a way we were - in inverted commas - 'lucky' because we were taken to Westerbork in South Holland, which was only a few hours from Amsterdam. So we were only in this thing – in this heat - for a few hours. When we arrived in Westerbork - I do not know whether we knew we were going to Westerbork, whether we knew where we were going. When I was telling this to someone I then discovered that Ludwik had been for 3 weeks in one of these cattle trucks so that really was nothing in comparison! And we arrived in Westerbork. Westerbork was terribly overcrowded because there'd been lots and lots of people. It was very crowded and very hot. We were taken to a barrack with bunks and washing facilities with cold water and so on and put into bunks and that was it more or less, you know.

**Tape 1: 46 minutes 15 seconds**

Westerbork was a holding camp rather than – I don't know whether one would call it a concentration camp – it was just a prison. We were prisoners there. The worst of Westerbork as no doubt you have been told, was the fact that every Tuesday a transport went to Auschwitz. Now, I'd heard the word 'Auschwitz'. To me Auschwitz was sort of... it really didn't have a place, it was just hell you know. Somebody years later said: 'I'm taking you to see Auschwitz' and it was as if they were saying to me you know: 'Were going to Hell. It's the fifth exit on the motorway.' It was very strange because I'd never given it a geographical location. It was just something dreadful. And every Tuesday a transport would go. On Monday lists would be read out as to who would be on these transports. These lists would have to be made out by a group of Jewish people. They appointed, as always...Of course it was terribly difficult. What do you do? Do you stay on such a committee and try perhaps to save somebody, or children, or something, or do you say: 'No. I'm not doing this and I'll go – just go on the next transport and be done with?' It's a very difficult situation to be in isn't it? Dreadful. Dreadful. Anyway, we were there for not all that long. Among other things Eva and I contracted hepatitis whereupon they took us into the camp hospital and carefully made sure that we got better. They gave us sugar – it was supposed to be good for the liver. I don't know whether nowadays they do such things. But they put us into an isolation – infectious hepatitis – put us into an isolation

ward until we were better. Although what on earth they did that for - the mind boggles. Why not just chuck you in the next wagon, you know? But that's the Germans for you. It's amazing.

**Tape 1: 48 minutes 29 seconds**

Mind boggling basically. But, anyway, we were there for a while. We did have some communication with Amsterdam. There were some sort of Red Cross letters that came from Amsterdam and I think we got the occasional parcel there. Food was poor but not starvation diet. One did get sufficient food. Not plenty but I think sufficient. I think probably a lot of potatoes - that sort of thing but that is - you know - food. And then, eventually of course, we were on one of these lists. No, the first thing that happened actually - sorry - is that my aunt, my aunt my mother's sister, Gertrude - Tante Nuti we called her - with her son and husband were also there. And they lived in the same area. I suppose we came on the same transport. They were on a list and my mother was desperate. She dearly loved her sister and if we hadn't been there - us children - she would have definitely gone with them. But, as it was of course, she didn't. She stayed with us and they went off and they were never heard of again. They all disappeared. I don't know if they even reached Auschwitz. I don't know.

**Tape 1: 50 minutes 0 second**

And we stayed and then a week or two later we were on the list. And then of course again I remember my mother sort of, you know, could have gone with her sister, you know. But there was this sort of cat and mouse thing again. You tried to get on the list and off the list and all these sorts of things. Of course off the list mainly. And somehow she managed to get us off the list and we were off the list. And then, a couple of weeks after that - I don't know the time frame - we were on a list to go to Belsen. Now the reason that transpired eventually is because we had these passports. They are real passport but they are bought ones. And because we had foreign passports and were there as foreign nationals - I mean they must have known perfectly well that...but still. We were...had - in inverted commas - the 'choice' to go to Belsen. Well, anything was better than going to Auschwitz. That was known. So we were put on these transports in December 1943. So we were about 6 months in Westerbork. We were sent in an ordinary train, as far as I can remember, to Belsen. When we arrived there, my main thing is bleak. It was terribly bleak. The Lüneburger Heide - you know it is very bleak anyway, I think, even in the most normal circumstances. But arriving there like that in little twilight in the evening and it was very cold - it must have been afternoon if there was any light at all. It was terribly cold and terribly bleak and we had to walk from...We came to Celle, the station and we had to walk from there to the camp. We were carrying our luggage. I think there were some people on some sort of transport. I can't quite remember. But when we came into the camp it was almost empty. They'd obviously - this particular part of the camp...I've learned lately that it was called a 'Star camp' - 'Sternlager'. And again we were put into a barrack even more miserable and bleaker and colder than the one at Westerbork. The washing facilities, the toilet facilities were very poor: Toilets with holes in wooden planks over a large or longer area, the water of course only cold from long basins. We were put into a barrack again - bunk beds with straw palliases. But because we were all women we were you know - with the fitness of my mother - we were at least kept together, which was not always so when they separated the men out in a separate camp.

**Tape 1: 53 minutes 12 seconds**

BL: Sorry to interrupt, but just to come back to Westerbork.

MF: Yes.

BL: Were you also together with your mother?

MF: Yes, in Westerbork we were together. I'm not quite sure whether men were separated there or not. It didn't arise. Now whether my aunt...I know my aunt was not in the same barracks as us. I know they must have had separate men's barracks but probably on the same, on the same camp, whereas in Belsen it was a separate compound. We did have there also a family member, a cousin of my father's, or was it second cousin. I'm never quite sure, cousins, whether they skipped a generation there and moved. They and their son – he had a son and mother and father and he worked in the kitchen and stole – took under his wing - stole a potato or carrot or something and the next morning all of them were gone. That was from Belsen. I don't know where to. And also never seen again.

**Tape 1: 54 minutes 21 seconds**

BL: Just to come back again to Westerbork.

MF: Yes, Westerbork, please.

BL: Do you remember what you did on a daily basis? Do you remember what...?

MF: No that's quite interesting actually. In Westerbork we were still allowed as children to gather together. Now I'm just trying to think whether my mother and Ruth worked in Westerbork. I'm not quite sure what they did. I'm quite not sure. Certainly Eva and I did not. Ruth probably didn't either because she was not quite...well she became 16 then, so I'm not quite sure about that. Certainly Ruth, Eva and I...but it was allowed to gather some children together and do a little bit of reading with them or to sing songs or some...to do something together. That of course in Belsen was absolutely forbidden. I do remember there gathering with other children and again learning songs, which again, to the amazement of my sister, I remember some of these things and they surface - it's very interesting - years later all of a sudden. You know, 'Where did I learned that?!' – You know. It's very interesting. And they also...I know the adults were allowed to have some sort of theatre, some sort of revues they did and so on, which the Germans came to watch and so on. It was certainly more freedom. There was certainly more freedom there. As I say the worst of Westerbork was a) the crowding and b) of course the transports. Everything was focused on these transports. I have got – while we're talking about Westerbork - a pitiful little letter that my aunt wrote to my mother, or to us, just before they left, you know, full of hope, you know: 'We will see each other again' and so on. She must have known. I've got the little letter.

BL: Written in Westerbork?

MF: What?



BL: Where was it written?

MF: It was written in Westerbork in the evening, on the eve before they left. And they must have given it to someone to hand to my mother. But, apart from that, as I say, it was a sort of freer camp. One couldn't get out. There were some people who had been there for a very long time. It was used originally as a camp where people came when they came from Germany. They came there first before they settled elsewhere in Holland and some of them sort of stayed there. It was a very strange mixture of people. As I say, there was still some connection with Amsterdam or letters and so on. But once we were in Belsen that all stopped. I mean there was no getting together, no religious observance at all, though people of course, just because it's forbidden, will somehow remember its Sabbath or it's the New Year, take a bit of rag and light it and mark the day. It's quite amazing that people did it although it was forbidden. I have a feeling that that was also not so difficult in Belsen. Some people really, I mean there were some religious people who would keep, or try to find a date for things, though of course things like Kosher and so on, there was no question of that. We were lucky to get anything to eat. As there was very little meat anyway I don't suppose it mattered.

BL: Mrs Finkelstein we need to stop here. We need to change tapes.

MF: Yes. Sure.

**Tape 1: 58 minutes 9 seconds**

**TAPE 2**

**Tape 2: 0 minute 4 seconds**

BL: This is tape two we are conducting an interview with Mrs Mirjam Finkelstein

BL: Mirjam, we were just talking about Westerbork and you were saying you remember a sort of little teaching with a group of children and you said you remember some songs. What songs do you remember?

MF: Well, they were Hebrew songs mainly. Sort of you know songs like 'Hine Matov Umanyim'. Things like that you know. There's another one which at the moment isn't with me. But they were mainly Hebrew songs- yes, yes. And then in the Dutch, in Amsterdam still in the summer schools those were Dutch songs mainly... also usually with a Dutch flavour. Sorry not a Dutch flavour, a Jewish flavour because we were all Jews getting together there.

BL: In Westerbork was somebody in charge of the teaching or was there...?

MF: I'm not sure if somebody was – no I don't think anybody was officially in charge, but there were some people who took it upon themselves to try and gather children together and do this because we were a bit at a loss of what to do. You know, to stop wandering around. I mean one spent a lot of time wandering around of course in Westerbork, more so in, sorry, in Belsen. But in Westerbork you know, I remember more being occupied as it were with these sorts of things, that some things were going

on together. And I remember being together with people and together with children, as opposed to Belsen where I remember being much more alone. Somehow I don't see people. I see bleakness, you know, emptiness. Interesting. But of course Westerbork was very crowded at that time so that's not surprising.

