



**UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT  
– INGA BLUMENBLATT**

**[Testimony: 1hr 46mins. Artefacts + additional answer 3'30"]**

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10:00:00:00

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah yeah, my name is Inga Blumenblatt I was born eighteen of June nineteen twenty-seven and I survived the war.

**[fade to black and black up]**

10:00:15:21

**Interviewer**

How um, how often do you tell your story?

10:00:19:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, I haven't spoken about it for years and years. Now I've got grandchildren and great-grandchildren, so obviously somehow it comes out and, er, well, the, the main thing why I started talking about it more was because our, um, was on television. What's his name? The one that deals in the, the English,

10:00:51:01

**Interviewer**

Are you talking about Sir Nicholas Winton or no?

10:00:53:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, no, the proper,

10:00:55:07

**Interviewer**

The prime minister?

10:00:56:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

The prime minister.

10:00:56:12

**Interviewer**

Oh, David Cameron.

10:00:57:13

**Inga Blumenblatt** *[talking over each other]*

Yeah, yeah.

10:00:58:00

**Interviewer**

Yeah, sorry.



10:00:59:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

And he spoke on television, and he said that he'd decided it wasn't enough time given to the people after the war, and I went yes, you're right! You're right. And then I somehow mention this in conversation or something, and my children always wanted me to talk about it, you know. And I sort of never did, but I thought to myself there comes a time in life that it doesn't hurt to make a note. I didn't realise it I would be lucky as, you know, having you to listen to me and so on. So that was it. And, um, from then on, I've changed my mind and said I should be speaking about it. I bottled in for a long time.

10:01:43:21

**Interviewer**

You're absolutely right Inga, and actually what, what you've been through is very important to record. So, um, the times that you didn't speak about it, did you make a conscious decision not to talk about it, or you were busy with the rest of your life and all of your children? Did you, what,

10:01:59:24

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, if the conversation came up, or something they were saying and I didn't agree with, with what they saying, I said no, that is, it was different in the war or before the war and so on, and I put my opinion, you know, for a couple of minutes and that was it.

10:02:19:08

**Interviewer**

All of that time, you, you kept a lot bottled up inside you. Did you find that very hard?

10:02:25:23

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well it was, but it didn't show in the ordinary way. It showed the way my body went and so on. And, um, I was an only child as well, so one is a bit pampered, and then the war broke out and so on. So it was very hard, because I was left by myself really. And my father, my father was alive, he went to the, he went to the army in 1942, I think it was, might be already in Russia, because we were taken there to Siberia, you know. And er it was different. It was a completely different life or existence, let's put it this way.

10:03:06:06

**Interviewer**

Mm. Um why do you think it, so we're going to start with some general questions

10:03:11:17

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, fine.

10:03:13:01



**Interviewer**

So why do you think it's so important for people like you to share their experiences?

10:03:19:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, because people moan about such little things that happen, and so many people that disappeared, and there is me, old woman and just sitting and not saying anything. So alright, I say some. You can't tell the children things like that when they're young. When they're older, they go either to school, to Uni or, or have their life, so you can't speak about it, and especially like me, which I didn't have the family, they didn't remain, so it was all being boiled up in my body. But it was a kind of, of existence, but I was glad to be alive. So that's another side to this story, and now I'm talking and I, everything. In fact I forgot to bring, because I started writing a little book and I thought to myself I'll bring it to you to show you. What did I do? Left it.

10:04:16:06

**Interviewer**

That's fine. You can send it to me another time, or you send me a copy. Don't send me that book, because it's very precious for your family.

10:04:21:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, it's only a few pages, because I didn't have time to write after that, or I was too tired, any excuse for me, you know. And, er, so I remain. But I started talking about it and I have the little book, and when it came on the thing and I heard from the Minister, you know, speaking about it, I, I found that book. That book, it was a few pages what I've written, and I had it and I forgot to bring it. Just shows you when you're over 21 what happens.

10:04:52:09

**Interviewer**

It really doesn't matter, because the way that we're recording this will, will last for many generations to come, so you don't need to worry about that book. And hopefully this will be a, a very accurate record,

10:05:02:12

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I'm sure.

10:05:03:04

**Interviewer**

for your family. So, so can I just ask you, now that you have started to talk about your experiences, do you find it very hard or is it a bit of a relief?

10:05:13:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

It's a relief. It's a relief. It's a great relief because, as far as I'm concerned, there were difference in normal things, you know, but, er, I never had the time to think about it and I tried to forget about it anyway. So now I think it is good as if to say to clear my



brain - whatever left of it - and things like that. So yes, I am very happy to be able to talk about it.

10:05:41:10

**Interviewer**

Do you find it very hard to remember that period of your life?

10:05:45:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

[Laughs] I can't forget it. You never forget it. It was such a different life, existence, let's put it this way. It's existence, and then losing all the family, which I was an only child. I keep repeating it, I know, so it is very hard and, the cousins that I did have were non-existent anymore, and so um I remember when I came to England, for instance, and, um, and the way they made, I was telling the children, my, my daughter and their children, I remembered the first time when I came back, and the, they made breakfast. It was in a convent, and, er, they made breakfast and I had bread, and I had jam - butter and jam! I couldn't believe it; how lucky I was. So, I still remember that. It was definitely wonderful. It was unbelievable before. I don't know how I survived the only one, and I was, I was the most pampered one because I was an only child. You know how it goes when it's, I mean I don't know whether you know, but it is being pampered. It's er that's how it is.

10:07:04:19

**Interviewer**

The contrast of, of being so precious and being the only child, and then suddenly being alone,

10:07:10:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes.

10:07:11:05

**Interviewer**

must have been very, very hard.

10:07:12:06

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, without a family and, er, and to be in whatever was given to me. I just had to take it, er, and I remember when, at one stage, that was, those were already the, the good sort of better stages, and I was in a kind of a orphanage which was done not by thing, and they didn't have anything to eat, and the ones that took care of us, she wasn't a professional, she was just a kind lady, and she said well, we haven't got any food today, but if you, I'll take you and there is lots of grass on the, on the way, that place, and you choose whichever grass you want and you have and eat it. I've never forgotten that. I can't I'm, Can you imagine the people nowadays, to tell them I'll be going today to have some grass for lunch? [Laughs]

10:08:08:06

**Interviewer**



It gives you a very unique perspective on life, doesn't it, your experiences?

10:08:12:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. Oh, it does, but for a long time I couldn't think about it or talk about it, but I'm very glad that at my age - as I'm over 21 - I'd like to get it out of me and tell people to be grateful for the little things they have in life and so on.

10:08:30:21

**Interviewer**

And that's something that we hear a lot,

10:08:33:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes?

10:08:33:22

**Interviewer**

People who, who are in a different stage of their life now and they have time reflect.

10:08:37:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, I do have time.

10:08:39:12

**Interviewer**

And all the memories come back now of, of that time.

10:08:41:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh yes.

10:08:42:00

**Interviewer**

And actually being able to talk about is a, is a relief in many ways.

10:08:47:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Of course it is. It is a great relief, great relief, and er it will remain with me, but I haven't got much time to, to think of it. That's also a relief. *[Laughs]* And that's how it goes.

10:09:01:19

**Interviewer**

Do you wish, now that you have started talking about it, that you had spoken before?

10:09:07:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, I must have spoken because my children - like my daughter is here now - and



she knows that I must have mentioned it, because she knows and she, she learned a bit of the other languages because of that, and, er, that's, that's how it is. It's not bad. Well, it's, no-one to show this, no relation or something so that's why she had er five children to make up for it. *[Laughs]* So that's very good.

10:09:41:01

**Interviewer**

The Nazis had an extraordinary, horrendous impact on your family. How do you feel towards them?

10:09:51:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, to be quite honest, I tried not to think about it for years and years and, er, whatever it was we were very lucky to run away, I say run away, we had to walk overnight to go to the other part of Poland, and we finished up, we didn't obviously, my, I remember it was a special birthday of mine and, and my parents had bought me a little gold er whatever, and a little bird in there like you see, but as soon as we got as far as Lvov, that is the other side, they had to, to sell it, must have been for threepence because people didn't have much money, to have some bread to eat or something. Because there was, and we were sleeping in um, um, in a shul in a synagogue because we ran away; we didn't have anywhere to go. So that's where we stayed in this, and then the Russians came and took us to Siberia.

10:10:59:10

**Interviewer**

We'll go through all of those details in a minute, Inga.

10:11:00:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. Yes, yes.

10:11:05:03

**Interviewer**

So you try not to think about the Nazis?

10:11:08:24

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah, well, I tried not to, yes.

10:11:12:01

**Interviewer**

But is forgiveness possible in your mind?

10:11:15:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, I mean if I see a German person or something or language, I'll speak to them and so on and the, that's how it goes, but er you can't think it's, you can't think about it all the time because you wouldn't, you couldn't live. You could not live because,



with yourself, because you know, all the time and so on. So you try to survive and be grateful, and be really grateful that I mean me, who thought about it? I didn't think of family in that stage. I thought of to be healthy and so on. And um but it was very nice. I mean even when I came back already from Russia and, um, we were taken to um oh gosh, what's it called? Where the nuns are, nuns.

10:12:15:04

**Interviewer**

A convent?

