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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	100

Interviewee Surname:	Steinberg
Forename:	Judith
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	3 March 1929
Interviewee POB:	Paks, Hungary

Date of Interview:	2 August 2005
Location of Interview:	Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	5 hours 10 minutes

REFUGEE VOICES
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEW: 100

NAME: JUDITH STEINBERG

DATE: 2 AUGUST 2005

LOCATION: MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

Tape 1: 0 minute 31 seconds

RL: I am interviewing Judith Steinberg and today's date is 2 August 2005. The interview is taking place in Manchester and I am Rosalyn Livshin

What is your name?

JS: My name is Judith Steinberg.

RL: And what was your name at birth?

JS: Judith Berkovic.

RL: And did you have any other names?

JS: Except my Hebrew name which is Yehudit, Yocheved, which is what some people call you, Yehudit or Yocheved.

RL: Are you named after anybody?

JS: Yes, my grandmother, yes the one I showed you the picture.

RL: And where were you born?

JS: I was born in a small town in Hungary, and the name of the small town is Paks, P-A-K-S, Paks.

RL: And when were you born?

JS: 3 March 1929.

RL: If you can tell me something about your family background, about your parents, grandparents. Give me an idea of your background.

JS: Yeah, well, starting with my own family: We were seven sister, brothers, seven children. Five boys, two girls. My parents, my father had a dairy business, a kosher dairy business in the town. My mother, before she was married, she was a nursery teacher. We settled in this community which is approximately five, between five and six hundred Jewish families. As far as you want me to tell you about my family more general.

RL: Well, I am just thinking to start with what you remember for instance, your father, what do you remember of his parents?

JS: My father's parents came from Slovakia, to live in that small town, and his name was I think, Yankovitch, Jakob Berkovic, my grandfather, and he died just before the Germans occupied Hungary in 1943. My grandmother also died a year before. That is my father's side.

RL: What was her name?

Tape 1: 3 minutes 21 seconds

JS: My grandmother I only remember her Hebrew name, Gittel, I don't know what to say, other name was Gittel and I don't remember much of her, a little bit.

RL: What do you remember about them?

JS: Well, they were very orthodox. My grandfather, he was once working for the Shechita Board, he was a shochet, if you know what that is, and gave that up when he went into the tannery business with some of his sons. He had seven sons. And my father had seven brothers and two sisters.

RL: What was your father's name?

JS: Marton Berkovic.

RL: Where did his siblings live, where did his brothers and sisters live?

JS: Two brothers lived in Berlin; one brother lived in a town called Dunafoldvar which is a Hungarian town. He was married. Hermann was actually the younger brother, who you saw on this picture. He was, he was deported to Russia. The Germans took out 12, 000 healthy young men to Russia to clear the road for the Germans in the winter, very terrible, a lot of snow, where they couldn't progress, to advance to wherever they were going. They took these Jewish young men, 12 000 and there was one of my uncle. And as far as I remember, he was frozen to death and the Red Cross found the name because they had some sort of identification, most of them perished. I think one escaped. It was a book written about the death squad or something at the time. So this was my younger brother's, another younger brother of my father, one from Germany, they were deported, who lived in Germany, one lived in Budapest, they went also to forced labour camps, we never heard what happened to him. Nobody witnessed anything, they were a crowd, they were sent to Austria. So that's what I know roughly about my father's family. I tell you who came with us to the transport to Auschwitz, I'll tell you at a later stage. And is one uncle who survived, who went to Canada, but he died young, he got cancer, he also survived one of these forced labour camps. You see, we had forced labour camps and eventually when they didn't need the forced labour, the people were deported to the concentration camp, to what they called the death camps, exactly what happened to my father. So, my father's family, as I know, where else he had other

brother, they were sort of scattered out in Hungary, in Germany. Where else? He had a brother, I think, he had a brother living in Rumania, part of Hungary it was called, I think, it was called Kaloczfar that's another brother and his whole family, I never heard anything about them after the war. I think, they all perished. They must have.

Tape 1: 7 minutes 26 seconds

Now I had one auntie, who, 1939, she came to England and she lived in London, she came as a domestic help, you know, to run away from Hungary. At the time, people , things, war started, things happening around us but Hungary was pretty peaceful at the time. Well, she lived in London, that's my father's sister, and, till about 1960, I would say 1960, and then she went to Canada. She got married. And her husband died about, they were about ten years married. She came back to London and 96 she died, that was my father's sister. So, the one who survived. The other sister, I show you on a photograph, she came to Auschwitz, just perished, never seen her again. She was in the same wagon, all the family kept together, I have never seen again. Regarding my father's family, they were quite scattered all over and to remember, you know, there was not such an easy contact. Like today, you got your emails and telephones and everything, and that wasn't, you couldn't contact them so very often but I remember vaguely what the family were, vaguely. And

RL: Where was your father actually born?

JS: In Slovakia. Now, they lived in Slovakia two places. I am not quite sure which one my father was born. I know half of the family, this, some part or another, they lived in three different places before they settled in Paks, my grandfather. Now, his own were on the Rumanian side, my father is on the Rumanian side of Hungary, they came from. And the town where I lived is, was near the Austrian border, it's just the opposite side. Of course my mother's family is merely on the Slovak side. You know, my mother's family. I suppose we will come to that.

What else can I tell you about my father's family because I was very young, and we weren't sort of living very close by to each other. And I don't exactly know what happened to them in the war, all I know, when I came back, searching for the family, nobody came back except one uncle who survived. And he went to Canada and he died very shortly after that and it is going back many, many years ago. And an auntie who came to England, they were nine sister, brothers, two sisters and seven brothers. I had five brothers two sisters.

Tape 1: 10 minutes 31 seconds

RL: Do you know what kind of education your father had?

JS: Well, education mainly in the Talmudic education. He was a very good scholar, Hebrew learning. He had no, any other English, sort of higher education, just ordinary. But two brothers, the younger one, he was a teacher, the two in Germany, one, I think he had an insurance business. I don't remember exactly, but one was a lecturer. The one older brother, he, he very early went to Germany. He studied in Hungary, he, all I heard about it, that he didn't, didn't agree with my grandfather being ultra-religious. He lived in Germany, he educated himself, he became a lecturer, but we couldn't contact, there was no correspondence. Once the war started, we were just cut off, literally, from the family. And me being so young, I don't remember any. If I would have found some letters when I came back but that wasn't possible, there were full of Russian soldiers in our house.

RL: Do you know what happened to your father during the First World War? Did he serve at all in the army?

JS: I think, the First World War, I think, he sort of wasn't old enough. But my mother, she is the youngest of nineteen children, and she lost two brothers in the First World War, my mother, the name was Weisz. That is my mother's family. She lost two brothers in the war. Because she used to tell us all the time, you know, hoe horrendous it was for the grandmother to get used to, two got killed. And then again, a very big family. They lived all over the place. There is two sisters who lived in Paks, in this little town, but she had two sisters and a brother in Bratislava which is in Slovakia. She had a sister living in a place called Hungary Szolnok which is the name. It is a funny language, so funny names. Solnok, and the, the other sister, one lived in Nyiregyhaza, one lived in … and we never contacted with the one who lived in the Austrian border, is called Eisenstadt, I think. She got married there. And she had relations where else? Yes, Budapest, she had a sister, and where else? Paks, Budapest, there is a place called …., she had a sister, in Hungary. You see, it is all a sort of funny names but they are exist. So I was mainly… Oh yes, then she had another two sister in another small town, I remember, I used to visit them as a child, it is not far from the town I lived, it is called Zomba. And they were, their name is Kreismans. And the children are still living in Israel. Yes, two sisters there. And I think, one of them died. Because there were a lot of them. She had, my mother had about six brothers and the rest were girls. But out of the six brothers, there is two died in the war, one lived in Bratislava and … oh yes, there is another one who was in Bratislava, was a teacher. A sister, and three sisters in Bratislava.

RL: What did her father do for a living?

Tape 1: 14 minutes 36 seconds

JS: Whose father?

RL: Your mother's father.

JS: My mother's father, he had a grocery business. And also was just learned in the Jewish, you see, in a small town, people not had the education unless, you know, the general education, unless you could move out to a bigger town and you were inclined that way but the orthodox families tried to keep their families in the religious circle. Learn the Torah and… of course it was, besides the learning the Torah, they were very encouraging to read books. And music was a very important part for all of us. Even the Rabbi, was incidentally, you had a Rabbi Altman, here who was a cousin, in Paks. And because he originally, his family coming from Hungary, he went to Germany and he then he came to England, and he was becoming a Rabbi here. So, all children learned some kind of instrument, that was all permitted, and playing sports. This was very broad-minded, sort of orthodox in a proper sense, it was very, you had to be. You lived in a small town with all our Christian neighbours. We were like sister, brothers, we just accepted each other. It was very peaceful. I can only remember nice things for neighbours and upbringing and non-Jewish neighbours and I went to Jewish primary school. But High School, I had to go to, that was a Catholic school because Hungary is a Catholic country, is like Italy. The majority, the major religion is Catholics, then the Jews, then the other bits you know, other religion, they call reformatus and… You know what you call Protestants or something. But very small, but the large was, very dominant religion was Catholic, but they had great respect for the Jews and we had very peaceful neighbours. And we were friends, you know, it was different. You had to be, you grew up together. It was very nice.

RL: Coming back to your mother. Whereabouts was she born?

Tape 1: 17 minutes 1 second

JS: She was born, I think it was, it was outside Bratislava, a small town. They, she was born in Slovakia. I am not quite sure what is, they changed the name to a Slovak name. I can't, a small town. So, most of her family, my mother's family come from the North, what we call the North, it is the Slovakia, but don't forget, in those days this was Hungary. Bratislava used to be the second capitol of Hungary. And the Jews in Hungary, they were all over Hungary, all over Slovakia, all over Rumania, spread out, everywhere. And where they changed the borders, occupied by the Slovak, you know, after the First World War, they cut Hungary up. The Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up, the country was cut up, I am not quite sure on my history, all the reasons why they cut up. But the people, still, they were family, sort of, is like East Germany, West Germany: you have your family here, your family there and that's what we had, because my mother had a big, loads of, a large number of family. And they come from Slovakia. Half of them got married there, half of them got married in Hungary, some of them, even she had a sister, in a place called Fiume which, I think, is an Italian harbour. That's her sister, I never met her. But she used to tell us as children, about the family 'cause you couldn't keep count who, there were so many of them. And one of my aunties who lived in Paks, the same town, it's got one daughter who survived out of nine children. She lost her parents, she is still living in Israel, in Jerusalem, and we survived to get out. I lost my sister in Auschwitz, she ended up in Bergen-Belsen. And I ended up with this cousin who survived in a, which I will come to, I tell you, where I finished up at the end.

RL: Do you know where your parents met?

JS: Oh, that is a good question. You know, how long it goes, is sixty years ago. How they met? My grandfather said he came to this town called Paks, he was offered that job, you know, in the slaughterhouse. They, what they call, I don't know, how do you call a shochet in English, what do you call it, abattoir, you know, he was killing animals in a ritual way, if you like. He was there and he had this big family, my father was a nice-looking man and he was, he came back from Yeshiva which is a place in Slovakia called Galanta. It is a there, and he came back to Paks. And you know, how they meet, you know, I don't know. They both lived in the town and they got married. So my father background come from the Rumanian side, my mother background is the northern side, that's what they call the East. And I was born on the west side of Hungary, you see, sort of… You can sort of imagine in a small country, people marry in different towns and in different villages and sort of, we were scattered all over the what I call the 'Greater Hungary', you know. So, but they all spoke Hungarian because to them the language was new. And I must tell you a very funny story about the language when we get, you'll have a laugh …

RL: Where did you come in the family, what number child were you?

Tape 1: 21 minutes 4 seconds

JS: I was second, I had an older brother.

RL: And what is your earliest memory as a child?

JS: As a child, the connection with my brother or?

RL: Just in general.

JS: In general. So, I just give you an outline of the type of life we lived. Obviously very far from what we live today and they, your own grandparents will tell you life was different to them as well. We didn't have all this technology to be entertained, we had to find our own. And we were very good because we had very good teachers. For instance, if it was school holidays, you wonder, what the kids doing in the summer, there is no television. It was lots to do, they made us do it. We, first of all, we used to make up our own plays and we did our own play in the gardens, and we were busy with that and entertain us. And we used to get people coming from big towns like Budapest, some cousins. And we used to love going out to the orchard picking cherries and apples and whatever. There were loads of, where I come from, it was full of orchards. It is a beautiful place, really. I was born on the bank of the Danube. One side was the most beautiful forest, the other side hills. And on top of the hills, this is most fascinating, Turkish and Roman remains on the top, and the city was built, there is a little city, was quite pretty. My daughter came, I took her to Paks, and my son Josh said, 'How can you live in Manchester, after this pretty place?' It is pretty, it is not big but it was a very close community, great respect for one another and we very much outdoor because it is so beautiful in the summer. You got all these acacia trees and you had the Danube, the Promenade, and in the evening it was lit up. And it was ice creams and a lot of gypsy music. And that was this sort of life, and it was natural, normal, the family gets together and sing. And what was clever from my parents, because the summer, we have an awful lot of fruits growing in Hungary in that particular part, vineyard and everything. So my mother got us in the summer evenings round the table with a big container, we had to open apricots, plums to make jams. So, or… She'd preserve everything. We used to have a huge, I don't know what they are called in English, it is like a larder, 'Speisekammer' in German, you know, where you can store your food for the winter. So this is what we had to do. And while we are sitting, we are chatting, you can invite your neighbours, singing, and we used to walk, sorry, we used to cycle to the countryside, didn't have to worry about the traffic. And there was a huge swimming pool, was built on the Danube, in the summer. We had a lovely time. Or my mother would make us, if we get bored, just go to the fields, pick some camomile flowers. And she dries them, in the winter we have camomile tea and things like that. It was very, life was very, sort of, natural and carefree and sometimes you would send us, me or any of the children who wants to go to Budapest because they like to come down to the country. They like to see something, the life in big towns which during the summer. The winter, winters it was different. It's cold. The summer is hot, the spring is beautiful, the autumn is nice but you have about five, six months winter. And wintertime is just sitting around the fire. Father would learn or read us something from a book or we had to read out poems and mother would embroider, so many things she embroidered because she had two daughters and you have to start to do the truce when they are born because it is handwork and she had, of course the Germans took everything, but this, that is, that's what we used to do, she would embroider and baking chestnuts and the evening, we find our own entertainment. And I always said I got everything. I gave the children what modern days want but I was much happier than them. You know, despite of we weren't so rich but we had a home, four rooms, it's like a bungalow, an ordinary, like a bungalow house, you know, four rooms and I remember, the kitchen was pretty big. And you know, this was a different life style, was … We had what we needed, but my father had to work hard to keep us going. But what the good thing was about Hungary, nobody was hungry, because the food was so much. You were just glad, people were glad if you come and pick the grapes otherwise they rot on the, in a grape yard and all this, so really…

Tape 1: 26 minutes 30 seconds

RL: About your home, describe the bungalow. What it was like?

JS: Well, the kitchen was big because my mother was always cooking. And well, it was one room which had my father's books and where we ate usually. And these other two big rooms, there were loads of beds because there were so many of us, we had to sleep in those two rooms because, you know, you couldn't have everyone in separate bedrooms, like you do in these days. But there were beds put up and we managed, we were still young, we grew up all right and there was a nice veranda, was nice in the summer. It's a veranda which is glass, you know, in front of the… How do you describe a veranda in English, it's just like a hallway but glass. You could look out. And really the nice things was there, everything, the nature, the freedom. You are always out and people come and go from each other's home. You know, it was like, like one big family. You know. It's, it's friendly.

RL: So did you live on a street with other houses?

JS: Yeah. Obviously, yes. The street I lived actually, it was near the synagogue and one side I had a Jewish neighbour and the other side a Jewish neighbour and this Lady, non-Jewish woman, was a very great friend of y mother because her husband was a captain of a ship and never was at home. And she had a daughter, practically same age as me, and all the, and we were playing together and she knew about as much about Judaism as any Jewish woman. So they were sort of friends and she said, 'Oh, I come and help you with your Pesach work!' and all this. It was sort of very respectful. There was no, I can't explain it, I find it strange but the segregation was when I came to England. That's an Italian quarter, that's a German quarter, they are Cypriots. There was sort of segre…, there was obviously a language barrier but we needed each other because we had no other entertainment and Hungary was a very sort of jolly country, they like singing, they like walking and what was very nice, people who was brave used to go on a boat at night and it was, across the forest and it's lovely walks there round the forest. I remember in school, we used to have a certain day in May, which goes the trees and the birds and we had this celebration. That was a national, sort of, celebration. And we had enough to do. If we didn't do, we were made to do. My mother made me to do work, cleaning even though I was only eight years old. Because we got to help each other, little brothers, keep an eye on them. But the school was quite long days, because at 8 o'clock you got to school, 12 o'clock you came home. 2 o'clock you went back and you come back five o'clock because the extra hours used to be the Hebrew teaching, you see? So…

RL: How did you get on with the non-Jewish pupils?

Tape 1: 29 minutes 56 seconds

JS: Very well, very well because we were just so close. You couldn't live together if not. We accepted each other happy and took it naturally and you hardly heard what you hear here racial… you may have an odd person sometimes but everybody knew who he was if he was. But we had a mixture in the street, Jews and non-Jews. And in fact, the one of them, this, my mother's friend said, 'Judith' 'cause Hungarian called her Judith, I said, 'Judith, I take her. I am going to hide her.' I said, 'No. I am going where my mother goes!' Before the Germans, you know, took us. And if they would have found her hiding any Jewish child, she would have been shot on the spot. So that wouldn't work. But as a young child, previously, pre German occupation, I was very happy and people were nice. And we enjoyed ourselves in our own way. And we were not sort off cut off of any sort of culture: it was books, there was

a library. What you can do in a small town. And we had a High school but if you, people wanted to go to other colleges, universities, there were bigger towns nearby. I mean, there is a beautiful town called Szeged. Szeged is quite well known, people go visit the small towns, are beautiful. Budapest got battered, you know, during the war. Having the Germans occupied and the Russian want to get them out and gave each other a bashing, that is another history.

RL: How many days a week did you go to school?

JS: Ah, we had to go, actually, that is a good question: we had to go six days a week, to school. We didn't have to write on Shabbos but we didn't have to go unless you requested because the people who weren't religious. We had three shuls in that little town. The one you call Liberal, we call Neologue. They went to school. But religious girls if they want to come, they don't have to write, they could come and listen to a lecture. But you could make up for it, on the following day, copy down the work. But there were six days in my town, a week's school. And Sunday was everything shut 'cause they were like we have Shabbos, they have Sunday. All shut. And, funny enough, you see, because we didn't have these automatic switches to make fires, they used to come in and do this for us automatically. It was, it was a nice, friendly, there was no … I can't say there was any envy or any anti-Semitism, is not, I don't remember those things, all I remember, I was playing with Jewish and non-Jewish children and we were happy, we didn't know… In fact, when I took Josh and Shimmy, to back, my home, a few years ago, and somebody was on the visit there and they were still talking about our Jewish people being taken away from us. And funnily enough, he remembered, my brother used to play football with them and Josh got so excited." I actually met someone who played football with your brother." And they were, that man was just happy to be there in the visit. What happened to our house, that uncle of mine who went to Canada, he was the last to come home. And he, because he has the same name as my father, I couldn't sell the house because it was in Russian hands, but the Russians gone out after a few years, and this uncle came back and he claimed the house because I was already in England with my sister. There is no other survivors and he's got very little money because nobody got money but enough for the house to go to Canada. And he wrote to us, 'Can I sell the house? I go to Canada', because he had a friend, he was in the tannery business, and he is going to carry on, used to make a lot of money on that, on that business, and then he would repay us. And when he built his business up and start to repay which England wouldn't accept the money at the time, you know. We are going back about the Sixties. He will open an account for me and my sister in Canada and would pay us back what casts, I don't know, was 5 000 dollar or whatever he sold it and sold it for, 'cause he had no money to go to Canada, and he had a friend there in the business and he joined up, you know, from Hungary. And the poor fellow, just when he started to do, he died of cancer, 45. That was my father's youngest brother, and that's going back on the Sixties. So that's where went our house, but is still standing. And he died and we didn't get the money because he was just making, opening the account. And we didn't have managed to …

Tape 1: 35 minutes 21 seconds

RL: Where did your father run his business from? You say he had a dairy?

JS: He had a dairy, yes. Now he, there was a farm, and this belongs to one of these, it's called a 'Baron', you know, one of these stately men who had farms and loads of cows. And he had a big cheese factory, so my father bought the milk from him and in the cheese factory, he rented him a part which he made kosher, he was working there doing his cheese and butter.

Kosher, you know, in that factory, cheese factory. And the milk, he had to bring it back to the town and we had at the back of the house a kind of, it's like a cellar in the ground. Because in the winter, they had no big fridges, they had to take the ice from the Danube in the winter, put straw on it and kept it for the summer. And he worked, you see, he had this big can and he worked from that special place at the back of the house. How many litres of milk he has to deliver, and cheese. But he manufactured all the dairy. It's called, it's a farm. It's about five or six kilometres from Paks and I remember the name Birito Puszta means that that's the name of the farm, and is, belong to, you know, kind of 'Lord so and so', you know, those big Hungarians who owned massive farms and land, land owners and all this. And he just took what he needed for the community. And there is, sometimes in the winter, he used to send to Budapest, in the summer it was not possible because of the heat, the butter would melt, you don't have these…, it is old fashioned, they didn't have these cooling car, cooling wagons what you have here, you see. So, so, this is the type of work he did.