BL: Were you...Do you remember your feelings at the time? Were you scared ...were you worried?

**Tape 2: 2 minutes 4 seconds**

MF: I must have been scared because what happened when we first came is that I cried all the time... and I cried and cried. It must have... my poor mother. If I think about it now it must have been terribly hard for her – I suppose a sort of hysterics, basically. But I felt displaced. Actually, it happened before then also in Amsterdam, which I haven't mentioned, that we did try to...to go underground, to hide. And the idea is you go from address to address. And we went first of all, my mother and I to one address and my sisters with sort of family, distant family we stayed. And though I was with my mother, who wasn't there during the day, but after all I remember then crying and crying and crying all the time because presumably I just felt uncertain, displaced and unhappy. My mother decided in Amsterdam that just...it wasn't going to work. My sisters were also desperately unhappy and we just went back home. You know, it was dangerous to do either thing. It was very dangerous to go underground, as we know from the many stories. So we decided to go back home and perhaps on the whole maybe that was the right decision - difficult to judge that. But in Westerbork I remember at first crying all the time and, as I say, it must have been very difficult. Eventually, I settled down. But I was 10 years old, old enough to know that what was happening. I suppose the fact again of being away from home, taken away, very worried adults, a sort of a melee of people around me and so on was probably more than I could really cope with. Though on the whole I was quite a reasonably good child but I do remember that. But eventually I settled down to it and I remember when I had this spell in hospital, I...you know that was quite exciting I suppose again. And I was together with Eva which helped. But certainly we realised – I realised - this was...this was serious. There was, something happening beyond, even beyond the adults' control. Perhaps that's what starts children off when they feel the adults are not in control. Yes.

**Tape 2: 4 minutes 38 seconds**

BL: What did your mother do in Westerbork? Did she work?

MF: You see I mentioned before. I'm not quite sure. I don't think so. I know that eventually – I'll come to that - they worked in Belsen, but I'm not quite sure whether those months they worked in Westerbork. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I tend to think not, but I may be wrong. Yes. So. She took care of us as best she could. Yes.

BL: And do you remember the journey from Westerbork to Belsen?

MF: Yes, yes I do. That was an ordinary train. We somehow felt that this was a better place to go. Little were we to know. But I suppose in a way it was certainly better than going to Auschwitz. I think that everybody realised that of the two, you know, it

was better to go there. Though it was an unknown quantity you know of what... I think it had been promised that that was a better camp. It proved not to be a better camp, but certainly not to be compared to Auschwitz where we would just not have survived, I mean, you know. Most of the people who went did not survive. Never even got there, as far as I know. Yes. But I remember the journey there. I can't tell exactly how long it took. Probably not all that terribly long. It wasn't all that far. Yes. I've sort of looked it up on a map. For years I never looked these things up, you know. Though, mind you, I say not very far, we had to go right across, right across Germany somewhere near Hanover there, but I don't think that we were very, very long there. And it was an ordinary train. We had somewhere to sit and so on, yes.

**Tape 2: 6 minutes 36 seconds**

BL: So your mother carried these passports with her to Westerbork?

MF: My mother carried the passports with her and the other papers. She carried my father's medals with her and no doubt any papers she had from that time. And she carried certainly the medals I know right through to the end as it were, because she felt it might be of some use. And the passports definitely yes; you know they were important documentation. Any sort of documentation that she had she took with her. Not everything survived but I have my birth certificate so I presume she had that with her as well, which, as I say, I have it, so that is quite unusual, most people lost it somewhere in the melee. But everything in our house was just taken, I mean after us. We had a flat. You know they just emptied it and removed it, never to be seen again. I mean my father got a few books back because his name was in it. They wouldn't give him other books because he believed not writing into books, you see. But some books had been given as a present. But all these things were just taken. There were also some... there was something somebody...called Puttkamer. They took money in exchange for some sort – meant to be - some sort of documentation that you wouldn't go to camp or that kind of thing. I know that I have a document relating to that you know that my mother paid some I think goods, rather than money to this organisation. Quite openly. I mean they actually gave her the seats for these things. It was quite extraordinary... quite extraordinary. I mean that sort of thing was for people grasping at straws, basically.

**Tape 2: 8 minutes 39 seconds**

BL: Who else was going with you going from Westerbork to Belsen?

MF: I can't remember. I mean there were a lot of people. I know there was a train full but it wasn't an enormous crowd. But I can't remember, I can't remember knowing anybody that went with us. Altogether I'm actually very poor with people in Belsen. Westerbork still a few. In Belsen really... Well, first of all, our immediate family had gone, had disappeared. And I somehow can't see people in Belsen. I see the place empty. Oh the barracks I see people but not actually people I know. They're all very shadowy as far as actual personalities are concerned. One or two, there are some, there are some. Not very many. So who we travelled with I can't say. Again I was by that time – I was 10, 10 and a half.

BL: So what were those first impressions when you arrived?

MF: The impression, as I said before, was bleakness - bleakness and cold. It was empty. Somehow I had sort of felt we were going somewhere better and it certainly did not prove that way. It was very cold. It was very uncomfortable and bleak. The food it transpired there was very poor and everything seemed to be made of turnips. There was turnip soup and there was turnip jam and there was turnip coffee and very little of it. And bread no doubt also had turnips in it. We had a ration every day and there were sort of churns which came with sort of soup, which had practically nothing in it of any food value and very little of it. I mean that is when we started to experience hunger and cold.

**Tape 2: 10 minutes 47 seconds**

There was some sort of stove in the barracks but it really gave off very little heat. I suppose they used wood for fuel but it gave off very little heat. So cold and hunger. Fear, I suppose... but I think by that time one sort of...it became for a child part of, sort of, what life was, you know. I can't remember actually questioning it. Funny isn't it? One would think one would question: 'Why is this suddenly happening?' I think perhaps children don't - just take what's happening to them or they just take it. But I suspect that my mother gave us food of hers. I thank goodness I cannot remember that, but I suspect she did because she needed it more than us, in a way. We didn't grow in that time you know. Children just stop growing if you don't feed them. We were allowed to keep our own clothes. Now that only years later occurred to me that that was unusual. We could keep what little clothes we had. We didn't have much by this time, but we could keep our own clothes. We did not have a number, and also we were not shaved. Now those three things are terribly important because they take away one's personality. You put somebody in prison pyjamas; you stamp them with a number, they're only known as a number and you shave off all their hair so everybody looks the same takes away completely all identity and it's the first step to the grave basically. And that they didn't do to us. Everything else was exactly the same as in the neighbouring camp, but that they didn't do to us because there must have been in their minds there was the possibility of exchanges and it wouldn't look good, I mean, you know, if one had a number stamped on one. It took me a long time after the war then I realised those things that we didn't...Why we didn't have that. And that was why. I think that made a big, big difference.

**Tape 2: 13 minutes 13 seconds**

Because it was if people lost their will to live; they lost their identity; and they lost their will to live; and they would sort of walk around with a glazed look in their eyes and sort of be like zombies almost, and one would know - even I would know - that was just the beginning of the end. So anything that kept one's identity going must of necessity be a positive thing, yes. So we... My sister Ruth, who was past 16 at that time, and my mother, were sent out to work. I know that Ruth took apart old Nazi uniforms and shoes, leather shoes they took apart. I presume these things were reused to make new uniforms. It could be that they just wanted to give somebody something to do, I don't know. It was unpleasant work but it was indoors. I'm not sure what the men did. I think the men were very much more outdoors which was much, much harder. But this at least was indoors. But Ruth worked there. She went out of the camp every morning and came back every evening. And so did my mother until, later on, my mother got weaker and weaker. And then she was put on duty sweeping and cleaning the camp compound. And Eva and myself were left inside the camp to do

basically nothing. One wasn't allowed to gather together. We did a bit of sort of helping with people who had small children and we helped a little bit. And I know I went to the back of the camp. I had a spoon and went with this spoon to scrape out the churns, what little there was left at the wire of the camp. I sort of remember it must have been there and I would look back at the camp and there was nothing there... it was all empty. It couldn't really have been empty, but probably some moments it was and that sort of stuck in my mind. We sat around a lot doing nothing basically because the thing was to conserve one's energy. If you're hungry, you don't do anything, you know. You try not to keep your...you haven't got the energy to play, though no doubt being children I suppose we did pick up pebbles and play 5-stones or something like that. I can't particularly remember, but basically we did nothing.

**Tape 2: 15 minutes 47 seconds**

My older sister had taken from Holland a little tiny diary which she wrote in for a couple of years. She ruled a line and wrote little remarks. This of course was actually strictly forbidden but you know...she wasn't caught at it basically. And this diary, or a copy of it, but I think the diary itself is in Washington in the Holocaust Museum. And Eva, who always loved drawing and became an artist and art teacher, had taken with her a little sketchbook and one of these tiny paint boxes. And she must have had some coloured pencils. This was gold dust to have a pencil at all was absolute gold dust. You know children nowadays, they chuck about their biros. Thank goodness, it's lovely, they're cheap and plentiful, but to have a piece of paper and pencil was really something and she drew pictures. I wish I had it here to show you: occasionally barracks scenes with bunk beds and so on, but mainly very, very colourful fairy stories. You know, Snow White and the dwarfs and Red Riding Hood and so on, very brightly coloured, which of course took her away from where she was. She has this book - her husband has it now - that she drew and that she kept. I didn't have anything in particular. I suppose I was too small to think about taking anything in particular. But the time, you know it was difficult to think about exactly what time was spent on... but basically time passes.

