



UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT – FRANCIS DEUTSCH

[Testimony: 1hr 26 mins. Artefacts 4' 18"]

A136_L001_0419CH - A137_L001_0419A4

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript. However, no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended only as a guide to the original recording.

This transcript contains copyrighted material owned by third parties. Any unauthorised use of this content is prohibited without the express permission of the respective copyright holders. All Rights Reserved.

10:00:00:00

Francis Deutsch

My name is Francis Deutsch, I was born on the 6th of April 1926 and I came to England on the Kindertransport on the 13th of July 1939.

[Fade to black and back up]

10:00:15:10

Interviewer

So Francis if you're ready we'll begin. Um,

[Cut for camera]

have you, um, ever recorded your testimony before?

10:00:22:00

Francis Deutsch

Not -, no I've not recorded it before. I spoken about it to schools, two or three schools in England a couple of schools in Vienna, er, and I was interviewed by a psychologist about 25-30 years ago.

10:00:41:18

Interviewer

Do you feel it's your responsibility to talk about it, the fact that you've spoken to schools in the past?

10:00:47:04

Francis Deutsch

Yes, er, time passes. We all die off and the history books cannot give -, paint, the colour, the picture. They can only tell you the facts.

10:01:00:18

Interviewer

And how do you feel in advance of this interview?

10:01:05:09

Francis Deutsch

I'm looking forward to the experience. It's, er, it's very interesting to be interviewed.

10:01:12:21

Interviewer

OK, thank you very much and we're very much looking forward to hearing what you have to say despite a lot of it being very difficult to talk about. Um, how much of your experiences have you shared with your family over the years?

10:01:26:22

Francis Deutsch

Very little in fact. Um, I went through a very long period of total rejection. I, I wasn't an Austrian because they turned me out I wasn't a German of course. The invasion. I was a Brit. -, and I want to be like any other Brit. and, er, the family just accepted me as I am and it's only in the, only sort of started being reconciled when Kindertransport reunion started. Don't remember how long ago but -, and, er, we were happened to be living in a very Jewish immigrant area, er, and so gradually that was the reconciliation that brought me into AJR and from there onto the -, going to schools and speaking about it.

10:02:21:04

Interviewer

Has that given you some comfort to connect with other people who have a similar experience to you?

10:02:29:14

Francis Deutsch

Er, I don't think I'm that emotional about it. I've, I've, I've made one very good friend through AJR - a namesake in fact - but, er, not, um, not otherwise.

10:02:46:09

Interviewer

You've given me a bit of this answer already, but why do you think it's so important for people like you to record testimony, to record your experiences the future?

10:02:59:19

Francis Deutsch

[Pause] The punishment of forgetting in history is that it will occur again and that mustn't happen.

10:03:08:18

Interviewer

Do you feel then that, um, we have learnt lessons from that period of history? It was one of the darkest moments we've ever experienced wasn't it?

10:03:21:20

Francis Deutsch

[Pause] Sorry, I don't, I don't entirely agree with you because, er, the hundred odd who were killed in Norwich at the time of the second or the -, first or second crusade, er, were the best that technology could do in terms of killing people. Er, this is so horrible because the technology was there to be able to kill six and a quarter million. Had they not had the gas it would have been one million, two million. Lots of personal trouble but the wrong was the wrong that was 136 in

Norwich or six and a quarter of million in a number of Polish and by the Russian camps.

10:04:08:15

Interviewer

But the question, I guess, is whether or not we've learnt any lessons? Part of the reason why you've agreed to record your testimony is because you said that, that the punishment of not remembering is that it happens again.

10:04:20:18

Francis Deutsch

Yes, er, sorry could you -

10:04:24:13

Interviewer

You, you said a moment ago that it -

10:04:26:01

Francis Deutsch [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Yes I did. What was your -, what was your question which I didn't answer?

10:04:31:09

Interviewer

No it's fine, um, do you think we have learnt anything from that period of history?

10:04:37:04

Francis Deutsch

Er, I, I hope so. Certainly with they've learnt the term ethnic cleansing and they object to it and it has an emotional impact. Similar to the words, er, Holocaust. On the other hand we have learned very little about a-, asylum seekers and refugees. We are treating people very badly at the moment.

10:05:06:02

Interviewer

You were a refugee - of sorts - weren't you?

10:05:08:17

Francis Deutsch

Yes, yes.

10:05:09:19

Interviewer

So when you look at the news now, how does it make you feel?

10:05:15:12

Francis Deutsch

I was a professional asylum -, lawyer for asylum seekers. It was my, it was my job so I feel it's got very much since I retired and -, but, but people go round -, politicians go round saying they are proud of British history. Yes, they can be proud of British history. They should not be proud of what the government is doing. What the rules are at the present time.

10:05:41:09

Interviewer

My next question was going to be about how your experiences in your early life shaped your later profession. You've alluded to it, but can you tell me about that in more detail?

10:05:56:01

Francis Deutsch

It, it, almost right through, er, I've always had a hang up about helping the underdog and, er, and my car-, professional career as a specialist in juvenile crime. Purely defending. Never prosecuting. Er, from there I went into race relations as head of law at the commission - legal section rather at the commission - and finished up as a immigration lawyer and with my colleagues agreement I became the specialist on asylum an immigration and, er, and most of my people were Iraqis, Iranians and, um, other people from the Middle East.

10:06:49:14

Interviewer

The link between your early life and what you chose as a career seems quite an obvious -, not obvious but there's definitely a very strong connection, isn't there?

10:06:59:17

Francis Deutsch

I think the word obvious is there if one looks back on it. It didn't seem like it at the time. It was not a deliberate choice. Well it was not a conscious choice of connection with the, the past.

10:07:14:02

Interviewer

But in retrospect you can see -

10:07:15:02

Francis Deutsch

In retrospect it's very clear that, er, my -, I was psychologically influenced in my development, yes.

10:07:22:16

Interviewer

Mm, it's very interesting and wonderful that you've been able to help people in a way that -, in a way that you were helped when you were a young boy.

10:07:30:22

Francis Deutsch

I'm not sure that Her Majesty's Government would agree with you.

10:07:33:11

Interviewer

Well, that's fine. I'm happy with that. OK, so before we move onto the specifics of your story, um, this is an opportunity now to record a message to generations to come. To your great, great, great grandchildren of something that you may have learnt along your journey that you feel would be important for us to understand.

10:07:59:05

Francis Deutsch

All man are born equal -, sorry all persons are born -

10:08:04:09

Interviewer

I understand what you mean but yeah -

10:08:06:12

Francis Deutsch

I, I but get it correct.

10:08:08:16

Interviewer

Ok. Go on then. start again

10:08:10:22

Francis Deutsch

No, no I -, it's all persons are born equal. And I'm sticking with that.