10:12:16:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

The convent, I always forget that word. The convent and after a while, they told me that er if I want to remain there and if I don't, I have, we have to get out. There was seven of us, and for some reason I took over to organise it. I don't know when we - I said alright, if you - obviously I knew that I knew that the people I was with wanted to, so I said well, if you want to do that, we have to send some letters to some places. We didn't have enough money for stamps. We had paper, but we didn't have envelope and stamps. So I said, whoever has got something will go and sell it on the market. I knew there was a market not far from there, which we did. I went with er some friends, and we had a few stamps, so I took the er the, the letters and I put down in, in Polish, because it was Poland, already coming out of Russia. It's a long story there, actually, [?] those are the good times. And I've written to the people [*clears throat*] and I said, I said to them, say Krakow, for instance, I put down Krakow, the Jewish Congregation, or something to that effect, and I said there are seven of us Jewish children and could you please take us out, because we were told that if you don't become Christians then obviously we have to leave. And I did, I think I put, took out four or five like that, and we sent it off, that is telling you already, all that is after the war. Those are the good times, so.

10:14:09:03

And erm, one day a lady came, and er she said she came to take us away from all that thing because it is already I am talking backwards! But still.

10:14:21:24

**Interviewer**

No, it's an extraordinary story, that story, when you were desperate,

10:14:25:00

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, I never forgot.

10:14:26:02

**Interviewer**

You were desperate and you just wrote to anybody, random people.

10:14:28:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**





But where did I get the, the thing to do it? When I think about it now, but my father, he was in some, er you, how can I say, organisations for children and so on, and I could hear him, I suppose, talking about it. And he used to go about once a week to that thing that we had all the time, and I thought well, I will try that. And when I think about it now, so many years later, that wasn't stupid, was it? It was good. Seven of us.

10:15:01:17

**Interviewer**

No, you really showed a really, a really strong character, and a great deal of initiative to be able to do that. But we'll come back to that story later on.

10:15:09:03

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interjecting into above*]

Yes, yes, yes.

10:15:10:24

**Interviewer**

So can I just ask, so you, you tried to move on, um, but you haven't said whether or not you can forgive. Do you, do you feel that you can forgive the Nazis?

10:15:20:22

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I never, I never thought about it. I, because all I thought I was grateful that I've, you know about the family and so on. Because we ran away before they came. We were very lucky, you know? But, er, both my mother and my, my father they spoke German as well, because it was on the border, not far from Austria and so on, so I knew the language.

10:15:49:10

**Interviewer**

But do you feel that you can forgive the Nazis?

10:15:53:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, I can't say I forgive because they killed my families and so on, and I'm left, just because I am the only one, so I can't forgive, but I haven't got, I made myself, that is very important was for me, I was working for wherever I could, I shouldn't have a minute to myself. That was very important for me, because if I started thinking I was thinking of family and, and no matter how much you survive and everything it's still behind you, you know. Sometimes you don't try to, but my, my daughter knew that there was something, no matter how much I tried to make them happy, you know, and so on. So er.

10:16:45:16

**Interviewer**

So that's very interesting. And you, you were saying that you, you basically kept yourself so busy that you basically kept yourself so busy that you didn't have a minute?



10:16:51:06

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. That was, that is always,

10:16:53:11

**Interviewer**

That's your technique of dealing with everything.

10:16:55:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

That was, that's how life came, because I was used to, not by choice, to do all that. I had to do it, so it just became like a way of life, and I tried as much as possible and,

10:17:09:16

**Interviewer**

So now that you have more time.

10:17:12:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I haven't got very much time!

10:17:13:15

**Interviewer**

Oh, have you not got much?

10:17:15:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I've got so many great-grandchildren.

10:17:17:05

**Interviewer**

That's wonderful.

10:17:18;19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

It is.

10:17:19:08

**Interviewer**

And they keep you busy. But now that you've reached a point in your life of reflection, is it very hard to remember this period of your life?

10:17:27:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Very hard. No matter what, you can't, I was, I mean I had cousins, I had, er, family and being an only child you rely on, on the family obviously, and so on. And but I'm, I'm glad that whatever I did, because even there was a time after the war and I was in that, the Jewish orphanage after the war, and there were children there, and there



was, they were nowhere to go and so on, so er they told me because I spoke - I suppose so - quite, quite good Polish, you know, there was being in Poland, and they were sending some children across the border to Israel. So um they asked me just then, it's not, it's not very important, they said to me, just take a train, we'll give you the tickets for it, and you go, I forgot the name of the place, I think it was in Czechoslovakia. I'm talking about the good things now. And you go to the border and there'll be someone, and you take the children to, and that person will take it away. And that's what I did. So I'm coming backwards talking, like when everything was hunky dory. So that's what I'm talking to you about.

10:18:53:30

**Interviewer**

Don't worry.

10:18:55:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

So I took a few times. I went with the train. I took the children that had no parents or no-one and took them to the border to Czechoslovakia. I knew the name of the place and I,

10:19:06:04

**Interviewer**

Don't worry, we'll go through it, because I've got it all here.

10:19:08:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes.

10:19:09:04

**Interviewer**

May I just ask, the members of your family that you've lost, and that you've kept so busy so that you, you don't have time to miss them, but how do you remember them? How do you honour them now in your life?

10:19:22:12

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Ah. It was no matter what sort of a time I had a bond with them, it as just wonderful, because they were very wonderful to me. I mean, you know, wherever, especially if you're an only child and, and so on, you just miss the life, miss the life as well. But, as I said, I was so busy and I was very lucky. My daughter, she was, she is greedy. She had so many children. I've got great-grandchildren and so on. So it, that's how I keep busy. And that's how we were busy and er, and that is, that is very good. Alright, of course, I've got problems which everybody has but er er I can never forget being in, in Siberia or running away from there and so on. Er it was, I just when I think about it, got more time to think, it's er unbelievable, I think to my, That's why I decided to, to say something so my great-grandchildren will be able to perhaps read about it. That's all I think, yes.

10:20:35:05



**Interviewer**

You're absolutely right, and that's what this whole process is, so that you will be able to keep your story alive for the generations that will come.

10:20:42:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, they should learn what they do to their children.

10:20:46:10

**Interviewer**

And, and, and at this point, you have an opportunity to, to give them a message about what you have learnt in your life, about humanity, about tolerance, about forgiveness. Is there anything that you would like to, Or about hatred or anything, is there anything that you would like to, to share?

10:21:06:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Er, there are a lot of sort of little things that er that obviously it's, it's good, you know, to share, but I, I always think if you get through so many bad things that each one is like a miracle. Because what, what can you do to get through it without medication and without everything? Some of the things are in the paper obviously, to give you an idea what it's like and er that in itself is good. Yes, sometime I've got too much time now to think about it. That's why I decided this time to put it down that people shouldn't take for granted every little thing means life.

10:21:55:11

**Interviewer**

And in terms of lessons that people can learn for the future, after the experiences that you and people like you have had, what lessons would you say should be learned?

10:22:06:23

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, to, to think what consequences can come if you don't think rightly. Because that's very important in life. Where there's one has been away, do, do good things or do bad things, it's still the same thing. Because in a, in a few minutes it can change completely if it's wrong. So let's try not to make those mistakes, because they also no good. They also no good.

10:22:36:21

**Interviewer**

Okay. Inga, thank you very much for the general questions, and now let's go through your story. Um you were an only child. Um tell me about your family. Where you, where you grew up and a bit about your mum and dad.

10:22:50:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. Well, my mum and dad, my father was er in, the, er an accountant in the firm, and we lived er near, it's not far from Krakow, but I sort of never been there until I did



the run away and then I was lucky enough to, to pass, but I still didn't, And, um, it was just very ordinary life. In those days, there was no, there were no television or anything, so oh, I had my father er remained in, um, to an organisation. That's how I knew about the writing about organisations, because my father was involved, you see. I knew always this, and they used to go and help and they made...He had to go away every two weeks or so they had, So I, I as involved in listening to it. I wasn't involved myself. And that, that's how I grew up. And I appreciated everything.

10:23:58:08

Now when the children in the orphanage, if they needed a doctor or something, when I came back after the war, who did they take? Me, to go to the doctor and to find the way to get there and so on. So now, when I think, I never thought about it, but now I think to myself, um, you couldn't have been stupid, you know, to organise all that and, and get the stamps and write the letters and so on. So,

10:24:29:08

**Interviewer**

Yes, you were obviously a very gutsy young lady, weren't you?

10:24:32:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I must have been.

10:24:33:19

**Interviewer**

So, um, your mother was a hairdresser, wasn't she?

10:24:36:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, but she didn't work already when I was born. It's my father was the accountant, and he belonged to a Jewish organisations for, for children, for oh, I don't know old people or ill people, because he always was writing, and they had those things and so on.

10:24:57:18

**Interviewer**

Was your family religious?

10:25:00:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, we went to such an a, how can I say? We kept a kosher place. We kept a kosher place. We kept the holidays and so on, but after that we were mixing with people and we were mixing with, er, Christians, you know, to speak, and my father obviously was in the, the job as well. So that's how we were.

10:25:30:07

**Interviewer**

What was your first memory of antisemitism and the Nazis? Can you remember



anything?

10:25:34:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, yes, of course I do. Um, because when I walked, I had a walking distance to go to school, and er we were walking there and there was a part of it that had Jesus on the road, right. His erm whatever, there, and those, that didn't put the cross were, you know, passing by they used to do a, a cross, yes, and those children that didn't, they were being looked very funny and er so on, but I thought it's not so bad and so on. But then it was, you could hear a lot of broken glass where I lived, before I ran, ran away, you see. And so on, so it was, that was completely dreadful. Everything was completely dreadful. And then we were, had to run away. Run to come from the part where I lived, it's near Krakow, to go to Lvov, where I, we were running away, it was a hell of a long way. So we had to run, we were hiding in the church and er and we were there and so on, and the glass was crumbling during the night. And during the day as well at stages. That's completely specially for, for anybody, children included, obviously.