BL: Tell me about the camp, because this was a special camp in Belsen you were staying in.

**Tape 2: 17 minutes 43 seconds**

MF: We were staying in a compound. Belsen had several compounds, you know. This, as I mentioned before, I found out later was called a 'Star Camp'. They reserved this particular compound, I think, for people who had some sort of passport, some sort of 'foreign nationalities'. The Nazis must have known that quite a few of these were bought ones. There were some real ones. There was one young man, a boy that was American and I can come back to that. And so on this particular camp part was used for that purpose. And I mentioned Albala before, which is one name and one face which really sticks in my mind [Jack Albala from Salonika]. And suddenly I remember him and I remember one or two of the Nazi officers. They used to take us out and count us. It was called 'Appell' and preferably in the middle of the night and the colder or the rainier the better - they seemed to like it - and put us in a sort of square or rectangle, five deep and count, and count, and count, and count. Now, many people couldn't have got away. There was no way of getting away from the camp. There were electrified fences, and there were fences outside the fences, you know, but

they counted and counted. And of course there would sometimes be people short because they hadn't come out of their beds, you know, either because they were too ill or they were dead. You know, so that was an excuse to keep people there, and they in their over greatcoats and these high leather boots and a leather strap across their chest. I remember the face particularly of one of them. He was called William Tell. You know, 'tell' – to count – you know. And they would take great pleasure in doing that – kicking people, shoving people and totally unnecessarily. It only cowed people. I suppose that was the point. You think: what on earth makes people do these sorts of things, you know? It's completely un-understandable. Yes.

BL: He was called Wilhelm Tell as a nickname, this SS officer?

**Tape 2: 20 minutes 14 seconds**

MF: Wilhelm Tell was a nickname, yes. I don't know, he may have been Wilhelm, that's possible. But he was called Wilhelm Tell because of the counting. Tell...in Dutch 'tell' is counting. I do remember some faces like that but, of my fellow inmates, not very many. One family with two girls whom I remember. I remember the father, the mother, and the two girls. They survived; the parents did not. They stayed till the bitter end. They lived in Switzerland eventually with their grandparents and we were in touch with them.

BL: What were their names?

MF: They were Marion and Erika Neuberger, their names. They married since – well, unfortunately, Marion has died. But we saw them and we saw their children. They came to visit here. And she, Marion, was an example. She did not talk to her children; she could not talk to her children. The end of their parents was just awful, just terrible you know - the last days in Belsen when the parents died. And she could not – she couldn't speak about it, so the children didn't really know the story. I don't know if they...if their aunt talked to them about it, but the mother did not. And, when they visited us here, he had just married, and I said something like: 'Isn't it amazing? Here we are sitting in the garden eating a strawberry tea or something. That wasn't meant to be.' They were absolutely amazed that I was willing to talk about it. And his wife said, 'Why don't you ask some questions?' But he was too loyal to his mother to get that for me. And we were talking about second generation, or third generation. Of course there are some very unresolved questions there and need for some interference some help perhaps in these sorts of cases, yes.

BL: What other nationalities in the camp, do you remember? Were there other languages?

**Tape 2: 22 minutes 35 seconds**

MF: Well, the Greek, yes, yes...Certainly the Greek I remember. The Greek was there. As I say, I'm poor on remembering people but I know that there were other languages and other people and other sorts of prisoners with different colour badges on them, you know, of various different reasons why they were there and so on. But exactly which...As I say I know the Greek because of Albala I suppose, but I really don't know what other nationalities were there. Certainly quite a lot of Dutch and I

don't know... The Dutch contingent were mainly from Germany originally, but not necessarily so. The Dutch had quite a lot of Jews themselves.

BL: Did you know at the time that Albala was from Greece, or from Salonika?

MF: I think I probably did. Yes. That's very difficult to tell between what one hears, but I think I probably did. He certainly was not either Dutch or German that was for sure. You know he was... But I think I did. I think the Salonika bit that I knew. I didn't know where it was and so on, but I think I did, yes.

BL: And was he the leader or the representative?

MF: He was the camp...the Ältester, the camp Ältester or something. He was in charge of the camp and therefore very much in cahoots with the Nazis themselves and had a terrible reputation. And of course it's very difficult. What do you do to blame people like that, you know? If you could get any sort of 'job' as it were, something you were doing, and it would give you an extra ration of this that and the other, you know. You know, people were after saving their own lives. Very often all people wanted was just to survive to tell the tale, you know. I don't know I mean, or just to survive. Let's say somebody like Primo Levi; he just...he was determined to survive to tell the tale, which he did so very ably, yes.

#### **Tape 2: 25 minutes 4 seconds**

BL: Were there any rabbis in the... Do you remember that?

MF: I don't know. There certainly were people who kept tally when the Jewish festivals were and so on and people who would mark those occasions in some way or other. I'm sure there must have been some Rabbis there. But that I'm afraid I don't know the details about, no.

MF: Oh no, actually there was. I know of one rabbi...of course I know one rabbi. Now was he in Belsen? He was in Westerbork, Rabbi Mehle, who taught Ruth at Hebrew classes. But I don't know whether he was at Belsen. Yes. But I'm sure there must have been rabbis there. Yes.

BL: Does the name Rabbi Koretz mean anything to you? Koretz?

MF: No, no. No. There as I say my sister might help. Being 6 years older she has just that little bit more memory of these things. But no...no.

BL: He was also from Salonika, the same as Albala.

MF: Aha. Yes.

BL: But you said you remember the two girls...

MF: Pardon?

BL: The two girls... that particular family...

MF: Yes. Yes.

BL: Any other people you remember from...?

MF: Not really. No. No. It's really just them that I remember. You see even now they have met somebody who sort of went the same path. Now, his family must have been there on the train when eventually we went out. But I can't...neither can he remember us. Not even the name, you know. We can't though...I think on the whole people were very concentrated on themselves. You know, in order to survive you've actually got to sort of look inward as it were. Though people did help each other, but it was very difficult, very difficult. Certainly among us I can't remember any difficulties with other people or anything like that. The only thing I remember from Westerbork when my mother hung laundry out on a string or something and it disappeared. It did happen there – it happens. And she pinned a notice to the line and said: 'I know who took this and they will be reported if this isn't returned.' And lo and behold the next morning it was back again, the laundry. So, you know these sorts of things did happen. But, on the whole, people seemed to live in...within their communities in harmony with each other as much as possible. But helping each other was of course very difficult. No one had very much to help, you know.

**Tape 2: 28 minutes 14 seconds**

BL: But you were with your sisters and your mother, so that...?

MF: Yes, that was of course a very positive thing. I was with my sisters and my mother all the time. Yes. Yes. My mother was getting weaker and weaker but we were all together. Yes.

BL: Did it seem like a very long time for you as a child?

MF: Yes I think it did, at the time. I think as a child I very much took each day as it came and I certainly had no idea. You know one didn't, as a child, think how this might end. I think most of my sort of concentration was focused on hunger and cold and fear, I suppose, those three things. And you concentrated on those things rather than on what might happen tomorrow. I can't remember thinking: how will this end? Or what will we do? I didn't think ahead, which perhaps is as well. I'm not a great one for introspection, anyway, I suppose, but...certainly not. I was how old? - I was then 11 years old.

BL: So how long did you spend in Belsen? How many months?

MF: We were there a year – a bit more. We were there from December 1943 until January 1945, so the whole year around. So we had in fact the winters of the two - yeah – and it gets jolly cold there. Yeah. But interesting you know. Nowadays, you say: oh it's cold and you turn the heating up and so on, but actually the amount of cold or hunger that a body can stand is quite high, you know. Yeah...

BL: So what happened in January 1945?



**Tape 2: 30 minutes 17 seconds**

MF: In January 1945 there were already rumours. I remember people were getting quite excited. And about 250, 300 people were called to come out and walk past the camp doctor. He was – one often sees these scenes in films – there was a table, a wooden table, stood in the square there and we had to walk past him. And he would decide who would or would not go to wherever it was we were going. I don't think anybody really knew. There was always the danger that it was not...I think it was perceived as something positive, I'm not sure. My mother managed – I don't know how - to walk upright past him, and we were chosen to go on this transport and we were immediately then and there taken to the railway tracks nearby. It seemed to me right by the tracks, but it may not be – there was a bathhouse and we were told to strip and have a shower. And of course I don't think that I was afraid of that but the adults must have been terrified that this was not water coming, you know. But indeed it was water, and we were told to get out and get dressed again, and we were sat on the embankment there and given something to eat. You see this I remember you see - given something to eat, which was a bit better which actually had a soup or a stew or something, which actually had something a bit more in it than just turnips, though why they would want to do that at that stage. We were sat there for quite a while and then the train arrived, an ordinary train. And we were put onto this train and moved off. I don't know how long we still stood there, and to me this journey lasted - you know - about two weeks, but actually I think it was only a matter of a few days. We stopped a lot because there were a lot of bombardments and the lines were up, and then they had to renew the lines, and then we would continue, and then there would be a bombardment somewhere and stop again, and so it took a long time it seemed to me. My mother was lying on the bench there. On the way quite a lot...it kept stopping at various concentration camps. And they took off people because they said they had too many people for an exchange. We were told it was an exchange. I think we knew we were going to Switzerland, I'm not quite sure.