10:08:18:16

Interviewer

And that is your message?

10:08:19:21

Francis Deutsch

That is the message.

10:08:21:17

Interviewer

Of tolerance?

10:08:23:04

Francis Deutsch

I beg your pardon?

10:08:23:21

Interviewer

Of tolerance, of understanding, of acceptance; is that what you mean?

10:08:33:03

Francis Deutsch

I mean, that we need to accept each other as we are with our various cultures, our various backgrounds, our gender, our -, the gender rules in our society, and our occupational class and so on. Behind that is humanity.

10:08:54:19

Interviewer

And what is the warning if we don't?

10:09:01:12

Francis Deutsch

Holocaust, nuclear weapons, war generally. And I mean, as I said at the beginning any killing is wrong. Er, and whether it's one hundred and thirty-six or, or just one or, or, or one thousand it is the act of killing that's wrong not the number of victims.

10:09:24:13

Interviewer

I completely agree with you. Um, Francis when you look back at this point in your life, er, to the period of history that you lived through, can you believe what happened? It's very hard to compute isn't it? It's very hard to accept it?

10:09:42:03

Francis Deutsch

Well it is fact. Er, I mean, I have visited Auschwitz and utterly horrible and, er, if one talks about good and bad then -, there was a postcard amongst the display just ruffled up and I happened to look at it in German and a camp commandant reported, er, that, er, three prisoners were caught breaking into the pigsty and stealing pig food and they had -, they've been given

10:34:51:23 punishment work for three...three weekends or something like that. And the senior officer wrote about it, breaking into the pigsty question mark. Don't they get enough to eat question mark and that was an official in Berlin reacting. He didn't realise quite how terrible the camps were and it is something that we perhaps still need to have to bear in mind about the survivors of that period in, in Germany.

10:10:54:03

Interviewer

You're absolutely right and that links together one of the answers you gave me a moment ago that, that at some point we aren't going to be able to hear your voices, um, in person and it's very important, apart from just the fact, to paint in the colour so that we can completely understand what happened.

10:11:12:14

Francis Deutsch

Yes. Er, that for young people particular, and perhaps researchers more specifically, the only way they can get our feelings, our emotion, our reaction, err, is by hearing, hearing your recordings.

10:11:35:01

Interviewer

And hearing your voices.

10:11:37:04

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:11:37:04

Francis Deutsch

Yes, [*pause*]

10:11:38:04

Interviewer

And your warnings.

10:11:39:18

Francis Deutsch

I hope so.

10:11:40:13

Interviewer

Um, ok we will come back to general questions at the end Francis but thank you very much for those. Um, let's just start with your life. Um, you were born in, um, April, oh, you've just had your birthday.

10:11:52:12

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:11:53:05

Interviewer
Happy birthday.

10:11:54:03
Francis Deutsch
Thank you.

10:11:55:05
Interviewer
In, er, 1926.

10:11:57:07
Francis Deutsch
Yes.

10:11:58:02
Interviewer
Um, tell me, you were born in Austria. What kind of family did you grow up in? What were, what were your parents like? What was your, your community like?

10:12:06:17
Francis Deutsch
Er, my parents -, I was, I was -, our family reflects the history of Austria. I'm, I have four aunts on my father's side. They each had one child and they all ten years or more older than me because they were all born before the First World War turned sour on Austria and, er, they were not -, Austria not only, er, lost the war but it was, that was followed by the flu epidemic, a famine and a , a minor economic crisis. Then was a brilliant recovery. A short gap of three years during which I was born and then came, of course, the world depression of 1929.

10:13:00:18
Interviewer
You must have been a very close family then, were you, with lots of aunts around?

10:13:06:03
Francis Deutsch
Indeed yes. That, that -, it was, it was a close family. My father, my father's sister, he was the only boy, er, two of them lived very, very near and grandparents lived very near and there were some cousins up the road and, er, so it goes on.

10:13:25:23
Interviewer
Was it a very loving family?

10:13:28:22

Francis Deutsch

Oh yes, very emotional. Typical middle -, central European Jewish.

10:13:34:11

Interviewer

Tell me about your father, cause he was an artillery man wasn't he?

10:13:38:01

Francis Deutsch

He was an artillery man and, er, he, he lost his job at the beginning of the Great Depression and a year or two later got a job outside of Vienna in Linz and was only home for weekends and he actually died in 1933 so I only remember him as a small boy and maybe I was a bit of a disappointment to him but perhaps he expected too much too young.

10:14:07:21

Er, we were going to meet my mother one day and because there was time to spare he took me to the first, one of the earliest cinemas in Vienna and, um, there was a cowboy film and when the fourth cavalry came over the hill charging diagonally across the screen, screen into the audience I burst into screams and had to be taken out.

10:14:34:11

He took me to an international football match and I remember him saying forward Austria. It was an international match and my gentle, quietly spoken father suddenly started to shout and scream and do terrible things to his Sunday best hat. And again, I was terrified. Started to scream and had to be taken out.

10:14:57:00

And thirdly his great -, greatest disappointment. He wanted me to ride. I fell off the horse, broke my collarbone, and never got on a horse again.

10:15:06:09

Interviewer

I'm sure you weren't a disappointment to him, but you didn't have the same passion about horses, did you, and artillery? It was just different.

10:15:12:22

Francis Deutsch

Um well I, at one stage certainly as a child I hoped to follow him into the military. The, as in England the First World War was a, had a tremendous effect on man and he and all his friends talked about nothing but military service and, um, in a sense World War One is part of my early memories. Although it started eight, eight years or so before I was -, it ended eight years or more before I was,

before I was born.

10:15:146:11

Interviewer

So how old were you when your father died in 1933? You were -

10:15:49:04

Francis Deutsch [*interrupting*]

Seven -, I was seven and a half at, at the end of the year.

10:15:54:13

Interviewer

And do you remember that very clearly?

10:15:57:05

Francis Deutsch

Well, no he died in the province at Linz. He collapsed. Had a heart attack. Er, I remember sitting Shiva for him but that's all I do remember.

10:16:11:05

Interviewer

Um, and tell me a bit more about your mother? So she was a milliner wasn't she?

10:16:15:15

Francis Deutsch

Yes, she, er, she, she, she trained -, she was the only one of her family who did take up a trade. Her three sisters were all singers. Um, one married early. Er, one became a, really an international star. She was, she was appointed as a soprano soloist at the Köln opera in Berlin. Started work on the 1st of January 1933. Hitler came to power on the 21st January and she got the sack before her first performance. And, er, she later moved to the United States but the, the other two -, the other sister sung as well and I've got photographs of them in Prague singing, um, *Hansel and Gretel*.