RL: How big was the Jewish community in …?

JS: Right, it's about, I think about less than 600 families but each family had a lot of children, we all were big families, you know. We were seven, my cousin was nine, some twelve, some four. It's a good size, I would add up probably 2000 souls altogether, because the wagon, it was so many children. This is unbelievable. We had to pack up and go.

RL: And which shul did you attend?

Tape 1: 38 minutes 5 seconds

JS: The one I showed you.

RL: What was it called?

JS: Oh, I don't know what they called it. Can't remember.

RL: Was that the orthodox shul?

JS: The orthodox shul, yes.

RL: Was that the only orthodox shul?

JS: That was the orthodox shul and they had a small shul what they called a stiebel for the very frum ones. Thea had a stiebel for the elderly, for the Chasidim. But I don't know what they called them, you know, the names, I don't remember. Then they had the shul of the reform Jews. There were quite a few, I remember, a chemist was reform. Lots of, quite a few, quite a few reformed Jews there, you know few families. And each one of them had a cantor and a rabbi. We had our community events and all this, yeah. Chanukah parties and all this, we had this. You know, everybody there, you know. But as neighbours we all got on, we didn't bicker at each other, you are frumer, you are less frum, who cares: you do what you want to do, we do what we want. We had to, we couldn't live there in a small town if you like you often hear of people different sort of standard, different kind of Judaism, Chasidism and and Belzer Rebbe, that Rebbe, there is not, people did not have that, they, they... You can be what you want to be and we just let each other carry on with their life. We were talking to each other, we were joking.

RL: Was your family Chasidic in any way?

JS: My grandfather, my father's side, he was a bit of a Chasid, yes. My mother's no. My mother family the more this modern looking? but very very orthodox, more like the German Jews, you know. It's like comparing a Polish Chasid or a German Chasid hardly existed, but the Germans, if they were frum, reliwhen you knew the Hungarian community. When you come from the North, they used to call you 'Oberländers' – means upper, on the upper side, and when you came from Satmar, the other side, where my father come near from that end, they were the Chasidic type, and they already spoke a little Yiddish, more Yiddish and this side, they spoke German, my mother's side. But as it happens my father family came there and half of the family wasn't following the sons, wasn't following the father footstep, they did not want to be Chasidim. But they were orthodox, you know, orthodox.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 3 seconds

RL: Do you know what Chasidic group he belonged to?

JS: Well, if somebody asked me, I couldn't put my grandfather to any other group except the Satmars, which I don't, I don't care for it, the Satmars. And because, when I went to America, and I think it's called Pittsburgh, I don't know where it is, one side, where they got the Satmars. And I say, well, my grandfather would fit into this lot. I, you know, but my mother's side they were a different type. But they got on, I mean he came to live in this town, he had to, my grandfather, be like everybody else. And and I don't know so much about his families on the other side.

RL: What are your memories of the festivals?

JS: Oh the festivals, I loved them. I really loved the festivals. It was, you know, you gather around in the shul, they had a bit of garden there, shul garden with benches and the other side was the school and there was a Beis Hamedrash as well, that's where they learned. And the rabbi lived on this sort of quarter there. It is still there but they made a market out of it because there was no Jews and the shul they made a library, out of it. Actually, Shimmy has got quite a lot of pictures from Paks, you know, the … He has got it in his collection. .And he can show you where it were, this, you know, the Jewish places. I recognised my Jewish houses, that were taken over, some completely died, so nobody reclaimed it, and those who claimed it, get so little for it, the people got no money, and they get the solicitor and get all the legal arrangement and you pay for the solicitor … leave you nothing for the house. People don't bother but they do go back. It's got a huge cemetery, **…** has a huge cemetery which I can visit my grandparents and famous rabbis have been buried there in the previous generation. It's very big, the cemetery. But Hungary is funny enough, people, you see, they don't know Hungary, but every corner of the country, they went every village, every corner, including farms there were Jews, you know, they found Jews. Here you may go a few hundred miles before you find another town with another few Jews but they were settled down for almost 2000 years, because they found this tombstone, 2000 years old, I think it is in the Jewish museum in Budapest. And obviously, Budapest the biggest city, there was beautiful synagogues, you know, the shul is beautiful. And you can learn about the history of the Jews. We were spread out. All over. You could be a farmer's daughter and your father could have been a Chasid. It doesn't matter, we were happy. And one thing, it was really, in enjoyed when you come home, Friday, it was earlier from school, 2 o'clock; you cold smell in the corner what my mother bakes. Actually you could see massive lots of cakes of

different kind and and fish from the river. It had to be alive. My father used to buy it. Because nobody eats dead fish like here. And everything, you know, everything was natural.

RL: What kind of food do you remember her making?

Tape 1: 44 minutes 59 seconds

JS: Oh, usually Jewish food, chicken soup, chicken, goose, we had goose, we had fish, we had baked fish. Huge fish my mother baked, you know, you feed so many people, and it was cheap and plentiful. They used to call Hungary, this is the, the European country of milk and honey. When the Germans came in, there was a paradise because they took food galore. And the wine, Hungarian wine, I mean, it's just beautiful. And it is a very rich agricultural country. I mean, some part, you can travel very near the Lake Balaton, it's beautiful there, Balaton, there is a huge lake, you can, you can see miles and miles, sunflowers, sunflower growing. And when you look at it in the morning, it looks at you, that way, and the sunset it moves the other way, and it's so bright, these huge sunflowers. They do this, you know, for business, but the fields, miles and miles, it's fascinating. You know, and orchards and vineyards and and of course if you go there, the great plane is flatter. But there is already, it's hotter and flatter und you can already see some tropical fruit like oranges or lemons, all grow near, like you got in Greece a bit and and Cyprus, Italy and southern part, near Croatia. Croatia used to be Hungary as well.

RL: Which was your favourite festival?

JS: Well, I think, my favourite festival would be Succos. It was lovely, Succos. I remember my father built his sukkah, he could sleep outside, out in the succah because it was such a nice climate. Succos, Purim, I liked it all. Purim was funny, Hanukkah we set plays, we made Hanukkah plays. We had to do these things, we learned, I mean, my father wouldn't let me go out to play on a Shabbos in summer. We had to, I had to learn the Perek by heart, you know, ethic of the fathers. Because he, we didn't learn like here the girls they go to seminar room and … All this is not necessary, you do the basic Mitzvah but you must learn the Perek because it will turn you a better person, and we had to learn and we sat, I even got in front of me. We had a walnut tree, we used to sit under there, and we got to sit on those benches and tell me the Perek this week, the meaning of the Perek, you know, all these practical ways and teach us. And obviously he was called in the forced labour in 43 before the Germans came in. And I remember still when we went to say 'Good bye' to him at the train station, and he blessed us, gave us a blessing and he said, 'Whatever happens, we are heading for difficult times, you always remember what I taught you!' You now, it was very very emotional time but it is something you could never imagine that things would change or something could happen to you, 'cause everything was peaceful round us. My favourite time was the spring because we had these acacia trees where they bring this acacia honey. And in May evening, if you sit down on the bench, it smells like perfume. So white, rich white flowers coming down. It's like you are under a … It's lovely. Now, I, I have just simple, things was simple but good. No worry, we only got to think about what play where go on even in the winter. If somebody who could skate would go on the ice part on the low, you know, it's not the deep part. We had fun, fun all the time. You go on your bicycle, you play ball, you help your parents, they kept us busy. You see, here we don't know what to do. There is nothing to do. My mother would teach me things to do, the house when I was ten years old, you see, she could do all the work herself. Well, you get some help, we used to get some help.

RL: What did she teach you?

Tape 1: 49 minutes 36 seconds

JS: Teach you how to bake bread and how to embroider things, and and clean, anything. You know, you just had to do what your parents said, otherwise you get … Yeah.

RL: When the war started in Europe in 1939, did it make any difference at all to Hungary at that point?

JS: Yes, that March, my mother started to worry about her family in Bratislava and not heard from them. It started maybe on the, not in 1939, more in 1941, 42. Didn't hear from the sisters, where they ended up, two families in Theresienstadt. And they, I think, they died. She is, we just didn't know, what is going on. We didn't know the horrors in Poland and in Germany. Yeah, one of my uncles, yeah, from Berlin, he started, he came back to Hungary but he couldn't stay because it was a small town and he would be found out. He is there, he would be reported, and he went to Budapest and he was trying to get into Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat's house, he's got these protecting houses. I know he couldn't because another cousin told me .. that uncle Chaim never got in, they, eventually they took him. He couldn't get any protection and it was very difficult when in a small town 'cause somebody find a strange face and the Germans they, the sad part was, when the Germans marched into Hungary in 1944, those people who were your friends, they work hard on it to turn against us. Some of them hated the idea, but some of them were frightened, so you have to go along with the Germans. So there you had it. I guess, the same happened in Germany, not everybody's favourite was Hitler. They were far too educated, to understand that he can't be right but you see, once you get hold of the masses and put them into power, anything can happen. That is, I think, the case in Hungary. So to keep track on a big family, how they scattered out, you know, everywhere, what happened to them. There was no communication. No telephone, no radio, we had radio but you could never announce on the radio things like that, but I do remember, that must, '39,'40, I was a little girl, my father was still at home and they used to come out of the shul and they stood in the corner and they go to each other's houses and they were talking about church and were talking about what's happening in Russia. They were talking about the mobilisation here and there but nobody really knew, what happened to the Jews. It was organised in such a, what I call, competent manner, that it didn't leak. Only the very intellectual would know. The people in Budapest they would know that, what was the plan the Germans coming here because they were bargaining already 1940. Admiral Horthy was the Head of the State in Hungary. Because 44 he resigned because he didn't fully gone with the Germans, and they put in power somebody called Szálasi. He was like a rightwing party of Hungary. It's like you have, what's the name, here you have, the rightwing fellow who died, you know, he was the head. So they made him the Admiral of Hungary, the head of the like you got the chancellor, we got Admiral, chancellor Schröder … we had this Szálasi and he was evil, you know. He was one of those few Nazis to get power the Germans and he had to do as the Germans wish, kill as many Jews as you can.

RL: Before he came to power, while it was still Horthy, was there, did life change at all?

Tape 1: 54 minutes 20 seconds

JS: Yeah, yeah. When our life started to change about, in the 40s, 42. They won't allow Jewish people to the university. Certain businesses you have to give up. Horthy's son in law was a Jew, Goldberg, was a very big industrial you know, so he didn't go along. He wasn't a Nazi, he was a great man, I mean, because we lived very peaceful under him for since the

First World War to the Second, under him. So, there was no problem, Jews have prospered, they could expand, they could get professionals, anything you want, but that's the restrictions started. He didn't like it but a lot of things, the the German influence was already so strong, that if he didn't go along with everything, deportation and killing the Jews, then he would have been either shot or removed. So I think, he just disappeared, favourite hideout is Argentina or Brazil. That's what I heard at the time.

RL: So as far as you were concerned, I mean, were you still at school? Well, how old were you when you left school?

JS: I think the schools were going pretty until the Germans came March 44, came to Paks. We were allowed to go to the local schools. And then I was thrown out of the High School because that was a national Catholic school and I had t go to the ghetto straight away. Now, we were in a ghetto, we took a street, actually the street where we lived, all the houses, everybody got to go out, Christian, they had to go to the other houses, the Jewish houses because they needed these houses for concentrate us into that street. And then we had to leave the school, my home, that my home broke up and**,** everything. I had to leave the High School, I was, how old was I? 14, 15, I think.

RL: So you were in the school up to that point?

JS: Yeah.

RL: Right. What was the street called that you were living on?

JS: Well, in Hungarian called Vilamy Utca, which is electric. Now, they called it 'Electric Street' because at the bottom of the street, there was an electric generator, you know, from the Danube. And they called it the 'Electric Street'. And it sounds funny, but I am so used to, I am so used to that called **…?** So, what else did you ask me?

RL: So, I am told that the Germans coming in at 44, did life change?

JS: Changed that way, that there was restriction on Jewish businesses, big businesses, Jewish, Jews couldn't go to certain universities, Jews were forced to go to labour camps, Jews were forced to work for the German army in Austria, mainly, because they weren't full occupation of Hungary but they demanded some young Jewish men to come to work in Austria, for the German army, whatever kind of work they wanted. Or, even they took doctors and professionals for their own benefit. But that's as far as it went, we didn't know the full horror what's coming. And what is going on, and Auschwitz or anything, that came as a surprise when we got there.

TAPE 2

RL: Just one thing that came to mind, was your father involved in the Jewish community in any kind of official capacity? You know, did he hold any positions or was he involved in any charitable work?

JS: Well, we didn't have this type of arrangement what you see today. We, people helped each other when they needed it. They didn't have to have an organisation. It's like, like a nice big family, if somebody needy and someone can help, will help without involve any committees and organisation, there was no need for it. It's sort of knowing your duty to your

fellow men, your community, your needy. We all had one another, more or less you know. I can't remember anyone who was such a needy that you had to sort of have an organisation to run it. There were some poorer families or anything but in Hungary, if you were poor, if you had a little home and you always had something enough to eat. There was never a problem of starvation. If you needed, for instance if somebody needed for a wedding for a daughter and they didn't have enough money, there were always people in the community come forward and make your wedding. That was more like on a voluntary basis than… as I remember, than you have to have an organisation to help one another. No, we didn't, in those days, we didn't know that.

RL: Was he involved in the shul in any way?

JS: Well, just was a regular member. And the shul… There was one, what you call… One person who runs the shul, what do you call a gabbai in English?

RL: Warden?

JS: Yes, a kind of warden around the whole shul. And he would collect the membership and pay for the rabbi, the families. And also you had Yeshiva, is run by a Rov and but usually families contributed and it was cheap because it's only the food and more or less, they had places to stay, we had a Yeshiva there. And well, it was never a problem, where to eat, where to stay, people shared. It was a natural thing to share. If someone wants to come and learn in the city, you'll be put up for a family who had room, and it was no problem. 'Secretary' it was, that's the word I was looking for, secretary, who reached everything, you didn't need a whole committee that anything like you have in England.

RL: Were there any Zionist groups in the town?

Tape 2: 3 minutes 19 seconds

JS: Not official Zionist but a lot of young people who wanted to go to Palestine, they were trying. Have you heard of the Betar, yeah? They started to, when they heard what is happening to the Jews, they were started to thinking of becoming Zionist so try to escape. In fact, a few went through Rumania and tried to save some children through the Rumanian border to the other side to get to Palestine. Because when, when the Germans came in and brainwashed the Hungarians and they all said, 'You shouldn't live here, because that's not your country, you should all go to Palestine, that's your country!'- they don't tell you now – They all said, 'You should all live in Palestine!', but we couldn't go to Palestine because obviously, there was no free immigration, it was under the British occu…, mandate, you know. And a few escaped to Palestine or went through Rumania. I had a cousin of mine who went through Rumania, is still there, I think he is still alive, I haven't heard from him. This cousin of mine took some Rumanian children with him, but where I lived in Hungary, you couldn't very well escape once the Germans were here, because we were counted up straight away. The first thing they asked, 1944, any town. 'Who are the Jews? We want a full list of the Jews!', and they took over and every Jew has to be counted for and pushed them into the ghetto. So, Zionism as such, as far as I know, once the Jews becoming the enemy of the nations and the Germans and everybody brainwashed, they all said, 'You all should be in Palestine, you shouldn't be here. It's like your country.' Well, that happened only when you get the brainwashing going on, you know, the German comes in and the poorest got into the rightwing hand and then they didn't want us there. And then obviously, there was the thing,

the infamous, I call him, Eichmann, Adolf Eichmann, who came to Hungary and organised the deportation of the Jews in 1944.

RL: Were there any youth groups in your childhood, were there any youth groups at all?

Tape 2: 6 minutes 2 seconds

JS: Well, there were youth groups in a sense, they were no difference, they were sort of all play together, they all, all did the activity sports together, sing together, learn together, as I said, there was lot of performance, there was lots of performing, you know, the Hungarians, they like to put up little theatres and things like that. That was very popular. They all worked together. See, if you group up in a small town, there is nothing to group up because it is only a small community. In Budapest they had different grouping because it's a huge place and I don't know how many hundred thousand Jews were living in Budapest, it is very, you know, the biggest synagogue, the second biggest in the world, is in Budapest. I could show you pictures, I haven't got them handy - of Hungary and the Jewish community. It was terrific, it's a very big Jewish history in Budapest.

RL: So coming on to 1944 and the German occupation. What are your memories of that happening, what do you remember about that time?

JS: What I remember, we were still in our home, my father was taken away earlier, for forced labour camps somewhere to Austria. And it was, it was spring, it was not quite spring. I know, they were baking the matzo. And we had our first supply of matzo for Pesach and it was top of in the bedroom, in the cupboards were the matzo. And we just wake up in the morning and we hear some marching on the main streets and everywhere. You know, they marched like somebody, the Russians did the same, the marching is such a noise, and such a … You really, looking up, we are frightened, the Germans are here. And the first thing, they come in, 'Jude?' 'Yes.', my mother speaks good German and they knock this matzo down from the top of the cupboard, looking for things, and came in with sacks and they took things away and said, 'You got to stay in, until you find yourself all in one place. We organise it for you.' And everything they could put there hands on, taken: our candle sticks, our little whatever we had. It was value to them, and my mother's work, beautiful embroidered, she embroidered beautiful, beautifully. And we were terrified. 'What's next?' Said, 'You can't move and there is only one person who come out to get your food and nobody else. With our inspection, without our permission, you can't get out!' And we just looked at each other, 'What's going to happen?' And we were in a ghetto maybe three, four weeks, squeezed in, little food came in, just barely survived. and then they took us out to a farm to do some work, you know, who can work. It was, I was one of them who could go and do something because anybody was older, they were taken to, older Jewry. If you had a son, 20, 22, they will go to the forced labour camp, wherever they wanted them to be, you know, whatever kind of work they had to do. And we don't know once they go, where they are. There was no communication. You don't know, you just hope, that the war be over and you see your family again. But the younger ones which could do some work, like myself, so what did we do? I remember we had to dig the earth and sort of plant something but that didn't last long, maybe five weeks. And then we called back to the ghetto because it was like a rotation of the collection of the people. So when is our turn came, when they came to Paks, and they brought in nearby towns and villages to this place, Paks, the Jews where they lived in a smaller number, they were all brought in and after a few weeks been, sort of working for the Germans back in the ghetto, we were put in a big school hall, we were all sitting on the floor with a rucksack, and they said, we have to wait because we are going to go to work. And

well, we all just sat, we looked at each other, 'Where are we going to work? What is going to happen to us?' Nobody knew.

Tape 2: 11 minutes 25 seconds

We were just sent there three days, three nights. The wagon was ready to come, it wasn't an ordinary train, it was the wagon where you, you transport animals and things like that, you know. So, and there were German guards outside the school, nobody can escape. He said, 'If one of you escapes, we shoot ten, straight away!' So, we were collected in this school hall, and when, bit by bit, we are ready, half of them ready were going to the train, the other half ……..This school hall and there were upstairs offices, we were like sardines, just put like sar… Must have been over 2000 people. So half of them gone then, when that transport came, we had to wait next day, until, I think, three three lots of transport gone, and we didn't know where we were going. He says, 'Just take your things, you are going to work.' We collected some photographs, bits of valuable, watch, my father's pocket watch and bits and pieces. But food was none, hardly any left because the ghetto, we were rationed, very little food. And they give some food, once a day we had some bread or possibly a tin of sardine or something, but nothing else to eat. We were all starving but we didn't know where we were going. We still survived, we were still in our, normal clothes. And I remember when we went through the city main street, some people were crying, some people looking out of curiosity, wondering where they taking us, what happening, where the Jews are going. And we all were bewildered. We didn't say, we couldn't say good bye because the Germans just said, 'Get on, move on!' And you know, 'Schnell, schnell!' or 'Tempo!', that was their favourite expression. So we were pushed in these wagons and it was three days and three nights in these wagons. When we arrived in Auschwitz, two babies were dead, in my wagon, in the wagon I was with my mother and four brothers because my older brother… Actually, he was in the Yeshiva in a place called Szombathely, he was 17, he just was there for about less than a year. He finished school, he went to that Yeshiva and the whole Yeshiva, it was six, sixty seven boys, they were taken also. Austria was a very popular place for make them work for the Germans. What sort of work they did, I don't know. But that's where my brother was taken as well. My father, and I believe, that my father definitely died in Mauthausen, but I believe my brother was died there before because somebody who survived it told me that he was all right until he got, they sent him to Mauthausen when he couldn't work. So it's probable he died before my father. My father died two days after the war, after the liberation. He had typhus sickness. And …

RL: How did you survive the journey in the wagon?