**Tape 2: 33 minutes 3 seconds**

But we must have been given things to eat... something... because it did take several days. People were being taken off the train and then it was very cold and snowy and so on outside and then eventually we were told to get off the train. My sister said: 'Look we...' – again to one of these SS officers with their high boots and so on, who came through in the morning, and my sister said to him, Ruth said to him: 'We can't get out; we can't carry my mother out.' And he said: 'OK.' He says: 'Stay.' Whether or not, you know, years later one thinks maybe they threw someone out in the next carriage, but thank goodness I don't know. And we stayed on the train and eventually reached St Gallen. And at St Gallen we were taken off the train and put onto a Swiss train. And I suppose that we were exchanged at that stage for...Now I was always told it was German prisoners of war who were in America, but I understand that it could also have been German nationals in America who...I'm not quite sure. This is a very interesting question, this question of exchange because there weren't supposed to really be any. But we were put on the Swiss train and went into...oh, across the border, and there they took my mother out to hospital. And she died within hours; she died that night in Kreuzlingen in a hospital. She, I think, knew she'd taken us out. She'd got us free - and let go. You know she was very, very weak. And she died and she's buried there. They took her. And we were taken up on top of a mountainside near there into a...We were staying strangely enough not in a house but in a byre.

They put us up in a sort of barn where cows were normally kept, but it was very clean and there was fresh straw and so on. It was, you know it was just...in retrospect... At the time we were in 7<sup>th</sup> heaven, you know. It was warm and we could lie down there, and we didn't of course know at that time exactly what had happened to...but I think there were so many things happening. I think it sort of didn't impinge, really. These things don't really impinge until you have children yourself and then you realise.

**Tape 2: 36 minutes 2 seconds**

And we were there under help from the Swiss. We were guarded there. We were not just allowed to move around. We were then told that my mother had died. And my eldest sister was allowed to go to the funeral, and she was taken under guard, an officer with a gun – with a rifle – taken under guard to Kreuzlingen to a Jewish family who took...You know, she had a bath and a meal at the table. And they went to the funeral there. I've been to visit a few times. There was a small Jewish community there who now, actually unfortunately, has died out. And my sister came back from that and took care of us. I don't think it hit us completely what happened. This lady, who originally bought our passports – these passports for us, came to see us there. People had already cabled to my father. Both somebody from Israel, a friend from Israel and also this lady in Switzerland – Camilla Arnot, her name was - and the Red Cross had cabled him as well. And eventually from there we were given food to eat, terribly unsuitable food. You know the things...because we hadn't eaten anything. Again only afterwards it hit us – you know, for heaven's sake, things like sauerkraut and sausages, things which made everybody ill of course. I certainly assumed at the time they were doing their best and anything was better. We had these passports of course. We had to show them when we...after this when we went by this doctor. And, interestingly enough, just coming back to these passports, it was only a couple of years ago that I, looking at it, have realised that, by the time we actually were taken out of Belsen, they were actually out of date! And I can't imagine that the Germans did not notice that. I think it's just that they wanted a certain number of people and we fitted the bill basically, you know. We were handed over – the Swiss handed us over to the Americans.

**Tape 2: 38 minutes 45 seconds**

We were put onto a train with American soldiers. Americans by that time were occupying – not occupied - had liberated France and we were taken down by train, down the Rhone-Saone Valley, all littered with tanks and military vehicles and so on – a lot of battle, a lot of fighting down that way. And we were taken to Marseilles, now a pitiful remnant, you know. By that time a few people died when they arrived, like my mother did. Some people were too ill to continue and they were kept there. By this time, we were only about 60 or something like that. And of course then they looked at our passports and decided we didn't actually have real passports to go anywhere. Not that there was much transport to take us anywhere, but actually countries didn't want to take us, as it were. And we certainly didn't want to go to Paraguay even if we could have done. Well, we would have gone anywhere they took us. We were put on to a ship in the harbour, an Italian war ship which...with the idea that we would be taken to Philippeville in Algeria to an UNRA camp – that's United Nations Refugee something or other because all the people who didn't have proper passports. There was one young man, who had actually a real American passport and his mother; they were put on to another ship to go to America. And my father who cabled and pulled every string that he could find in America, the Foreign States Office

there, anything he could find, managed to get permission to actually have us shipped over to America.

**Tape 2: 40 minutes 44 seconds**

So we were at the very last moment taken off this Italian war ship and not sent off to Africa but sent to...but put on the Gripsholm. The Gripsholm was a Swedish Red Cross ship taking wounded American soldiers back home. And oh my, they were so...I mean they were in a terrible state, in a terrible state. I mean people often say things about America. They really should think twice because they lost so many people in that war. And the injuries and so on of these poor young men, it was really quite appalling. Anyway we were on this ship. It took us quite a long time. We took a very southerly route to avoid - because it was still wartime - to avoid submarines and mines and so on so. It took us about two weeks to get to New York and we came into the harbour there to the Statue of Liberty. And somebody had advised my sister that, you know, we would be queried, questioned and so on because after all it was the ideal way of putting spies into America. So she suggested she should wrap these medals up and throw them out of the porthole, which she did, much to my father's chagrin because they nearly got back to him but didn't quite make it. We were, however, very thoroughly interviewed and interrogated and then we were all put onto Ellis Island, which was a sort of...It was a prison basically; it was a prison, or used for refugees for years and years. We were held there. We were there two or three nights, I think, and we were the first of this group of people - there weren't very many of us anyway - to get off Ellis Island, and we were taken into New York to an immigration office, and there down the corridor came my father! And we were...it was quite amazing. And we were asked to swear the Oath of Allegiance as one is in America, and we were handed over to him! And came into brightly lit...I mean America was at war but it was brightly lit because the bombers couldn't reach that far.

**Tape 2: 43 minutes 20 seconds**

And my father was in a sort of guest hotel where he put us up as well. He took us to a cafeteria. You know, it was as if we'd landed on the moon. It was quite, quite extraordinary. But you know children take these things... they just take them in their stride. This is what is happening. I think in a way adults do as well if needs must you know they...We were put up there. My sister Ruth for a long time afterwards used to take food up into...by her on her bedside table 'cause I suppose she felt, you know, any moment now it'll disappear again. Long time that she did that. My father, however, had to go back. He already was supposed to go back to England before we arrived, and he asked for special permission to stay because he wanted to be there when we arrived, which he got, grudgingly. But he got the permission. So very soon after we arrived he had to go back. He went back on the Queen Mary, which was a troop ship. And, of course, left us in America, I mean, first of all, there was a war still there. You can't just take a trip on a troopship in war time and, also, there was nowhere where we could have lived in England. In any case, there was no question of us coming with him to England. He gave us...He had arranged for us to stay with a Quaker family. Their name was Day. He was a doctor and his wife and three young girls, whom I recently now have been in touch with actually again. We were in touch afterwards for a while but then I had lost contact. And we stayed with them for a few weeks. We couldn't speak any English of course, but we managed somehow. And they got clothes for us. You know collected from friends and so on. The Red Cross collected clothes for us. And, eventually, we went from them to a Jewish family in

Newark Delaware where we stayed with them and then started immediately school there, again without speaking English. Ruth had a bit of English; she'd done some at school. But children learn very quickly. You know nowadays there's such a big problem of children coming to school not knowing English. Children learn very, very quickly. So then it was... you know, education was the important thing to get back to...to some sort of schooling. Yes.

**Tape 2: 46 minutes 16 seconds**

BL: But what was it like for you in such a short time span to lose your mother and then to see your father whom you hadn't seen for so many years?

MF: I think it was very extraordinary. I don't think we really fully took it in. I certainly did not take fully in the death of my mother. Not till much, much later. I mean, there was the fact that we missed her of course, but there was so much happening that I don't think I took it in until much, much later and really I think only fully, as I said before, when I had children of my own and I realised what she must have gone through. And of course also what she missed, you know she...how old was she? She was 49. She was 49 in 1945, yes 49 and not yet 50, so no age really. And that really only hit me much, much later. Yes, seeing my father was amazing. All things going on around us was amazing. We were much more grown up than the children around us. Going to school for instance, was a very strange experience because I was much more grown up - always was you know - than the children in school, who knew very little about it. I mean there you know...Afterward we went to another Quaker family in Concord, New Hampshire, which is even more out somewhere with school in the middle of nowhere. I mean they really had no idea of the war - thank goodness - of the war in Europe. I mean they knew that America was at war. So one didn't talk about it actually. Among ourselves we probably did. I don't remember actually all that much talking even to my sisters. We just concentrated on what was going on then. And my sister - elder sister - was desperate about education because she felt she'd never catch up. She felt: Oh! She'd missed all. She of course was in a way the toughest because she had missed those wonderful young years between 16 and 18, you know. She was just beginning to sort of grow up at 15 and 14 and then to 18. Really she lost her youth, these young years. It affected her, therefore, much more. But the education was very important. And I have letters from my father asking about what we are doing and praising the report cards, and that seemed to be... No question of counselling or discussion or... There just wasn't at that time. One just coped! Which in a way was quite good.