10:17:11:11

Interviewer

You were clearly a very cultured family, weren't you, cause you went to operettas and you had a rather comfortable life. But, but, but millinery became important later on, didn't, it because your mother helped to train people?

10:17:23:16

Francis Deutsch

Yes, well yes my, my, my mother sort of did -, was very dutiful. I had, had learned to swim. It was something my father did succeed in. But, er, she ensured that we went swimming and had holidays together and, er, walked in the Vienna Woods. But especially in winter afternoons we were frequently at matinee -, Sunday

afternoons matinee at the operetta and the opera.

10:17:53:20

Interviewer

OK, thank you. Let's talk about your school now shall we? Um, you -, did you enjoy school?

10:18:01:21

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:18:02:20

Interviewer

Can you tell me about what kind of school you attended and your friends?

10:18:06:11

Francis Deutsch

Um, well I had one particular friend. Er, we started, er primary school together at six. I don't think we came from the same kindergarten, but certainly started primary school together. And we played together three four days a-, three or four afternoons a week and played in the-, and visited the Town Hall Museum on Sundays, Sunday mornings. Er, they have wonderful armour there and it worked wonders for our military-minded imagination. And, and we went up together. We both passed scholarships and went to secondary school. Er, I mention him because, um, he was, he was non-Jewish and he had another non-Jewish boy whom we met at secondary school. Always walked home together. The other boy went off two-thirds of the way off in one direction and we two continued in another.

10:19:15:09

And the reason I mention is that shortly after, er, they resumed school after the Nazis came, er, those two set about me, knocked me down, punched me a bit and then run away and, er, it was nothing terribly serious, just hurt feelings more than anything else and, um, but when I reflected on it later I decided that they really were quite good lads, er, because they run away. They did not swagger off saying we're good Nazis we beat up a Jew. They run away because they felt guilty for doing it.

10:19:59:15

Interviewer

That was a very difficult thing for you to cope with when you were so young?

10:20:03:16

Francis Deutsch

It was very many years later.

10:20:05:19

Interviewer

Years later -

10:20:06:22

Francis Deutsch

I beg pardon?

10:20:07:16

Interviewer

Did you say it was very bad years later?

10:20:09:20

Francis Deutsch

Er, it was very many years later -

10:20:11:12

Interviewer

Very many years later.

10:20:12:08

Francis Deutsch

-er, that the reflection came. Er, I -if I thought about it at all –sorry - if I thought about it at all it, er, I didn't forgive them for a long time.

10:20:25:23

Interviewer

That must have felt very lonely and quite frightening for you though?

10:20:32:10

Francis Deutsch

Yes, not so lonely because my mother's business was quotes "Aryanised" end quotes and, um, so she spent much more time at home. This period mid-38 to July 39 when I left, er, I saw much more of her than I did before.

10:20:55:22

Interviewer

When I mean lonely I meant not so much, um, from your family but an experience like that must have been terrifying for a young boy.

10:21:07:01

Francis Deutsch

I suppose so, yes, as I said the most was hurt feeling that my best friend had done that. But, er, but in the autumn of '38 school started again outside the Jewish schools. Yeah, sorry I should have said before. Um, they got -, as Jews we got thrown out of the secondary school and spent most of the summer, er,

isolated anyway and the autumn started at a Jewish elementary -, senior elementary school and, er, we just, we were just there together but didn't, um, greatly make so close friends. The catchment area was too large.

10:21:57:09

Interviewer

OK, we'll go through that again in a minute, but just tell me in terms of religion how religious was your family, and can you tell me the story about when you used to go to school on a Monday you used to have to present cards, didn't you?

10:22:10:16

Francis Deutsch

Oh yes, yes, yes sorry, um, as a family we were not terribly religious. We had one aunt that sing, that, the, the youngest single one who stayed at home to look after the parents Austria had the same thing as the Victorians about the unfortunate youngest daughter and that remained the family home my parents, she lived with my parents in their flat and took it over when when they grandparents - when they died. And we went there for the festive meals: er, Hanukah, Passover, Yom Kippur and so on. And the whole family of ten, twelve, fifteen would sit down to a meal. Hanukah was special there because they celebrated Christmas as well. We had Christmas tree and Hanukah candles.

10:23:08:03

Interviewer

I think that's fair enough.

10:23:09:15

Francis Deutsch

So, but beyond that we had -, this youngest sister was very much involved with the Jewish community. She sat on some charity committee and other bodies and community organisation. We celebrated the high holidays. We were not kosher - we ate normally - and, um, the, the, as I say just sort of normal mainstream average.

10:23:39:16

Interviewer

OK. Um, at, er, Anschluss in 1938 you were 11 years old weren't you?

10:23:48:02

Francis Deutsch

Yes. No twelve.

10:23:50:03

Interviewer

Twelve. OK. My maths is not very good.

10:23:52:04

Francis Deutsch

It was one month short of twelve.

10:23:53:18

Interviewer

Exactly March April, um, nearly twelve. Um, do you remember it?

10:24:00:05

Francis Deutsch

Oh yes. The -, perhaps the most, my strongest memory is the election, of the election campaign just before the Anschluss. Er, you may recall that, um, when Austria was threatened by Germany in-, at about the beginning of 1938, um, the Chancellor called a plebiscite: freedom -, free Austria or part of Germany and that was to have taken place later in March and er, for a small boy perhaps the most exciting thing was aeroplanes just throwing-, distributing leaflets. Flying fairly low and scatter- throwing them out and them fluttering down on the rooftops.

10:24:59:01

Um, but er, the, the strongest recollection is, um, an occasion when this aunt and I went to the Kärntner Straße - the sort of Bond Street of Vienna - and on one side of the street were the Austrians and the other one side were the poor Germans and, er, we, um, we stayed on the Austrian side going up. And then slipped across the road and walked down, and the atmosphere is the thing that I cannot forget. They were all so stiff and inhuman and every so often the whenever they passed each other they gave the Hitler salute clicked their heels and then shouted across about one people one right -, one Reich, one, one leader and, er, but it was the inhumanity. The hardness. The yes, the hardness and the harshness of their behaviour that really put -, scared us and we left down a side street fairly quickly. Er, the reason for the demonstration being on that side of the road was that, er, that first building on their side of the street so to speak was the German travel agency and their enormous street window - much what Bond Street windows are like - um, were -, was, er, a portrait of Hitler on an easel with a drape and the window was otherwise empty and that, that is what these people had come to admire.

10:24:00:05

Interviewer

You remember turning the radio on at this point don't you?

10:26:40:24

Francis Deutsch

I beg your pardon?

10:26:41:24

Interviewer

You have a memory about listening to the radio at around this time don't you?