10:27:11:04

**Interviewer**

So Inga, antisemitism was on the rise and, and you, you just said there you realised that you needed to go. Who, you and your parents? Or anybody else?

10:27:23:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, we went with my, my aunt as well, I think we went, yes. That were yes, and then there was my mother aunt, my mother's other sister, and she had those two children which one was, one was called Inga. She was, I think 16 or 14 months older than me. So she was called the, the big one, and we had French lessons just before the war, and they used to called me the petit and she was the grande, and that was upside down, because it was what remained in my, in my mind, it's a funny thing. So we were together then they got ill and my father had to work in a salt mine...

10:28:11:12

**Interviewer**

We'll come to that later

10:28:12:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

That was later, yes.

10:28:13:20

**Interviewer**

So basically you left. You were about 12 years old at this point, weren't you?

10:28:16:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, must have been.



10:28:17:21

**Interviewer**

So you left with your cousins Inga and Maximilian?

10:28:22:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Maximilian was my father.

10:28:23:17

**Interviewer**

Oh, Maximilian was your father. Okay. And your aunts were Anna...

10:28:27:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

And yes, that was their mother. Yes, but they got ill and er my aunt [Rosia?] Rosie, whatever you called her, and she was ill and she died and there was... if we're going already that far, yes.

10:28:44:08

**Interviewer**

No, we'll, we'll go slowly. So you left when you were 12. And, and do you where you went and where you stayed? It was the synagogue, wasn't it?

10:28:53:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, we ran away from one part of Poland to the complete other part. I think we had about half an hour or an hour with er a train that we hopped up that, you know, to get from our part, from [?] to the other part, but other than that we had to walk all night long. I don't know how we did it, to go from one part of, of Poland to the other part, which was near the border of Russia.

10:29:26:11

**Interviewer**

And you walked?

10:29:27:17

**Inga Blumenblatt**

We walked all night and at one stage we managed to get a, a train, because we were passing by, and at one stage we also we were hiding in a, in a church, and the bombs were going all around and so loud, and we thought any minute it will come over to us, but the church was alright. And then we had to go away because we wanted to run away further. I, and at one stage it was Krakow, and I said I couldn't wait to go to Krakow, that, and I think I have no pleasure of it, but we have to run away from there.

10:30:06:08

**Interviewer**

Your journey and the ,um, way that you crossed Europe is extraordinary, and this is



just the beginning. Can you remember how long it took you to cross one, one side of Poland to the other?

10:30:20:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No idea. [*Talking over each other*] Well, I can remember there were, No, no, it was days, it was days, days, because we managed to get a train at one stage. I remember we passed, we passed through to go to Lvov where it was, through Krakow, and I thought to myself oh my God, that's where I wanted to be and my parents would have taken me, obviously, but it was just the luck to get there and to get a bit train to go for a little to go another part of to run away.

10:30:54:19

**Interviewer**

And it was at this point on the journey that your gold necklace that you talked about earlier on, that you were given for your 12th birthday,

10:31:02:15

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, something, Yes, that was,

10:31:04:01

**Interviewer**

What happened to it?

10:31:05:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

It was, I told you this, [*talking over each other*] We had to, because we, we stopped that time at Lvov and we didn't have no money really, because who thinks of such? No-one thought it would be so long and whatever, and we weren't rich people, I can imagine we weren't. So we just had to exist from one minute to another.

10:31:34:01

**Interviewer**

But do you remember your, your parents selling your necklace?

10:31:38:06

**Inga Blumenblatt**

My father took it somewhere to sell it. Never seen it again, no. It was a lovely, it was what you call it, too excited now, so. It's, it's not, er, it's, it's, um, there are a lot of us, a lot of them here.

10:31:57:22

**Interviewer**

A pawn shop?

10:31:59:12

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, no, the bird I'm trying to,





10:32:01:12

**Interviewer**

Oh, the bird.

10:32:02:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

The bird.

10:32:03:05

**Interviewer**

Oh, I see.

10:32:03:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, it's an ordinary bird. We've got lots of them, too much in Trafalgar Square. What,?

10:32:08:14

**Interviewer**

Pigeon?

10:32:09:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Pigeon. Sorry.

10:32:10:10

**Interviewer**

That's okay. So you had a, it was a pigeon on your necklace?

10:32:13:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, in a, in a little round sort of thing. And that's the first thing that had to go. Didn't even wave goodbye to it.

10:32:22:15

**Interviewer**

Aw. Well, it kept you going for a little bit as a family didn't it?

10:32:26:15

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, we had food.

10:32:27:23

**Interviewer**

So it served a purpose. Um, at this point the Russians were advancing, weren't they? Do you remember about that?

10:32:33:24



**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh yes! That's, that's how we, yes, and we, we, er, run away to the place where we wanted to go, and we stayed in the synagogue in that, slept there - you know - at night. And I, I had to go to school, which was there, for a little while. Anyway, so were there, and we, er, we, we stayed in there. And after that one was early in the morning a noise and so on. They said the Russians are coming in. Never forgotten it. And we ran away to the street, to the street and of all the children that were there, I don't know why me, I was crying and one of the Russian soldiers came up to me and she, and said, must have learnt two words which I knew, will be like alright, and he tapped me on the shoulder. Never forgotten it, never ever, and that was it.

10:33:45:03

**Interviewer**

So he showed you a little bit of kindness?

10:33:47:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, which didn't [*laughs*] didn't consist the whole time. [*laughs*] yes, but people are people. Yes.

10:33:55:20

**Interviewer**

I guess that was an important lesson for you that, even though there was so much evil going on around you,

10:33:59:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, you're quite right, yes. Yes. And that was only the beginning of it. [*Laughs*]

10:34:05:24

**Interviewer**

So the Russians came early in the morning, and you were asked to get your belongings?

10:34:13:23

**Inga Blumenblatt**

We were waiting just, er, outside because they were marching in, which we were this and there were a lot of them, and we still had to stay in the synagogue. We still stayed in the synagogue, and we still had to, to get some food somewhere, and er, and that was it until one night, the Russians came in and said [*Russian Dialogue*] get together with your things - I remember that two words. That's all they knew, and we had to go and we were taken into, um, a what you call it in, in English? It's like a thing where you, where you take with the train things like boxes of some kind. What's it called?

10:35:10:16

**Interviewer**

Some kind of cargo, or was it a cattle truck that you went?



10:35:13:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Like a cattle truck that they took us there, and we didn't get any food or anything, and it was a long journal, that is it was a long journey.

10:35:25:10

**Interviewer**

How long?

10:35:26:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Ah, I wouldn't know exactly but, a week? Perhaps more than a week. And er we were taken to Siberia like that, and it was cold and hungry and we, when the train stopped at certain things, I remember we were very lucky, my mother said, because we had a tin, I don't know what was in the tin at the time, had one tin and when the train stopped, if they were in good mood, we used to run to the train and take some hot water from the, to have some. That was the best time ever, I never forget it, to have some hot water. If we have nothing to eat it's better than nothing. And it took days to get in that cattle thing and until we arrived in a place called Chelyabinsk.

10:36:24:09

**Natasha**

Inga, can you tell me that story again because actually you were, you were catching the steam weren't you from the train and that didn't come out in the story, so can you tell me that that you were in a cattle truck and you were travelling for a week,

10:36:35:15

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh, more than a week

10:36:36:22

**Interviewer**

Ok, so can you tell me the story and about collecting the hot water?

10:36:40:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, when they, when we were lucky that the train stopped, that the train stop and they let us out, that they let us out, so that my - I think it was my father and my mother - they said well, we will try, you know, so we had one tin there was there. I don't know what we had in the tin before that, and we used to go and run to the, to the may, to the, well, the first thing where the hot water comes out and we took this steam from it, and it turned into warm water, and it was like the most wonderful thing that we have a little bit of hot water. That was the only good thing on the whole journey. No food nor anything.

10:37:31:17

**Interviewer**

How did you make sure that you weren't separated from your parents?



10:37:35:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, we didn't go any, anywhere to be separated. Just we were together in order not to part, because we, say if the train would have gone they would have shot us, I suppose, whoever got remained or whatever.

10:37:51:08

**Interviewer**

When you eventually arrived at your destination, what happened?

10:37:54:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, we were, it was called, the first one was Chelyabinsk, yes. And, um, it was autumn. It wasn't, it wasn't er very cold there, it was hot sort of thing. And we stayed in a, like open things at first for days at days, day and night, and then they, they took us like to a, to a kind of a camp and we stayed like two families in one room. Those were the good times, and we had hot water and so on and I, I don't know how, they gave us, I think a piece of bread, I don't know for how many days or whatever, and that how it started in, in to being Russia. And remember, I didn't know a word of, of Russian to speak. Not a word.

10:38:59:19

**Interviewer**

At that point, do you remember your parents talking about escaping? Because you were kind of nearly 15, weren't you?

10:39:06:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No.

10:39:06;23

**Interviewer**

12 to 15?

10:39:08:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I must have been, I was, that was in 1939, and I was born in 1927. How old was I, 12?

10:39:17:12

**Interviewer**

Yes, yes.

10:39:18:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, that's why I had that wonderful er,

10:39:20:24



**Interviewer**

12 because of your necklace, okay.