Tape 2: 15 minutes 18 seconds

JS: Yeah. I lost the voice, I was very thirsty. And it was, I think, the last day of June or the first day of July, could be. I know it was the day of Shavuot. You know, that was our fast day. But we had three days of that. Elderly died, one elderly man, two babies died and we lost our voice. We could hardly speak when we opened, it was hot, no air, no food. Well, anybody had a little bit, no water. We wanted water, just water, and nothing else. Nobody even thinking of food. The thirst, we were so dried out. So, when they opened the wagon, and we were dozing and we had to sleep standing and leaning over the one next to you because there was no room to move, it was sort of, kind of last transportation of Hungary, you know. The 'final solution' as you call it. Well, we opened the door and just looked at each other. 'God, where is it?', and we look at those bonfires and the people behind, it look like an asylum, it doesn't like a normal place. What are they doing here? And they said, 'Just get out!', and we couldn't ask for water, we cried for water. He says, 'No water, you get later on,

you get later on!' That's the German soldier who were telling us. I said, 'You go over there', there was a barrack and in front of the barrack, there was Dr Mengele, he was the, the selec…, he was in charge for selection. They called it the 'Lagerdoktor', the doctor of the camp. So, when my mother, we were hanging on to my mother. And my four little brothers and my sister, so, when he saw us, he says, 'Just leave your mother, you go that way, leave your mother, see her later.' And to my sister, he said, 'You two go the other side, you see your mother later. Let them come with me, the children, your younger brothers.' He spoke German, my mother spoke German, well I speak German and I understood what he was talking about. So, that was, that was the last time I saw my mother. And we were sent into a barrack, we were ripped off our clothes, shaved our hair off, we had to wait to, to sort it out, which camp we will be going. And the, the German, there was a German woman, she was called an 'Aufseherin', which is a German woman's guard, and a Jewish couple who will tell you, 'You come to this B1 Lager, B2 Lager.' 'Lager' are camp, they called it 'Lager', 'And you go to C 'Lager'. And they just took away from my sister, we couldn't recognise each other because we had no hair, and we were standing naked for two hours, they throw at us some clothes, some old rubbishy clothes to put on and we were bewildered, we just don't know, what's this all about? We look at each other. What's next? When will we see our mother, when we meet later? And then when the light came, we were still hanging in this place, in that barrack, sorting barrack, and we were just looking through the window and it was a bit lower down, we saw this terrible smell of burning and and like the sky gone red from all this smoke and a horrible smell. And we didn't know what it was and they said, 'Oh, we asked, don't ask questions!' We asked this couple, 'What is it?' 'You will get to know everything when you are here. Don't ask any more question!' I said, 'When can we see my mother?' ….said, 'I can't guarantee you are going to see her.' That was the answer. And I wouldn't believe her. So eventually, they give us these horrible clothes and putting us into, showing us into the barrack. And in the barrack was this kind of barrack, not a bed. What do you call a … this where you were sleeping, this barrack …, what's it called in English. It's like you you twelve on the bed, and then you got one on the top of it.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 22 seconds

RL: Bunk.

JS: Yeah, they were all there, and some on the top, some on the bottom. We were squeezed, twelve on the one, on the bottom and twelve on the top. We didn't know who they were. I lost my sister and this cousin, Edith, the one I told you who has survived, she was luckily on the same bunk. We sat there. And every morning, we used to have to get up, four, five o'clock in the morning, and they called it the 'Zählappell ', they count you up, if you are, all the numbers are there, and it was morning, cold or rain or anything, you had to stand there for hours. They were just counting you. And I hold her hand, my cousin, and I said, 'Never leave me. Please let's get together, stay together!' And luckily we managed. So when this counting up was finished, we had to queue up for a little soup, they called it the 'Dorga gemuze', which was anything in it, but you don't know what you are eating, you are just eating because you are hungry. You had a bowl of kind of soup. I remember there was something in it which we used to give to the animals, it was sweet, a bit, but the rest, tasted sometimes like sand in it, they never washed it, but you just had to queue up and get this. So, well, anyway, we were lucky and you get a piece of bread which looks like a small piece of brick and it tasted like brick. We don't know what we are eating but we eat it because we are hungry. And when we got into these barracks and we had a chance to speak to the people who were there previously from us, earlier on, and they, those people, we thought they look crazy, and they look sick, they look this. Some of them were quite famous people. I met a

Hungarian-Jewish writer there. She was quite famous, lovely, she was just deported. And she told us that, you know you got only one choice: Do as you are told. Fight for survival. Or you touch those wiring and it will kill you. You know, the, we weren't… The fence with electric wire, if you wa…, if you die, sorry, if you want to die you go onto this wire, but you officially are not allowed to do it. Unofficially you can go and die, if the guard is not around. Because somebody was trying to do this, the Germans shut it because they had this tower where the guard, German guard SS was watching us, not one, few of them. So, gradually, we just adjusted, this is the way of life. I said, 'If you have guts, don't kill yourself, you never know, we might survive. Because what they are doing here, it's beyond comprehension.' I said, 'It's, nobody ever will understand or. Somebody has to be very lucky to survive it.' That was a very sweet voice, and very clever woman. She happened to be on the same bunk in the barrack like I was. She gave us, we gave each other some encouragement: 'We are going to see our family!' We just had to gather what happened to them, because anybody gone, there was right and left. Who went through the left gate, never came back. A bit lower down, the crematoria couldn't manage to cope with the bodies, so they had to open, on open air, pour petrol on them and burn them. Some of them weren't even dead.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 31 seconds

And there I learned gradually, but all the same. I just said, that couldn't happen to my mother. And I wouldn't accept this. But you never know, he may escape. I just couldn't believe that happened to my mother and my brothers. But you have to… And then you come into a state of mind, you are so hungry, you only think for food or or or anything, just a drop of water, just to live another day. And even that few days gone by and all of a sudden they count you up. Now: 'This hundred comes with me!', he says in German, 'Come with me!', and they took me, you know where they took me? Mengele had an experimental clinic in Auschwitz on one side of the camp and we had to carry stones to build the path because it was muddy. Auschwitz-Birkenau was a forest before and the Jews had to clean sort of the forest to be hidden the Jews and the camp away in that particular part. It was rough, was muddy, was terrible. So I had to carry stones, and together with my cousin. We three young girls, and there were other people, women, and there were a few men who also… We weren't allowed to talk to them because the first thing you ask, 'Did you, do you know someone that name, do you know someone, my brother, my mother, my this, this that.' You weren't allowed to talk to the men but you just got to do your work. And we carried this stone and building this path, watch it growing and so Mengele can walk on clean past his clinic and then you see the mutilated bodies going to the crematorium all days. A horrible sight and screaming there sometimes, occasionally. You watched these twins were carried in and carried out. Not all died, but those who survived they got a hell of a lot to tell. And the funny thing is, that Mengele, he was a rather handsome man, and he would send you to your death with a smile. You know, he was always smiling. We called him the 'angel of death'. He looks like an angel but he is a real evil man, I mean, to do these things. Anyway, you just settled in, you are in Auschwitz, and you are going to do as you are told and if you survive one day to the next, you are lucky. We've seen people dying like flies in front of our eyes, and sickness and if they weren't doing better, they don't bother to get you help, to get you better. If you couldn't walk, you were sick, off you go, we get rid of your problems and it went on and on. And, and we did this path, and the other things we did in Auschwitz is the, oh yes, we had to collect some clothes. And they take you to a part where outside is called, they called it 'Canada' for some reason, because the valuables were all sorted. They were all pushed in a corner, in a barrack and we had to sort them out. And there was somebody told me, 'Sorting out', I said, 'You got the easy job! I was told' – she was from Holland – and she said, 'I had to take out the gold teeth from the dead!' - because there was lots of gold teeth some of the people who died. 'We had to look in their mouths and take out the gold.' Oh my

God!' I said, 'You just don't complain, do your job. Sort out the shoes. Sort out this. The glasses go in there, sort them. So we have been doing that for a while, and when … and then just, we carried on and one day, we had again, every morning we had this counting up the prisoners.

Tape 2: 29 minutes 1 second

And then there was three or four SS came and looked at us which one he wants to take to work in another factory, not in Auschwitz, ammunition factory in Upper Silesia. This is near the Czech border, East Germany at the time, well at the time it was not East Germany was the eastern part of Germany. A place called Liebau. That was a factory there, actually three factories, manufacturing all kinds of ammunition. But before that, oh yes, I had to also work a bit on the railway line, the cleaning the weeds out of the railway line because some more people coming in. And that's the last time I was, the last job I did in Auschwitz, and I saw them coming in and it was the remnants of Theresienstadt, you know. The people were brought in, and when they came in, they didn't look so bad because Theresienstadt is supposed to be the model. And they ask us, they ask me, if I was Czech. I said, 'No, Hungarian. I speak German.' I only could have a few passing words because they had to leave the wagon and I was clearing the weeds out of the railway line because there weren't many transports coming in. They brought them in, beginning of November, it was I think, or October, end of October, some around. We didn't know the exact date, we didn't know what day it was. There was no calendar, you don't know, day in day out, what day it is, we didn't know. So, when they told me they come from Theresienstadt, and when he said he was from Bratislava, and I said - obviously I tried to talk to him but the German was there and I couldn't speak, I said, 'Why did they bring us here, what are we going to do here?' I said, I asked the same question. You got to find it out yourself.' And the next things I heard that they all, young people and very successful people, they had an orchestra, the whole orchestra who were playing and composing music, Ullman went straight to the gas chambers, the whole lot of them. And it was quite a lot of people. And next day, when these Germans came for us and picked us up next morning for who he wants, look at your faces, who he wants for working, in that place, Liebau. So we were put into another wagon.

RL: I was just going to ask you a few more questions about Auschwitz before we move on.

JS: OK.

RL: How were you treated by the Kapos in Auschwitz?

Tape 2: 32 minutes 5 seconds

JS: Well, I personally didn't have much to do with them because I was just one of the crowd to do as you are told. It they come and tell you, 'Do this job today!', you do it but it was mainly carrying stone from one place to another. It was mainly standing in the queues for counting, in morning, at night. I didn't see much of the Kapos, I saw them at first, when they gave us these clothes but they said, they, some of them were from Slovakia, some from Austria. They were there since 1941, 1942. And I think they survived because they had to work with the Germans to help them with their job as you call it, to deal with the arrivals. And I didn't have much to do with them really. It is mainly the SS men who watched over us, we work hard enough and we stand in the queue in time and watching us when we are queuing up for our food. It hasn't, I hadn't got much to do with Kapos, that's the only time I saw a couple.

RL: How did the SS treat you?

JS: Well, if I didn't work fast enough they would give me a push and a kick. You know, that was, you see if you are tired and hungry, you just have to force yourself to move on and on and on and if you were a bit slowed down, they would give you a push. I still remember his favourite words, 'Schnell, schnell!' or 'Tempo!' – means quick, quick. 'Tempo' means quick time, you know. So, be quicker. Well, I did my best, and obviously when he wasn't looking I slowed down but as soon as he came back, I hurry, I do my job properly. God, it was full of fear, you know, full of fear. We used to go to bed and and somebody who had the guts and the courage would say – it wasn't a bed, bunks – will talk about the things we used to do at home to try to remember things and cheer us up. I am going to cook a dinner, now you are going to eat this and that. I said, 'Please, shut up! I am so hungry.' You know and we were making a joke and people were just watching if you got your, if you had a slice of bread and you are knowing you not get anything the next morning. You have to put it, there was no pillows, just a blanket, and you put it in your blanket to make sure that you have a bread, a piece of bread for the morning. You know, it was all the kind of how we survived. From one minute to next, and obviously the food was the most important thing.

RL: How did you know…

JS: I am crying when I see these children in Israel, you know, this starvation, this is how we used to look. I was under five stone when I was…

RL: How did you eat the food, did you have any eating implements?

Tape 2: 35 minutes 25 seconds

JS: You had a bowl and and a spoon. And they just give you, and the bowls were there and the spoon and you pick it up, it was all black and dirty but you didn't care. But there was that big container, the soup was cooked in there. And this you get and when the bread came, then they used to tell you, before you go for counting, come and queue up for your bread. Bread and that bread was just like a piece of ……brick, that's what it looked like. And that's what we got. And it was hard, but we had to eat it. 'Cause I don't know what it was made of. Tasted funny.

RL: Do you, were you given a number?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

RL: What number is it?

JS: A eleven, elfhundertzweiundsechsunddreißig**.** Now, eleven thousand six hundred thirty six, that's my number.

RL: What do you remember about when you were given…?

JS: Oh, we had to queue and then I remember this woman came who did this tattoo. She said, 'One, next one, next one.' I remember, 'You go and get your number!' And somebody said, 'Why, what's his number for?' They said, 'Don't ask any questions!' And somebody **…** obviously that we shouldn't run away because with that number they will know. We are the Auschwitz prisoners. So, one day, they decided, my group got this number. Yeah.

RL: What was the sanitary arrangements?

JS: That's interesting. We had a toilet at the edge of the camp. It was built like a, you had a, imagine like a long table and it had little holes in it. One next to, you just go to the toilet whenever you want, no privacy. And the toilet was consisting a hole in the ground, but it was wooden top, you know, it's like, imagine a narrow long, long table and they got holes on it. And if you, it was busy you had to wait your turn. But that, you don't need it much,, maybe once a week or something you know, there was no drinks, just the soup and the bread. So you hadn't much to waste.

RL: And was there anywhere that you could wash?

Tape 2: 38 minutes 9 seconds

JS: No, not in Auschwitz. In the other camp, yes.

RL: Were there any acts of piety or religious…, has anybody tried to daven?

JS: Yes, well, that's interesting you ask me, 'cause I used to go to bed and there was a girl on the bed, I mean the bunk, and a girl another girl, a Hungarian girl, Hungarian Jewish girl, funnily enough, her name was Eva Braun, had nothing to do with Hitler. Eva, she heard me every night, I was saying my night prayers, shema and krishma, you know, what you are saying, what I remembered by heart. Every night it was in my sort of, in my blood or whatever, I had to say that even in the horrors, and she kept telling me, 'Oh, so do you think, it's going to save you? What are you saying that prayers for?' I said, 'It might not save me but it certainly makes me feel better. And as long as I can say my prayers, I thank God almighty, I am still alive.' So anyway, she laughed at me because she wasn't religious at all. And it was very funny, she was the girl who came in the same selection group to the other camp. So what else you would like to know about Auschwitz, were people wondering, 'Which day is Rosh Hashanah?' And somebody was trying to hide a little prayer book but if the Germans find it, they would take it off you. You know, you put it in your rag, you put it in wherever you can manage, to hide something in your sleeves, depends what kind of clothes. You tried but that was, must be in secret because we were not supposed to have nothing of the kind, no books, no prayer books no anything. But there is somebody who did that but we didn't know which day was Rosh Hashana, we didn't know, we tried to guess, we couldn't ask anyone. The men wasn't there and the men didn't know any different. The men, the male camp was in another barrack. We weren't mixed, we were only mixed when we had to do work on the same shift but no other time. So, some people turned this way, some people turned the other way: there is no God to help, you know, escaping in this horror, in this hell on earth. You know, people had different kind of, way of looking a life. Lots of **…?** famous rabbis, children would turn away, because that, we didn't do anything wrong. And the funny thing is, happened to this particular, this girl, he, sorry, she came, we got liberated together in Liebau - that is a very interesting story, I tell you about this later - and she, when we liberated and we met up in Budapest and I said, 'You teach me your prayers and you teach me this thing!', and she become religious and she wanted to go to Israel. And she didn't know her Hebrew name 'cause nobody came back, and her mother wasn't religious either. Her Hebrew, she came, her name Zehava, that's what she choose from the Hebrew and she become….said, 'You know, you were right to say your prayers! It has saved you. I didn't think you were but it did. And s/he said, it give me thoughts. and I was in contact with her while I was in Hungary. Eventually she, all I heard from her, she went back to the

German displaced camp and she joined some crowd who went to Israel and eventually she got there but I lost touch with her for a long time. But she was a, we met up at our first anniversary, we met up in Hungary, she was a different girl. She went in Budapest to, and got help, she's already knew how to daven and that's it, she says, I didn't think I would do it but I said you were right. You gave me this inspiration.' I was very pleased, but I lost touch with her. I have so many relatives and friends and everybody, you can't keep touch, especially I had a terribly hard life, since I lost Issy. Its 27 years now, was a long time.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 44 seconds

RL: Did you witness any punishments or any executions in Auschwitz?

JS: I have seen shooting at people. I I saw through the open air this horrible mess, fire, from people burning and we could smell, death smell I never forget. And then later on I realised what it was. You see because things happening in Auschwitz you weren't told or explained what is that barrack doing, what is the other one doing. It was, you kept eye on by these guards, these SS. A lot of them didn't speak even German, they were from Ukraine. So many were from Ukraine. The only things they knew, a 'schlechte Jude' means a bad Jew, and some of them had dogs and they would bark at you, bite you if if got the order from his boss. But… sorry, what was your question?

RL: Have you witnessed punishments or executions?

JS: Execution: No, I didn't witness execution in Auschwitz, but I saw shooting at people. And that's all. I never went near for the crema…, sorry, for the gas chambers which was a bit lower down. But I was told later on, you know, this is a gas chamber which we were not allowed to go anywhere near. We were so **…** It's like a big forest and there was a place for gas chambers, there was a place for 'Canada', there was a place for selection and the barracks. The barracks were sort of next to each other, A, B, C. And these barracks just the ordinary, flimsy barracks, you could see it on television, many times. And we were just chucked there in, by dozens, on the bunks and

RL: Which barrack were you in?

JS: I was in C Lager, C Lager, C.

RL: Were there any non-Jews in Auschwitz?

Tape 2: 44 minutes 56 seconds

JS: Yes, yeah. Funnily enough. While I was doing this carrying the stone, I met a few Polish non-Jews. And I met one German priest. I tell you that was an interesting thing, because when I was doing some sorting, there was only a few days, and saw this man, speaks very good German and I said, 'I had some family in Germany. Where do you come from?' I? said, 'It won't be my family because I am a Protestant priest.' I couldn't believe it. He was disagreeing with the Germans and he ended up in Auschwitz. They called him a traitor and he was there, and he was there and he was working on these 'Canada', in the thing, what he was told to do, like me. And he gave me his piece of bread, and I thought, I blessed him. 'You are younger, you got to survive!' And I said, 'I am getting older now.' 'You have this bread', and I have never seen him again. And, and, he was very sweet. I, you know, he spoke very good German, beautiful German. I could see he wasn't just anybody. But of course he

looked in the rags, he also had these, a lot of men had stripy clothes, you know the stripy ones, they gave them. We just had any rags which they didn't use from the transport or or somebody dies, take your clothes of and give it to the next one. This is how we dressed. You should see the original pictures, I mean, just rags, and two different shoes, I had two different shoes, different size and it was awful. And they had no sole on the shoes and I got cold feet, I had frostbites, all sorts. So, Auschwitz life was, if, you know, if you were just a prisoner, you you had to be in your barracks and you had to be in a certain place, you saw what you were allowed to see. A lot of things, I even didn't know, about Auschwitz, the bit outer part, where the commandos lived and this I haven't seen it. And also, you know, what's happening in the gas chambers, they just send the people in, they don't tell you, you don't see it, you, you don't know it and perhaps it was better I didn't know it, because I would have gone crazy. I was hoping to the last minute that they are not dead. And I tell you about this reaction I had about, you know, when I came home, back to Hungary after the war. And I was looking every women arriving in the train perhaps , my mother escaped and I, and I look at every woman, come back from camps. Maybe she has come back from the camp, maybe she escaped, maybe this. You just can't believe it, that you are not seeing your mother anymore. But I never did.

RL: You know, you mention that act of kindness by that German priest. Did you experience any other acts of kindness, you know, between the inmates there?

JS: Well, they were, some people were more disciplined. And some people accepted, this is our destiny, now, we can't avoid it, we can't run away, we may as well look each other, we did, quite to an extent, we were, as you call inmates, we, we tried to be civilised to each other. And there were people who lost their temper, they would swear, they would get angry, you know, emotions manifest itself different ways with different people. But I I was quite lucky because I was very young, so, they were trying to look after me a bit more than some others. I don't know why, because I will come on to it when I tell you the next step, the other camp, there was quite interesting experience. Then, well Auschwitz, I I couldn't explain you a great deal more that life was extremely boring, the same every day, is full of just anxiety to survive each day. A) is the hunger, B) is the, you feel uncomfortable, unclean, you were always itching, you had crawlers in your clothes. You felt so, just fed up. And and you wondered if you would be here again tomorrow. And if you are you say, thank God, another day gone and we are still here. And it was quite different when I moved away Auschwitz.

RL: Were there people that gave up, you know, gave up, sort of, the will to live, in Auschwitz?

Tape 2: 50 minutes 18 seconds

JS: Well, people who gave up, usually, they got ill. And some people weren't even ill but they had this sort of feeling there is a light in the darkness, they said, maybe it comes to an end, it can't last forever. And you had this determination, I have done nothing wrong, I got to survive. That can't go on, this is not normal. Human beings shouldn't be treated like that. And how did this cultured nation came to, into such an awful conclusion that what they are doing to our people, innocently. We just couldn't understand. And of course the details of history has been revealed later on and Hitler's plan and, and his, his corroborators, the gangsters, it's like, it's like an evil force come into power and and looking for victims and obviously the Jews were the number 1.

RL: Did you witness any suicides?

JS: Yes, people, went to touch the wiring when the German didn't look and the they just collapsed there and they took the body away and you never seen any more. But between us, we were trying, whenever we had, we were allowed to talk when the Germans wasn't right on front of us, we were talking about, you know, about families, what we are missing most from home and how will we find, you know, our family after the war. We were sort of speculating on this and speculating on that. Information didn't come into the camp. You were just like, you see like a battery chicken. In, in those battery houses, that's where, how we were, just dropped there and no, no, no culture, no timing, no date, nothing was given what men, normal civilised people need. It's simple existence and you feel you can be close to death but perhaps not. Perhaps you survive. It's just how you felt, very tired, very cold, that that was terrible, at night, very cold. So we tried to go very close to one another and keep each other warm. They give you one blanket. Because the night was very cold and the day was warmer, was in a sort of extreme climate in this forest of Birkenau. And but you see, day gone by, and when we were selected, shall I go to the next…?