10:26:46:06

Francis Deutsch

Yes. Er, that was the -, I happened to come home from school and we were very proud of having a loudspeaker , er, radio. Most people still had earphones and, um, I turned it on and almost, almost by accident I heard the Chancellor's broadcast saying that, er, he was resigning and the Germans were taking over in the interests of peace and they made it all sound pretty formal and don't, don't worry. Everything will be all right sort of thing. And as a kid I fell for that till at the end a quartet started to play the Mozart variation on the Austral's -, of the Emperor's song. The national anthem. And, er, they played it with such intensity, such depth of feeling, that actually sort of penetrated no this is not all is, all is well, all is well. That something dreadful has happened. And then came the silence and then up started brass band oompah music. Really nasty. And that...that was the first direct experience of the German invasion.

10:28:08:23

Interviewer

So at the age of eleven, twelve you were very attuned to the political climate and the fact that things were changing fast?

10:28:15:20

Francis Deutsch

Well funnily enough I'd always been interested in politics. Hans and I played the Abyssinia -, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia on a great big map with our toy soldiers reading the New Free Press of Vienna. Er, that was just parts of our play.

10:28:36:19

Interviewer

Um, so then your life - and everybody's lives - changed quite radically didn't it when Hitler did officially come to power. Um, what impact did it have on your immediate life?

10:28:49:24

Francis Deutsch

Very little because I was very sheltered. Um, we had a -, we lived in a block of flats with a fair number of Jewish tenants. It wasn't exclusively Jewish but a fair number of Jewish tenants. Um, and the house master the *portier* was, um, was an elderly garrulous man whose son was a policeman and, um, he run around saying, "my Jews are alright." [?] alright and, er, other sense of the word but, er, we never had any trouble of arrests in the house or SS or SA visiting the house or disturbing people. There was always the policeman son was always very useful. So of that I knew very little. Obviously I knew that, er, one heard people

speaking of arrests and people being sent to Dachau and Dachau sounded terrible but I did, as a child, I did not really know what it was but they took terrible points where Dachau and Buchenwald and, er, the greatest shock was probably when we started to apply for visas to go abroad to emigrate, going to the Office of the Jewish Community, finding them shut and the office being run in the synagogue itself. Their Torah scrolls gone. Their cabinet, er, wide open. People sitting around trestle tables smoking. Not wearing hats, er, that, that really was sort of genuine shock to see if that would happen after Kristallnacht.

10:30:47:02

Interviewer

And what about your mother's shop? What happened to that?

10:30:49:14

Francis Deutsch

Oh that, that -, it was Aryanised very early on. Er, she and I spent, were able to spend more time together. Quite a bit of time together. Quite a few things from the shop came to her so she was able to set up a millinery training school to assist Jewish ladies they prepare for -, to become manual workers for emigration and, er, I became the proud owner of the office typewriter [*laughs*]

10:31:23:21

Interviewer

When you say the shop was Aryanised, she had a partner didn't she and you suspect the partner took over the shop?

10:31:29:11

Francis Deutsch

I guess that the partner, the partner was three-quarter Aryan not fully Aryan, er, but I presume she took it. I couldn't make any enquiries post-war because the place had been blown up by a landmine.

10:31:45:24

Interviewer

Can you tell me about Maria? Maria?

10:31:49:13

Francis Deutsch

Oh, our maid. I think we inherited her from whoever left the flat before. But, er, she was, she was the maid even when my father was unemployed and had no money. And, um, we had a great relationship. She got a very good Christmas bonus and her family, when they slaughtered the annual pig in September, always sent her for us a nice basket of, er, chops and black pudding and steaks and ham and so on. And, um, she had to leave. She wasn't old enough to be allowed to stay within a month or two of the Anschluss and, er, everybody was terribly, terribly upset. My mother was in tears. She was in tears. I was in tears

probably, probably, er, and, and, and, but she had to go.

10:32:47:09

Interviewer

Life was changing?

10:32:49:09

Francis Deutsch

Yep.

10:32:49:14

Interviewer

Life was changing.

10:32:50:22

Francis Deutsch

Life was changing. Indeed, yes.

10:32:53:07

Interviewer

And life changed at school as well didn't it? What happened to you?

10:32:56:16

Francis Deutsch

Er, well the so-called German efficiency got me turned out of my school, er, and sent to a Jewish school quite a way away. Er, when subsequently I learned that the year after it was converted into a collective school for Jews. So, er, so much for Prussian efficiency. Erm-

10:33:22:17

Interviewer

Francis, can you, can you tell me the stages of that though because prior to that in your normal school can you tell me the story about the fact that you were moved to the back of the class and you weren't able to do physical exercise?

10:33:31:21

Francis Deutsch

Oh yes, yes, well certainly, er, immediately, er, after the Anschluss when there was first a long gap. It was the beginning of March when Austria was occupied and schools did not resume until after the end of the Easter holidays, so very late April and then, er, all Jews -, Jewish children had to sit at the back. Er, and we stood up whilst the rest of the class greeted the teacher with Heil Hitler, er, er, we were not allowed to take part in games and when we were expelled rather that, that, that was the first protest. There were a few of us who were good at sports and our Christian colleagues, or our Aryan colleagues, did not wish us to be

expelled and interceded strongly that we should be allowed to stay. I had -, I wasn't terribly good at games but, er, I had my moment of triumph when in an act of desperation when the junior school was playing the senior school I simply threw myself at the feet of the, of the senior school centre forward and I didn't really try to tackle him just flying over me and I acquired for a few months the nickname of Tiger and so I was one of the boys who was thought -, who was interceded for by the others that I should be allowed to stay. But they were -, it was simply because we were good. and the interesting thing is, interesting thing about it is that my wife tells the story that when the, the African Asian came, the Kenya Asians she had them in school, an ordinary London prima-, senior school and there was a good deal of racism but oh there's him he's all right. But all the rest are awful. And, er, everybody had their particular black friend who, who was the exception to the rule. So things don't change. They come back to what we said at the beginning. One's got to learn.

10:35:58:12

Interviewer

There's prejudice all over the world isn't there -

10:36:00:11

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:36:01:02

Interviewer

- that's the sad fact. Um, you said earlier that you were quite sheltered as a child. You were quite sheltered -

10:36:08:20

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:36:09:09

Interviewer

- as a child and protected from what was going on, but at this point there was nothing that your mother could do to protect you from, er, the changing tide?

10:36:18:10

Francis Deutsch

Er, [pause] she, she did because, simply by keeping me at home and, er, speaking English on the telephone - which I couldn't understand - er, so, er, I was sheltered in that sense. Er, and then came the -, I was a, remember I was aware of because we wanted to emigrate and in fact, er, we did both get American visas and, er, we should have gone together to the States in October 1939 and we had both tickets, er, a lot of my generation who came from- came

by Kindertransport like I had tremendously upsetting experiences being parted from their parents.