10:39:22:05

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*talking over each other*]  
they had to sell. [*Laughs*]

10:39:23:16

**Interviewer**

Okay, I'm sorry. So I made you a little bit older. So you were around 12?

10:39:28;08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes.

10:39:28:19

**Interviewer**

You were clearly a very clever young girl,

10:39:31:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, it only took it from my parents. They were, they were common sense sort of thing. That's how we lived in those days, it's common sense.

10:39:40:13

**Interviewer**

Do you remember them talking about trying to escape, or was there any chance of escaping?

10:39:44:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

There weren't even people when we were already at the point, like police or something, because there was no chance of running anywhere. There was no chance. I mean when the, there is lots of space and so on, but there's miles and miles and we never even thought of it, nobody did. You couldn't run anywhere. They weren't silly. So they took my, my, my father to a salt mine to work and, um, and sort of and I was left and I got, well we got, I got ill there, like you know colds. God no, more than colds. And that was going on. Eventually I had to go to school there at one stage to like to school for a, for a little while. And er then, then to work and so on.

10:40:50:20

**Interviewer**

So you stayed there for a while, and your father was working in the salt mine.

10:40:56:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, and my mother was working at other things, and there were two, two families



like in one room. That's,

10:41:07:17

**Interviewer**

And then eventually your father joined the Polish Free Army, is that right?

10:41:12:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, but that was in, must have been in 1942. That was, yes, so he left and, um, he has left and I think we went to, to Kazakhstan at that stage, when he left I think. Because it, yes, we were there and then it was completely different because, because my father, once he, That was already, those were nearly the good time, but wasn't. My mother had to work in the, er, fields and there was, um, to pick up, um, what do you call it? What you make bread from?

10:42:06:05

**Interviewer**

Wheat.

10:42:07:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Wheat, yes. Yes, we had to wait for that. Because the winter, the snow was up to here. [*Sighs*] And we had to this and then because we sort of we work there, we went there, we worked in this, in the [*chimkent?*] and so on. And, um, in the fields, and the, there wasn't even a school or anything, nothing at all, so we had to be, And there was one that, a manager like, you know a manager that took, hold of everything and er he, he sort of, um, was doing things like to say that um like once he, he told me to clean, he was like a married man with children, that he could clean a, I should clean his windows. So he took me there, on a big, big er what's the name to climb up?

10:43:16:16

**Interviewer**

Ladder?

10:43:17:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Ladder, sorry. I'm getting very excited. And on the ladder, and I had to clean his windows and so on. He was very, So and then he came over - I'm cutting it sort of short because I can - And he said to my mother that, um, he wants to marry me. He wants to marry me. So, um, when my mother and er spoke and we made friends with her, I think she was a little Indian lady, and she had the son about my age of that time, so and my, my, what, my aunt was still, Yes, my aunt was still alive so, and then he came over to her again. He said that he definitely, it's got to through and so on. So my mother spoken to that lady and that lady said we should, she should come one, er, whatever evening to where she lives, which must have been about er a mile and a half or something and that we should think something out. So we went to her to stay for I don't know, a week or something, and my father was taken by that time already, he wasn't there. My father was already taken, I don't know, to somewhere



else, to the army, I think that was. And er we went there to her, and so on, because he said he was definitely going to marry me. So then we ran away to, to that, we decided that we have to, er, run away properly, because he was, he had a horse. He was like going everywhere. So we decided to cross, to cross somewhere, so they said that we should som, I didn't know anything about it. Someone said to, to her, to my mother that we should cross the, the Tian Shan mountains.

**[cut for card change]**

10:45:30:07

**Interviewer**

Um Inga, you've just said something that I found interesting. You said you've surprised yourself talking.

10:45:34:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah.

10:45:35:02

**Interviewer**

What do you mean?

10:45:37:06

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, after, especially you know with family and so on, and there was a long time that I didn't like to talk about any, no, did not come into it because I was busy, which I was... that's how I got through it. But somehow now, because the opportunity arrived, I think to myself, well it would be good and it's good, it would be good, my grandchildren, my great grandchildren rather, er, should have an idea that life doesn't always go very straight. And, and to see, not to do mistakes like that and so um, well I don't go into details, I just thought it's, nothing wrong but the children should have a side of a, a different side of life, to know that not everything is just um, chocolate and crisps.

10:46:33:11

**Interviewer**

But you just said that you've surprised yourself talking?

10:46:36:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah.

10:46:37:15

**Interviewer**

What do you mean?

10:46:39:01

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, on that subject you know, I n, I didn't think of it in details that I would ever do it.



Because I, couldn't talk about it. It's just, if I said something to the children, it happened to be circumstances that brought to it, like to say well, if you don't eat that you know, I would have been pleased if I would have had it. You know, things like that. Yes. And um, you c, you, when you live you just can't you know, make details and so on. But my, where I was already in the orphanage when I arrived to Poland and so on, y, you could tell that you had to, to, to live like that. And there's no alternative.

10:47:31:11

**Interviewer**

There's something else that your family just said, which also perhaps stopped you talking, is that your story was so extreme, that you travelled through so many different countries, that you encountered so much sadness. But actually, if you spoke about it, a lot of people just didn't believe you?

10:47:46:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, most probably didn't I, most probably didn't, but I don't know where they would have thought that I got it out for, because there, there are things that one can't imagine. When I think about it now, I just cannot imagine. So, even now when I talk about it and, it's just unbelievable when I think about it. When people moan about here because they haven't, well not now I mean, but before. But the people during the war here, they also after the war, they were very good and very, very nice, the people were very nice I must say. I was very lucky. And um, so many things, little things that happened that was good. I, for in, for instance um, I tell you, after I think my, my mother was already dead or she, she was - it doesn't matter - and um, I went., we had the water. Before we run away through the mountains, we had like a stream and a river actually, passing by. That's where we used to pick our water. And I used to take the water in from the t, tin we still had, and had it. And um, and I looked and I thought to myself, there is something wrong with my eye, I thought you know. Whatever I have and I looked there, it didn't help anything. Not until after the war and so on, and er for some reason also, they always, in the orphanages, they always send me to the doctors with the children, with the younger children and so on. And um, er, so, I went to the, to the doctor but they, they couldn't do anything. But I could see in the, in the stream of water in, in Russia that one eye was very swollen. It was very swollen. But I don't know whether I should tell you that now, but when I was eventually, they, they found that I've had a, a tumour behind my eye, that was alr, I'm talking, I'm jumping over to time. So that was er, I had to go to, to the doctor and they couldn't do anything and so on. Not until I came to England, and eventually went, and they found that I had um, a tumour behind the, b, behind my left eye. So what happened was, they send me to Addenbrooke's Hospital, and um, and er the, the sp, specialist did the operation. It was wonderful, I'm sort of alive, and it was really what he didn't do. When I had to recuperate, he hired a, a lady, er she took me to his house, he lived in Cambridge obviously some of, he said I'm, I'm so sorry that I didn't,

10:51:15:04

**Interviewer**

Don't worry, we'll come to that. Can we, can we just pick up at where we were





because we were in Kazakhstan. Yeah we were in Kazakhstan and you were fifteen years old, and your father had gone off to fight for the Polish Free Army

10:51:29:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes

**[cut for sound]**

10:51:30:05

**Interviewer**

and at this point you, you had to go again, and you were separated from your aunt Anna and your two cousins. What happened to them?

10:51:41:07

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well I didn't know anything, and that was already, I'm, I'm jumping it because it was after, er, they separated people, it must have been after the war, when the, the war finished, it must have been then. And they went away in a different, with a different whatever transport it was. And my aunt, um, she was already, um, because we already passed the mountains didn't we, when I, yes. And then so, they got ill, my mother got ill, but, but um, we are still talking about my,

10:52:28:01

**Natasha**

I think we're talking, were talking about Aunt Anna?

10:52:31:15

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes

10:52:31:20

**Natasha**

And your two cousins, and they were too ill to travel weren't they? Do you remember that?

10:52:36:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, yes they didn't, they didn't,

10:52:39:18

**Interviewer**

So they stayed and you went? And, and do you know what happened to them?

10:52:44:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes I didn't find out, I mean I found out about the, the, the aunt Rosia the one that we were together. And er, she was running away through the mountains with me, with my, my mother was alive, that aunt was alive and myself. And there were other people too, which we met on climbing the mountains they, that mountain, you know.



And we were um, er, sort of running and so on. But um, it., they had a typhoid or something and we didn't know what it was, but just, passed away after we crossed to the mountains you see, yeah.

10:53:33:03

**Interviewer**

We'll come to that in a minute, because it's a very, very painful part of, um, your story but at this point, Aunt Anna and your two cousins, they, they stayed didn't they? And you carried on running, is that right, in Kazakhstan?

10:53:48:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, no they still had to, to, to work but they, they sent them to a different part of it So we parted, so,

**Interviewer** [*talking over each other*]

Did, did you ever see them again?

10:54:00:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No I didn't, but when I came to, to Poland – eventually - and I managed to go to a, to a Jewish congregation thing you know, where it was. And I went there and I'd spoken to my aunt Rosia friend was there. And I said to her what happened. So she said that um, they, even they came back they died. S, some of them in Russia but she was she, aware of it. So they were not alive anymore yeah.

10:54:36:22

**Interviewer**

Um, a, at this point um, you were working er or you were living in, was it, it was like a pig farm, is that right? Can you tell me a bit about that?

10:54:49:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well that was the one in the, that was still in Russia

10:54:54:00

**Interviewer**

In Kazakhstan I think it was.