RL: Can I just ask one last question? Did anybody try to escape?

JS: From Auschwitz? Not to my knowledge, what I saw. There might have been on, because the camp was huge, big. And I belong to this barrack and the same people I see all the time which, I don't know how many hundred people was in that barrack, possibly two hundred and two hundred in the next barrack, I don't know. We were just sort of clinging on, hanging on to the people we are always together, with the counting up, for work, work load if there is any. And we could talk when we had the energy. Sometimes we were so tired, even speaking was too much. We just walked like Zombies if you like. Oh God, if I could only have a drink, oh God, if I only see my family. I think the anxiety of not knowing what happened to your family it was very, very demoralising, we were so longing for our family, and that was just about the worst feeling. And we knew, we just have to live like this unless a miracle will take place and we get out of this mess. And what happens after, God only knows.

RL: How long were you there?

Tape 2: 54 minutes 49 seconds

JS: I was there, I think it was the last days of June till October, end of October. When these people arrived from Theresienstadt, because I asked them, 'What month is it?' I think it's end of October, they knew, we didn't know. We knew the summer was and we could see the leaves are falling, it is autumn but we didn't know. But there were no leaves inside Auschwitz but just outside, the railway line, there were some still trees and you could see. 'Cause they cut all the trees out there to build these barracks. It was originally a forest, I was told. So, to tell you more details what happened in the gas chambers and inside Mengele's experimental clinic and all the horrible events took place and well, death was always on your doorstep, either for natural causes or people just couldn't carry on. Some people were shot because maybe, made they answered back to the German guard, for any little reason you can get shot. So, it was becoming our daily life and if we get out of it, it would be the biggest miracle. Often, people give up hope. 'Oh, we'll never get out!' and some days you said, 'Perhaps we will!' And somehow we did.

RL: Did you see the results of Mengele's experiments?

JS: I only saw these carry on, these, what you call the, where they carry the dead body, this carrying on. What do you call them, this, ah, there is a special name. You know, where you carry bodies, and they hold it, you know, what they do in the ambulance service.

RL: Stretcher.

JS: Stretchers. They got out on the stretchers, there were bodies on the... They wen't straight into the, to the gas chamber, sorry, to the crematoria. Because they were five next to the where they were. But we, I didn't see actually. I saw them going that way with bodies. I often saw them coming out with bodies, but some of them did survive, I know that much. But as soon as he saw twins he put them there. So…

RL: Did you know at the time that he was experimenting?

JS: Oh yes, oh yes, I know, there is something horrible doing and they were told us that the people were there before. 'Do you see that that clinic there? That's where he is doing his dirty work!' And I knew about it but the details you have to be inside. Thank God, I wasn't inside. It's enough to see the body coming, the bodies coming out. Time to time and yeah… And really, it's not a great deal I can say what in Auschwitz what you haven't heard, what happened there.

RL: Well, this tape's about to end so we'll start the next part of your story on the next tape.

JS: Oh yes, that was more exciting.

TAPE 3

RL: We were just about to go on to the next stage, your experience which was after you were selected in Auschwitz to go to Liebau. If you can just tell me about the journey there and how it all happened.

JS: Yes, we were counted down, 500 in Auschwitz, I guess, it was 500. And there were a few German soldiers with us. He says, 'You are selected, you are coming with us. Another place, you go somewhere to work.' Well, they were honest in that. And we went in a wagon, took about two days and two nights to get there and when we arrived we were very pleasantly surprised because it was outside a little town called Liebau, because it's a beautiful area, it's full of pine forest and pine trees and behind there, there was three factories, which was, was obviously ammunition factory. And there were no German workers left to work there but we had a lot of French political prisoners on one side. And the other barrack where we, there was a couple of barracks where we placed these 500 prisoners from Auschwitz. And when we arrived, well, it was slightly more civilised. We had a shower room which was ice cold but at least we had water. Didn't change the clothes but it was very cold, we did get an extra something to put on, a sweater or something or a coat if you were lucky. We didn't have twelve on the bunks, only six, or five or six, a lot less. It's, but the procedure was kept very much the same like Auschwitz. You have to get up in the morning, be counted and after the first day we have to walk for about, about possibly a mile or so to get to the factory from where the barrack was. And we were taken in this factory, two factories, to women chosen, these 500 women. I was chosen to the factory where we had to assemble boxes to put the ammunition in. The other factory was metal to, metal factory where they made component parts of ammunition and it was a very sort of noisy. And metal chains they were doing and all kinds of metal production, very hard work but I was lucky to get into this one where we

had to assemble these boxes. And I was shown how to do it, putting a screw in pieces of wood. And often, when we didn't have enough wood, we had to go in the forest where the wood were lying around, ready to bring it in and go through certain machinery and then used up for these boxes. That was sort of the department I worked. And we, all these factories, we had some of the French prisoners come in to do certain work or teach us how to do the work, various work.

Tape 3: 4 minutes 29 seconds

Obviously, the, we weren't allowed to talk, but there was opportunity, when the Germans didn't look, that we could, people who could speak French, because the French couldn't speak German or any other language, most of them, they could sort of tell us things because they knew more, they were slightly better treated, they had a bit more food, they had hidden radios where they picked up news. They, they were just a bit better off, more civilised than we were treated. Now, the treatment was in that respect that we didn't see the horrors in front of us, day in and day out. So to me, it was a relief because although a lot of people got ill and died, and some of them couldn't work, they got shot. And we had also mixed, the SS, mixed nationality who was looking after us, because it was the very end of the war. The German army was already exhausted and was short of men, so, but we did have some German women who who were watching over us at work. But certainly, I must say, it's a step better than Auschwitz. A) the horror wasn't in front of us in such a scale. B) we could see people in front of us like the French prisoners who are nice and civilised people who would smile to us or or try to they could get a little extra food if they were not watched. The food was only very slightly better, very slightly. But still the same sort of soup and very poor bread but we just about survived, nothing more. Now, the treatment, if you could manage to do the work, you were kind of left alone but you were pushed all the time to do more and more. But we did all we could. So that went on from roughly end of October, November, beginning of November till the very last day, last day before the liberation, is 5 May, that was the last day of the war in that area, the liberation came by the Russian army.

RL: Did the French workers give you part of their rations?

Tape 3: 7 minutes 20 seconds

JS: Russian. Yes, they managed to get hold of more food than we did because they were treated as political prisoners, we were treated as Jews, good for nothing, really. You know, we were below any human dignity, you know. So, the work, life was a bit better because we could go back to our barrack and talk about other things. Because you weren't so dragged down by the horrors of Auschwitz, 'cause it was a nice walk to get to the barrack to there, it's a nice area, but the snow, it was cold and I had frostbite because my feet were always, I couldn't feel my feet and I had to stand on it and do the work, 'cause if you were complaining that you can't work, your feet is frozen, they would either shoot you, get you off the job, because again, there was no no medical attention.

RL: Have you seen people being shot?

JS: Yes, because she was very ill, she couldn't carry on. Yes, there was a woman shot, yeah, in the camp outside, and was buried outside, I don't know what happened. And then…

RL: Did anybody try to escape from there?

JS: No, no. That was not possible because everybody knew if somebody escaped, they shoot half of us. You know, we felt responsible to stay there and being a step better than Auschwitz and hopefully, which we get a lot of encouragement from the French prisoners, 'Don't worry, we'll be free. They are coming nearer and nearer. Just keep your nerves and pretend if you are ill, you are well. Don't complain; don't let them see that you are ill. And…

RL: How were the German overseers, how did they treat you?

JS: Well, as long as you do as you are told, you get away, you do your hours, you start something like 8 o'clock in the morning, 8 o'clock in the evening. You get back to your barrack and you get your little bit of food in the factory, what you are supposed to get. And it wasn't quite as horrifying to see the people who barely could walk in Auschwitz and you were just that little bit what I call, a little bit uplifted from the horrors. A little bit. And I also got quite ill one day, very ill, and my colour changed to blue. And I had a big - what you call a swelling; in German they call it a 'Furunkulus'. You know what that is? It is a boil, a boil, a big boil on my leg.

Tape 3: 10 minutes 34 seconds

And one of the girls, was a medical student, a Hungarian girl. And you know what she said, 'Look, I have to do something because you have got poison in your blood and you're gone!' So she could even speak a bit of French, this girl. So she spoke to the French prisoner to put in her machine some candles and matches. And what they did, in our room, they they tied me down, my legs, and put something in my mouth. I mustn't scream. She burnt this off with the candle. I've still got the mark. Here, a little round mark. Because when she said, this poison which it shows on the top, it has got to be burned off. You can't cut it, I have no instrument, but I'll burn it off. And it was, and I couldn't scream because they would hear me outside, the, the guards. And they, and it was very, very painful and they were just being round with me, almost died because of the pain. And, and we had, and they also give us one prisoner's shirt, which we could make a bandage on my leg. And I could work next day, in agony, but it it got right, my colour came back. And that was the operation I had, in Auschwitz, and it's here. Still there. And it's just, its healed up but the mark is still there. So I was very very lucky, very lucky. And that happened about a couple of months before the liberation. So the little optimism, a little hopefulness come back when we see these prisoners and they were able to get hold of news. They knew about the advancement of the Russian army, they knew about that Britain had helped with the American army and they are also not far from us, the American army, they are also in Europe and we shall be liberated. But they also found out something very interesting. These French prisoners, they saw that the Germans put mines under our barracks. So, because it was so far ahead now, the, the war, they, they knew that it is going to come to an end, the are going to blow us up. Now, so the French prisoners told the girls, you know, those who could speak French, 'Look, when the time comes, I'll tell you when, when the Russians advancing towards us, you mustn't go to sleep. You got to be awake because in case, they blow you up. You know, if you sleep, you just die. But if you are awake… Pretend you are asleep, got to bed, and is no light on anywhere, because there was one light for the whole barrack at night. But that light must not be on but you got to watch, out watch out of the window, 'cause if they do anything, you just fly out of the place, because that's what they are going to do.' Well, now as the time gone out, day by day, you work, you get a bit of encouragement, you struggle with the last bit of strength you got. And you are skinny, and you keep on, push yourself. Yes, we are coming to the end, you must go on, you must go on, and we just encouraged each other, don't let your illness drag you back, just we got to go on, we are close. So knowing, but we would not have known that in

Auschwitz, but knowing from the French prisoners that we are very, we are near for the liberation and we should keep our strength as much as we can and don't give up hope.
Tape 3: 14 minutes 58 seconds

So, this is exactly what we did, but what happened when we come nearer to May, you know, days have gone by, we work we sort of struggling on, holding on and carry on as best you can. Few days before the liberation we couldn't see the guards. It's only it's only two guards left. So they, they ran away because they came quicker than expected. And the French prisoners who knew something about these mechanical things, dismantled the mines. The mines were there to blow us up. And it was pure luck because things came quicker, the Russians, than they expected because they had no time to do it. So obviously when the real day arrived, when the Russians put their foot up to the camp, and that really something I'll never forget. First of all, we were able to come together properly with the French prisoners and hugging and celebrating, we even nearly collapsing on the floor, no energy but we are free, free. And the interesting thing was, this Russian army, there was a Russian Jewish officer. He knew a bit of Yiddish, you know, because the parents, the new Russian generation did not speak Yiddish but he was an older man and, you know, it's going back now 60 years and the parents couldn't speak Russian properly, or whatever. These people spoke Yiddish and he knew. And he was telling us a story, you see they were, had to come through Poland, great part of Poland, and their was one of the Polish town, it was famous of Jewish population. And when he come to this Polish place, where the Polish and Russian language is a bit similar, and he asked the Polish resident, 'Can I see some Jewish people? I am Jewish and I want to see some sister, brothers in Poland! There were a lot of people here, living here.' And this Polish man – I smell cooking? No. Somebody cooking. Sorry, where was I?

RL: You were saying about the Polish man…

Tape 3: 17 minutes 50 seconds

JS: Oh yes, and that Polish man, yeah. So he said to him, 'Come with me, I will show you where your brother, sisters are!', and he took him to out of the town and he said, 'Can you see that hillside? There is about over ten thousand buried there! That's where your sister brothers. And which are not there, they took them away and they never came back.' And he just burst into tears after that. 'I am going to find these Germans, what they've done to our people. That is despicable and I will not have it.' And he was telling us this story and crying. And they were themselves very short of food and medicine but whatever he could get from the soldiers to share it with us, he would. And then we got together with these French political prisoners and we went to town, to Liebau which is a few kilometres. And the Russian had this jeep, you know, they took us, I was one of the, I spoke German, a couple of others, so we went to town. We got to find food and clothes, we want things. You know, it was a very funny thing; we got into this Liebau with the French prisoners. I had to speak 'cause I speak German, and some other girls spoke German and we went and we said who we were and we were out there, we were working in this factory. And we are from Hungary, from France, from here from there. And, and they didn't now anything about this factory, and there was a German woman when I told her the story we went to this terrible place in Auschwitz, and they kill people, they, they were stunned and she was crying. I said, what had they done to us? 'My husband is missing. One of my sons is crippled, his legs been shot off. And one of his brother, and the brother died and she is all alone and she didn't know there was such a horrible thing going on with the Jewish people. And she said, 'There were some Jewish people in Liebau and I didn't know that. But I didn't know where they were gone?

Nobody knew what happened to the Jewish people? Now you come and tell us that in our doorstep such a horrible thing is happening.' They couldn't believe it. And she hardly had anything but whatever she had, she had to give it to us. You know, and, and she was really, you could see, she was in tears and sorry because they wake up, not only Hitler, dragged in their men and lost their lives and they suffering and the glory gone and all the promises what they are going to have, they just got poverty and broken families and Jewish people had been destroyed like this. They couldn't believe it. The facts came out, the, the true events came to light. And and it was a joke what they did. They put up this big yellow star, this French prisoners, to say we are Jewish. We are Jews, they, they, we are proud of our star, they made us feel disgraceful but we are proud of our star and they put up these yellow stars and went to town. And when we got back to the camp because we were no time to, there was there was no time to just moving because we were so broken and tired and hungry. And as we got a bit more food and medicine, so slowly, slowly we got better.

Tape 3: 21 minutes 53 seconds

We stayed in this place, not too long, possibly two three weeks and one day, the four of us went to walk in the in the nearby forest, lovely walks there, and there was hiding the man who run the factory, like the manager, Mr Lasky was his name. And they called the factory Lasky. And he had one artificial leg, couldn't go very far and the French prisoner said, 'I kill him, I kill him!' And I said, 'You are not one of them, you don't kill him! Let him be there, perhaps he'll have a taste of starvation.' And he was begging for us. He says, 'What he says? He says, he beg we give him some food. I said, 'We don't have any. We are hungry ourselves. I told him because he couldn't speak French and the French prisoner couldn't speak German. And I won't let him kill him. He wanted to kill him. I said, 'No!' His name was Jean, and he was a dentist by profession. He couldn't speak, very few German words he knew but couldn't sort of make a sentence sort of conversation. He knew what the Germans used the words, 'Work harder!' or this or the name of the food, but he didn't speak German properly. So, so the French prisoners were very good to us. He says, when they got this women here, they are not safe, we can't, even if they could go home, which we were not capable, because A) all the railways were bombed out, alone we weren't safe, everything was a wilderness, Russian soldiers everywhere, raping girls and God knows what. So they were keeping with us and when we get stronger, we make a move. And if we see anything on the way we have to walk. And wherever we can rest, we rest. We were not far from the Czech border, maybe it was, I think 50 kilometre. And I couldn't walk it but he carried me half way. I was only five stone. Carried me this man and eventually we gone to the Czech Republic, well Republic, now Czechoslovakia. The people were kind, they give us what they could, they already seen other refugees, 'cause there was quite a few factories on the eastern German-Czech borders. There were other factories as well. And so, I remember a place called Olmütz. Olmütz, is that a Czech place? And another place. And we were sleeping in empty halls, church halls, wherever you get a, a, a place where you can… They let us do what, they knew who we were, the Czech, they were quite understanding. They gave us what they could but they themselves were shortage of food but they had more railways because they weren't bombed, the Czech weren't bombed like Hungary, like Germany, there was lots of the railways were bombed, so there was no transport. So we slept in these various locations, you know, empty halls, and then started to walk, and the night came…

RL: How many were in …?

Tape 3: 25 minutes 40 seconds

JS: This Hungarian group, the Hungarians, we've had about twenty of us and we had about seven French political prisoners and this one, which is, was about the oldest, this Jean I am talking, he took special care of me since I was the barrack's child, so I was the youngest, so, he was very good to me. So when as I, we walked, a bit walked, a bit on the train but then the train they were so full. Everything, people hanging on the on the steps on the train. God knows, it was chaotic, horrible. Everybody flogged into Czech Republic and then night comes and we found ditches where we could sleep because already was summer, spring, it was end of May, beginning of June. It was very stressful but being free, we could even express our feeling, how we feel because we are free. Because we are going home, who is going to see and what's going to happen? And in the meantime you had to keep your strength out, you have to eat a bit, we had to go into places, 'Can you give us just a piece of bread, anything?' When the people were told where we came from, they were helpful and when we got into Slovakia, they still spoke Hungarian, Slovaks, they do. And they also helped us. So, it took from the camp to get back to Budapest, two weeks or more. Just over two weeks, I remember. So we sleep here, we sleep there in the ditches, in the location in the railway, empty railway, the railway stations, you know you could sleep there, we slept wherever we could. But was a big struggle. So, somehow we crossed the border, we arrived to Hungary. And it happened to be on that side, the train wasn't bombed out, there was a line. So we got on the train and they had to take us, you see, because they were full of Russians but we told them. There was a girl from Slovakia who could talk because you know Czech, Czechoslovakia is similar to Russian that we are survivor of this concentration camp and you must let us go on this train and we got to go to Budapest. And well, it's about two and a half hour's journey from the place where we managed to cross the border and get into the capitol city. So these prisoners they took us, we found out because people were waiting at the station, you know, Hungarians who hoping the loved ones coming back and they told us, the best thing, if you go to the centre where the, you register. So somebody comes back, if they see your name, you are alive, then they know that you are alive. So we went to this centre and they were already organised for people that were there before us. There were people, some people coming back, not all died, some people coming back, they need attention. There was established there an American joint organisation, it's called, they had us, they had some food for us and some clothes, like such as egg powder to mix it up to make it egg. Biscuits, some sort of biscuits because food in Hungary was scarce. The Russian army was so hungry when they got there. And they had been there already a few months, they started to occupy Hungary January, February. I came back, it was the beginning of June, I think, middle of June or something like that. So when the organisation took your name, and they asked me to. I was in a terrible state because my skin was bad, you know, those… I don't know what you call it in English, that disease where you got to scratch yourself all the time, you know. Very, the skin, because of the not being hygienic all this time.