10:37:20:09

Er, I must have had that because I have a totally incorrect recollection. I am always under the impression that my mother and I were alone standing under a lamppost - er, lamplight - at the railway station. In fact, there were hundreds of children. It was the middle of the day. I know that I went and also I thought it was a great adventure. I was on the Austrian quota for American emigration. There's a - America had a monthly quota according to where you were born. If you were Japanese there was one a month so less than that. One every two months. If you were Austrian or German, my mother came under the Czech quota because she had been born there and, er, I came under the Austrian quota because I was born in Austria. So I had to start my journey in July and she had to start her journey in October. And we had both tickets. I'd seen them. I'd seen a wonderful manual that thrilled me as a child. A wonderful food you got aboard the ship. Five courses for dinner including five different sweets and afternoon tea with wonderful pastries. Something that wasn't available to Austrians never mind Jews. Er, so, so in that sense I was, I was merely having a great adventure coming to England for three, for two-three months and, but of course war started in September, er, and she couldn't get away.

10:39:03:06

Interviewer

OK we're going to come back through that again in a minute, if you don't mind. Before we do that can you just tell me about Kristallnacht in November '38. You were 12 at this point weren't you? Do you have any recollections of Kristallnacht?

10:39:22:13

Francis Deutsch

[Pause] As far as I was concerned as a, as a twelve-year-old, thirteen-year-old, um, it was a non-event. Er, apart from the occasion when we soon afterwards had to go to the synagogue and found it had been converted into an office and been vandalised, er, er, it had little impact apart from what one -, what I managed to pick up from other people about arrests and broken windows -, and broken shop windows and so on. Um, that whitewashing of windows, er, Jews and, and, and Star of David that had been going on for some while and didn't seem such, such an occasion. Er, so apart from knowing one or two friends who's fathers had been arrested - which I heard sort of over the next few months - um, it, it had no impact on us.

[Cut for card change]

10:40:29:17

Interviewer

We're, we're going to talk now, um, about a big thing that happened in your life and getting on the train and being part of the transport, um, and so if it's possible to try and remember as much as possible your emotions at the time because it must have been a very, very hard thing to happen to you when you were that young. Although you say it was an adventure, you still were very connected to your mother weren't you?

10:40:58:02

Francis Deutsch

Yes. It, um, as I said just now - sorry I'm repeating myself,

10:41:05:05

Interviewer

Please repeat yourself. There's no problem.

10:41:07:02

Francis Deutsch

Perhaps deliberately, er, there was, there was a conscious reaction which was, oh it's a great adventure. It's only for a few months. There was an unconscious reaction that this is something terrible because I had this totally inaccurate, utterly inaccurate recollection of saying goodbye to her in the middle of the night under a gas lamp at Vienna West station of which only the last is true. We were at the West station but, er, left in the middle of the day surrounded by hundreds of -, about a hundred children and their parents and the relatives. So, er, there was, there's a conscious and unconscious reaction and the surprise was because of the quota regulations we had to start our journeys at different months and we were due to join up in Southampton, er, for to travel to America together and in fact, um, before the great events of May, April-May 1940, er, there was a discussion whether I should go to America on my own or whether to stay in -, I was to remain in England, er, and a conversation which I was not involved about which I only heard. And because of, um, the, the very heavy losses at sea it was decided I'd be better off staying in England and I'm truly grateful.

10:42:48:08

Interviewer

I guess just thinking about your memory of saying goodbye to your mother, it illustrates the fact that your world was, was very small, wasn't it, at that point?

10:42:46:18

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:42:57:05

Interviewer

You can just remember the light, and you can just remember you and your mother, even though you were surrounded by lots of people.

10:43:03:18

Francis Deutsch

And there was no light. [*Chuckles*]

10:43:04:21

Interviewer

There was just -, it was just the two of you.

10:43:07:00

Francis Deutsch

Yes. That is the recollection. Yes.

10:43:10:17

Interviewer

And also I'm trying to imagine what it must have been like for you because you'd lost your father already, you must have had a sense of responsibility for your mother as well even though you were only a child?

10:43:21:07

Francis Deutsch

It, it only just started, yes. Er, I was perhaps a little young as a child, but in that sense there was the conscious awareness that we're meeting in three months' time and having this wonderful cruise across the Atlantic - seven days of it or whatever.

10:43:43:11

Interviewer

So it was given to you as an adventure. It was sold to you as -, and it's what you believed. It's what everybody believed.

10:43:47:17

Francis Deutsch [*talks over the end of Interviewer's question*]

It was more -, it was the fact that we knew that we were going to the States and that we were together and starting a new life and this was going to be difficult and hard and without money and so on and so on but, um, the stay in England was essentially a holiday and, er sort of, yes an adventure. I don't, I don't know whether it was sold to me as such. I think my mother anticipated joining me.

10:44:19:22

Interviewer

And in fact did you ever see her again?

10:44:22:24

Francis Deutsch

No. Er, no it -, in fact the surprising thing till '41 till - sorry - till mid '40 when, er,

Italy came into the war we had a fairly fluent correspondence, er, because we have, we have distant cousins in Venice and I wrote to them and they passed it onto my mother. My mother wrote to them and they sent it on to me and so in the early stages of the war we -, I was very close contact with her and, um, it after that, once Italy joined the war and this correspondence ceased, er, there was a sense of -, and not of loss because of no contact because the only thing there was was the six monthly Red Cross contact which would in practical terms mean [?] three where, where there was so much officialese on both sides of this card that all you could say is, are you well, looking forward to seeing you or vice versa: are you well, love you, behave yourself. Er, so, er, the, these ceased almost without one noticing because they were so officialese. So, er, impersonal. The, the-, that it was virtually meaningless.

10:46:03:17

The surprise, er, was that it must have been '41 I was approached by the Home Office as an- and told that I could become a British citizen under the Orphan Refugee Minors Scheme; and, er, I do not to this day know how they knew that I was an orphan.

10:46:25:22

Interviewer

And at that point did you know what had happened to your mother?

10:46:29:00

Francis Deutsch

No.

10:46:29:22

Interviewer

So by receiving the letter to say that you were entitled to British citizenship that essentially was the news?

10:46:37:05

Francis Deutsch

That was all I, I knew and, er, even then it sort of really didn't sink in. I was so excited about becoming a British citizen that the orphan bit didn't register for really till after the war when I started to make enquiries and got in -, and heard from aunt, from two aunts who had gone back to Vienna.

10:47:04:24

Interviewer

We've just covered a huge amount of sadness really very quickly, um, and as you said it was only until after the war that you were able to really process what had happened.

10:47:15:03

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:47:15:17

Interviewer

But if we go back to that departure, and your inaccurate memory of what actually happened, when you look back on that period and you now know that that was the last time that you ever saw your mother, can you remember what she looked like? Can you remember -

10:47:30:20

Francis Deutsch

Oh yes.