10:54:57:02

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*talking over each other*]

Yes, yeah, yeah

10:54:58:00

**Interviewer**

And where, you were working in wheat fields? Is that, did you have a job, yeah?

10:55:01:12



**Inga Blumenblatt** *[talking over each other]*

Well I, I, what's the name? As I said, we run away from there didn't we? That's when we run away,

10:55:11:15

**Interviewer**

But there's a story about where you slept with the snake um,

10:55:14:17

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh yes, oh that was, yes, yes. Well that was still, I yeah. Yes, that was, we was a sleeping and that was in Kazaks, that was till in the other part that we were. And um, that was where this manager was and all that you see? And we were sleeping in um - or was it the one that we run away already from there? And we were sleeping in um, yeah, it was there. How can I say? It must have been for pigs that they kept the, the pigs there. So we were there, and er, another, er, what's in pap-, a couple were there without their husbands, but a couple of children so er, they were there and er, we were sleeping in a part of it which was later, quite small and we had a, how can I say, not um, trees but bushes. And we were on those we were sleeping. That was my, my aunt, my mum and myself and I was in the middle. We slept like -, all through the winter there. But it, although it was a, a hot country, in the winter it was very, very, very cold and snowy and so I don't know how we survived, I really don't. It was yes, and my aunt still, this one, not the Anna they, because they disappeared, I'm just talking about my Aunt Rosia. And we were there, so it was terrible. It was terrible. Anyway it was spring came, and um, my mother said we'll clear out that little part where we were... and we did and then all of a sudden, underneath the bushes, there were big, big snakes and we slept the whole winter on top of that, that snake and I was an, being an only child, I was frightened if a fly was too large. So can you imagine that happened? I don't, I really, I mean it's too horrendous for words. So, the snake was there and we were just taking out and it's bigger and bigger. Oh I, I still don't know I survived that, it was dreadful.

10:57:40:12

**Interviewer**

It sounds extraordinary. So you were sleeping on bushes,

10:57:44:04

**Inga Blumenblatt** *[interrupting Interviewer]*

On bushes, which we put ourselves. There were no snakes as far as we knew. Don't know whether there were some eggs that produced the snakes I don't know.

10:57:52:13

**Interviewer**

How big were the snakes?

10:57:54:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

There was one snake, it was one. Well it wa, ph, I don't know, I didn't want to look at it because once it went and I ran for miles to be not na, well I couldn't because it was



outside, outside the thing. And there was this snake. And I said to my mother at the time I said, it's making a noise. And it was making a noise because it, I, nobody thought about, they says oh it's the bushes you know, they make a noise, my mother used to say. And yes, when they, when they opened it up it was dreadful. Oh sorry.

10:58:28:06

**Interviewer**

Try not to touch your microphone. Um, but actually - although we're focusing on the snake and sleeping on a snake's nest it was terrible - but you were in the middle of winter, sleeping on a bush?

10:58:40:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah. All the winter.

10:58:41:15

**Interviewer** [*talking over each other*]

With no cover or anything?

10:58:43:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No we, we warmed our, each other. I don't know what we had to cover ourselves with. I don't know. I really don't remember, because there was really nothing. There really was nothing. And that's before we, that was it and then we run away to the other part and decided to go to the Tian Shan mountain you see.

10:59:04:22

**Interviewer**

But, but it, was it snowing, it was cold?

10:59:07:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Wh, when we I, when we left it wasn't, until we didn't get to the mountains.

10:59:12:05

**Interviewer**

But, but sleeping on the bush, er you were,

10:59:14:11

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*with interjections from Interviewer*]

Oh of course it was. Of course it was. We slept the whole winter, which was, was Uzbekistan wasn't it? No, it was er, Kazakhstan I think. That, yeah, I don't know how we did, and I don't know, me being so frightened, being a only child, can you imagine? And all of a sudden, you pick it up the bushes and, and then at first it didn't move, because it was so used, and then all of a su, I don't know, without the, without water how does this snake live without any water? I don't know because all the Winter we were on top of that snake. Not that I worry about it but I mean, how did it survive?



11:00:02:03

**Interviewer**

I don't really care about the snake, do you?

11:00:03:13

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*laughing over each other*]

You can say that again. I haven't thought about it for a long time, but since I've been again with the children, ah, yes that was frightening. That was frightening, sort of

11:00:20:19

**Interviewer**

Um, there's a story now about, um, a camp supervisor, and something that he offered to you and your mother. Do you remember that? Um, where are we now, that's the next story we have. Um, there was a camp supervisor and, and your mother and you decided to go, but the camp supervisor offered something. He wanted to buy you. Do you remember that? And to marry her. Can you tell me that story?

11:00:49:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. Well he wanted to, he said to my mother, that he's going to marry me. And I, he, always as I said, he was on a horse, and wherever I was somehow, he always was there. And he told me to clean the window as I said before and so I, never thought of anything. And er, m, um, well it was so bad because he came again to my mother and he said he's going to, to give my mother a lamb and something else. I don't know what el, else exciting he was going to pay for me. And er, this woman that we knew, which I think she, I don't know where she came from, from India or something I don't know. And she said you'd better run away, and come to me so, so we sort of didn't, she worked and I sort of hoped and my father was already gone away, so it was only us. And only my Aunty Rosia was still alive. And we, we, that's how we went to her. And um, we decided we had to go, and we slept on the floor there - don't know, two or three nights. And we had to go so, I don't know what we had, that we, first we walked a long time and then tried to, to exchange with something that someone should take us to the, to the mountain, which was the Tian Shan mountain. And we got there, and we had to start walking, and yet walked like the whole night. And the snow was big, the snow was, well not that big because it wasn't the time of year that the snow was so big. But it was so very cold and I cannot tell you. And they found some people um, walking through there. So, um, we sort of looked wherever they going you know and so on. And there were, also which really helped, there was a kind of er, um. I don't know what it is called. Something that lights up at night, which I never knew it existed. It's a worm, like a worm. And that worm, when it was dark, put out a light. So we were, we were going afterwards, of horrible things were, were you know, alive. And we had to walk through a whole night, a whole day we've started though. And the whole night. And then there was like a, a little something there. Um, some people lived there I th, I don't know or what. We went there and they gave us some hot water.

11:03:55:05



**Interviewer**

You know the thing is, Inga, um, Hollywood films have been written about people who go on these extraordinary, um, feats of survival and, and walks like you. Um you, your mother and er aunty Rosia woke up in the night. You started hiking, you hiked across the, the Tian Shan mountain range. It bordered Soviet Russia, China and Uzbekistan.

11:04:24:02

**Inga Blumenblatt**

And I wasn't aware of it.

11:04:25:13

**Interviewer**

Freezing cold. You were 15 years old.

11:04:29:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Was I? Yeah, must have been.

11:04:32:08

**Interviewer**

And it must have been so frightening. I mean the,

11:04:34;22

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interrupting Interviewer*]

But didn't have time to be fr, you're not, you, you can't think about it. You think every step you take, that it is the right way that you going, that you'll be, you know. The only good thing was, we were going through the mountain -I don't know how many hours - and then we saw like a little hut. And there were people there. I know they were, this, and we walked in there and they gave us some hot water and they sort of told us... and told us, made you think which way to go, which is also a help you know. They must have been. And we crossed, we crossed there, we were, and you couldn't go to sleep, because, where will you sleep? In the snow? In the think, you just couldn't. I don't know how we managed it. I just don't know how we managed to cross the, the mountain.

11:05:29:12

**Interviewer**

How long do you think you were walking in total?

11:05:32:16

**Inga Blumenblatt**

The whole night. We start, the whole night.

11:05:35:19

**Interviewer**

It must have been more than one night though, no?

11:05:40:24



**Inga Blumenblatt**

I don't know. Perhaps it was, I just can't think. I remembered the night very well. And, as I said, it was this little hut that we went to. We had some hot water. And I don't know, and we started walking again. I think it must have been the whole night, and a bit in the, and as I said th, those worms that were, were lighting up, it was all the, all the way well there, until it didn't get a little bit lighter. I don't know. I must have been in such a thing that one does, I don't remember exactly. Sometimes thing comes back to me. I know that we did, and um, that,

11:06:26:04

**Interviewer**

And, and do you remember that one of your memories is of the noises? Of, of the wolves? Can you tell me that?

11:06:31:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh yeah, that was it. Must have been when crossing. That was it. That was it, it must have been wolves. I didn't even know what animal they were. You heard the noise, you heard that sort of that, you didn't even know where were they. You would you, and when I think about it now, we could have fallen just because the worms made the light. And then I kept a, as, asking I remember sort of at the, at schools you know to see what, what the worms were called. And I said what was it? We thought it was like a - you know - miracle or something. They said no, there are worms like that. But I've forgot what they were called.

11:07:13:00

**Interviewer**

Was it like a glow worm?

11:07:14:18

**Inga Blumenblatt** *[talking over each other]*

Yeah, could be. But in the snow, and when it's very, very dark, it's completely different.

11:07:22:05

**Interviewer**

But somehow,

11:07:22:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I don't want to be in that,

11:07:24:05

**Interviewer**

No, you'll never do that again.

11:07:25:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, I hope not.



11:07:26:13

**Interviewer**

But, but then Inga, incredibly sadly, what happened to your mum and your aunt?