**Tape 2: 49 minutes 23 seconds**

Thank goodness we were able to cope. Perhaps, like I say, Ruth was perhaps the most affected, but even then we all...She got on, she caught up those years in no time at all. Eva and I went to New Hampshire and Ruth went to New York to stay with a Jewish family there. She helped them. She was a sort of help as well as going to school. They had a children's' home and a holiday camp as they have in America. So Ruth was there and Eva and I were elsewhere and went to school and lived a sort of American life, though we did not discuss with anybody our experiences. That came really very much later that I actually - already when I was in England, we came to England in 1947 - that I actually sat myself down and said: 'Now what do I remember? What actually happened?' You know, actually gave the matter some thought. But for years

and years and years it just was not done to talk about it. I think people started thinking about it more when they realised people were actually dying off who had stories to tell, who had important information. But at that time we certainly did not.

BL: Did people ask you questions in America? I mean, you...

**Tape 2: 50 minutes 56 seconds**

MF: Not very much, no. The children would ask questions more about Holland than anything else you know. Did we wear wooden shoes and did we live in a windmill? - That sort of quality question. Even the teachers didn't really. They wanted to be kind but...I know that in the school in Concord I wrote an essay entitled: 'A Dutch Girl's Appreciation of America'. It was meant to be a patriotic essay and I won a prize for it - I won \$10 or some fortune like that. And it was published in the newspaper. And then the headmistress of my school wanted me at graduation - it was a junior school graduation - to actually say this. But she didn't want me to read it; she wanted me to say it off by heart, you know. It's very difficult to say an essay off by heart. And I remember sort of messing it terribly up and she thought she was being kind you know, giving me the privilege and so on. But I didn't have my parents there and... Eva was there on that occasion, I think. I'm not sure but it was I remember terribly painful. I would have preferred to have melted into the...you know with the other children and not have been picked out for special things. It was meant well; it was meant well, but people did not understand. No, they did not ask many questions. Later on, even in England as a school girl and so on I don't think I was asked any questions by anyone. Only the most basic ones perhaps, but not really, no. Much, much later and then when it became a much - I would say we are talking more of the 70s now - when it became more of an issue and so on and then people at dinner parties and so on. And sometimes they'd be totally amazed. They had no idea, particularly non-Jewish gatherings and so on. You know things at the University for instance.

**Tape 2: 53 minutes 12 seconds**

BL: But were you close to your father at all? Because he missed so many years, in a way, of your life?

MF: Yes...No, but we were very close. We were very close. He was very much a father figure as it were. I mean he didn't really...Every day taking care of ourselves, we took care of ourselves - we took care of him if anybody. But we were close and he was keen that we should have education. There was no question that we should not go to university and so on. It was a matter of course. And...Ruth...well we came to England in 1947 and Ruth sort of ran the household and she studied part time at Birkbeck College - languages - did very well. And she married in 1950 already and then, unfortunately, she married an Austrian Jew who had emigrated to Australia and then was sent here to do his PhD. Now they met and...because we had people coming always to the house. I mean my father, nothing daunted that there wasn't a proper housewife, would invite any stray refugee who needed...who he felt needed somewhere to come. And that's how she met him and she went in 1951. No, she still went in 1950 actually; she went to Australia. So she didn't have quite as much contact with him. But she was very close to him and she helped him with his books and that sort of thing. And then Eva...Of course we had to take care of my father at that time,

which I don't think we did all that well, but it had to be good enough as it were. Eva married in 1954, I suppose, and she then went to... She married, well, you know, she married Ted Zeev Plaut and they went to live in Israel and so she was not here all that many years either, but she had a good relationship with my father. And I was left behind to look after him as best I could. He very soon after that met my stepmother Lotte and she took over the...taking better care of him. That was fine. Even I had a little bit of restitution money by that time and I thought: 'Well, if that doesn't work out with another woman in the house, I'll just move out somewhere.' But actually it wasn't necessary. We got on very well together and still, after his death, I was very close to her. He was a very good dad, but he...What we actually did and so on, the English system, he didn't really understand. You know English education and so on, so we had to sort of do those things for ourselves, which is understandable.

**Tape 2: 56 minutes 35 seconds**

BL: How come that in 1947 you came to England rather than stay in America?

MF: Oh because he wanted us back with him. That was the whole idea that we should come back as soon as he felt it was possible. Even then it was not comfortable here in England. There was little heating and little food. It was very rationed and so on. I understand somebody just said to me the other day that bread rationing only started in 47 interestingly enough. But he was busy looking for somewhere where we could live. It was difficult to find somewhere in London, to find somewhere to live because there was so much bombing and so on. But he found a flat that he rented in Queensway, Bayswater. And we came over in January on the Queen Elisabeth the First ship - I mean it wasn't called Queen Elizabeth I since there wasn't a second one yet - and came over here. And we lived together. Then we moved to Golders Green, actually bought a house in Golders Green. Yes.

BL: Mrs Finkelstein we have to change tapes.

**Tape 2: 57 minutes 52 seconds**

**TAPE 3**

**Tape 3: 0 minute 2 seconds**

BL: This is Tape Three. We are conducting an interview with Mrs Mirjam Finkelstein.

Mirjam we were talking about your stay in America post war and then coming to England. What were your first impressions of England?

MF: Cold – it was the winter of 1947. It was cold. And London was still very, very bombed. It was still quite difficult in England. I mean there was rationing. We were happy to be reunited with my father, also that the three of us could actually be together because we hadn't been together in America. We obviously got together. I mean towards the end in America when we lived in New York for a while I was in one place and my two sisters were somewhere else together. So it was nice to be together. My elder sister took over the household. And we were quite comfortable in

the flat there. But England was very austere. It was difficult circumstances generally. As I say, there was rationing, and it was an extremely cold winter. I mean the winter of '47 is a well known thing, and there was not enough heating and all these sorts of things. But we were quite content to be with my father. We ran a household of sorts. It was not very good. We had not much idea of cooking. If there is rationing what you really need is someone who knows what to do with one carrot and one potato sort of thing, which we didn't in a way. But we were content to be together and we girls did things together. Ruth started her studies. I went very soon to school and Eva also went to school with me, the same school. She was doing her last year of what was then General School Certificate. There were some problems where they were afraid she might not pass them if she didn't stay a year longer. But she insisted she wanted to be in that class and of course she did pass all of them, and then she eventually went to art school. And Ruth who did the main of the household and she was in charge. At least we all helped and we muddled along. I mean America had been more comfortable and perhaps more pleasant, but it was nice to live together again as a family even though there were sort of difficulties.

BL: Did you want to come to England or did you want to stay in America?

**Tape 3: 2 minutes 53 seconds**

MF: No. I think I was quite happy to come to America [i.e. England. I think what I wanted sort of was to be a family again. Although it never quite worked out like that because no mother, you know, it's not a proper... I suppose I was hoping in a way that things would be back to normal at last and it wasn't quite, but we did have a family home. And we had guests and so on, a lot of people. My father always had lots of people coming and going. So that actually worked very well and I liked my school. I made friends very quickly. I still had my American clothes to show off in austere England. No, I was quite happy to come here, yes.

BL: Because in America it sounded as if you changed places quite a lot.

MF: Yes, we moved around a lot. Yes. Yes.

BL: So that must have been difficult?

MF: That was difficult and I think we were all looking forward to settling down in one place. Yes, I mean the last place, as I say, I was living with a family at one end of a road and my sisters were living in another place. So I had to, at that age you know, sort of really look after myself. I mean I was a lodger as it were, you know. People were quite kind, but I was there as a lodger, not as a member of the family.

BL: Who was the last family you were staying with in New York?

MF: I was with a family called Birnbaum, a Jewish family. I don't know who found them, but they were very kind and so on but I...Thinking back, a lot of the time I was there as a lodger, not really as a member of the family. They had two very grown up daughters. But I fitted in well enough. As I said before, we were very grown up for one's age really. You know, one wouldn't think of letting someone of that age sort of

live like that, but actually it worked out perfectly well. And my sisters were down the road so we did see each other quite a lot.

**Tape 3: 5 minutes 1 second**

BL: So how many different families did you actually stay with in your – in those two years?

MF: In those two years? Well, first in this hotel. That was just a few days. Then the Day family, and then the Danneman family in Newark, and then the Moody family, the sort of Quakers, in New Hampshire, and then back to New York for some months – that makes four, I think, yes. And some of it with my sister, and some of it on my own.

BL: Was there any idea that your father would come and join you in the States?

MF: I can't remember that there was any particular thought of that. As far as I remember, we would eventually join him in England, although there must have been a question of whether he might come there. But I don't think that he seriously considered it. I don't think he could come and settle in America because his work was here. I mean he certainly wouldn't have abandoned that – here in London.

BL: What had happened to the library - then?

MF: Well, the library was in Manchester Square. When the government and the BBC withdrew funding they went through a very thin patch financially, and my father had to spend – many years actually - a lot of time raising money for the library, which was very difficult actually. But he did find Leonard Montefiore, who gave a lot of financial aid, also practical help with the library. Other funding I think eventually he got from Germany. I think it's something called...I'm not quite sure, but there were funds of restitution money which they got money from, and then, eventually, other foundations. I know that they got money at some stage from the Volkswagen Foundation. I don't know quite when that was. That might have been much, much later, perhaps even after my father's death. I know that finance was a problem, but it remained a library and it was used. I mean it was used by papers and museums as well. But they did not fund it in the same way as they did during wartime. But it kept going! Going from strength to strength eventually, you know. But it took some time.