10:47:31:09

Interviewer

- your memory. Anymore about her?

10:47:37:22

Francis Deutsch

It's difficult to say. She, she was cultured. She read a lot. Er, she was a heavy smoker. Er, she wasn't a good cook. Er, she -, no, a good and the bad experience of Vienna and the Germans was that, er, in that connection was that I develop appendicitis. Um, at first was stomach pain and, er, oh I can even go to school. Oh dear, er, if I cook you your favourite meal, er, will that make it better? And, er, I had sausage goulash for my lunch which she cooked specially and the pain got worse. But the Austrian ambulance men who ultimately took me off to the emergency hospital might be wearing swastika armbands but they couldn't have been nicer. The journey to the hospital is actually sort of really happy memory cause I knew the pain would be going and they were so kind and so, so strong and gentle. It really was a good experience. The Jewish hospital had wonderful doctors but terribly overcrowded. It was quite scary for a child. They were disturbed people shouting all night long - not screaming, not pain, not in pain - but shouting and swearing and it was very -, it was a bit of a scary experience that.

10:49:21:21

Interviewer

But somehow those ambulance workers had come to rescue you hadn't they?

10:49:25:00

Francis Deutsch

They'd come to collect me. They'd just been sent to take another child to another hospital. It happened to be a Jewish child to the Jewish hospital. It didn't matter a damn to them.

10:49:35:06

Interviewer

They were just helping you.

10:49:36:20

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:49:39:24

Interviewer

So when we think again about your mother and what you must have meant to her. You're a, you're a parent you know what that means. That love for a child -

10:49:49:19

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

10:49:50:10

Interviewer

But she'd lost her husband, and although you thought you would be reunited, that must have been a very painful experience for her -

10:49:57:16

Francis Deutsch [*talking over Interviewer*]

- it must have. Yes indeed -

10:49:59:09

Interviewer

- to let you go.

10:50:00:10

Francis Deutsch

Yes indeed and, er, er -,it's not something that one wants to reflect on, really. There is nothing one can do and just leaves one with a sense of guilt.

10:50:14:24

Interviewer

Why guilt?

10:50:16:09

Francis Deutsch

Pardon?

10:50:16:16

Interviewer

Why guilt?

10:50:20:19

Francis Deutsch

[Pause] One got away and she didn't, and, er, I think it's quite a -, certainly in my experience quite a lot of refugees have this sense of why am I the fortunate one? Er, and the sacrifice one's parents made for one. [Pause] But the, the - [pause] I can think of several of my Iraqi ladies who, who's asylum applications I have dealt with who had exactly that experience. Er, because they spoke a foreign language and because they'd been to university or because their family had made the sacrifice, they had come out and they were living safely and they were minority religion or different racial group and having a tough time back home and because they had all the modern means of communication they probably felt it more than I would - also because they were older.

10:51:25:12

Interviewer

But it's interesting what you've just talked about - your Iraqi women - because actually it, it sounds to me that your career has made you feel a little bet-, a little better about what happened?

10:51:38:10

Francis Deutsch

Yes. I think it did but, as I say, with hindsight not at the time when it occurred, er, because the, the law centre where I was an asylum specialist, er, actually was run, was, the department was headed by a woman, who was very concerned, um, with marriage and founded an organisation called Asylum Immigration Widows because of the difficulty spouses have had and having more now to reunite families if they're on relatively low pay. And that was the sort of focus of the immigration unit's work till I came and, and suddenly there were two focii. She had her widow, her immigration widows and I had the asylum seekers and I, I started off working with her but within a matter of months I had a full case load and more.

10:52:44:05

Interviewer

And you were helping people just like your mother.

10:52:47:04

Francis Deutsch

Possibly yes, yes, yes, except that they'd got out and were seeking to stay and not be sent back.

10:52:57:00

Interviewer

Yes, but still she would have been proud.

10:52:59:24

Francis Deutsch

I hope so.

10:53:03:04

Interviewer

Um, tell me about the journey?

10:53:10:17

Francis Deutsch

[*Pause*] Well, we all had our packets of sandwiches which we compared. I was one of the big boys in the compartment and, um, when it, when it became evening –later - er, we were -, we put the little ones to bed in the luggage rack and just the bigger ones on the seat and, er, and the two biggest lads just lay down on the floor. Er, there was no water, no drink, er, throughout the whole of the journey through Germany, which was about, I would say, 24 hours roughly, very approximately.

10:53:49:11

Er, then the, the nice point was arriving in, I think, Venlo but whatever the first station in Holland were -, was, and there were trestle tables with white cloths. Ladies with huge urns of orange juice and - sorry - and sandwiches. It was absolutely wonderful. [*Weeping*]

10:54:24:23

But then the unpleasant side was the fright in Cologne when -, the last stop - when we noticed it was SS not, not customs police who got on the train. As far as our compartment was concerned it was -, they just looked in and didn't open any luggage. Left us alone and was perfectly simple exit. But, um, so we were -, but other people had a rough time and had suitcases opened and scattered all over the floor of the compartment. But not us -, not in mine. Er, and then the same thing happened on the boat.

10:55:15:02

Beyond the fact that the girl who was the other -, next eldest, and I met again quite by accident, er, after the war and worked for the same employer. And, er, she had a very successful career as a Liberal Democrat leader of a county council and we kept in touch ever since, ever since, ever from when we met after the war.

10:55:43:07

Er, then there was the arrival in England. Sorry there I didn't have the smiling policeman. I saw no policemen. Um, our group were not -, were taken straight to London and, er - sorry am I going too fast? Er, came straight to London from

the boat as far as I remember. And, er, we were terribly -, greatly impressed with English railway carriages which were...which were upholstered. We only had wooden seats in Austria and, um, the other thing about Liverpool Street is there was a nutter there wearing the fascist uniform giving the Hitler salute and shouting at us. And that's where I saw my smiling policeman. Um, the -, that was, that was my arrival in England.

10:56:47:18

Interviewer

I'm sorry that you have become emotional. I don't want to upset you, but it's an incredibly emotional story isn't it?

10:56:55:12

Francis Deutsch

Yes. Don't worry. We've moved on now.

10:57:04:01

Interviewer

It's part of you. It's part of you. It's what, it's what drove you later on in your life isn't it? The thing -

10:57:10:10

Francis Deutsch

Probably, yes.

10:57:11:24

Interviewer

The, the two points when you've been emotional in this conversation are when people have shown you kindness. The Nazi who picked you up and took you to the hospital and the Dutch ladies who gave you orange juice and then that's what you ended up doing with your life is being kind.

10:57:30:08

Francis Deutsch

How kind of you to say so.

10:57:31:20

Interviewer

But it's true, isn't it?