11:07:32:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well, it, that happened already when we were crossing to, to Shymkent, near Shymkent it was or something. And um, and she got ill there, again. They, they, she got ill there. And my mo, my aunt as well. So, I was left and I remember, we were - yes - so we were sleeping somewhere in Shymkent you see, in that. And it was like um, it. Er, I, I went for a little while to, to a school there I think. And my mother, I, I can't remember er which part of it was, it was. And um, and I went as well and we... then my m, my mo, mo, after we'd crossed already the mountain then, and I can't take you into detail but it was a little while, and my aunt passed away and my, my mother passed away, and I was left by myself. And I've, they've found somehow, there were some children and the, and the woman that made herself to look after and, so I happened to be with them. And she wasn't a teacher, she just, somehow took us into this thing. And there was also um, a f, I was a few of us and she used to take us for, for whatever food and that's where I stayed, that's where I stayed and it was already in Shymkent.

11:09:26:23

**Interviewer**

But Inga, that must be, that is such a, a huge moment in your life. You had been with your mother and your aunt, and they both died.

11:09:43:07

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah.

**Interviewer** [*talking over each other*]

Can you remember that? Can you remember what happened or where you,

11:09:43:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well I know, yeah. I knew my, I knew that my aunt died, died first, aunt, it's Aunt Rosia. The other aunt I didn't hear about then. And, er ,she was left and then, then my mother died but, I couldn't even bury her because where we lived in a little bit that was already in Shymkent I think it was. And it was so, so cold and didn't have no money to pay for that part. So the, the owner came with a big stick right? And my mother was dead already dead. And I was there and I didn't know sort of what to do. But he came with a stick and he was going to, to hit me with it and so on. And he were a bit [*older?*] so I ran away. I thought to myself, I will come back again you know. But when I came back my mother went and I don't know where he, took it and my, my aunt by that time was already passed away as well. So there was, there was no, I was left by myself so I had to, to run away by myself. So I don't know where my mother was buried or, or whatever, because he was saying er, he'll kill me and he looked you know, he was with the stick and so on. I had to run away. And





there were some - just lucky I was - that there was a, a what's her name, a Polish sort of pe-, person and she said you stay with me. And, and I was there because I run away because she had, um, a little girl and she wanted, well, she, she did, she said I should teach her in, in Polish because she liked the way I'd spoken and so on. So I don't know, I, I sort of didn't have any, I don't know how it happened that I stayed there. And then managed to come to visit, must have been where the people were, the youngsters. And this woman that took over like she's a teacher or something; and I think that was it.

11:11:55:00

**Interviewer**

But, but did, did your, I'm sorry to keep asking about your mother but, did she, did she die on the side of the road where you were? Or how, how did she die, where was she?

11:12:03:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No, she died where we, we lived. I lived with my, my aunt already was, was gone then. Er,

**[cut for direction]**

11:12:10:15

**Interviewer**

So, so you were, you were, um, you were based there were you? You weren't still, you weren't still walking with your mother?

11:12:19:13

**Inga Blumenblatt**

No by that time we stayed there and, and we, we took like something. And while we had money, so we paid but then we didn't have any money. And my mother died, but he wouldn't let me in again. So, one day I s, the what's her name it was, I looked and they took her away. And um, and my aunt, my aunt also died, so I was left sort of by myself. And he, he was going to kill me because I didn't have no money to pay. So I met there a Polish woman with two children. And er, I've s, I don't know how it was, but I went to her. I went to her, it was quite a long way but I remembered somehow to go ahead, there were no streets or something. Just straight on to her. And she said no, you you stay with me. So I stayed with her because she wanted me to teach her chil, well, she wanted me to be there because I know how it is. So, I was with her and I'd spoken to her and so on. And then somehow got to know that, um, I don't know how it was,

11:13:38:06

**Interviewer**

Don't worry. Do you remember how that felt, when you lost your mother? Because as you said, you were an only child. You'd been through so much together.

11:13:48:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**



You know I haven't got time to think though what I've been through. I can think about it now, you know. I could never talk about it. That's why, when it came to, think to, to be able to, to talk to somebody, I thought to myself well I should get it out of my system and say to people it's not like an everyday thing. So, at least, and there's lot of, I could talk tomorrow again, for another half a day I'm sure, in detail. So I thought to myself, go on, get it out of your system. Because with the kids, I do a little bit, and a little bit sometimes. I used to, not now so much. And er that was it. So,

11:14:35:24

**Interviewer**

You must have been a very strong young lady to deal with all of that.

11:14:40:17

**Inga Blumenblatt**

And I was an only child and, gosh, my mother made such a fuss, you know. On the, in a very clever way when I think about it now. And what she only did, you know to, and she had a miscarriage I think before me. I think she did have, yes. She said I had a brother but it's passed away, I don't,

11:15:04:19

**Interviewer**

Do you know um, what illness your mother died from?

11:15:10:01

**Inga Blumenblatt**

She died from hunger. From hunger, from coldness and, and sh, she, er she had a heart what's her name, complaint I'm, I'm sure she did. But there was no one there. There was no food. I had to see to, to anything that was possible. And then the, the man, we didn't have no money, we had nothing else to sell. And my father was away. My, my aunt passed away already, it was me and my mother. I did sort of what I could and, and I couldn't and then she came with this stick and she chucked me out of there, because I didn't have anything else to, to pay.

11:15:55:09

**Interviewer**

What a terrible story, Inga. It's very difficult to, no, please don't apologise. It's - you know - what you went through was just so traumatic.

11:16:06:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes, yes, it was. Well, we, I don't know, that's what I mean. I, I never, because people, even if I started saying something some time, they looked at me like sh, oh she's definitely mad. No but they felt that, it could be like that. If I think about it or, or write a few pages I did, I thought to myself, do me a favour, no one will, no one will even think that this is half the truth, which I think now as well.

11:16:34:05

**Interviewer**

Yes when you tell the story and you, you imagine yourself as a young lady going



through all of that, it's hard to imagine that it was real. It was just horrendous.

11:16:41:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah, I don't think about it that way. I think to myself - I always think to myself - how on earth could you live through all that, and f, I can't believe it myself, so that's why I usually have a cup of tea and makes me feel better. That's all I can say. Yeah, that's how it is.

11:17:05:01

**Interviewer**

Mm. Do you remember what happened after that, with the man that chased you with the stick, and somebody took you in and you helped to look after the children?

11:17:13:13

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*talking over each other*]

Yes, that was a bit yes.

11:17:19:21

**Interviewer** [*talking over each other*]

Um, I'm just trying to work out where you went. Then you went to Siberia. Is that right? And then back to Poland?

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interrupting Interviewer*]

No we went to, not to Siberia, we went, we went to a different place af, o, that was after the, all through the mountains right?

11:17:36:10

**Interviewer**

Yeah. Then did you go to Gdansk?

11:17:39:00

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*with interjections from Interviewer*]

Oh yeah. Well yes. Well that was, I've, I've, we was talking before. The w, the, the war was finished, as I said before. And, um, we were t, we were taken to Poland. So we went in a proper train, sort of. I was ill when the war finished by, my, the what's her name. And the, the people, some of them, they could take a train where everyone you know, whenever times, yes.

11:18:14:19

**Interviewer**

Okay. So let's talk about the end of the war. You were 18.

11:18:20:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Was I?

11:18:21:15

**Interviewer**



I think so. This is the notes. Um,

11:18:24:19

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*helped to the date by Interviewer*]

It was 194- 5.

11:18:27:18

**Interviewer**

So I think you were 18. Do you remember the war ending?

11:18:31:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well I said I had - I remember - I had the flu or something. And everybody was making noises. It's you know, jumping and, and saying and you, you know, singing er Russian songs whatever. And I said what it was? And I was somewhere sleeping then. They said the war is finished. It was 1945 wasn't it? Yes. So after that, er, to cut the long story short, I managed, we managed to get a train to Poland. And, um, and they took us. Er, I was saying today, because the train went. I mean it's a long journey but I'm just cutting it short. O, on the way, we went in a proper train, in a proper train and the, they um, er, we got there to, to Poland and they took us to the, um, where the nuns are, what's it called the convent, yes. And I think it was called [*Polish word*] actually, that place where the, the, and the Sisters were very, very nice. After a, a few weeks - as I said to you before - er we, I thought they think because the Sister said either you become a Christian or you must leave. So, I said to - there's six of us there was - I said we have to do something. If we went to the market - I've told you - and we saw that they had a few stamps and I wrote er on the envelope, en, envelope, because the Sister took me over. And if you don't want to become, you have to make up your mind. So I did. So we did, and I organised it I must say, proud of it.

11:20:37:07

**Interviewer**

So you, just tell me the story again. You've got the stamp and what, and what did you write on the envelope? Who were you writing to? And what did you ask?

11:20:43:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I tell you what I'd been writing. I s, I because at first through my father because he was usually through there. All I must have heard this thing. And I put down, um, to the, the Polish Organisations -with a question mark I put down - whatever of Krakow right? So one. I had about five. One I took to, to Krakow, one I took to er Gdansk, I don't know, to p, place where I lived I put one. And ,um, W, Warsaw and there was another one - Krakow most probably. Yes, those I knew. And yeah, and I put and, we are in the thing in the, a convent and could you please, someone get us because if we don't want to become - you know - we had, that's our choice, that is my choice. And what did they do about a few weeks later? A lady came to the convent and um, and she said, and she went to the Sister there I suppose, it's what's her name. She wasn't a young lady. I can still remember sort of her. And she wasn't very slim, but she came over and she said, um, er she's there, and she will take us. So she will



take us out, so the seven of us, because if there was, there was one boy I think, and he was, well I suppose he went with us I, if I remember right, yes.