RL: Like Eczema.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 34 seconds

JS: Eczema and other skin diseases, the skin looked terrible, so they had to take us to the hospital, and we had this isolation hospital, some of them was catching, catching disease. And I was there maybe five weeks and my disease gone, I was much better. And now it was right in the middle of the summer. Oh yes, we had to say good bye to these French prisoners. But we made arrangements, they come back a year later, reunion, and they did. And when

they saw me, I? said, 'My God, you can't be the one, Judith, the barrack's child?' I? said, 'God', I? said, 'You are really good looking.' I? said, 'I'll take you home. My wife would be delighted, we have no children!' He asked me what happened to my parents, and I said 'No, they have not come back.' And I was still staying, sorry, standing at the railways watching people coming back after the…, hoping my mother comes back. Never came back. But it took me a few weeks to get on my feet when I can walk. Then I got back to my home town to see what was going on. And I could…There was my cousin husband, I had a cousin who had a baby, a young couple, she has gone to the gas chambers and her husband survived in one of the camps. And he, because he knew a bit of Russian, he has been back before, before me and he picked up some Russian words because the whole country was full of Russians, and it was communication difficult because the Hungarians never spoke Russian and the Russians didn't speak Hungarian. So, it was very difficult, and I asked him to take me back to my home. I wouldn't go there alone because they were soldiers and I would not face them alone. I can't speak to them, I want to see where I can find some photographs, some memories or something. So I am going, he took me back to near my home and he could speak to the Russian army letter come in to to have a look at home. She wants to take some souvenirs, some pictures or something. So I went in, oh the site of it, they were cooking there and used my father's Hebrew books for fire and there was some left and my cousin took it to the cemetery and he said 'Be nice to this girl, she is Ivrim, she is Jewish and you know, the camps, you know, he could explain it to the Russians. And because they were just ruthless, you know, with the young girls in Hungary, you know, I am talking about the people before had bad experience and, and I remember, couldn't find anything which…, my, my school report half of it in the back yard, because they, they used your valuable things for their fire and lot of things the German took and to see them there in the back yard.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 55 seconds

What shocked me as a young girl, there was two Russian women soldiers, and it was summer and they were nothing on, on the top and they were washing themselves, you know, the Mongolians, they were joining the Russian army from Mongolia and they were in the back yard at home, and the sight of it. It was so embarrassing and I told my cousin, 'Just get that few books!' even though they didn't want us to take my father's seforim, you know the books. Because they need it for fire, to make cooking, they cooked in our house. But I said this is a holy book. Holy book? They don't believe in this sort of thing. And he salvaged a few and put it in a bag and I would never go back while they were there again, the sight and all the memory. So there was… And I went back to Budapest, I stayed with one family named Deutsch, in one house because this person, the house was free because there was a, a, a German lived there, in the German ……Russians soldier, officer lived there, said, you can come back because he was placed somewhere else. But didn't take long, he left as well because 90 percent of that city, of people was destroyed, 10 percent came back from Paks. And I was one of them. So, we stayed there for a little while because I went to see my non-Jewish friend. And they were in tears and they were sort of, 'What they have done to us?' And is not just taking out the Jewish people and horrible destroy you what you are telling me. And she telling me my daughter was raped and this that and took all the food and she we we we all paying for our sins, she said, poor woman, and the only thing she could get me, fruit which already growing, in July, you had. And she gave me everything. I stayed in this Jewish home, a few of us, in this family house, a biggish house. And brought us food and these fresh fruits, and whatever she could get hold of, she rather give her own portion just to get me back to life and after a few weeks, I so recovered in this little place, 'cause they had fish, loads of fish in the Danube. But she made me fish, she brought it there and there was nobody there to make Jewish kosher kitchen was no meat, you could have a bit of fish, fruit and potatoes and thigs like that, so nobody at home. I didn't even know my sister is alive because she was

liberated in Bergen-Belsen and she couldn't move out of there till about October. She wasn't fit, she was in a hospital, an English hospital. And it was unforgettable, when we met. Somebody came back before her, and 'I tell you, I've got news for you, you are not alone!', because everybody believes you are just the only one come back. 'Your sister is coming back!' I didn't even know she was in Bergen-Belsen. And it was , I think it was between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, somewhere around that time. And you know who was that who told me? The late Mr Eckstein's brother, you know, Eckstein the carpet man, the brother. He saw her coming back and he is in Budapest … and we met up. And the we went to live in an Aguda home, the Aguda. And there is a funny things, the Aguda, was run by, you know, Knefler, he was my next door neighbour. The father and another man called Mr Fry, they were the head of the Aguda, reorganised because it was a big Jewish community in Budapest. The Aguda centre, they had the Jewish 'Gymnasium', it was the Jewish High school, and this and the other. All the learning centres. And we had nothing we could stay, nobody in the few of us who came back in this little town. We are going back to Budapest, so we went back to Budapest and I was there till the following, and we had the reunion with the French. And I was, you know, in better health. And that's was that picture taken in, first, before I left Budapest. So, anyway…

RL: What were you doing?

Tape 3: 38 minutes 42 seconds

JS: I, in Budapest, we went to this Aguda home called Beis Yaacov the orphanage, for the girls who came back. Now, if we went back to school, you couldn't get out. The Germans, not the Germans, the Russians wouldn't let out anyone but we learned, we could learn something which is not, you know, you got to announce that you are in school and your colleges, they can't keep track on you. We learned sowing a bit, and something a bit Hebrew, we went helping the others who needed help, we lived in this home but not all the time. I was in between, when I could get away with my cousin, we went to the surviving relations in different towns, but it was very difficult the travelling. You had to hide yourself, you got to stick around with a lot of people on the train and the communication being so difficult. But most of the time I had to stay there because I didn't want to stay with particular relatives, they all had nothing, they had hardly anything to eat, some of them didn't get back their home, some did. In Budapest, they had a cousin who lived in his parent's home, but you see, everybody, nobody had anything, so… But we planned, when we gain our strength, we get an opportunity, we will leave Hungary because the only way you could do it, if you run away illegally, and you got to go to Czechoslovakia because they were not Russian occupation. And if the border guard would see you, they shot you. You see, things very, very restricted, they didn't want young people to go out, they had to be brainwashed for being good Communists. If you were old or sick, you can go. But young people, they wouldn't let you go. And they couldn't force me back to school because school age was finished at 16. But if I wanted I could go to school, and they would find me a place to live, you know, all that. Our aim was to leave. So, one day, we decided, seven of us, some of my cousin and a couple of friends, we can't go on, there is nothing we can do here. The food is scarce, the Russians all over, we are not going to settle into this system, what they would like us to do. So we decided, whatever we have, little valuables, I got something back from some non-Jewish friends, an odd ring, an odd this which some of them looked after for my mother but lots of it was lost, the German took, whatever they found it valuable they took. So, we gave them everything we got. There was a Hungarian man who knew a back way, not anywhere near where these, where there is no guards. He had a boat, an old boat and you give him what he got, little valuables because money was big inflation, the money was worth nothing, nobody

had anything. To describe this situation, it was it was absolutely chaotic, bewildered, the Hungarians were upset, the Russians were rough after the war. And they all tried to find their, restore their lives, it was very difficult times. And eventually we, we got this man, we had to go to a place called Szombothely

Tape 3: 42 minutes 28 seconds

that's the name of the village, it's a bit of a hidden place which the Russians hadn't discovered yet. And you can get away with this man because we were recommended to him. He did help others to escape, so we took us to the forest, and the forest, sorry, he took us to the Danube and he said, 'You come out at the other side, there is a forest. That is Czechoslovakia. And then you have to… I'll take you on the boat.' We had very little with us and I wanted to go to Bratislava, because I had a lot of cousins there, a few cousins who survived. And he took us, dropped us in the forest. But it was a long way off to Bratislava, we didn't know where we were. Pitch dark, full of mosquitoes, the mud, we just had to walk slowly. Muddy up to here, we were just going and going and this through the night, nothing. The day comes and they see the forest, there is a huge forest and we saw, we, we just sort of heard, somewhere is a train going by, somewhere, noise in the distance, where there is a train going. So we are somewhere, we just kept walking and walking, we didn't know where we were walking, we didn't even know where we were. That's Slovakia. So, then suddenly we heard dog barking. Ah, we are getting somewhere, we got into a farm, a farmhouse. And there was an old man there with cows and horses, chickens, and little animals running around. And he comes out and he spoke Hungarian because Slovaks, the elder generation didn't know the Czechoslovak, Slovak language, they were still Hungarian. So we told him who we were and we very hungry and he said "Where were you, full of mud" stuck in the mud, we could hardly get ourself out. And he took us, I remember, you know where you make the horses to drink, in that container. He said, 'Come on, I'll give you something. Get the water out, you wash yourself down!' Luckily it was a summer's day, it was in August, I think, September, I remember. And 'Wash yourself down, get dry. I'll give you milk and bread, I have got plenty milk.' That is how we got out in one piece of that forest, walking through the night, and the, got knocked, I was full of scratches in your faces, in your legs. He said, 'Oh, you kids, you have been through something.' And that was two boys, five girls. And two boys ended up in Sunderland Yeshiva. Who was somebody, who was the Rov there, Sunderland? Rabbinow…You know, what's the name? My late husband knew. They had a Yeshiva there. And they ended up… I was supposed to go to Gateshead. Now I tell you how I got here. So anyway, eventually he said, 'If you want to go to Bratislava, from off this farm, he said, 'You have another two kilometres to walk, the name of the station is…' They changed the Hungarian names to Slovak name, so I don't remember the Slovak name but we found it. So we got on that train, we got to Bratislava, the same thing again. They had to find the Jewish the community .They had a few people, they had an office. There already been back because we were the latecomers, there were earlier survivors. And some people were hidden, even happened there. Is quite a few in Budapest was hidden in, with this Raoul Wallenberg, and lot of them managed to get some non-Jewish papers and they survived like non-Jews, there were quite a few. And these people prepared the ground for the people who survived, to help them out. So, so, well, we got into the centre of, of Bratislava and I straight away asked for my relatives, they give me the address. 'Your two cousins is back!' They are still living in Haifa, they are old people now. And but not your aunties because they knew about each other, 'Your auntie was in Theresienstadt.' You mustn't come with that train to Auschwitz the last minute. So, and I got, when I got the address, first of all they put us into a also an Aguda home, because, you know, I have always kept touch with my religious background. So there was an Aguda home for the survivors, there were so many, so very few were in Bratislava compared to Budapest, they more came back, because, it is a small place

and a smaller, less people survived, you know, it was different. So anyway, there was a communal kitchen and they could give us something to eat, whatever they get hold of. Food was scarce even there.

Tape 3: 47 minutes 46 seconds

And so eventually, I just had to knock on the door, of my cousin. And you know, it's the first time I saw her because you know, we lived in…, they lived in Slovakia and she was little. But my mother used to go to see them, quite often, I was a little girl, she heard about me. She said, 'Oh, you are the little daughter of Hannika!' – Hannika, Hanni is a nickname, Hanna, my mother called Hanna – 'Ah, I always heard about you little girl! And I said, 'Thank God you survived!' and she gave me clothes, you know. And we were in Bratislava and we were free. And we were sort of hoping to go to Israel. Very difficult. She said, 'You have to go to Germany, you have to go here and here, very hard to get to Palestine. Whoever tries it coming back from Germany, can't manage, it's difficult.' And then, then somebody, somebody told me you can easily got to London. New York takes longer. But London. So, but if you want to go, to emigrate, we have to go to Prague. And in Prague, outside Prague, we were put in an empty Jewish building. I don't know what it was, a school or something. There was a building and they said, 'You stay here!' because they have contact. It was Rabbi Dr, Rabbi Schonfeld, who went round, who heard. They knew from Hungary, you can't get people out. He, he is from Hungary and he was telling me afterwards, he was learning in that Yeshiva in Paks, believe it or not. And their mother and **…** spoke Hungarian. Dr Schonfeld, I don't know if you have heard of him, Dr Solomon Schonfeld. Now, he had a man who came, who sent to Czechoslovakia and Poland, to try to find survivors and bring them out. And the only way to you could bring them out by getting guarantees from families that we are students. So the students mean that you go to Gateshead and you … or as student. And they guarantee, we are not going to be a burden on the state you see, it's a … But really, I had an auntie there and she couldn't give me a guarantee because she wasn't a British subject at the time. But she found families from London, from Gateshead to, sort of, guarantee for me and my sister because I escaped with my sister together. We left Hungary together. And so, while I was in Prague, and this guy called Moses. You know who he is? The son runs these Good**…**, you now, the travel agent, Goodmoss. Yeah, and I think it was the father, I don't think he is alive now. He, he was working with Dr Schonfeld, going round Europe, where you can get them out. They would have been arrested if he came to Budapest to try to get children out. And it was also difficult in Poland, but Czechoslovakia only become under the Russian Communist regulation 1948. And that was before, it was 47. So I got out, from Czechoslovakia, by these guarantors. And we had to live in Prague, in this empty old building, a few of us. So my sister and I… And that was in, taken in Prague, that picture, that few girls who could come to London, you know, those girls. And, and there was a couple who not happen to be on those pictures but I remember one called Hoffmann, Danny Hoffmann and the other one's name. They came to England, to London and they went to Sunderland Yeshiva. I know that. The girls didn't go, we all were supposed to have gone to Gateshead but these girls, one of them, I know she went to Australia, she had a cousin there, she emigrated to Australia, lived in London for a while. We lived in Stamford Hill for a while, right?

RL: Do you remember their names?

Tape 3: 52 minutes 28 seconds

JS: Netzau Irene, Irene. And the other one, oh, the other one, Katie, but what was her other name? Have you got a picture? You got a picture. We have look afterwards. So we are just a few girls, we got to London.

RL: How did you come here?

JS: We gone to, we we we had bought us tickets on a plane, on a little plane, maybe 40 people get on that small plane and it was run, it looked like an army plane but I am not sure who brought us here to England. And when we arrived in the airport, and I remember, I never forget, they were all waiting, these girls in uniform gave us a cup of tea. They were so sweet, and we didn't know what milk tea was. We couldn't drink it. They said, 'Oh, yes! Well, you got to get used to it! In England, you have lots of tea!', you know. They were sweet, they were nice. And when I got to England, it all, the big lonely world, I was, I couldn't believe my luck, you know, you are walking through Hyde Park and free speech. That's where I learned my English, I used to go Hyde Park Corner. And when auntie was very delighted, we came and she had a full-time job and settled in and we, my sister and I we, we made our home in Stamford Hill. They made some, that's where she met her husband Halpern.

RL: Where were you staying?

JS: With my auntie's house. First, and, and when my sister got married she asked me to stay with them, they had a flat. Well, she had a baby, and that was Hanna I wanted to go to Golders Green, 'cause I got a job. I was doing, I was got a job in a factory doing clothing, you know, sowing and that sort of thing. And I I moved to Golders Green. And my auntie went to Canada and she got married and she came back as I said later. And we had friends, and my sister got married very young, she was just seventeen and a half or something, and he was twenty, Mr Halpern. She is younger than me, my sister, really. What happened, there was a family class. My brother comes from Košice. Košice is a, used to be Hungary but after the war it has gone back to Slovakia. And he had these people from Košice living in Stamford Hill, a couple. And he was very friendly and they also had a sister, our age, this, the name was Mr and Mrs Kraus. Now they had a sister, Mrs Kraus**,** who we were friendly and she used to maybe invite us every Shabbos. And my brother in law was their Shimon because they knew them from home, from Košice, they were neighbours. And we were friendly with the girls because we went to the same sort of Beis Yaacov and we had these Shiurim, we had Ezra, we had Dr Rabbi Schönfeld Friday night meetings and we had lectures and talks. And and also a girl called Miriam Shwab, she was giving us a lecture from Jewish learning, general things, you know. So we got together. That was kind of social life. And when my sister met my brother in law, he used to sing there, and sing, sing so beautiful. And she fell with him and he fell in love with her. And, and when the brother was a rabbi who just got, she was just married only maybe two three years, Reb Chuna Halpern his name, he was a well-known Rav**,** my brother in law's brother, in Golders Green. 'Oh well it's wonderful, young people get in love, got to get married!' And he says, 'All right, I find out the background!' So he was a Hungarian Rov. He was in contact. I? said, 'I have got here two girls, and their name is Berkovic, and they come from Paks. And did you know the family because this man is come from a little town is named Paks and is a well-known Rov' 'Oh yes', he says, 'He is. They are very very, very balbatisch as you call it, very, very religious people and nice good family, good Jewish family. And he invited us, he says, 'Oh, I don't need any more details, I have got good report about your family. You look OK to me!', he says to me, 'But what you say, you are the older one, the younger one gets married!' I said, 'I am delighted for her happiness, I find my own!' And that's why they got married quite young because the brother approve on it and they were happy ever since, thank God. So they got

married. So my sister got married before me, about a few years. I was 24 when I got married, much later.

TAPE 4

RL: You were just mentioning something about life in Budapest. I wondered if you could just tell us a little bit about that?

JS: Yes, one day I was walking on the street in Budapest and I come across with a crowd of young people and they were passing on leaflet regarding the Prime of Hungary. He was a very well liked, very respected priest, head of the churches. The name is Mindszenty. And he lost power when the Russians occupied Hungary, all these church leaders or any religious leaders for that matter were kept under the control and lost power of head of anything. So, they passed on, these young people, some leaflet because they arrested him. And he'd become a become a, a prisoner in the Russian hands or his own home, I can't remember, but he wasn't a free man anymore. They wanted, these young people, to free Mindszenty, that's his name. In fact, it was, you know, his name, when he died, it was in the British newspapers. He was quite famous for Hungary and in a Catholic circle. And I was arrested with them because I was just one of the young people passing by with the crowd. And they took us into the prison, on of the Budapest prisons. I said, 'Because we are…'. They called us reactionaries. 'You are working against the state; we don't want you to support any religious leaders. You go to prison for that.' So we are in prison and I didn't know how to get out, I tried to explain to them. There was this Hungarian guard, and 'You got to tell these Russians, I am not a supporter of Mindszenty, I do not support any religious, in any case, I am Jewish, I just came back from the concentration camp. And I am living in such an address, in such a Jewish home, you, they will unfairly being put in this prison.' So they get in touch with the man who run this home and he had to negotiate with the prison guards and with the authorities that she is one of the survivors and she's never, she doesn't know any politics, she doesn't, she is not supporting any Catholic priest because it is not her religion. She had suffered in the German hands, you must let her off! And eventually, after three days, I was a free person back in my home and this is just one of these incidents, comparing the life in Budapest, you had to watch all your movement or what you say. It was like… Well, I can't compare it, it was a prison like Auschwitz but it was life, it's like a great big prison, the whole country because nobody felt free really, and nobody knows who's after what. It doesn't matter what religion was, is a new government and they were very tough on people because they considered the Hungarians allies to the Germans, so they got to be punished. And they are not interested if you are Jewish, or anything. You got to obey the Russian system, the Russian regulations, and they don't have religious freedom, you just have to be, fit in with good Communism. And they obviously, the first thing they taught in school, about Communism and had to stop learning all other languages, no German, no English or whatever.

Tape 4: 4 minutes 21 seconds

The Russian language was compulsory but I didn't go to school. But there were a lot of, such upheaval in the country that… They really they gone on, the Hungarians till 1956, there was a very big uprising and then is a lot of life we lost, they fought against the Russian army and the Russian is the big brother and he won, they won and they stayed on many for years after till the iron curtain fell, is about 1989, 1990, somewhere around there. And but I was away, I was lucky to escape, as I told you, illegally, we, seven of us, managed to escape to Czechoslovakia, where we were lucky to meet, hear about this Mr Moses and Dr Schonfeld,

they working together to organise passage to get out of Czechoslovakia. There was no future for us, our family and home were destroyed, most of our relatives were missing, died. And we all had plans, where could we go? You know, nowhere to go. We've tried different places, of course in those days you couldn't get to Israel because of what's been going on there. And there was no free passage there. America was very suspicious people from the, coming from Eastern Europe whether they are Communist or not. 'Cause if you are a Communist, whether you are Jewish or not, you, you had to go through many affidavits, many kind of regulations, to know who you are and who your family in America and all this. So we had this choice and as I said, I had an aunt here. I always had this dream, London is a great city, if I ever get there and we have to, you see, with all the sorrow and sadness because when you, when we came back to Hungary after the war, to face all you lost that was the most horrible feeling. It was, it's like postponed grief for your family which you, as you had to survive one part of your journey, you had to survive your next. Which I did and then you, we got together, and they all told different stories, different way of surviving different place where you were placed, and different experiences. You made friends but you were sort of gathered together in a very sad circumstances, life was different. And as I said, when I arrived to England, and I, I , 'cause after all this bullying in Hungary by the Russian army and the Russian, they called it the 'Kommandantura' which was the centre for the Russian dictatorship, where they give you orders, that kind of thing. Doesn't matter who you are, young, old, Jewish, what you are allowed, not allowed. Things were very, very tough under the Russians as well. Because under the Germans all I knew, I lived in a ghetto, send me to Auschwitz, destroy my family, come back and you face this kind of result of the war. And as I explained, I've been lucky, survived, escaped, which was a miraculous escape to get alive though the border, in a rocky boat, it was shocking, I can't swim even, I just hung on, hoping we'll get to dry land. Well, with all this hardship we had and looking for the reverence of relatives and Slovakia and eventually got to Prague and we met people, coming and going, and people don't know where to go, where you belong, 'cause your home is destroyed and occupied. Your family have gone and we sort of just get together and we go try wherever we can go, you go.

RL: Did you find out what happened to your brothers?

Tape 4: 8 minutes 40 seconds

JS: Well, I knew my mother with the little brothers, youngest was three, she couldn't, he couldn't have run away. And my older brother, he was seventeen, he was two and a half years older than me. He was, the whole Yeshiva, the whole Talmudic college were taken, he was there. And one or two survived the, I heard, you see. How we got to the stories, it's not just pick your phone up or your email or anything. We heard stories, one tells the other one, 'I was with this', and if you see somebody, family who, you can tell this I was with this person who died. So at least you know he died, and interestingly enough, when I was living in England and we had a union, of the Holo…, the first Holocaust union was run by Elisabeth Maxwell, Maxwell's wife in the Sternberg Centre in London. And it was 1988 and Mr Steve, I don't know if you know, the late Mr Steve, God bless his soul, and also Jonash, you know, Jonash, what's his other name? You know, the handbag manufacturer, you know Jonash, yeah? I don't know his other name, I called him Jonash. We went down to London for that Sunday conference, kind of conference and you had very interesting speakers, the Madame Simone from France, she says, Auschwitz survivor who is a member of the French cabinet and speaks good English, so very interesting people. And it was chaired by the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn. And I, I saw a Hungarian friend talking to him in Hungarian. I never thought he was Hungarian because he says he is Czech but he is Slovak, well he doesn't know Slovak

but he is, he went to a Hungarian school because Hungary, Slovakia came back a bigger part on 39. The German gave it back to Hungary and it has gone back to the Czech again. But not only that but the parents don't speak Slovak, only Hugar…, speaks Hungarian. I said, Rabbi .. 'I didn't know you were from Hungary?' And he was telling me, 'Yes, it's Bereczas which is the name of the little town he comes from. And they call it some different names, the Slovak, they give their own names. And as we were talking it was really funny. He asked me, 'Are you a survivor?' I said, 'Yes, I was in Auschwitz.' I told him I was from Paks, near the Austrian, not far from the Austrian border. And he knows Paks and he, and I said to him, 'And my mother died in Auschwitz and four little brothers And I had an older brother and my father, my older brother died in Mauthausen and my father died two days after the war in Mauthausen.' He said, 'Don't say, my father died two days after the war in Mauthausen! My father told me. I said, 'We got Jahrzeit on the same day!' I said, 'That's strange!'