10:57:33:00

Francis Deutsch

Yes, possibly yes.

10:57:35:22

Interviewer

What was it about the Dutch ladies that makes you so emotional?

10:57:44:18

Francis Deutsch

They were warm and friendly and welcoming and had food and drink and were really loving. They all seemed to be big and big bosomed and had these great big urns. Probably bedroom jugs: water jugs from, from bed, er, from bedroom suite rather than jars of orange juice and they had pint glasses and mugs and it was so informal and so friendly and so warm. It was such a change from what we'd been through. We had been about 26-28 hours without -, probably without water. We were all told to bring sandwiches so we had one meal but very few of us, if any, had anything to drink so that, that Holland thing was physically very desirable - apart from the conduct of the people who were so very kind.

10:58:51:24

Interviewer

Francis, can I also ask you to tell me -, you've told me something that other people haven't said about the older ones putting the younger ones to bed in the luggage racks; because you were one of the older children on the Kinder transport can you tell me that story because that's a huge responsibility. You weren't told to do that. You just knew that you had to.

10:59:11:24

Francis Deutsch

I'm not sure if we weren't told.

10:59:13:23

Interviewer

Really?

10:59:14:10

Francis Deutsch

There were, there were some youngish -, young men or young women sort of 20s thereabouts who were responsible, whom the Germans allowed to come with us, er, so

[cut for sound]

the supervision on the Kindertransport was a small group of Jewish young men and women who were allowed to travel with us so long as they came back to Germany on their, on their return trip

10:59:49:11

and I have since learned that, er, their families were kept under some sort of

control to ensure that they return. Er, I'm not certain whether we were told that the eldest had to take charge of each compartment or whether we simply took, took this autocratically for granted. Er, but, er, I just -, they may have been told that but certainly the elder ones took charge and told people to behave themselves and be quiet, whatever, but when it came to bed time we, we, we did that with the smallest one's going in the luggage rack and two, two on each side and, er, the middle ones having the seats and we sleeping on the floor and the same thing happened on the boat although the -, I think the number were smaller. Er, [?] to each cabin. There were several children to a cabin. And as I say, er, that's where I met this young lady who -, with whom I later worked and remained friends till she died.

11:01:01:23

Interviewer

Um, you've told me a little bit about how you were able to communicate with your mother once you were in England, and you told me about your arrival. You also told me earlier about how you received a letter saying that you could get British citizenship and, and that's how you found out -

11:01:18:11

Francis Deutsch [*interrupting Interviewer*]

A lady actually came to see me.

11:01:20:09

Interviewer

OK, that you were then an orphan.

11:01:22:21

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:01:23:04

Interviewer

But you hadn't processed actually what had happened to your mother until later on so, so what did you learn had happened to your mother?

11:01:31:15

Francis Deutsch

Er, the information was very -, came in dribs and drabs. Er, first was that she was sent to the, to, quotes 'to the camps' and had died there. Er, and then gradually one read more and more of the camps and, um, what had happened there and partly because of that sense of rejection I had, er, it's like I've got a new life. I'm a new person. Er, I didn't make as many enquiries at the very beginning, the immediate post-war period, as I might have done. Er, I was, like everybody, I also had a lawyer recommend to me and he said leave it

all to us and, er, there's not very -, the only compensation was pretty insignificant so, er, I, I didn't do very much until very much later on. er, so when I, I, I adjusted to the situation that I was a refugee, that I had been a foreigner, er, that I did have an accent when I spoke on and that's when I started to research family and family history and what happened to my mother and to other relatives - well to another aunt. And, er, finished up with, er, er, having memorial stones planted for both of them outside the houses where they lived.

11:03:21:02

Interviewer

Can you tell me what, what did discover happened to your mother and her aunt?

11:03:25:21

Francis Deutsch

Er, they were both sent to Minsk, not together, but in June 1941, and as she was by then getting on for fifty I presume she was not used for work but immediately killed. But I don't know that. I don't think there is any way of knowing that. And as far as the aunt is concerned I know absolutely nothing beyond the fact that she was deported to Minsk. Er, that was the spinster lady who was the core of the family about whom I spoke earlier, er, and I had, er, memorial – *der stolperstein* as they're called - the plaque set at her house where she lived because she was a spinster and had -, would otherwise not be remembered.

11:04:30:19

Interviewer

And remembering is very important.

11:04:35:16

Francis Deutsch

Well, yes, we've been under this theme, er, we have -, one has to remember and, er, it is -, I'm glad that they're... those stones in Vienna although the people who now live in, certainly our house, couldn't have been nicer. Er, the, the weekend the stone was unveiled we were shown the old flat. We were invited to tea and we've since been invited to go back there and had a week staying in the, in the old flat. And again endless tea parties all-round the block. It really was very -, it was really impressive how friendly they were; but, er, obviously there were,

11:05:32:05

um, coming back to what we learned at the time, er, after I got married in '55 – '56 first holiday we went to Vienna to see my, er, to -, for Sheila to meet my relatives. Sheila being my wife. Um, to meet relatives. The old porter was there still garrulous. Er, but, er, wouldn't, wouldn't let me go through to the, to the flat then and I've since learned probably the reason why he did that was that a very, very unpleasant, very Nazi woman was still living there then, who had got the flat from the Germans after my family was moved.

11:06:20:14

And the date of both deportations are fairly clear. Firstly, I've had them officially. Secondly, Vienna was called free of Jews- *Judenrein* - um, which actually translate as clean of Jews, um, as -, in June 1941. [Pause]

11:06:46:19

Er, er still on that, er, I think the thing that upset me most was when I got the bank papers, er, relating to the, the closure of my mother's account when she was deported. They all spoke about her evacuation to the lands east and the term evacuation really got under my skin and I was furious and upset and it really, it really -, that was the thing that really bit.

11:07:27:05

Interviewer

I can understand why.

11:07:30:03

Francis Deutsch

Given the emotion association of the word evacuation, evacuee, er, we have from the war years, er, the -

11:07:42:13

Interviewer

It's all so inhuman isn't it?

11:07:44:16

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:07:53:15

Interviewer

Um, who looked after you when you came to England?

11:07:58:20

Francis Deutsch

Er, a lady my mother played bridge with was with a member of the Communist Party and so had to leave Austria in 1934 when the Christo-fascists took over, er, and she was a lecturer at Vienna university and concerned with the liberation of Austria politically after

11:08:35:00

and, er, very young, newly ordained Methodist minister. Was a keen pacifist. Wanted to do something. And um, he was prepared to offer a home to a -, for a few months which exactly suited my situation

11:08:43:14

and she made the offer to my mother and my mother, and my mother arranged for a place on the Kindertransport.