11:22:34:15

**Interviewer**

And it's an extraordinary story that you were able to [*talking over each other*] write to anybody, er just please, somebody come and help me. It's like sending a message in a bottle isn't it?

11:22:44:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I said there is five of, of us I said. And we are in that convent, and we were, we've got the choice of could you please. But I had many st, what interests me, how I went to the, to the whatever, and sold something to get some stamps. That was, I th, I think to myself, how could I have done it, but I did. And this woman came and she took us to, it and I can't remember the name. I used to remember it well where she took us. And we went there, in the, in the Jewish place and we had, the first time - I never forget - we had coffee in the morning with milk, and bread, butter and jam. Would you believe it? I couldn't believe it. And each time when I don't fancy something to eat you know, I think to myself, never mind, you will soon have bread and butter, that will be be very wonderful you know. That is such a, I keep telling my kids as well, my grandchildren, great grandchildren yes. So um, so that's how it was. And they took me there, in that thing which was wonderful. And whatever they needed to have children to go to the, to the doctor they sent me with the children and to cross the border, they se, gave me money or tickets, I don't remember what it was. And to take them to the border, and they took the children across Czechoslovakia. I don't know how I did it.

11:24:24:24

**Interviewer**

I don't know how you did any of what you've done, I have to say.

11:24:27:20

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I, I wouldn't of believed it but I think to myself I was there, it was true.

11:24:31:14

**Interviewer**

Absolutely, of course

11:24:34:13

**Inga**

Took the children over and if they were not well, they took, I took them to the doctor. Didn't even know where to go. Well you go straight on and just to this street. Yeah.

11:24:45:23

**Interviewer**

There was something protecting you.



11:24:48:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah.

11:24:49:03

**Interviewer**

Um, Inga, at some point now in your life you had a reunion with your father didn't you? Is that right?

11:24:56:06

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh yes, yes. So we were, I was taken to Austria actually. I think it was in Austria. Yeah, Linz in Austria. It was,

11:25:08:06

**Interviewer**

So you moved from one orphanage to another, from the Czech Republic to Austria?

11:25:11:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

So they took us, they were only, a collection of children in that camp they, yes. The children came. Apparently that was part of, um, when the Germans run away, they had like a for, for the soldiers. That was the place, you know, so

11:25:30:20

**Interviewer**

So, so, what's the story? Cause you were out on a date with a boy weren't you?

11:25:35:05

**Inga Blumenblatt** *[talking over each other]*

Yeah that's, that's coming now.

11:25:37:08

**Interviewer**

This was in Linz?

11:25:38:09

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah. That was in Linz we met with each other and, and he was the, it was like a barracks you know. And the big things and you, you slept there. Mostly one barrack for girls, one for boys. And that boy, we sort of, sort of somehow you know, and he a, a mother and a father and they were on the frum side a bit. You know what I mean? Yes. And the, the mother and father also liked me and for once, for some reason, we, we managed, we were managed to go to Linz because this one year you know, like the barracks are and things like that outside the big town. So, we went there to, to Linz for the f, the first time just the two of us. I don't know how we did it with the, I don't know, but we went there and we came back and I sent the letters to find my husb, my father with the stamps you know, send them away no, no reply or anything. So the let, the, the, the, that was it. And one day we went to the,



that day to Linz and we came back and, and that was alright. And then all of a sudden, people that I had got to know this, they came for me. Oh is, could you, could you come here because I want to show you something. I went there and there was my father. Can you imagine what it was? Never, ever, forget it. My father was there. Because I sent the letters obviously. And um, somehow it was, my father was there, never forget it. So, coming to that point, after we, er we got together then he had to take me to Italy I think. To Italy to,

11:27:51:14

**Interviewer** [*interrupting Inga*]

So, you had been looking for him, and obviously he had been looking for you as well. And that reunion must have been extraordinary?

11:28:00:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

That's what I'm coming to. So, on the journey from Linz, all of a sudden, I see, I walk in and my father was there. I never, ever forget, not forget it but I, I can just tell you. So, it was absolutely fantastic. And then we cried. It was fantastic. And then he tried and we tried to go a, across also some mountain whatever, to get to Italy because he was in th, in the Army you know. Pardon me. And so on, so we took and he paid for someone to show us the way to also go through the mountain. To got to, yes. And he was, he actually went for a holid, like er, he well I took time off and was with a friend or something. But then, then because he was a soldier and he was in uniform and it wouldn't be by himself to go across. But me, I had nothing and to go. So, they caught us once, and we had to go back again. So I thought well, that won't work and, at my age, but the what I went through I just didn't care, as long as I had my father and so on. And then, he's got to try it again. So we had to try it again. And we went through and my father explained you know, blah blah and other other thing, they let us through to Italy. To Italy and, um, he was still in uniform. And so on the, there and we got through the mountain and we went to Italy and we went to a place called Forli in Italy. For Forli it was. And er, then yes, er, my father had a f, a woman friend there, and she took me with him one day to Bologna and, because her, she was a woman, so we went together, and my father paid for lovely clothes, I still remember. Wonderful it was. I chose it myself, most of it. With a bei, with a beige coat and shoes and, and I was nice and slim because, because there was no option.

**[cut for card change.]**

11:30:43:12

**Interviewer**

Um, we were just talking about um, how you must have been dressed an, an how you survived an, an even you don't know how you survived do you?

11:30:53:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

To think of each minute, each hour just where to sleep, where to walk but with the train then I said I came already there to Poland back, that was, that was I'm telling



you wonderful for, for breakfast to have that, all that.

11:31:13:19

**Interviewer**

But to think of the journey and, and what you would have been wearing can you imagine, can you describe what you would have been wearing or, or how you travelled, or what you had with you?

11:31:22:24

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Water, if I was lucky. I mean again even coming back I mean it was completely much better, it must be because I don't think about much about, can't remember in detail. I know we went on the, on the train, yes and it was again frightening when my father had to take me through to Italy because it took me and I thought they would take me away and to go through the mountains again there. So

11:31:54:01

**Interviewer**

But I, I'm just going back actually Inga just, just to put in our minds about what it must have been like to have been you. What, what were you wearing, did you have shoes, what did you, what have

11:32:05:11

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Most I don't know how. I must have had some kind of, of a shoes. Most of the thing, just some, even some until I didn't get to Italy an it, as I came to, to Linz an in the camp there well I think they had some secondhand yes, which very, very lucky. There were like secondhand things you know I got to the Red Cross and you put some, some clothes or something, so we were taken there once to go an we can choose what we can wear. You know like we give now things for charity like I do as well, it's better than the ones they gave me but I was very grateful for it. So whatever I could find a lot of fitted me because I must have been like a stick.

11:32:55:23

**Interviewer**

And what

11:32:56:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Without the diet

11:32:57:16

**Interviewer**

And what do shoes mean to you now, you were saying that they're very precious to you?

11:33:01:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**





My, my shoes were even very precious as a little girl. Always had to have the, the what, you know what I liked and so on, and, I always likes shoes and the first thing that I bought in Italy I remember, although I didn't know what I'm going to wear, what colour, but not that I worried about, all I wanted to see these shoes an I, bought brown, brown shoes, brown shoes and a brown coat as I told you -I remember it still - and it was fantastic. Still is, still is.

11:33:35:16

**Interviewer**

Do you still have those shoes?

11:33:37:19

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Na, no I worned them, worned them and they were very good, must have been a very good quality. And it was, yes I still like shoes. Still yes, so.

11:33:53:17

**Interviewer**

It's a treat to yourself now

11:33:54:21

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Exactly

11:33:55:15

**Interviewer**

To buy shoes

11:33:56:01

**Inga Blumenblatt**

For good behaviour

11:33:57:01

**Interviewer**

Because you haven't had shoes for so long it's so nice to have them when you do?

11:34:00:08

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah, and the snow the way it was. It was unbelievable, just unbelievable. I don't know how, now I never had time, I never wanted to have time because I wanted to be busy, I don't start thinking about the things in detail and so on. Sometime it came it was very hard because you have to. Even now, I have to be busy all the time so I shouldn't get into the, the think of the luxury of thinking of things like that and so that's how I survived. I had a good return,

11:34:42:02

I've got two children in return. I've got how many grandchildren, five is it um. Seven I think, seven grandchildren because it's my, my sons I think seven and I've got great



grandchildren, how many have I got, five I think, five.

11:35:07:07

**Interviewer**

And in some way that is your compensation for everything that you've been through?

11:35:11:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah, yeah. And now I don't help as much as I used to. I mean I used to, I used to work and a, all the time but I, I still look after myself an everything. And that's how it goes. It went.

11:35:32:00

**Interviewer**

It's extraordinary your story

11:35:34:03

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh thank you.

11:35:34:21

**Interviewer**

Let's just quickly, um, talk about Hugo. So this was when you were 19

11:35:40:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

My father

11:35:41:16

**Interviewer**

Yeah, tell me about Hugo?

11:35:44:05

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yes. Well he, I say he went, so we parted because he went to the army and we were in Italy then, then from Italy, um, we went to England which was lovely but in a way it was sort of diff, I didn't know a word of English, did not have a word of English. But there was a, a demobbing a camp for the demobbing so they demobbed me and the they demobbed my father and we went to live in Italy and then - that was good - then we went to live in Shakers Wood at this um, where was it, near Brandon have you heard of something like that it Brandon, that was it. And after that went to London and a

11:36:53:01

**Interviewer**

Is that where you met Hugo?