**Tape 3: 7 minutes 54 seconds**

BL: Did you go to the library? Do you remember when you came...?

MF: Well, I did visit. I actually did go as a...when I was at school perhaps. In my holidays I used to go to the library to help doing things there. And I remember I used to stick newspaper articles onto paper, although of course now you know people draw in their breath sharply when they hear of gluing things onto ordinary paper because it ruins them of course eventually. But that was what one did then, you know, or with sellotape, heaven forefend, you know. But I used to help with archives and filing and that sort of thing. I used to go there on my holidays and it was just near the Wallace Collection, so I remember going frequently to the Wallace Collection as well. Yes.



BL: So there must have been a lot of refugees. Was it a sort of centre for meeting other refugees?

MF: I don't know. I don't think...can't remember meeting other refugees there. Eventually, I also did some work for the United Restitution Office – URO, as it was called. Now there, there were a lot of refugees, yes. In the library the people who worked there were mainly refugees. I mean most of them had come before the war and had escaped and so on. The people who worked there were all refugees, yes. But the people who went and came to work there, well, must have been quite a lot of refugees. But all sorts of people who wanted information and so on. Yeah.

**Tape 3: 9 minutes 32 seconds**

BL: What sort of circles did you mix with?

MF: Well, me personally, with my school friends mainly. It tended to be the Jewish girls. It's interesting, isn't it, how one gravitates towards them? In fact just a moment ago one of them phoned here. But I'm still in touch mainly with her. There were one or two other ones, but sadly they're not all about any more.

BL: What was the name of the school?

MF: The school was called Paddington and Maida Vale High School for Girls. Used to be before I got there the Girls Public Day School Trust, but then it became a state school. It was a very good school actually. As I say, I drew my friends mainly through the school. I then later on also joined B'nai B'rith when I got a bit older. So I went camping with Bnei Brith Youth group. Actually very early on – I was too young for them – but I went so I made friends that way. But mainly, my main friends were from school and there was a Jewish Youth Group through the Alyth Synagogue and the...but later on B'nai B'rith gave us friends which now are still firm friends. And my father's friends were mainly refugees and all sorts of people - writers and researchers and you name them, musicians and all sorts of interesting people who used to come and visit and we would look after them as best we could. But he liked to have people. I remember sitting there listening to such difficult conversation. I always wondered why did adults want to sit there and converse such a lot, you know. Until one finds, one day, one does it oneself, you know. But it was quite...there were always people coming to the house. Yes.

**Tape 3: 11 minutes 43 seconds**

BL: Where was the house? Where did you live?

MF: We lived in Golders Green. Actually...well first we lived in Bayswater from January '47 till about December '48 so almost a couple of years. And then we actually bought a house in...in Golders Green, not far from the station there, very nice, which my father promptly filled with lots of books. He had his own books and he also built up a book library for eventual... as a book shop because there was always a danger that the library would pack up financially. So he had this as a backup, to sell books, to be a bookseller. When he went off he used to go off with a little suitcase, go off book

shopping. We would say we don't need any more books, but still... He would come back in a taxi with his little case and we thought: 'oh good he's only brought one case of books', and then behind him would come another taxi with lots more books. However, he knew what he was doing. Eventually, we sold the books and he knew what he was buying. It was mainly German - not German - educational books, mainly philosophy and all sorts of things, much of which was eventually sold to a new German university. All these books were out of print, of course, and hadn't been reprinted. So, as I say, it was a large house but there were also a lot of books. My eldest sister married shortly in 1950, so she was not all that long in the house. Eva married, I think in 52 it must have been - maybe 53, I'm not quite sure. So then it was just me and my father and eventually, at about that time, my stepmother came on the scene and we lived there together. My father travelled quite a lot. He went to Germany. He went to Germany to speak to students, to speak to German students. He felt one must get at them as soon as one can. He was quite unique in that way because most Jewish people didn't go, didn't want to go to Germany. And, anyway, one did not travel all that much in that time, as one nowadays just pops here and there.

**Tape 3: 14 minutes 23 seconds**

BL: So he went back in the early '50s?

MF: He went back in the early '50s, yes. Yes, yes. I'm not exactly sure which years and so on. I know he had connections there with schools and also with the church - the Kirchenkampf - and that will all be recorded in the Wiener Library, I expect, yes.

BL: And what was your stepmother's background?

MF: She came from Düsseldorf. She married a businessman. She came to England just before the war with...she had a son and daughter. The daughter had TB and unfortunately died in Switzerland where she had been sent. And her son was sent over here to school already much earlier. And she came here with her husband and they lived in Cambridge. The husband died of a heart condition. And so they met eventually. I think they met on a boat going over to Holland or Germany or something like that. And, in a way, it was to me a relief because it was somebody who could look after my father properly. I mean I was looking after him, but we had a series of housekeepers and so on; it really was all... not very satisfactory. So, she must have come in about '53. That must have been '53 when she came, something like that '53-4, yes.

BL: What did you do after you finished school?

MF: When I finished school, now, because we did not know all that much about the English education system and so on I didn't stay for what was then called a Higher School Certificate, because one could go to university and do something called the Intermediate, which only takes a year. But of course that was a foolish thing to do because it didn't take me a year. It of course took two years because it takes a year to get used to being taken from school into a completely different environment. But I then went to University. The idea was to study chemistry. In fact I changed that slightly. In fact in my Intermediate I did biology and physics, and chemistry and math or something like that. I then did a general degree in math, physics and chemistry,

which has stood me in very good stead. I've used every strand of that education in some work or other, so I think the government invested well in my education. I've given some of this back, yes. Ruth studied languages and Eva studied art and all worked in their fields eventually.

**Tape 3: 17 minutes 22 seconds**

BL: So you had the right spread of...

MF: Yes we had a complete spread of what we did. I must say my father, when I said I would study the sciences, was completely foxed by that, as it was some field he had not really touched upon. But he was quite prepared to let me study whatever... As long as I studied something it was all right by him, you know. And it all worked out all right. I mean if I'd stayed at school a couple of years longer I would have perhaps gone to London University. It might have been a bit easier for me – you know the polytechnics did external degrees, which were more difficult to do and the whole ambiance was not as it might have been at another college, but it was perfectly all right. I was happy to do that.

BL: You were talking about your schooling and then...

MF: Yes I was saying that perhaps it would have been better if I had stayed for two years in my school still longer and gone to a college which was more pleasant – London University or so. I don't think there was any question at the time of going out of London. I don't think we thought about it. But I was perfectly satisfied with what I got there. I got a reasonable degree and work in all three of these fields eventually.

**Tape 3: 19 minutes 2 seconds**

BL: What job did you get?

MF: I worked for a firm called Zoflor which made artificial flavours and perfumes and I first was in their sort of in their lab which tested any incoming chemicals to make sure they were of the right standard and purity and so forth. And we used to analyse – analytical lab - actually in the laboratory and then eventually I worked in their development lab where you sort of made things and tried out whether they are smells or a taste was of some interest to...in the commercial sense. They made things like perfume for Brylcreem – yes, yes – and hair things and orange flavour for squash. This sort of thing. I was very happy working there. I quite liked working in a laboratory. Then eventually – then I got married while I was there and then I decided I'd like to do something with a bit more sitting involved in it. So then I worked in the civil service in their patents department – as a chemist for chemical patents, which was a very interesting job. Yeah.

BL: How did you meet Ludwik?

MF: We met through B'nai B'rith and I...one of our members, who actually was at that time the President, worked in the same place where Ludwik did and mentioned to Ludwik and another young fellow – Jewish fellow – about B'nai B'rith and that they should come along. And one evening Ludwik was in town to see some exhibition or

another and decided to come along to a meeting. And so, as I was membership officer, I made him a member and he decided that was quite a good thing. He said any organisation, as he put it, which has such membership officers must be all right. Anyway, actually through this other young man we went out four of us together and we started going out and the rest is history, as they say. We met, I think it was April '56, then we got engaged in January '57 and married in July '57, coming up for 50 years. Not quite there yet, but almost. And, interestingly enough, the other young man who also came along married a friend of mine as well, so there we are. B'nai B'rith was a bit of a marriage bureau – the young ones you know, we all met there together.

**Tape 3: 21 minutes 59 seconds**

BL: Was it attached to anything B'nai B'rith – to a synagogue?

MF: No it's not attached to a synagogue but to the B'nai B'rith organisation. The meetings were at a synagogue. In fact we met in the same room that eventually we had our wedding reception in, in West London Synagogue. In the library there we had a meeting: somebody was giving a lecture on something and that's where we met. So we met at the synagogue, but it was just that we hired the room there and we had a lot of meetings actually in the West End there. And those friends we made then are still our friends now. At that sort of age that's when you make them – it's the basis of our friendships.

BL: What is Ludwik's background?

MF: Ludwik is Polish. Well he is Polish Jewish as the expression Polish, interestingly enough, usually means not Jewish. But he feels very Polish and so on. He was born in 1929 and... in Lvov in what was then Poland, is now the Ukraine. He was the only son, and his father was an industrialist. He had a big business in steel, iron and building materials I think generally. And the family was...His father was sent to prison eventually as a capitalist. And his mother and he were deported to Siberia where, after some adventurous couple of years, he then ended up in what was then Palestine. And in 1947 – in 1945 they could not go back to Poland, but in 1947 they then came with the Army to London and settled down here and he also started studying and so on. He was working for the Coal Board when we met.