Tape 4: 12 minutes 1 second

And he was telling me, he wrote me a beautiful letter, I even got it, he could arrange, he's got contact, you see, they got a museum in Mauthausen, and they got an organisation because the people died after the war, they don't have headstones, but they have their name written and their number on the grave. And I always wanted to go to visit my father's grave because he died after the war. I could never manage because I had difficulties, you know, running the business and Josh was, you know, had to look after my children, had a lot of problems, it was very difficult. And they are all very soft, they do not like to come with me to…, they don't even watch any of the films of the Holocaust. And that's why I never tell them anything. 'Mum, don't tell me!' I said, 'You upset me, Ruth!' I said, 'Mum, I don't know how you can live with it!' I said, 'You'd be surprised!' You have to, you either swim or sink in this situation, it's a great nisoyin. But when I see children starving like we were, I just straight automatically see the people in the concentration camp. I said, 'I never thought, I'd see hunger or this kind of hunger ever again to see a human being to starve like that.' People were like skeleton, walking like skeleton. And if you are very young, you like an old woman, and these children, two years old, they got so wrinkled skin and this is what I have seen in Auschwitz and it just breaks my heart, it just brings it right back to me. I said, 'Is the world see that? and how could that happen? You know, all these things and my children very sensitive. I said, 'Look, there is plenty of the media, since they brought Auschwitz, the fifty years anniversary, all of a sudden, the, the Holocaust become a history, which before, you don't mention it, nobody wants to know it and I couldn't understand. People, you come here, they don't know anything about it really, after the war, they didn't, except the people, the British army who liberated the, the, these people in Bergen-Belsen or some other camps, they understand. I said, 'We couldn't. I spoke to somebody who lived in Oldham. I don't know if it was some sort of a gathering and he said, 'Are you a survivor?' I said, 'Which one?' 'Because I (was) liberated in Bergen-Belsen. I can't tell my family because they think I am exaggerating, this has never happened!' But now, ever since, now that is going back a few years, but afterwards, when Auschwitz came on to the media, the fifty years of anniversary celebration, it's everything, book has been written, but nothing would take the imagination and comprehension of people what is really happened. And it took a long time and I couldn't understand. It's such an event, it's not 100 people died, not 200, 6 Millions, the majority, the bulk was Jews, some gypsies. I remember the gypsies and some, obviously some Christians.

RL: Did you see some gypsies there?

JS: Some Polish Christians, I remember, were there a few.

RL: Were the gypsies there when you were there

Tape 4: 15 minutes 54 seconds

JS: Yeah. Yes, oh yes, yeah. And they, they, they deported them from Hungary, from Rumania. Not to that extent as the Jews because we had to be counted. They were just rounded up as they found them. If the German army happened to come across them, get rid of them. Go on, put them on the train. And there were quite a few of them but not to that extent.

RL: Were they in a separate camp or were they mixed?

JS: Well, they were mixed up and they were just, happened to… It wasn't in the C Lager but I know where I was working. And I heard them speaking and telling people. There were some women but mainly men, gipsy men who, who were, you know talking, about the gipsy **…** you know, but you couldn't discuss it, you couldn't talk really. Just an odd occasion you here this one talking or that one. And the German comes near you shut up. Because they don't want any conversation, they don't want you communicate, they just want you to be like an animal, do as you are told or else!

RL: Coming on to England, what was your first impression of England?

JS: Well, first of all, it was very exciting, it was, I felt strange, I didn't speak the language and, and I I was so excited being here. And then I was, 'Oh God, I must learn the language!' because I feel lost. You do feel lost you want to go somewhere you want to shop something. You rely on this little Jewish circles. I remember there was a little Jewish grocer called Spitzer in Stamford Hill, so I got to go there, but when I go out to West End or East End, now luckily in the East End a lot of Jews speaking, the elderly, Yiddish. And I remember when I had the job in this factory where they made gowns, costumes, you know, a manufacturer. And his name was Mr Green, and he was an old either Polish or Russian Jew and he spoke broken English but he was, had this factory going. And I asked him if I could have Friday off because of Shabbos, and I spoke to him German, because I couldn't speak English. And he says to me, 'How comes you speak German?' He says it to me in Yiddish. 'And you speak German, and you keep Shabbos?' And he couldn't understand, I don't speak Yiddish, how or why could I keep Shabbos. I said, 'You know, it doesn't matter what I speak, I always kept Shabbos!' Then he said, 'Well if you survived in the war and you keep Shabbos, you deserve to take your time off and I pay you for it!' But they didn't, obviously, yeah. The East End, the Jewish, the tradition and religion was carried mainly by the elders, because the younger ones has been educated here and some of them were quite successful and then they drifted away but I remember, when I used to go to the East End market there. What's it called? Petticoat Lane and all this, oh I had fun, with this Jewish, old Jewish ladies selling 'Schmalzhering' and […] And I got to know, they were sort of Polish customs. And I said, 'Oh!', I said. 'You speak a bit Yiddish! You come in to me, come and eat with me.' They didn't even know me but the friendliness was fantastic. And general, to me go walking so Oxford Road, Regent Street, and people can buy newspaper, there was nobody selling it, there was just a bowl, you put your penny in or half a penny or whatever it was and then you can go freely. And the I remember I was standing in the air, I was learning a lot in the Hyde Park Corner because we didn't know where to go, we had to work. Eventually I went to evening class, learned sowing, not English. English you just had to pick it up as time goes by. But that was a good place because we enjoyed the freedom of speech. You heard there all

sorts: Political things and they even spoke agin the king, we had a king there, King George. I said, 'Good Lord, this is freedom!'

Tape 4: 20 minutes 26 seconds

They had all so many platform there because people not had better to do used to go to Hyde Park. It was very, very exciting. And the British people when you told them, and they were amazed me, you know. He says, 'Why? Who, a few of them, because sometimes you were frightened to say. They think you are lying or making up stories. But some people wanted to know, and especially who liberated us, they were absolute angels. I can't tell you. Did you see that story about the, sorry, not a story, the Westminster Hall, they shown a film about a woman in Bergen-Belsen who, a man took her out of the ditch and they were reunited, and they gone back to bring alight this Englishman. Ah! It was so touching, I can't tell you. It was almost like, well I had the Russians liberated. But to me like angels came out of heaven to get you out of this hell, anything. And I think I have the greatest respect for the British Royalty. I mean why these Holocaust survivors… Who on earth was thinking that I will live the day I could go to a reception, to the palace, I mean. It is just beyond expectation. I think, I think she's great. I am a great fan of the Queen, I think. Ah, she's… God help them. I think it's wonderful, and it's Britain, I think that is something to be proud of. It's the monarchy, it's the tradition, it is a very civilised country. This is why I think people these days take advantage or something, too much freedom, and this is, this is… I appreciate because if you were under oppression like I was, and people don't appreciate it, they don't know what it means to be, you know, to be, live under dictatorship. And sometimes I say to my children, 'You know, with these terrors and bomb scare we get, because they couldn't do it under dictatorship Saddam Hussein. Now they are open, they become a free country, they can do what they want. And this is what frightens me because Britain deserve better. Had too much freedom for too many people and helped opened the door and I'll always be grateful, always. I think to come here and find a husband and family here, it's to me, to me it's unforgettable. And there is no way, I can't find words to thank for this country for me being here and able to, you know, continue my life as, as it was.

RL: Have you ever met any anti-Semitism here?

Tape 4: 23 minutes 28 seconds

JS: Not directly really. Not really, you see, when my husband died, I took on his business, and he had a lot of customers in the provinces, down Birmingham also, Liverpool. And we wanted to maintain this personal contact. They all said if you carry on we stay your customers. But as years gone by, you know, the input has gone bigger and the small shops are disappeared, so we lost a lot. They said when my husband died, they lost a friend, not a supplier. 'Cause he was very good with the customers, he gave a good service, he was a friend, he was helping them whenever they need a help. He would never sell goods which doesn't, you know which doesn't sell. He says, 'I rather lose the money, I don't want…'. Some people used to push some goods, on a small shop keepers which won't sell. Now, he wouldn't do thins like that. He was very straight. And I learned a lot from him and I was really on the road. I used to come home in November, it was foggy on the M6 and all that. I worked so hard. They asked me, 'How you do it**?** I said, 'You been in, you been through enough!' I said, 'I am well trained for it. I can do anything!' And I really did manual work, I carried heavy cases, so purses, handbags. You got to supply your customers in the shop and you got your car, you got to bring in your goods. I did manual work. What my husband, oleh vasholom did. I had to do it, we had to make a living, we carry on. And then a beautiful big house, he was so happy, he could take it a bit easier, don't have to. We worked very hard together to build a home. It's just when he could take it easy, he dies suddenly.

RL: Tell us a little bit because we haven't really met your husband.

JS: Ah, oh, I see.

RL: The last we spoke, you were living first with your aunt in Stamford Hill. And your sister got married.

JS: And I lived with her for a while, that was Amhurst Park in Stamford Hill. And then, she moved to another flat and I went to Golders Green, there was a room to let. And I had friends there and I met a crowd. We didn't have much in the Beis Yaacov but there was a crowd called Torah V'Avodah. It's like the, it's similar to Bachad fellowship or the Ezra in Golders Green. And I know it from a few people. And I thought I'd like to live there. I had a job, I could pay my way and I went to learn these LCC, London evening, London County Council evening classes, I learned sowing. I made a lot of things, I make this, I make a lot of things. And then I get a better job, in London. I worked, first, before I was married, I worked for a big firm called Jackmar. Have you heard of them? Jackmar, famous silk. And they had a department with the, they sold silk for the stars like Vivien Leigh, and all these famous people they used to come. And I was in the backroom working there but I learned the trade a bit in the evening class. There was an Italian designer, Mr de Rosa, and he said he wanted a continental girl, he advertised. The wages wasn't much good but the experience and I like the experience of making nice things, you know, to sew. By the time I got into it, I was proposed to get married. Well I first worked in a factory where they did these manufacturing and once that job is gone, then I was serving in school, school dinner, there was a 'Kindergarden', it was a primary school, Yesodei Hatorah. In Yesodei Hatorah in Stamford Hill, one of the Chassidish schools.

Tape 4: 27 minutes 45 seconds

I don't know if they still exist. But my English got a bit better as time goes on but you don't have to be clever in English, if you can sow, if you can serve dinners and wash dishes and play with the school children, you don't have to, your English so good, but gradually I went wherever I could to learn English. There was a lecture, there used to be lecture, the Anglo-Israeli Club, in the West End, they had something and people come there, you know, speakers. Or there was some JNF. Something or other, I go anywhere, just listen to talks to improve your English. And just went my husband said, 'Now you can go to evening class, learn proper English, just when, he died, because he worked so hard.

RL: How did you meet your husband?

JS: Ah, that's… I lived in London, as I said, Golders Green, and I went to the the shul to Reb Chuna Halpern, was my brother in law's brother. And he had his members of the shul and there was a family Last, and this girl called Esther, one of the girls, about my age She's a Polish girl. The family survived and they lived in Golders Green and they were members of his congregation, his shul. And I was there, and I got very friendly with Esther. And Esther, funny enough, he married. Do you know the picture, I show you: My husband was sixteen and is writing about the story, about Ossi Findling. He is from Leipzig. He came together with my husband, with the Kindertransport, and all the war years, they lived together in Wales, in an empty castle, they were working there. There were a few people, Fanny Pine and Mrs Rechnitzer, there were Uscha Dor. And this was the Kindergarten, sorry the Kindertransport Centre where they were kept during the war, you know. So, and this Ossi Findling was a friend, in fact, he was our 'Unterführer', you know? See, very close, he stayed

close to my husband. And he got married in London and he decided he is going. He lived in Manchester. I think he stayed with Mrs … What's her name? Mrs… What's her name? You know Ruth Friedman? Her mother, Mrs …What's her name?

RL: Braunold?

JS: Mrs … Gottenheim, Mrs Gottenheim. She was from Breslau too where my husband is from. And this Ossi Findling stayed with Mrs Gottenheim. And he came up to, he was friend with my husband in Manchester all the years ever since they came together to England. And he used to come down to London because Ossi married in London and then moved to a new flat, I think. And in the new flat, they had a little housewarming party, and he came down and he met me there. And so he said, 'Do you mind if I come back to see you again?' I said, 'All right, I don't mind.' Came back and there was Hanukkah time, and he came back by Pesach, backwards and forwards. I said, 'Look I am a busy man I just started a business. You keep me, you wanting me to keep coming to London, we better get engaged!', he said. He proposed to me Pesach Chol Hamoed and you going to make you a little party and I was very friendly with the family and they made me a little party, an engagement party. And he kept coming back and then we married, 3 November, same year.

RL: Which year was that?

Tape 4: 32 minutes 1 second

JS: 53, 1953 when the Queen got coronation. Because he came down for the coronation and we were all night on Oxford Road waiting for the coach. Brilliant, we were young, it was such an exciting time, we would see the coronation coming through the city and we are up all night, it was lovely, walked everybody up and down, you made friends in London. It was different times, a lovely atmosphere.

RL: Who were you sharing with? Who were the girls you were living with in Golders Green?

JS: No, I had a room on my own, 'cause I had a job already, I paid my rent. It was ten shilling a week. You could get a room ten shillings, you don't believe it but that was a … And I, my wages gone up starting three pound, three guineas or three pound something gone up to eight pound and that was good wages then, a good wages because I worked for Jacqmar, and I was a bit experienced in sowing you got more money but when you do the factory work it is just like chain work, you know, you do the same thing, put lining in a coat all day long or you put shoulder pads into the coats, do nothing else, You know, it's worked to hand in hand, you know, these large manufacturers. And I did that, I started of like that. And when I enjoyed my job, then he came down and when he came down he obviously stayed with his friend Ossi, and I show you the picture again, you'll see him there. And we were friendly ever since. And when we got married, he came up to Manchester, he was our 'Unterführer', he married my friend Last, Esther Last.

RL: Where did you marry?

JS: I married in Manchester.

RL: Why in Manchester?

JS: Because he lived here. All his friends were here. And I only had my sister and she was very friendly with Mrs Fruhman and Mr Fruhman and they wanted to do the wedding. And they did it. And he didn't know anyone in London. And I, besides, Mr Halpern's brother, I had no, my auntie was already in Canada, I had no relations there. And he said, he could make it, and he could have to pay for everything, I had nothing. He had the money to pay for the wedding. And I was going to make my wedding dress and I was doing that and I was, came up a few weeks before, I lived with a Lady called Mrs Katzky, in Wellington Street, and there was opposite a lady. She says to me, 'You don't make your own wedding dress, it's back luck!' I said, 'Really, I never heard this before!' 'But I know somebody got married not very long ago and that was Doreen Wachs.' You know her? And said, 'She will, I am sure Mrs Wachs will let you have her wedding dress. She is in Israel. So Doreen was already in Israel and I got her dress. And I had to make it a bit slimmer but I wore that dress, her dress, because it is bad luck to make my own. So I got married in her dress. And I gave it back to them, and I was very grateful, it was a beautiful dress, you could see. And I couldn't have made a classy one like that but I could have made something plain, you know, nice.

RL: Where did you get married in Manchester?

Tape 4: 35 minutes 39 seconds

JS: The Chuppa was in the Holmes in the garden. And the reception there, and his 'Aufruf' was, there was a small shul on Bury New Road called, called Beis something, Beis Yaacov, I can't remember. He, there was a small 'Aufruf' there, but I didn't see him after that, I didn't see him then. And we he used to go to Crumpsall you know shul, as well. And when we married, it was very funny, we were living next door to Berish Weisz in Parkside Avenue, Berish Weisz is the son of Dayan Weisz. And my husband used to go to Crumpsall but he said to him, 'Why don't you come, my father Dayan Weisz, he was the rabbi of this small community but he had no shul, he went to Levy House, he had dominion there, long before your time. And he says, 'Why don't you help us, we get a house, help us to build a shul. I mean we bought, they bought a house and my husband helped and we just joined us to our community. It's called Ohel Torah. And he was a member there. He was the vice president because Crane, Mr Crane – I don't know if you know the Crane family, Mr and Mrs Crane…

RL: ...?

JS: The son is Michael Crane.

RL: Dr Crane? Yes.

JS: Yeah, the father. He was the president and my husband was the vice president. He worked very hard for the shul to get it in existence.

RL: Was that on Leicester Road?

JS: On Leicester Road. Until he died he were a member there. And I just couldn't take the memory when he died. I started to go to Crumpsall, you know, it was too painful because it is in a small shul. So I left and I started to go to Crumpsall. Because the memory of here, he was there and…, you know.

RL: When did that shul start then? When did they get going?

JS: I was, they got it going, we were married, we lived in Parkside Avenue for seven years then we went to Marston Road. We were about two years there and old Mr Fulda, was running the shul, Mr Fulda, the old man. And he has also said, 'Come on, will you help me, we are going to Shul. But he died soon after that, he had, I think he had cancer, Mr Fulda. And my husband was willing to help and then he got involved with the shul and he was very pleased because he was, sort of, you know, nice. Dayan Weisz is a great man, he was oleh Vasholom and we got very friendly and Berish wife was very nice. The kids growing up together. Rivkele was her first daughter, I had Ruth about that age and the first son was Label. He was a bit older. And we were a few years neighbours, so we stayed members of Ohel Torah until he died, till 1970, April, he died.

RL: What work was he doing?

JS: Who?

RL: Your husband. What was he, what was his first work?

Tape 4: 39 minutes 5 seconds

JS: Well he was a wholesaler, handbag trade.

RL: He went straight into that?

JS: Well, after, before we met he has already been in the trade. Before that he had hundreds and one jobs like all the refugees, they done this, they done that, they done so many things. I didn't keep track on these things. 'Cause he was part-time in Leeds, he was staying with the, was very friendly with Rivke Stern. You know, Gertrude, the daughter? The Rivke's died a long time ago. Gertrude, they come from Bratislava, you know, the… And my husband was friendly with them. They had friends, a lot of other friends in Leeds and then he came to Manchester and he was trying to sell this and that and, you know, it was everything so short, everything in coupons, and we just came off the coupons, the clothes. He used to sell table cloths, and God knows what this and that. And eventually he decided, goes in the handbag trade. Because handbag was novelty, and these foreigners came here. The Polish, the Jews and the non-Jews, they started to go into the handbag business in a bigger way, they started to manufacture, you know, like Bomstyk and his partner … And the, what's it, the Karlisch brothers and all these. Well, they made a good living, we made a good living out of it, but he worked very hard. He was travelling to Sunderland, Newcastle. In Newcastle, she, I think they were the Davis's or Sunderland, I am not sure, Sunderland, I think. But he had customer in Newcastle, Hull. They, you know, in Hull, the Jaffa family. When, before we had Ruth, we had Ruth, my daughter, two years later when we married, I used to go with him on his journey and I helped him with his work. And we worked from the house, we didn't even have a warehouse until a bit later on. But he said first I want to establish I have got enough customer. And then he rented a place on Cheetham Hill Road and we were there ever since. And that's going back a long time. We are on Cheetham Hill Road, where is, where our warehouse is.

RL: Have you got a, like a name, this business?

Tape 4: 41 minutes 22 seconds

JS: IAS Leather Goods. IAS Leather Goods Ltd. Isaac Aaron Steinberg that was his name. Isaac Aaron Steinberg. He used his initials.

RL: And are the leather goods manufactured there?

JS: Well, he was a wholesaler. Ruth started manufacturing, Ruth, my daughter who has just finished Bar Ilan and who had a very good job in Israel. He worked for a big export-import firm of electric, electrical goods. And she worked in translation because she has got a French degree. And she spoke Ivrit already well. She was there five years, and she suddenly heard the news, my cousin broke her the news, she had to came back. And then she told me, 'Mum, I can't leave you with the business and the two boys.' Shimmy was 11, he has just started grammar school. And Josh just about starting university but this is all, well he was already in the university. So it affected us very badly. And she stayed in the business, sadly never got married, she is still there. She should have got married, she has got a nice personality, she is nice looking, I show you a picture of her, she is…

RL: When were your children born?

JS: Ruth was born '55, right, she was born '55, she is 50 years old next Pesach. Josh 47 and Shimmy 38, the youngest, I had them later year, I was 30, something like that.

RL: What schools did they go to?