11:36:53:20



**Interviewer**

And it was a very, no, met Hugo in the demob, came back to, must tell you [*talking over each other*] this story.

11:36:58:15

**Interviewer**

Yeah

11:37:01:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

And a, when he was, my father had a friend, a friend in the army also there in the camp and a, on Sunday - we still had to work this soldiers - still had to do the demob sort of thing and so on. So while I was, while we were there a we, we went for a walk on Sunday with my father and his friend and all of a sudden I can hear someone screaming, "help, help they're killing a Jew. They're killing a Jew, help." So I turned round and there were two men behind me sort of laughing and smiling, and I thought to myself, they're mad. An then after that the same man is came over to me and he introduced himself and he said he's Jewish and so on an the, the story started that we became very friendly and my, my father wasn't very happy because he was 15 years older than me and my, but they had like dances there, the soldiers dances and he was come, you know, wherever I went he was there. And so on and so we got, I had to wait until I was 21 because my father wouldn't let me get married before. And we got married and unfortunately he was 15 years older than me, I can see it now that what my father talked about it but, but we had a, a nice few years together and we had the children and so on. So that was an end to it; you know a nice, nice end I think it was, yes I've got a good return.

11: 39:10:01

**Interviewer**

You certainly,

11:39:10:23

**Inga Blumenblatt**

My monies' worth

**[Cut for sound]**

11:39:10:00

**Inga Blumenblatt**

when I met Hugo it was, um, all you know very good but my father - as I said - wouldn't allow us and in the end I, we, we got married, I had to wait till I was 21 and um, then we had a, which point did you want about it?

11:39:36:17

**Interviewer**

I wanted to talk about your career, when you wanted to be a pharmacist.



11:39:39:07

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I wanted to be a pharmacist. So while we still was there, but I saw a pharmacy there and my father was getting like a want to sort of thing so um some, a women there said there is a, what did you want to do, she asked me, I said I always wanted to be a pharmacist so she said I will, um, there is a pharmacy there I said well how will I, what's a name. so she said, no, she said I will take you there one day and ask him whether he's got a job. So I couldn't speak, speak a word of English, I could say "bye bye" or something like that and that was it and I went to he, to him and I, someone was with me in that could translate it. Says that I want to learn so he said yes. So I, I didn't drive, I didn't have no money for a bus but he took me on. So I, from that camp, which was Shakers Wood, I was walking, I was walking to Brandon to start the job and I was doing it and I liked it because before, before the war started I was very slim and my mother wanted me to put on weight so there, I've seen a toy with lots of a, a toy, toy things for a pharmacy and I, I wanted it badly and my mother said, if you will put on, I don't know a kilo of weight or something, she would buy me that, that toy and I tried, good job I did because it kept me over the war. So I was, um, you know put on, I put on weight and for my birthday, so a year before but the war broke out must have been, she brought me that present without the, oh yes, she brought something.

11:41:49:21

**Interviewer**

Amazing

11:41:50:17

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh I didn't get it, I don't know, because I did have some of them anyway. I had those things an, an then I could hear when the pharmacist was talking to a girl there and I could speak, she had a Polish boyfriend, so she knew a few Polish words. So I spoke to her a bit and they were saying Miss Niger, Miss Niger, Miss Niger is said, to her, try to speak to her I said how does know my name, what did I do wrong, I thought I did something wrong, can I do it sort of proper. And she said, explained to me that he, he thought that I'm working better than her, and that was so it gave me more things to do, and I loved it. And I was, had to go for lunch because I didn't have anything to eat so where you get you know, from this camp so I had something, but I couldn't take it with me, I mean I could have asked him I, it didn't have so, that's how it was.

11:42:55:22

**Interviewer**

It's amazing you know and as you said, now that you've got your family, your children and your grandchildren it, it's your compensation for everything that you've been through.

11:43:07:04

**Inga Blumenblatt**

I appreciate it. That's what I'm saying. I appreciate everything good that happens, I don't like the bad things, but I still like the good things, yes.



11:43:14:22

**Interviewer**

But you focus on them rather than the negativity that's happened in your life?

11:43:19:10

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Well always try to make myself work, always did as a, did the pharmacy said because the only way I can get out of any trouble is to do something. To do something, and sometimes when you even do things you think about it one way or another and perhaps it's not so bad, you know. So that's my motto. Yeah

**[cut for direction]**

11:43:43:00

**Interviewer**

But, Inga, I just wanted to ask you maybe a final question about reflecting on life. You know you; you have experienced such extremes and, um, you have a very, um, extraordinary perspective for somebody who has been travelling and has gone through so much sadness and yet has ended up with a, with a very balanced and a positive outlook on life.

11:44:06:11

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interrupts Interviewer*]

Well one has to be, one has to be grateful for little things and you don't get always good things does one? So for little things, make the most of life that you can and even sometime a, I mean the people when I had to have the operation which I was glad and I was in Addenbrooks Cambridge hospital and the way the doctor treated me and took to, to hire someone to look after me, to take me out for walks and so on, so how can this people you know that's wonderful with somethings an life doesn't go always smooth and it happened to me over and over again, it's

11:44:50:22

**Interviewer**

And with the story that you have and the story that you've shared with people, do you feel that people have respected you enough in your life of what you've been through?

11:44:59:06

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interrupts Interviewer*]

Oh most of them yes, most of them yes. There's some people that doing it because they're ignorant they don't realise what life is been like me so they would never understand it, no matter how much you know, you sort of see but they, it is so nice. I mean when I think about it in compare it to that Professor at the Addenbrooks hospital, to make that operation, to hire someone to take me out for walks or something and so on, who would do it now? I know it's not necessary, but nevertheless, I couldn't even, if I would have said it to someone in English people, they would think she's mad. Don't you think so?



11:45:47:22

**Interviewer**

But, but how lovely for you that you've had the experience, the opposite experience. You had so much cruelty and so much hardship that

11:45:55:07

**Inga Blumenblatt** [*interrupts Interviewer*]

Yes that's right

11:45:57:01

**Interviewer**

But actually somebody came to you in your life to show you that humanity has both sides.

11:46:00:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Yeah definitely

11:46:02:12

**Interviewer**

And that you

11:46:03:15

**Inga Blumenblatt**

There was a, the Jewish human who came to visit me in the, in the hospital and she said, well the food, as far as I was in hospital it was, she says what would you really like, [*Laughs*] sorry I've got to laugh already. I said I would love chicken soup, right and she says, yes I'll be back. A few days later the woman [*Laughs*] sorry, arrives and she has a tin of chicken soup, Heinz chicken soup. It's nothing like the, the Jewish chicken soup right and son. I thanked her very much but a, a ever since, since that time, each time I have a chicken soup I kiss the chicken soup each time [*Laughs*] yeah. It's so funny.

## END OF INTERVIEW

### ARTEFACTS

**ARTEFACT 1: scan of photograph of Inga's father, Maximilian, in his Polish army uniform**

11:47:00:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

This is [...] my father being in the army in England. I think it was [...] before I met him after the war.

**ARTEFACT 2:**

11:47:14:18

**Inga Blumenblatt**

My, my father on the left-hand side and his friend are recuperating at being in

England and being demobbed.

**ARTEFACT 3: scan of photo of father, Maximilian, and stepmother, Esther**

11:47:30:00

**Inga Blumenblatt**

Oh this is my, my father sitting smoking a cigarette - naughty boy - and it's my stepmother because my mother wasn't alive anymore and [...] it looks like it was England, yes, in England.

**ARTEFACT 4 : scan of a photo of Inga in her wedding dress**

11:47:49:14

**Inga Blumenblatt**

this being my wedding - which I had to wait for three years to be twenty-one - and this is the happy day. It was the happy day

**ARTEFACT 5: scan of photograph of her father, Maximilian, husband, Hugo, and stepmother, Esther, on her wedding day**

11:48:08:07

It is my wedding and um on the left is my father on the right is [...] my husband and this is my stepmother next to me sitting. It was happy day.

**ARTEFACT 6: scan of photograph of husband, Hugo, stepmother, Esther, sister-in-law and brother-in-law**

11:48:29:22

This is my wedding and I've got on the right-hand side it is myself sitting with my husband and on the left-hand side there is [...] my stepmother, [...] my sister-in-law and brother-in-law: my husband's brother and his wife.

**ARTEFACT 7: scan of photo her father, Maximilian, standing in a wood**

[No commentary]

10:48:55:22

**ARTEFACT 8: scan of a photograph of Inga's husband, Hugo, and her grandfather**

[No commentary]

10:49:00:23

**Caption: SAVED FROM FROSTBITE IN SIBERIA**

**Inga Blumenblatt**

11:49:11:19

it was very cold, it was wintertime and you're very lucky – I don't know whether we waited for something, piece of bread or something in the queue and we were waiting and that was – it was winter, the snow was up to here and it very very cold. All of a sudden there is someone pushed me in the snow, in the snow while waiting in the queue and started rubbing my – this little finger and what happened was that finger got frozen and when it was frozen, I must have had a little bit of water on it or something, it gets completely white like this, white, and she started rubbing it and if



she wouldn't have it would have fallen off. Because that's how - how bad this thing is so that finger it's a little bit like this now, it never showed like that in comparison with this one can you see? I never even noticed it before, it - it would have fallen off so there - good job that the woman thought of - and she started rubbing it, sort of thing, and I thought well what's she doing? And it came back to life. And I forgot about it, my - my children knew about it and they - they, what's the name, reminded me - oh my god so many years ago but that was - but now I know this it is a little like not straight. Silly woman with a crooked finger walking around.