**Tape 3: 24 minutes 11 seconds**

BL: Was it important for you that Ludwik has this sort of continental background?

MF: I think it was important. I mean at the time, yes, I think it was important that he had the continental background and also I think that it was important to my father that he could speak German, that – he was very good at languages anyway but - he had a German nanny when he was little. And, yes, I think that was important that we had things in common to start with and a way of life that was in common. By that time his father had died and his mother. I met his mother and so on. They lived just near here, down the main road. As I say, we lived happily ever after I can only say. Yes. We actually moved in together with his mother. We converted the house they had into two flats and she had downstairs and we shared the bathroom and had two separate kitchens and so on. It worked very well. She was a remarkable woman my mother-in-

law, a remarkable woman. And, well, just a very special mother-in-law. That's all I can say. I worked very hard to emulate her. And then, after two years, when we were expecting Anthony, we moved really around the corner only into another road down here and bought a house, which one could easily... Actually, the only reason we could buy a house was that by that time I had some restitution money, which acted as a... And Ludwik had some as well. So we set up a house there and lived there for quite a while. And then, eventually after my father died, we then moved to this house. So we've been in this house now 41 years, something like that. Perhaps 42 years now? A long time to be here but we are loath to leave it.

**Tape 3: 26 minutes 38 seconds**

BL: When did your father die?

MF: My father died in 1964. Already the last couple of years he was not well. He was... 1964... he was very nearly 80 – not quite. Of course nowadays one calls that young, but it was a fair age. So he died at home in Golders Green in 1964 on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February.

BL: So you raised your children here in Hendon?

MF: The children in Hendon, yes. Anthony and Daniel were born still in Woodford Gardens, our previous house, and then we moved here and Tamara was born here in 1967. And they then all did what one hopes children will do. They all gave, well, a minimum of trouble, and then they did reasonably in school and they went off to university and all work. I mean have done remarkably well really, you know. I mean we count with an amazement that who, after all to me are always children you know, are actually serious adults doing very serious jobs. And they all have children and we are very fortunate that they live so near to us so that we can actually see them all. This Friday evening we had them all here plus my nephew from America and another friend. So we are very fortunate that this is possible.

BL: What sort of identity did you want to transmit to your children?

MF: I wanted - we wanted them to be Jewish, Reform Jewish of course because we were, so that's what we knew. We wanted them to be clear about their Jewish identity, not so much that they had to go all the time to the synagogue and so on but that they were both clear and also proud of their Jewish identity. They never did try to change their name or anything like that. They were quite happy in their Jewish identity and still are. And that was important to us, and we wanted them to be English. We wanted them to study here and be English and for me, at the same time, I don't see the conflict. Though it's... I think we have achieved. I think they all feel... well they're all part of the establishment with the sort of jobs they have and feel very, very settled here. So we really are very fortunate that they married Jewish partners and that is also a matter of good fortune in a way, though if they hadn't we would have found our way around that one if it's necessary. But as it turned out, that's how it is.

**Tape 3: 30 minutes 2 seconds**

BL: How would you describe yourself in terms of your identity?

MF: Again, Jewish. Continental – not all that much continental. I feel actually more English than continental. I mean I know I am, you know, continental maybe because one has an accent and so on, but I feel sort of very English. I know Ludwik does as well, you know, very much part of his academic establishment and so on. I'm always quite surprised when other people don't quite take me as being English, but I take myself as such, and always speak English. You know I very seldom have the opportunity now of speaking any other language.

BL: What impact did it have on your life to be a child survivor? A refugee?

MF: I think the main thing is that I'm very laid back and I don't think I would have been. There are so many things that happen that I know just aren't that important, that I can't get myself excited about. We had a burglary, for instance, more than one. Yes, it's very annoying, but one still has enough things to live with. Maybe I would not have been quite so laid back – that's the modern expression - about things around me. You know, but otherwise it's difficult to know how one would have been different. But I've become more conscious of being a survivor because lately one speaks about it more. You know you speak about it more; it becomes of importance. But I've become more conscious of it. There were years when I was studying and so on when really that was not of any importance – or working and I was quite happy to do that. It's only when one gets a bit older that then you remember, you know you go back more perhaps.

BL: How come you started talking about your experiences more?

**Tape 3: 32 minutes 17 seconds**

MF: Maybe because it became generally more talked about. And I suddenly realised – that must have been somewhere in the 70s I think, maybe even the end of 70s I'm not quite sure - but I suddenly realised that it was being talked about much more. I think I mentioned before I really had to make myself sit down and think about it and think about what happened. And then I was occasionally asked to speak at a school or the synagogue actually for the Hebrew classes. And just, bit by bit, it sort of grew. And then I heard about the fact that people were actually speaking about it regularly at school, and I thought: 'Yes, that's something I could do', and also my story being that of a child would perhaps resonate more to children, though I also talk to adults and so on. But it's a different sort of experience, but also quite interesting. Yes.

BL: So is it quite important for you to talk about it or...?

MF: It's not terribly important. I could live without doing that, I think. I don't feel that I need to talk about it. It's rather the other way around. I feel that somebody needs to do it, and why not me, you know. I'm after all at the younger end of the spectrum. If you're much younger than me...I mean people who came as a child, people who came on Kindertransport and there are all sorts of stories of people who can be a bit younger. But, to be an actual camp survivor, you can't be all that much younger. So I think it is important for me to tell my story. I don't think it is of importance actually to me. I could live quite happily without doing that. I'm quite

glad it's been recorded on various occasions. I think, you know, to leave it behind as it were, as a record, but that's about it. Yeah.

BL: Did you ever go back to Berlin or to Holland to the places where you were?

**Tape 3: 34 minutes 38 seconds**

MF: I've been – oh to Holland, certainly. I love going back to Holland. It's always still a little bit like coming home. It's interesting, we don't have any family or anything there, but I love Holland and of course speak Dutch. Ludwik spent a year in Delft and then we went quite frequently to Delft which is a lovely place as well. To Berlin - I have been. They had some scheme where the mayor invited you to come there for a week, which we took part in quite a while ago. That was the first time that I went to Berlin proper. I can't remember it at all. I don't like terribly much being in Germany. Maybe it's because there are too many Germans about. It's the same feeling I have in Vienna you see. I mean a beautiful place but too many Viennese, but that's obviously a hangover of course from the war experiences. But we went there. We had a week in Berlin. We went to East and West at the time. And then...well, once I was in East Berlin on a conference because Ludwik went on a conference near there. And then I've been recently - about 2 years ago – I was taken to Berlin to meet the daughter of Albert Speer, to meet Hilde Speer, to have an interview talk with her, which was recorded and broadcast, which was a very interesting experience. Yes.

**Tape 3: 36 minutes 17 seconds**

BL: Why did you go and meet her?

MF: Well, as I mentioned earlier on, we were staying with a Quaker family called the Days, in New York in 1945. And in the 1950s Hilde Speer, Albert Speer's eldest daughter, won a scholarship to come to America to study in school there for a year. And though there were some difficulties about her coming there and getting a permit to come, she was taken in for those months or years – because it really was - in the Day family it so happened. This fact is written about by Gitta Sereny in her book, was picked up by a gentleman who makes radio programs and so on. And he came to speak to me and he hit on the idea that we should all get together, as it were, and have a program together about this. And he did indeed speak to everybody. But, one of the things he did was to take me to Hilda Speer and have a one to one sort of talk with her and he used this then as a broadcast on BBC 4. It came out actually quite well. I mean I have no experience of these sorts of things. It was very interesting to talk to her. I feel that she is a victim more or less like I was and still is suffering of course from this...her father. She obviously loved her father – he was her daddy - but he made demands on her which I feel he definitely should not have made. When she was in America he tried to get her to get hold of people to try to plead for his earlier release and so on. Things like that, which made that even more difficult for her, of course. She was only a child. He was not released by the way, I mean the Russians wouldn't let him out a day earlier and I think quite rightly so. I think he was very fortunate to only have been imprisoned and not hanged actually. But you know she feels all this very strongly and does various things to try and make up at least a little bit for all the things that happened - in her own way. She was an interesting person to speak to.

**Tape 3: 39 minutes 5 seconds**

BL: It must have been an extraordinary meeting!

MF: It was - yes. Yes it was very strange. I hadn't really prepared before hand for it, but when I met briefly the day before – we had a cup of tea together - I suddenly thought, well, I ought to think about this a bit more before going in for this. And I'm glad I did because I had a little bit more idea perhaps what we could talk about. And somehow it worked very well. We talked about what she is doing. She is doing work on giving people grants for people to come - young Jewish people to come - and study to Berlin and do film projects or art projects and so on. And she also has something going encouraging people to return stolen works and to think a bit about: 'How did father get this shop?' and 'Where did these pictures come from?' Very often things were given to quite ordinary citizens from raided Jewish houses and she tries to get people to donate money to the funds. So she does her own work, her own way of doing something like that. But she has suffered a lot with this and it is very hard. After all it was her father.

BL: So, in a way, you continued your father's work of reconciliation. Because you said he was doing something in the '50s.

MF: Well, I suppose – yes, I hadn't thought of it in that direction, but I suppose in a way, yes. Yes. It was a very fine opportunity to be able to do that. Yes.

BL: Do you think your life would have been very different if you hadn't been forced to leave Germany?