JS: Well, they all went to Broughton Jewish primary school. And Ruth went to Broughton High. And it was all lots of, kind of politics: she, they didn't want her or she didn't pass. But she passed Broughton High and she's got four A-levels, not the highest grade but she got enough to get into Bar Ilan. She wanted to go to Israel and Josh went to Manchester Grammar School. They had two A's and a B in the A-level. And he could have gone to, he could have gone to Cambridge. But he's got a photographic memory even today. His maths, just like my husband, oleh vasholom, he doesn't need a calculator. In two minutes, a long list of articles were reckoned up to dead on. He doesn't use calculator. He helps to Ruth sometimes. But then he had this breakdown, obviously it affected, but I, but he is very bright now and everything. But he missed the boat, you see, and once you have, unfortunately you are not well, they stigmatise you and… But he, he is, he, you know, you lose your confidence if you are out of it so long and the others made the grade. He used to be the bright one, teaching the others Maths and French. He was very good in languages due to his memory. He says for languages you need memory. He was very well liked in Manchester Grammar because he did so well. First year he came top in the Latin in the whole class, and then, he did well there. When, unfortunately since went wrong after that with losing my husband is really like a whole pack of card collapsed. The family collapsed and we all got devastated. And you know you you you are not accepted in the same way because we used to entertain lavishly. We always had friends, I had five six people on Seder night and it was like a bachelor's lonely hearts club, the were all, you see, my husband always said, 'If I have a home and a good wife, I don't let people being alone because I did that without a family so many years. It's so nice to be able to to get friends into your home and he always invited a lot of people and he loved it and I loved it. We did, well finally we should be able to afford, we had a nice home, kids went to school, everything looked very promising and well. He supported Bar Ilan he he got a special certificate there. We went the same time once with Sir Sidney Hamburger.'Cause he invited him there, he had a do and he gave a nice donation. And the, it was very interested, what Bar Ilan**,** you know, Bar Ilan said because not only Ruth was there but he was very Zionist because all his friends was at Kibbutz Lavi. He had a lot of

these German refugees, you know, in that Kibbutz. And well, we all were, sort of in a way, longing for Israel because what happened in Europe. People were very happy prior Germans when they allowed them to be. When things went wrong, they all said, 'Go to Palestine!' And when you want to go to Palestine, 'This is not your land, you go home! Go somewhere else!' And that's how it goes, but he had the friends who came together. Well the Kindertransport was a few sections. But he came with all the, the transport he came with, they kept very close contact, was somebody called Kauffman, Shmuel Kauffman this and that. I have got pictures somewhere, from the whole lot of them, the Kindertransport. But I don't even know where I've got it. It's just that bit of newspaper that somebody sent to me. Which is him when he arrived in this country, with this Ossi Findling, where we met in his home. And that is how the Shidduch came about.

RL: Did your children belong to any youth groups in Manchester?

Tape 4: 47 minutes 44 seconds

JS: Josh was in Madrich at the Bnei Akiva for a number of years. Done very well. So has Ruth. They all went to Bnei Akiva, Shimmy as well. Well once things gone wrong, and you know, he couldn't invite his friends because he was, he, he wasn't accepted in Jewish Grammar, you know, he had a bit of a a a do with Lippe because this, he said this his Hebrew wasn't good enough. I don't know. So I said, no favours. And he settled the other schools, he got William Hulme, he went to William Hulme Grammar School there. But there were quite a few orthodox kids there, Leibovitch's were there. He was very well treated because the father died in in April, he stared school in September. And this headmaster, such a wonderful man, he said, 'I know how you feel, Mrs Steinberg. Don't worry about it, he gets all the holidays free. And we are going to treat him special because I lost my father when I was twelve!' He is a Welshmen, and I can tell you, I know how he feels. And he had a form teacher, Mr Fisher, and he always said, 'Steinberg, Steinberg gets away with anything!' And they didn't know and I didn't want to explain to the other children, he has just lost his father and this and the other. But Lippe wasn't very nice it put so much conditions and this and that. There was something not very nice, I don't like talking things which is not right to talk about but I think it was unfair and he had to go to that school and he was still going to Bnei Akiva, everything. But then things got difficult, he was so easily, when you have your problems, you easily detach yourself from the community 'cause all these morbid curiosity. How is he, what is he doing, what is…?' They don't want to know. She says, 'I don't care what other people do, leave us alone. I go my way!' And of course with Ruth not got married, this is a shame, is a shame, I am upset. No grandchildren, nothing.

RL: Did Simon marry?

JS: No. None of them.

RL: None of them?

JS: No, all his friends are not married, so they they… I don't know what is wrong with them. And I mean he has got a very nice friend, is Howard Blunt, and then he got Mark Rosenberg. All his school mates, they are not married, is Allweis brothers, he just lost the father last year, you know, the Allweis brothers. And he knows all these kids **…** and so many of them, never got married. Actually, one of them got married, Michael Beigel, he was also in his class, he got he got married last year, Michael. But a lot of them, it's got about eight bachelors, not married. And I think because if you are not able to provide big, today the

woman are, you know, they competing with men career wise. They want money unless you are very frum, which unfortunately they drifted a bit. Which I am not happy at all, I am very unhappy, but they are very good to me. So, they are not little children, 'I smack you if you don't do as I say!' you can't do that and basically they are very good to me. And and I have really have a soft spot for Josh because he really should have been somebody, because he is even, he has got a good head, but you know, he he…

RL: What is Josh doing?

Tape 4: 51 minutes 24 seconds

JS: He is, he is doing a bit of computer, he does work with computers and he, he is helping Ruth in the business. Not doing a great deal, because, you see, he says, 'If I want to come off the benefit' – he is on benefit – 'If I come off the benefit and they don't want to employ him, only just certain jobs which is very low paid, and people don't keep, then you have no job for life even if you didn't have my experience. You can't get a job. Now what happens? No jobs, no benefit, I'll be on the street. So I might as well just carry on, I am old and people don't looking for 47 year old for employing, they always want younger ones. So things gone against him and he is a bit of full of self pity. 'Why it happened to me? And why me?' I said, 'I had a lot of things happen to me. I don't ask 'why me?' It's me and I'm, just pick myself up and get on and get on your bike and go on and carry on!' But I am afraid they are too spoiled. We did too much for them too long and they don't face so easily responsibility like I do. I'd do anything, just about anything. Nothing could frighten me in a way not to survive. I I am very, I am very immune to these things. I mean even, you came to England and I wanted very independent, I wouldn't take a penny or any help or anything. I'd do anything, I just wanted to stand on my two feet and I don't want to say thank you for anybody, and I do that even today. I downsized myself from a beautiful place I lived in. I could afford it. But I know, my money runs out. I have got to live on a lower standard and I am quite happy. As long as I've got my house which I am struggling to get back. Obviously my teeth, is very very worrying because I hate dentures. You know what I mean, but I see to it. I'll do what I have to do.

RL: What is Simon doing?

JS: Simon, he is doing some computer job, he's got a job now. He did for a long time temping job because he had to help me packing and selling the house and…. He did part-time job but now he is joined with a friend and he is doing some computer work, some firm. I don't know, I don't understand the modern technology but that's what he does. There is not many, there is not got a great wages, but it's manage, we just manage. So, and he he meets up with his friend and they are hanging around in the weekends, nothing exciting.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs or societies in Manchester?

JS: Well, Mizrachi, that's more or less. And I, I worked in the beginning, I did help in the soup kitchen and they used to come to us or had had a a a reception there for the soup kitchen and I had a coffee morning for Bar Ilan once. And we did, that is going back many years ago, I did things for the shul. I kept a, made a coffee morning for our shul in the Ohel Torah. And I did bits and pieces like everybody else. And I used to help, we worked together, she was very sweet, Claire Pfeffer who lived down the road, you know, Brantwood, and I was in Marsden Road. We are quite friendly and she was one of them who never been as snobbish like Julia. I was very friendly with her but later on, when people started to get big money,

then, sort of you know, you couldn't keep up, so I lost touch with her. But at one point we were very friendly, Manchester was very friendly community. But people branched out, the, the, different reasons, don't know. But we did quite a bit of charity work: I, I used to help Claire, Claire Pfeffer when she made something Mizrachi. I said, 'Claire, just give me a call, even I'm busy, working hard, we can always come together and I help you in the kitchen, get these things. She had a very big house, the Hamburgers lived there **…** and I did what everybody else did, and I enjoyed it.

Tape 4: 55 minutes 42 seconds

Then unfortunately when he died, I had no time whatsoever, and I lost touch with a lot of friends. And you see, if you can't entertain, lavishly, I used to, I used to, I love cooking and baking. I'm in that respect real Hungarian. We are all brought up cooking, baking, you know, we were good at it. And people used to love my cakes and they come for the weekend, a Shabbos afternoon tea. And Sunday, we had this extension sukkah, was like a sun lounge, beautiful. We had a good time and this lovely house and the back garden. We used to have half of Broughton Jewish there. A huge garden. People tell me, I say, this year, I got a garden, it's a land you get lost in. It was big and it was safe, you see, it was nowhere open to the street, you see. Children played cricket, football, and Josh used to run it, used to call it the 'Humphrey Club'. They are arriving here with these cricket bats and everything and I am organising it. He was a good organiser. He was well liked and everything. And he made a speech at his Bar Mitzvah, it was unbelievable. People, not reading it, he picked it up in two years, half of them in Yiddish for the Ohel Torah and the other half in English. And the people were amazed, he never reads it, learned it in two weeks because we were in Israel and when we came back we only had two weeks to learn his Bar Mitzvah. He is very quick on the uptake, even today. But his life is, is a bit ruined, he lost confidence now. But I enjoy when he comes here, he makes me laugh, he is very witty. Unfortunately he is very conscious what happened to him and he doesn't like facing people. I said, 'Look, you are not a fugitive, it's happened. People, is not a crime. If I am ill, I don't care about other people. This is what happened to me and it happened to other people. So that was it.

TAPE 5

RL: This is the interview with Judith Steinberg and its tape 5.

JS: Oh, we are getting on a bit.

RL: How do you feel you fitted in to an English way of life?

JS: Oh, very easy. I realised it is quite different, and I realised you have to adjust to the country where you want to live or where you got this wonderful refuge, to escape from all these horrors you have seen in your country and and the horrors of wars. And well, obviously Britain had the war but I didn't see, but the friendliness after the war I found the people exceptionally wonderful. They, they were helpful. Nobody had much, we had still struggling with the ration book at the time when I came. And I realised it is a complete different world and I must learn the language in order to find, to feel completely at home. It is a horrible feeling to arrive and you can only speak to the Hungarians and the Germans, I had some Austrian Jews and I sort of spoke to them, spoken to them German. But I made an effort to learn as much as I can and when I did, I appreciated all what England stands for. I always compared. What was it back home like when I left? And previously I was a child and I was only interested in my child point of view, I was happy, I was carefree, I had a family lots of cousins, lots of friends, the streets full of us and walking together, all these sort of good

childhood. But that's what's all behind. And this new life of yours on your own in the world, it has a different meaning. You, you sort of, I have to continue what my parents would like me to do. And that's sort of carried in my mind, and I am lucky, extremely lucky to come to a country as Britain after the Russian invasion and all the horrors I've seen. And the people, I only know the nice things about Britain. I don't know any other side of Britain because when after the war, people were very friendly to each other and the hospitality, it was always room for you, you can always call us, although there were not so many telephones and everything. You can just walk in your neighbour, to your neighbours and ask them something. They were very friendly and I adjusted because pretty well because I thought England to, if I ever get married, got potential, the education is wonderful. It's got potential. And I was talking to these Jewish mothers in East End, they told me, 'Oh, my son is' – you know how they speak English, Yiddish - 'he a doctor, a doctor!' And oh, I was joking with this… And the other one is going to be a solicitor and the other one is a businessman.' 'How comes the other one is a businessman?' I said, 'Well, somebody to keep the other two.' He makes money the other one! So we were joking, they had a sense of humour, you know, these old, kind of Yiddishe mamas, Jewish mothers in the East End. I made friends with them because I wanted to learn, something different from the Hungarians, the old heimische mother and I, I couldn't speak Yiddish at all. German because the district I come from, nobody spoke Yiddish. Well, I learned the Yiddish from them because it is so close. You know after a while I couldn't have communicated otherwise. And…

RL: Did you ever feel an outsider?

Tape 5: 4 minutes 19 seconds

JS: Not… Yes and no. But I was lucky, I met a family and the husband wasn't alive. Funnily enough the daughters still live in London; they were a big family of twelve. The husband was a Chazan in the shul and something else. Anyway he was dead and there were lots of children. Similar ages as myself, some of them were a bit older. And I met one of the daughters; she was an English teacher in the Yesodei Hatorah, this Jewish school. And she took me home to her mother once to the East End. And they had huge table, huge family and her mother made all this fish and all this food and, and she was so happy that I coming to... With my broken English and with her Yiddish we sort of managed to communicate. But I felt so at home with her because she was so down to earth, it's like a real family life again. We used to be like that once. Big families, loads of them, the more the merrier, they come and they are happy to, to serve you, to, to entertain you, to… You know they were really nice but this lady I don't know, I tell you who she is, she is still alive and it's her family I am talking about. Do you remember Prof. Levy who used to teach in the Jewish Grammar, Levy. They lived in Windsor Road and his wife, Simmy, it's the second, his second wife, Simmy. Do you remember them?

RL: No.

JS: He he was a lecturer at the university but he was also teaching Maths part-time in Jewish Grammar. Perhaps your husband will remember.

RL: He'll remember.

JS: Professor Levy. Now, I don't know whether he divorced or his wife died but that Simmy, she divorced. She was a Mrs Cohen. She was one of this member of this big family. And one day she walks into Marsden Road and said, 'Judith, guess what happened? I married in

Manchester!' I didn't know Prof. Levy at that time but her mother, an angel, and she is one of the big family. And she has got sisters in Brighton, in London, some died. But we keep in touch. She gives me a ring. So she went back to London because he retired. And he wanted to go to London. And they live in London now for possibly ten years or more but she used to live in Manchester, here in Windsor Road.

RL: How…?

Tape 5: 7 minutes 12 seconds

JS: And then, I, a family which was very much like we at home, you know. And they were very friendly all round in the East End, the elderly people you know, the elderly Jewish people. And the young ones, as they progressed and made money, they spread out all over the city. You know probably better the Jewish history of, you know heard of Woolfson and Isaac Woolfson and all this. The background was very modest. You know, they weren't such a big 'Machers' as their sons, you know, not big… But they were lovely people and they had a natural sharpness about them, I don't know what it is, a natural kind of… I, I quite tried to adjust my, sort of, compare my home life to their friendliness because we were a friendly family. And the Jews or non-Jews neighbours, we were all friendly. And that is what is a little bit missing until you get to know them. And you are sort of on the same line, carry on, you are friendly people round you, 'cause otherwise in a big city you are lost. And you have to make the effort to find your friends, they don't come to you. You you go out there you start to talk to them, tell them, ask them questions how they live and when they came from and how long they have been here. We were sort of getting into conversation and wherever I had a chance, I went to Aguda, on Shabbos, but they were very similar people, refugees from Austria, from Germany. But I find these Eastern Polish and Russian, they were friendlier than the German refugees. They were OK, I had some friends from Germany, Mrs Lemon. And I don't know if you know the Newman family. Here, Shimon Newman, he used to live in Cheltenham Crescent, he died. You know, his family, Miriam Friedländer, you know her? She's lovely. Her mother's sister is in London, used to live in London in **D…** Road. She used to invite us on Shabbos. She would teach us English, me and my sister. You see, because my sister, my brother in law spoke Hungarian always. And this family Kraus, in Stamford Hill, we met, they also spoke Hungarian. But it was important to learn the other language and communicate with the other. People, you are here, you can't just be like be in Hungary, you are in England, and you adjust to your communities, your friends, your neighbours, your…, anybody. It was good fun.

RL: How would you describe yourself in terms of identity?

Tape 5: 10 minutes 3 seconds

JS: My identity, in which way? National way or what?

RL: Yes, national and and who you, what you identify with?

JS: You you can't stamp out children's background, of been once a Hungarian. And I appreciate the good times of Hungary, I do. Because life was, however simple you may call it, it was good and it wasn't all that simple. People have lived to the full as you call, under the, any circumstances. They were always a gaiety. In fact that somebody who didn't know any Hungarian, it was somebody called Mrs Newman, her husband took her to Hungary and she said, 'I didn't need the language, I just had to look in the faces, the friendliness, you

know, the, the, they are very hospitable, they're friendly, so easy going. I missed that at first but I realised, it's different but you can get people if you get to know them. And as soon as I spoke English, you know, and got married and we, we obviously had many non-Jewish customers. The people were nice, I met, and they were so interested in me. 'How did you… What was it like in Hungary?', all those sort of things because my accent is always there, you can't get rid of that. So gradually, you see, you had this sort of mixed identity in a way. My background is Hungarian, I couldn't explain to the children, what was it like? But I took them all to Hungary, Ruth was, Josh was, Shimmy came to Hungary with me. So, they understood now, what it was like. Because it is hard to explain the place and people unless you go and experience it yourself. So this, I am not surprised, they are very nice. And you could have a good Jewish life here because you can tell the synagogue and this all, the museums, the literature and the people. It it was quite a got life until things got spoilt. And it would tell you, people who lived in Germany or lived in Czechoslovakia, life was peaceful, was good. It's like here. When it was peaceful and good, everybody was happy. Once it got stirred up and the war came and the horrors came and the difficult times came, that was difficult. But to me, looking back, appreciated that I had, I was happy as a child. And what, how, how history changed everything. Hungary is not the same. Life is not the same. You got to go around with the past, and I think, I am the luckiest girl alive today to be in Great Britain because compare what's going on in other parts of the world all those years, behind iron curtain and, and this, and the, and I saw the British people, the British Jews, the life here free and and what you make of it, it's up to you. So I feel British, if not more British than Hungarian. Because the major part of my life, it took place in Britain and I have a lot to be grateful for, Great Britain, a lot.

RL: How secure do you feel here?

Tape 5: 13 minutes 40 seconds

JS: Which well like everybody else; I don't look at it myself individual. As a nation, how secure we are. God knows? I mean, times has changed. It's present time, I just unbelievable, I never believed that Britain opened the doors for all those refugees and going to end up terrorist attacks, I just would never believe it. But nothing surprises you in life, if you have seen such horrors and you heard so many horror stories in Russia, in here, in there. You see, the stories were told, the people lived through in this area, in this part of the world, that part of the world, and experience different times. You, you just add it to the ongoing experience and my loyalty is definitely Britain because they let me in when I had nowhere to go, the door to Palestine was shut for me, they wouldn't let anyone in. And Hungary was unbearable: hunger, fear, rapes, your home is empty and you got to face that without your family. I couldn't live in a small town, the Jews was on the main street walking on the Shabbos and, and, and then the Danube, along the Danube it was beautiful, this promenade. You had to see to believe that, it is so beautiful, used to be. And they werer sitting there on Shabbat and we **…** for the neighbours or anyone and we were so well integrated to the nation. I never believed, but they couldn't do anything because Hungary was a small country even those who wanted the Jews to stay, I mean it was very influential, Raoul Wallenberg**,** you know, he could only do so much. And you know, this is uprooted everything. Well, I can't change history but I've got to be grateful for me able to come hear and work hard with my husband and establish a home and children and even I, I would have expected something more and different, then again, you can't always order your destiny and you can't run away from it either.

RL: How did you feel going back to Hungary?

Tape 5: 16 minutes 1 second

JS: Very mixed feelings. I try to remember the good memories, the good things. And some people come to you with a kind of guilt complex. 'We really, we were really brainwashed, we were really, we suffered under the Germans. We were treated, once the Jews gone, they treated us just as bad and you know took everything from us, you know, food.' Hungary was very good in producing medicines and things. It all emptied the factories, the shops because Germany was already so many years in the war. You see, instead of a nation progress in the domestic end, it was everything destroyed bit by bit. Leipzig was bombed out, and Berlin and this. And also instead of developing their talent and, and those natural gifts and advance the Germans, they did it on wrong end, were Hitler orders. They become, the, the youth was messed up with the Hitler Jugend because the, Hitler promised them, 'You are going to be the greatest nation on earth and Aryans and you be so different, superior to anybody else, and all this rubbish. And this poor Hitler Jugend, **…**and even rooted them in the army and shot half of them. This is, you know, when you look back what this 20th century, what you have seen and you have survived this century, this gone century, you can write about ten books, if you want to go to details or your movement or your experience and your feelings and, and all your little adventures and your meeting people and and you don't know what to do, you fall in love. 'Shall I get married. Shall I….and there was a boy after me, crazy, he had to go, he couldn't come to England, so I lost him. And then, all sort of things happened. And I had some relatives in Sweden and I went to visit one day when I saved a few pounds up. I went to on a Swedish voyage on the ship to Sweden. Y you know, you are sort of collecting your experiences, your memories and you always, I think, if you want to get on life, you always built on, on the, on the here and now, and the possibilities and your past, trying to remember the good memory. And the other one you mustn't forget but don't live with it because it could destroy your soul if you just …? 'Oh God, why this and all gone!' But I understand, I always have a tear for parents whose children for instance, they shot this poor boy the other day, he has done nothing wrong. And even some people get killed, it makes my blood boil. 'Cause you hear that, where he lost his two little children, two young girls, in you know, what's the name of that little village where they died, you know, the Huntley case. Why should anyone take life. I've seen taking life. People come healthy, happy and then one day somebody tell you, your life is over, push you in a horrible chamber, push your gas on and kill you off. Innocent children, innocent people. The injustice… I I I, but I can't make myself ill, I've got to step back a bit, because I am very touchy, I I feel very sorry for the people who are hungry. Because nobody knows what it means to be hungry unless you did it yourself. You feel the hunger pain through the look in their eyes.

RL: How do you feel towards the Germans?