MF: I don't think, apart from the actual war years and of course my mother's death, which could have also happened in normal circumstances. I think...I think not. I mean maybe...Certainly the earlier years sort of from '40 after we were released. For the first few years perhaps it would have been different if...you know, different years. But I think once getting married and with children and so on I don't think that life would have been all that different. I always sort of semi-joke with Ludwik that it seems excessive to have a world war just for Ludwik and me to meet. But he assures me that if there had been no world war his father would have sent him to Berlin to further his education and no doubt he would have gone to B'nai B'rith there and we would have met there as well, so... That's a comforting thought, you see, probably. I don't that think the years following our meeting and marriage would have been all that different really.

**Tape 3: 42 minutes 30 seconds**

BL: For you what is the most important thing of your – let's say - continental heritage?

MF: My continental...?

BL: Yes, what is the most important?



MF: The only thing really is the Jewishness, which of course could also be an English and not necessarily a continental feeling. I don't really feel continental. I know I am, you know, and no doubt to the outsider I am very much so. But to me myself no. I feel very rooted here. I feel very happy in England. I have great faith in the English. I had a little argument with somebody the other day who said: 'Oh, the same thing could happen in England.' And I said: 'No, I don't think that sort of thing could have happened in England. The English are different'. You know, I boiled it down to that they believe in fair play. It sounds simplistic but I think basically it's very important.

BL: Do you feel you belong here?

MF: Yes I do. Yes I do feel I belong here. Yes. And Ludwik does, even though he studies a lot to do with Poland and so on - that's only since he retired. And the children very much feel they belong here. They're very much part of - as I said before - the English establishment, really. All three of them. Well I suppose I must count my in-law children as well. All six of them - yes.

BL: Your father left a lasting heritage behind of the Wiener Library.

MF: Yes.

BL: Are you very concerned with what's going to happen with it?

MF: Well I'm interested in what happens to it. But I think it's now got to the point where it can take off. Actually it's always in need of funds of course, but I think it's at the point where it is not in danger of folding. And it seems to be in good hands. They have to move now, which is a big thing. But no, actually I think my father would have been quite amused how it's gone from strength to strength, and how now, if you mention the name 'The Wiener Library', people say: 'Oh, yes! The Wiener Library!' You know they're quite impressed, which is very gratifying - it's very pleasing. And of course there's another Wiener Library in Tel Aviv. So it's a typical English...one of these English things: you know, they had no money so instead of there being one library there are two libraries. One of those things, but yes, it's very pleasing actually to see that the library has gone from strength to strength, and really plays quite a big role within the community, certainly within the Jewish community.

### **Tape 3: 45 minutes 28 seconds**

BL: Is there anything else you'd like to add which we haven't discussed or I haven't asked you? Maybe you would like to add your grandmother's name?

MF: Oh! My grandmother's name. I think it was Amalia. Amalia Wiener, that is. She is the only grandparent actually that I knew. I've got a picture there of my grandfather, but unfortunately I didn't know any other grandparents. I knew her. She lived just above us in Amsterdam and she was a diabetic. She used to throw sugar lumps down to us, no doubt much to my mother's... probably disapproved of this! But I don't know whether she was already old then, but she died shortly afterwards, or whether it only seemed to a child that she was already quite old. But unfortunately I didn't meet any of my other grandparents. I think it must be lovely to have grandparents around. Yes.

BL: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MF: Oh, well, I suppose the only other thing is to mention again my sweet aunt and her husband and her young son, my only cousin Fritz, who were so young and lost their lives and are no more. I suppose I should use this occasion just to remember them. Yes.

BL: Is there a message you might have for anyone who's going to watch this film?

MF: Oh I don't think so. I don't think I can give any message. I think perhaps the main thing is that material goods are not that important and that what really truly matters is the family and friends - other people. That is what matters. Nothing else really, really matters. And that's something I try to live up to and am blessed with a wonderful family. Yes.

BL: Mrs Finkelstein, thank you very much for this interview.

MF: Thank you.

**Tape 3: 48 minutes 11 seconds**

**End of spoken interview Tape Three**

**Photographs**

**Tape 3: 48 minutes 30 seconds**

MF: this is a picture of the home of my father taken in about 1895. He is the little boy standing on the right next to his father, Karl Wiener, who had a haberdasher's shop, which one can see behind him. And I presume it is his mother in the doorway. Next to it - the other shop next to it is the Deutsch family, which was an aunt, I believe, and cousins who lived there.

BL: Where was it taken?

MF: It was taken in Benschen in Germany, then in Germany.

MF: This is a picture of my mother and father. It must have been taken well before the war and, by the look of it, it looks as though they must have been taken on holiday somewhere. I expect in Germany.

MF: This picture was taken in the garden, in Holland on Johan Van Eyck Straat. It shows my sister, Ruth, on the right. And, on the left in the foreground, my sister Eva. And I am sitting, aged about three - it was taken in 1936 - on the lap of Betty, Betty Levine, who was our mother's help for many, many years.

MF: This was taken in Holland in 1938 on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June. It's my 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, with my sisters, Ruth and Eva, looking at me admiringly with my birthday ribbon on my dress.

MF: This is me in 1941. The war had started but we were still in the Montessori school, just before being moved to a Jewish school. It's a school photo, taken also of my other sister.

**Tape 3: 50 minutes 50 seconds**

MF: This is the three of us, I think probably just at the start of the war. We are going off to school – a very serious Ruth, a somewhat nervous Eva, and a devil-may-care Mirjam with a brand new satchel going off to school in Amsterdam. I would say probably 1940, 1941.

BL: It says March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1940.

MF: This is my mother, presumably taken just in the war because of her looking... she looks more sombre and older than I seem to remember her before the war.

MF: This is my mother's gravestone. She died as we arrived into Switzerland. The [Jewish] community of Kreuzlingen buried three people that died that night and also put up a memorial plaque as a memorial for the Holocaust dead in general and looked after the cemetery, though now unfortunately the community itself is no more. They still have a scheme by which the cemetery is looked after.

MF: This is my aunt, Tante Nuti – Gertrude Abraham – my mother's much beloved sister and her son Fritz, my only cousin, who were taken away from Westerbork to Auschwitz never to be seen again.

**Tape 3: 52 minutes 42 seconds**

BL: When was this photo taken?

MF: The photo must have been taken I would say somewhere around '38 – something like that, I would hazard a guess.

BL: Where?

MF: In Holland - in Holland, yes, by the age of Fritz.

MF: This is a picture of Ruth and Eva and myself in the winter of '45 sitting on a bench in Central Park in New York. Eva and I had come down from New Hampshire, over the Christmas holidays, to visit Ruth.

BL: When was it taken?

MF: I think I said in December 1945.

MF: This is Mr and Mrs Moody in their garden near Concord, New Hampshire. They were a Quaker family and Eva and I stayed with them, first in their summer camp and then in their house during the winter, where they had children. They looked after various children wonderfully and were of great warmth and loving friendship to us.

MF: This is a picture taken in probably autumn 1946. I was staying with a family in New York and some friends of theirs took me to visit, to Philadelphia Zoo. Very American. I'm sitting sipping soda through a straw and vividly remember a very nice day.

MF: This is a studio photo of my sisters and myself, which has been slightly touched up and glamorised. It was taken in New York sometime during 1946, probably the autumn.

**Tape 3: 54 minutes 46 seconds**

MF: This is a picture taken in October 1950, in London in Middleton Road, Golders Green, where our house was. Ruth and Paul had got married shortly beforehand and Eva is there and myself, and my father in his smoking jacket smiling.

MF: This is a picture of my father taken in – I would say - 1953 in his library. In the Wiener Library and it's a very good and very typical picture of him with a smile on his face.

MF: Ludwik and Mirjam, 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1957, a wedding photograph nearly 50 years ago.

MF: Another wedding picture of Mirjam and my father again 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1957. My father looking very formal there.

**Tape 3: 56 minutes 10 seconds**

MF: This is taken on the occasion of Anthony's engagement in about February 1985. Anthony and his fiancée, Judith Fishman, are in the foreground in the middle, Tamara to the right and myself to the left. Behind is, Ludwik and our middle child and second son, Daniel.

MF: This picture was taken on the occasion of Simon's Bar Mitzvah. They are six of our grandchildren. From the right is Aaron and then Alex and Sam. Simon is standing and in front of him is Callum and his sister Jade. Little Roxana, who was born a year later, is unfortunately not on this picture but is very much with us.

MF: This is a picture of Ludwik and myself taken in London around the year 2000 I would say.

MF: This is a passport, a Paraguayan passport, bought for us at my father's behest by a friend in Switzerland in 1942. She paid for this passport and it was of great use to us later on in the part it played for us being able to be exchanged. An interesting thing to note is that, in fact, on the date we were exchanged, it had just run out of date.

MF: This is a letter dated February 6<sup>th</sup> 1945, received by my father, to state that myself and my sisters had been released in an exchange in Germany. I am not sure whether that was before we reached Marseilles or after.

**Tape 3: 58 minutes 53 seconds**

MF: This is a certificate of identity for my father. It was used as a travel document and it is amazing how much he travelled in 1940 to Switzerland and even to France. He was naturalised after the war in 1948, dispensing with the usual continuous 5 years living in England, and the three of us - the sisters were all naturalised together at the same time.

BL: Mrs Finkelstein thank you very much for this interview.

MF: Yeah, that's a pleasure.

**End of Photographs**