Tape 5: 19 minutes 58 seconds

JS: Well, you see, when the people say 'the Germans' or you say 'the Asians' or the this or that, there is good and bad in everywhere. But if you let the bad, the evil come into power, because there was so many German people, and they quietly, they were disgusted when they found out what Hitler did. And there wasn't a proof on it but if you become the minority and you don't, if you don't keep shut up, you get shot, you get turned up in the camps or whatever. To, I think, Hitler managed to pick up the scum of Europe, you know, they all, from all over, you know, you found in the army. Every country, from Rumania, from Hungary, from Slovakia, from Austria. They got this SS, it's not like the Wehrmacht, they got to armies. The Wehrmacht was, but then they overtook the power, the SS from the

Wehrmacht, and that was become a tragedy. Because you could have negotiate somehow with the Wehrmacht, something, it was some dignity of being a good German, but it doesn't mean… In some ways I felt sorry for that German woman who in Liebau, who I faced and she was crying her eyes out, what Hitler had done to them. So you realise, they fell in with something, so you can't hate the whole German people because evil Hitler. They, you see, if God forbid, here comes somebody in power who will do the same thing, you can't hate all the British people or the Asian people because they got some brainwashed terrorists. This is a… I've got so with my personal opinion, I try to work out why become these people terrorists. But I tell you, under Saddam Hussein there was no freedom, they were always pressed down their own hard, not so, governments, you know, the Arab government, it was somebody on the top like the Saudi Royal and this and that. And they had no freedom but they come here, they have the freedom and then they misuse it. What they do, what have they got against a country where they educate them, they give them good living, they give them benefits, they give them homes. So what have they got? They get hold of these fanatics, the lunatics, teaching them, that is not the religion, I am sure that is not the Koran what they teach in these… The, the, the evil people get hunger for power and we make the world, Muslims, or we want Muslim parliament in Britain. What right have they got? How to tackle it? You got to fight back and, and this is what the world doesn't understand because first time in history, the Jews fight back because of Israel. See, if they don't fight back and we could just be destroyed altogether.

RL: When did you first visit Israel? And how did you feel going there?

Tape 5: 23 minutes 14 seconds

JS: I visited first Israel – it was a wonderful experience - Josh was five years old and I remember, he stood by the wall. And it wasn't belong to the Jews, it was Jordan, you know not Pales…, not Israel, it was Jordanian. And he was arguing with the, with the tour guide. I remember his name was Benny. 'Benny', I said, 'Tell me why this Jordanian is keeping our holy wall? It's ours, why is it not on this side? Why aren't we, can't we go to the wall, we could look over the fence?' I said, 'You know, my children asked the same question, I haven't got any answer.' I said, 'But it's, it's built, this King David, King Solomon, this is our wall!' And Josh, he said, 'You know, you got here a little professor!' He asked so many questions. He was very advanced, he was three, he could read because of his memory. People, you know, Miss Schlesinger said to me, 'He's got a memory, it's just fantastic and, and the they told. But it doesn't matter. He's got a friend who is a doctor, his name …., he is not Jewish, a lovely guy, Steven, he is from Glasgow, his father is a foreign diplomat, it doesn't matter, he was two years in a medical practice, had a breakdown and he's ended up like Josh and he's… They wouldn't take him back, he applied for the blood bank to work. They wouldn't take him because of this record. So, you see, tragedy happens to clever people, you know, it's tragic.

RL: What does Israel mean to you?

JS: It was a very interesting experience then, because there were only very few hotels and it was very barren everywhere and, and we went to little tours to the country. My cousin took us round. I think they had, he had a car because he was a trade union leader, and that was a wonderful experience, he worked, Michael Levy his name, he worked with the Druids and Druids' village. He got a job and he went there and I went with him and he took us into these beautiful, not a hut. They call them, these big, it's like a marquee, they live like that, they are living on the floor. And the hospitality and the fruit and the garden outside, there was

pomegranates and it was like the Garden of Eden. And he had such a reception because he loved these people. And he cold speak to them, they speak Hebrew, you know, the Druids' village, they used to, he used to take me round. And these, some of the decent Arabs who settled down. I felt sorry for the Arab, 'cause they didn't where they belong, the British gone and they, they never had a Palestinian government but they said that is all us to and we went into and we were walking in a little shop in Jerusalem, my husband and I, and I saw in a window a lovely bracelet. I still got it, and I said, 'Oh, just let's go and find out what is, what is, how much it costs!' So we go in and my husband tried to speak to him, he knew a bit of Hebrew and he said, 'Yes, I know a bit of Hebrew but I know English!' because he had to speak to me English, I don't speak Hebrew. So, and he speaks very good English and he is an Arab. And I said, 'How comes?' and he says, 'Well, I was working for the British army, so I had to speak English because they don't speak my language!' And he said, 'How are you settling down, we got a new government?' And he said, 'How do I settle**?** I am happy, the new government, I have got business, I've got a home, I've got tourists coming. This becoming a country, a normal country!' And he says, 'I love it being here, now being Israel, because before, all I was is a servant and for the army, I didn't have a home, and… Well life was hard, we didn't get anything, we had noth… But now, they are building roads here, they start to build roads, they becoming a country, good job, is becoming… He was nothing against it and a lot of Arabs… I went round with my cousin. They got them jobs, never had jobs before, they work together. You know they could have really gone a long way, but then these refugees came from Jordan, from Egypt, from everywhere and they made it like a Palestinian tragedy.

Tape 5: 27 minutes 57 seconds

But at that time there were very few there. I mean they were few, and they were, not, some of them were, not so much the Palestinian people, the muftis, they told us, the, you know the leaders, the Arab leaders, they didn't want Israel to exist, so they got in, the army to the war but I think they got on very well, they are lovely people. These old Palestinian, they are peaceful people and the Druids, are amazing people. I just love them, and my cousin loves them, and they love my cousin. He is a very friendly guy. He was even invited to the trade union meeting some time in England. He speaks good English 'cause he lived in Gibraltar, he was working there as a, a Mizrachi shaliach of some sort. He is a very, my cousin, this particular one is an extremely nice and clever man, he died three years ago. And and the, I was very impressed, it was peaceful at that time. We went on a boat Kinereth, and there was an Arab who took us on a boat to the Kinereth and I remember they just said, they are going to build an open kind of theatre, they will have some events on, near Tiberius you know, that was lovely. And we had a cap put it on Josh he made him the captain of the ship, it was so fun, so much fun. And life is now different, and he was five years old, that must be 42 years ago, I was first in Israel. And we went on a bit rocky plane. We had to go to Amsterdam and change to get to Israel. It was a big thing to get to Israel and then we've gone more often, time came and more hotels been built. And he was in Israel in summer, 77, and he died and we were, wait a minute, yes, it was 77 and we were again in Israel in 78 before Josh's Bar Mitzvah because it was between season and he liked to have a holiday and that was the last holiday and then afterwards…

RL: Coming to other things. Do you feel that your experiences have affected you psychologically in any way?

Tape 5: 30 minutes 37 seconds

JS: Well, I learned how to get to terms with it. The only way, when I was after the war affected me, I wouldn't accept that my mother has is died and I kept searching for her, searching and searching, has become an obsession. I must look, 'She might come back, she will come back!' And I missed very much my mother and my father of course but knowing, seeing her last and my father was already turned into the camps, forced labour camp, I've not seen him probably a year before and then my mother was always in my eyes and they didn't want to part from me. And I says, 'My daughter, please let me be together!', and Mengele wouldn't let her. And I said, 'Mum, mother, we will be together soon and made us to go and always at the back of my mind, 'How can I only find my mother?' And then and then I realised, you search, you search, and what you are searching for. You you got to accept, i she was alive, she would know where to go, she was smart, she wouldn't get lost. And I gave up. And that was the effect. And when I came here, I was so busy with so many things establishing a new life, get used to a new way of life, get used to a new language, a new environment, a way to behave to other people. It's a different country, you got to, you know, you got to behave what the, the country you go to and respect this and be like, like, to make myself a little bit British as much as I can and I knew that never be my country again, Hungary because the Russians there and they'll never go out. And my husband always wanted to come to Budapest. He says, 'I always wanted to go there', and I said, 'As long as the Russians are there and they ask questions in the border, they suspect you with everything, the people went. So start to remember the good days. Don't go back. The are, suspect you always with this, with that. It was difficult. Some people went back because they had an old mother there or a sister. I have a few cousins but nothing important enough to risk to put you to prison or they will make up a story and they lock you up. You know, they did that 'cause in Russia, you remember, when Kerensky got free. Why did they put them prison? The Russians want to put you in prison, they put you in prison. It is, it is complicated, you got to get visas and they said, 'Where is your exit permit?' If they want to be funny. But nobody cares today. It's free as any other country, they want you to come back. People came back from Israel, very religious people, they rebuilt a synagogue for them and all sorts. 'What's going on there?' It's …..it's coming back, the religious way of life.

RL: Have you ever suffered of nightmares or flashbacks to your time in Auschwitz?

Tape 5: 33 minutes 51 seconds

JS: I, I, do you know, when, when I was liberated, I remember, I was still in the hospital, trying to get well. And, and I wake up in the morning, I sort of looking under my pillows if my bread was still there or somebody nicked it. 'Cause you sometimes you were so frightened that somebody comes and nicks your bread. 'Oh God, I am I am free, nobody nicks my bread, nobody gives me much but I got something.' And I used to get these feeling wake up, will I find my bread, you know, because the hunger was the worst thing. When you are so hungry, you lose your worry and concentrate just to survive the hunger, the hunger pain. It was bad. And that hungry feeling was with you and then you wake up and the nurse comes. I said, 'You know, I just dreamt somebody stole my bread', I said, 'Nobody steals your bread anymore. If you dream again, just say, was it was, it's not here anymore. And the Hungarian nurses were extremely got, I mean, they saw me in such a state. But they got me back so…

RL: Do you think it has affected, did it affect the way you brought up your children in any way?

JS: Well, you see, one time you adjusted to the way of life in England, I don't want them to be any different. I had a common interest, they will go to the school where I feel they need to go and I work and living with the community is like I am just one of the member and doing what we all do, you know, socializing when we can and living normal, we attend our businesses, we make friends outside our community, we had friends, people, customers used to come out of town, seeing us at our home, discussing business. This normal sort of settling down and my husband was, 'No, I could not live in Germany, I don't know if I go back I could face it!' Because he was so affected by, you know, his parents and his two sisters. The two sisters is, they all come to Auschwitz, oh no, they gone to, first they took them to the Lodz ghetto, and from the ghetto to Auschwitz. That's what he heard. But the brother survived who lives in Toledo, Ohio in the States, and he is older than him and he is still alive and he was two years in Auschwitz. You see, the brother – I show you the pictures – looks like him. He was, was funny, when he died, he came for the unveiling and we went to the bank together, somebody said, my husband came back from the dead, 'cause they saw me in the bank. …Steinberg. He is so much alike, like twins, you know. He wore the same clothes, sort of clothes, it was funny. It's, it's… No, I, I didn't want my children to live on my past, and I don't speak about it, I want to be normal. And when they started to come, these films and media and this, and they, they started to watch, what I couldn't watch. 'Mother, you have been all through in that!' I said, I couldn't watch it. The younger one, Shimmy watches it. I said, I have your attitude, it was, you survived that's all that matters, we can't change history, we got to carry on and this and that. Josh is watching that, Ruth can't. She is someone, 'I just can't watch these murderous events!' Even today, whatever she sees: 'When you see that, you know, how can you watch these pictures?', you know when you see **…** suicide bombers or anything. I said, 'I've seen worse.' I said, 'You've seen it, you just wonder why these things happening again. I didn't think, in my lifetime you see tragedies and you, happens and happens, and you can't adjust to these things happens.' And never wanted my children to feel because I had a bad time they got to live through my memories, my histories. The only thing they used to say, 'Mama, it's such a shame we don't have a Grandma!' We don't have much relations, only auntie **…** Mrs Halpern you know, she was the only one, so they were grateful for that. And they came to visit us a couple of times, my brother in law from America and his wife which is on the pictures, that time she came and I just had a hysterectomy, I had an operation, that was 96. And I went to see them, you know, once, I went to the wedding of Shmuli**,** you know, my sister's younger son. And it, he married a girl from Cleveland. And my nephew or my brother in law, my husband's nephew lives in Cleveland, David Steinberg, and they came from Toledo to Cleveland which is an hour's drive, very near. And then I met them again, my brother in law, my sister in law. And then they came once to visit me after I had an operation, in Barn Hill Road. And I haven't seen them since.

RL: Did your experiences ever affect your religious beliefs in any way?

Tape 5: 39 minutes 51 seconds

JS: No, no, because I think, the religion, it brings me back such lovely memories, the holidays, the togetherness, the of food we used to have. It, it was so engraved in me this background. And you know, my father taught religion in an inspiring way, not drum it down in your head but, as I explained it to you, he would teach us the important part in the religion. And obviously, 'Love they neighbour!' and this sort of things, you know. He would, you see, he was well liked in, in the Jewish circle, in the non-Jewish circle. He was always friendly. I mean we did, we just lived normal lives and it was like one big family, the whole community. Somebody just asked me the other day, he said, 'Why Hungarian Chassidim, they only speak Hungarian? When you go to Israel, when they go and come here? When

you… They are so religious and always speaks Hungarian? Because that's the way we used to be, we were very Hungarians, you were religious, you were accepted, you didn't have to speak Yiddish or anything, sorry, invent your language, your own. You speak the language in the country you live in because you live with the people as a whole. They understood us so well and we understood them. There was no, how can I say, there was no segregation, no, the, you can freely live and do what you want. And they were taken and accepted for what you are. Because you couldn't have lived in a small community and, and work together, do business together, farm together, do everything together.

RL: Did you ever join any refugee organisations here? Have you ever been associated with any refugee activities or…?

JS: There was something in London, what did they call it? It was, I know, it was called Bloomsbury House. That was a refugee… But you went there when you needed some help, some guidance, some special references for applying British citizenship but I didn't have to do it because my husband was British. I said, now you know why I got married, because I become British. He was British already before me.

RL: But what about the AJR?

JS: I didn't know AJR for a long time, I only heard about AJR last …..I know it was a 45 group, a Polish group, 45. And I think, that's developed AJR or something. And as I said, last 27 years since my husband unfortunately died, I not have time to follow up all these social events. I got an invitation, I go there, I I take part on events on the Holocaust Memorial Service, I go here and there and it's part of my history, and part of my life, and duty, you go there, and you say your prayers and so on. And, but I don't belong to organisation, I am a member of the Holocaust Survivor Centre in London. I send them five pound and they send me some events, what's going on. But I am not going to take a train because they've got an afternoon tea somewhere or go to a show or take the people out. You see, you are fortunate to live in London, you have a better social life. And here, we only few scattered, a few of us here. I don't even know too well where they live the survivors. One friend of mine, was cousin, Dr Haber's mother, she died a while ago. And who else I have here from survivors. I don't see them much. There was Raizi Weisz who lives in Broom Lane, and I don't see her for a long time. Not because they are just survivors, you see, you develop friendship with other people, you loose touch but is no… Here, I didn't find anything here in Manchester like the Sternberg Centre in London, where you, you can drop in, where you can have coffee mornings and drop in for any cultural events, you can learn this, you can learn that, you can be entertained, you can just have a, socializing talk to other people. You know, you are fed up in your flat, you go out there and they, they even help you with the transport. I read about it, what they're doing. There's nothing like it here but of course London is a bigger place. And these Sternberg, he happened to be Hungarian that Sternberg, he, he's what **a** philanthropist. What do you call them? A philanthropist He is a reformed Jew but he is very kind man and he does a lot of the interrelation, inter faith relationship very good.

RL: Did you ever receive restitution?

Tape 5: 45 minutes 31 seconds

JS: I did get some pension lost some capability, a small pension, I get from Germany since. I think I have applied 1965 or 68 they started to pay me. It took a couple of years, that was a German lawyer,, Mr, Mr, Dr Munster, he's lived in London. And he was a German lawyer

who dealt with people who claimed from the Germans, he got all my details and they accepted, you know, my claim, and they allow me a little pension, I've got every month. And I got, by the way, this slave labour. What amount I had, I think, I had, was it two years ago, about 4000 pound. That was the slave labour from the factory that we did. And nothing else, I don't think I claimed anything else. You can claim if you work for the Germans while in a ghetto, but I can't be bothered. And I have no time and there is no time lawyer here and I got to have everything translate and some comes with the 'Hochdeutsch', with the very difficult German, you see, I am not very good at the that but everyday language I can manage very well, but ah, there is papers and papers, I couldn't, I've got enough papers in my, being in the business all these years. I hate papers; I give it all to Ruth. I say, 'You go on with the papers and Josh, now we just do the donkey work, I hate papers, forms and things like that. No, but I do get a little compensation but is neither here nor there.

RL: Is there anything else that you would like to add before we go on to the photographs? Anything major that we might have missed?

JS: What, the personal life or the details of the experience? In Auschwitz, it was so horrific, but if I just tell you all the side because you probably heard all the other people saw the same thing what I saw, it's mainly the the, the arrogance, the cold, the hunger, the treatments of the people as if they weren't human beings. And as I explained it, it was a little better and there was an interesting experience that we met these French prisoners and they were extremely helpful and sort of pitied us. And did what they could, not a great deal but better than nothing. You see, if I go on any more little details, you heard it before because we had similar stories but my personal story when I, as I explained, how it worked out when I got back to Hungary and then my hometown. And it was taken over by the Russians and my sister turned up unexpectedly two three months later and sort of we took it, we stayed together and people everybody who could get away, who had a chance, it's like we got a chance get to know this man who took his risk to to get us on in a roundabout way to the other side of the border which we managed how it gone through. And come to England, it was strange but happy, and I felt free and this happiness and gratefulness will always be with me. All I can say and think, is I can't find words to express Britain my gratitude. I can assure you, I would never teach my children to be suicide bomber because this country deserves a lot better than that, it's really taught me a lot of things. And I am just only sorry that are so many things missed out on my education and when I was able to get into something, when my work, to establish a good home to provide the children, my husband said, 'OK, you can go to evening classes, you can do this, you can do that!' We made a bit of money, we'll cut out this journey, that journey, we don't have to do that much. He was a lot away because he had a lot of business out of town. And I, so many days during the week I was by myself with the children but I didn't mind because it was for the benefit for the family to make a decent living. I said I don't want our children to struggle like we did. Let them have everything they want. Didn't do them any good. More you gave them, more they expect, you know?

Tape 5: 50 minutes 31 seconds

RL: Was there any message that you'd like to end with?

JS: Message to who?

RL: Just to whoever watches the video.

JS: On the, on the personal level, I would say, people in my position should learn to be grateful and appreciative. If you found kindness after many terrible things happened to you. There, you can make your life better if you want to and you accept your fellow men. On an equal level and respect everyone. And I think, life is precious and we should respect one another and we can if we want to live in peace. And do appreciate if you, if you got a refuge. You come out of a messy world and a very bad dictatorship you live under and you come to freedom, it's so precious and you can appreciate and you can give your children freedom. Don't let it take it away, be strong and appreciative because it can be done. And you can't, you don't have to live with the past, you have to learn to forgive because otherwise if you don't forgive, and forget partly, not forget it that it never happened, but, but you forget that you have a little happiness. You don't live the daily horror, what was baggage behind you, you know, the pain, the hunger, the agony, the suffering together. If you can end up, live in a nice home and have children and you have a home, life goes on and I'm really, thank to God, and I really, my religion was a very, give me strength, hope, you know. I always thought of my father, what he taught me. He said, 'Don't ever give up hope whatever difficult times we live in!' He understood what was going on in the world, he used to stand in the street corners and out of synagogue and they were talking all the time what terrible times happening in the world. I said. 'We're worrying, they are coming here as well!' I mean, I remember his words, I was only a little girl. But all those things, if you can't come to terms with it and, and just forgive to what happened, it, it's, I always think, you know, the Jewish words it's beshert something, you can't avoid it. And if you come out on the right, appreciate it. And what more I could say that that people either in my situation or in other horrible situation, 'Learn to accept your destiny! And live in hope.' And hope mainly so this never happens again to anyone. And the times we live in I think it needs a lot of forgiveness to live through, to get through with it. And I was always hoping my children won't know horrors but it's in front of our eyes, our very eyes today, and you can't look at the other way. And I, I appreciate what they are going through and I feel helpless. Because I can give a few pound here and then a few pound there, But it's really, I think, it's the heads of governments in the world and they should get together and put their heads together and they can make war, they could make peace. I'd like to see piece on earth. And I think that would be the nicest thing in my lifetime, if I could see that, not what I see today. I would be happy if I live long enough to see that. And that would be my message. Be happy while you are her and help where you can but things that are out of your control, nothing you can do, you can just pray. I do that often, I, even today. And there is something I like to see different, I pray, and makes you feel better, even if it doesn't help. And…

RL: Thank you.

TAPE 6

PHOTOGRAPHS

RL: So if you could just tell us what this photo is?

JS: She is my grandmother. The name is Yocheved Weisz, taken in, some time in her early twenties in Paks.

In the front row is my grandfather, Jakob, Yitzchak Berkovic. On the right is his daughter Ethel, behind his son Hermann, to the left, his son Moshe. This picture was taken approximately 1943. In Paks.

This is the synagogue where I used to go to pray in Paks.

This is taken in Prague airport, 1947. I am second from the right, I am together with other survivors.

I am on the left together with my sister Helen Berkovic, it was taken in London, approximately 1947.

This picture of myself Judith Berkovic, this was taken in Budapest in 1946.

This is my wedding to Isaac Aaron Steinberg. On the right is my sister Helen and her husband, Shimon Halpern. Their daughter Hanna is the bridesmaid on the left and Mr Spitzer from London. It was taken in November 1953 in Manchester.

On the left my daughter Ruth, in the middle is my son Simon, on the right is Brenda, secretary of the, of the bag business, of our bag business. It was taken 1955 approximately, in Birmingham Trade Show.

This is my son Joshua taken, taken in Prague, in 2000, year 2000.