11:08:50:09

The young minister - er, I now refer to him as my foster father - we had a -, I'm very, very fortunate indeed. A lot of refugees have had a rough time with the people who were looking after them but I couldn't have been luckier.

11:09:08:11

Interviewer

Really? They made you feel loved and welcome

11:09:11:11

Francis Deutsch

Yes, very much so, and the three months became a lifetime. Um, his three children I regard as my half-sisters, all coming to birthday party. [*Weeps*]

11:09:23:01

Interviewer

Are they? On Saturday?

11:09:25:07

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:09:25:23

Interviewer

Oh how wonderful. So that was very healing for you after everything you'd been through?

11:09:32:03

Francis Deutsch

Extremely. That's what made me feel -, I was so accepted. That's what make, gave me this reaction of I am a new person. I am a Brit and, and -, and no feeling of being an alien or foreigner or anything like that.

11:09:51:12

Interviewer

What a wonderful family.

11:09:53:06

Francis Deutsch

Yes. Indeed.

11:09:55:03

Interviewer

And they are still part of your -, they are still your family?

11:09:58:04

Francis Deutsch

They are still family, indeed.

11:10:01:20

Interviewer

It's extraordinary, isn't it, because you lived through a period of such hatred and yet in so many ways you've spoken of such kindness?

11:10:13:03

Francis Deutsch

Yes, yes, and, and, and when they, they came to London in 1941-, no, he got a church in London in 1941, his wife was pregnant so she went to her parents and I went to another family who were equally kind and, er, with whose eldest son I'm still, still in contact today and he's somebody else who's coming. And, and I came to London in late '41 or early '42, er, to join up with the, the first family again. And, er, the children were born. We all lived in Greenwich.

11:11:00:02

Interviewer

It's lovely to hear after so much sadness your stories of so much healing in this country -

11:11:05:10

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:11:06:05

Interviewer

No wonder you feel so bonded and and connected to all of them.

11:11:10:14

Francis Deutsch

I hope so. Yes.

11:11:13:03

Interviewer

And they must have been very proud of what you ended up doing with your life?

11:11:17:19

Francis Deutsch

Er, I hope so. Er, we, we -, they were very non-judgmental. Absolutely lovely family. And, er, they did suggest that I seek an apprenticeship as a chef and I finished up a solicitor but *[laughs]*

11:11:39:

Interviewer

Close. Um, do you remember much of the Blitz?

11:11:45:07

Francis Deutsch

Yes indeed. It was a growing up experience. Er, I was with the second family when the numerous air raids happened on Bristol. And I was still there and we, she -the recollection is that I was -, the, the -, her children were evacuated to Wales. I was with -, she and I were -, went to the public shelter - air raid shelter - and, um, her husband was, um, fire watching or, as one did and after second or third raid, er, a lady in the shelter started to scream that I was old enough to help the men. There was a real row between these two, two ladies during which I slipped out and joined the man outside and, and I never went into an air raid shelter again, ever. Because at that -,the growing up concept was that when there weren't air raids there was beer, there were cigarettes, there was male talk, there was football teams. And that opened up a new world to me which -, from which I'd been sheltered in England. So, er, quite an important time.

11:13:20:21

Interviewer

How old were you when you met your wife?

11:13:24:12

Francis Deutsch

Oh God, '54. I got to work this out

11:13:29:04

Interviewer *[interrupting Interviewee]*

You don't need to -, it wasn't, it wasn't much later then?

11:13:33:11

Francis Deutsch

Oh much later - post-war - we met in Bristol, er, when she graduated -, after she had graduated. Sorry not -, we met in Hull I beg your pardon. We met in Hull. I was working there and, er, again for a Quaker who employed this other girl whom I met on the, on the boat, er, as well and Sheila came to Hull and, er, the two women shared a hou-, flat and that's how I met her.

11:14:04:08

Interviewer

Wonderful. And then you moved through your life. You moved through your career and you had your own family.

11:14:10:22

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:14:11:09

Interviewer

And how much of your experiences did you share with them as they were growing up - your children?

11:14:18:01

Francis Deutsch

Er, none then because I was in this rejecting mode and, er, the -, if the sort of -, my activities at all it was nuclear disarmament and, er, politics. I was a council candidate several times. Er, I did nurse a constituency for a year when the chap who got one better place was suspended and had to appeal to the Party conference to be reinstated, so for a year I was the prospective parliamentary candidate. And, um, they would think of that and going to concert but not of my origins till, oh the last ten – fifteen years but especially elder one, er, became very interested and they both came to Vienna for the unveiling of the first stone and, er, er she, she's really been very, very interested and has read about it and her son is here, er, listening to us and, um, er -, but no discussing of problems or situations were -, we're are just non [?] family and, er -

11:15:43:24

Interviewer

And now that you have started talking about it, do you find it easier or harder as you get older?

11:15:56:05

Francis Deutsch

Er, easier in the sense that it becomes almost routine, harder because as you think about it and prepare, and prepare, er, further recollections come forward. Recollections I've probably suppressed before that would be emotionally affective. I mean, er, I, I need to think about that. You're the first person who suggested that I who stressed contin-, that I become upset when people are kind not the oth-, not when nasty -, not when bad things happen.

11:16:38:09

Interviewer

But it's true isn't it?

11:16:39:16

Francis Deutsch

It is, absolutely, and, and I need to reflect on that. [*Chuckles*]

11:16:45:19

Interviewer

Had you noticed that before about yourself?

11:16:47:17

Francis Deutsch

No, no. It's a new insight.

11:16:54:20

Interviewer

And it's what you ended up being. Your whole career is kind.

11:16:59:00

Francis Deutsch

I presume so, yes.

11:17:03:23

Interviewer

[*Pause*] I hope that helped. It's not intended to be a therapy session.

11:17:10:24

Francis Deutsch [*laughing over Interviewer*]

We are not -, yeah we are not in the counsel -, counselling session but it is very - , it's an interesting thought.

11:17:17:18

Interviewer

And it was obvious to me. Mm, um, Francis we've kind of reached the end of your big story. We've gone through all the facts and so, um, what would be nice now is kind of to return to the beginning and to the general thoughts again. Um, and before we do that I would just like to , to ask you whether or not there's anything else you would like to say about your mother and your aunt in their honour. We've already spoken about them a bit but whether there's any other memories that you'd like to share with me about them?

11:17:57:17

Francis Deutsch

I think I stressed that the aunt was the sort of focal centre point of the family, so she felt all our emigrating probably more severely, er, than almost anyone else. Er, I know that from my aunt, her sister in the Argentine, who, who remained in correspondence with her till she left Vienna. [*Pause*] Er, regards my mother, no I think we've covered the key points. Er,

11:18:42:15

Interviewer

That's, that's fine. Um, just sometimes people want to say something further about somebody who they've lost just in order to honour them or in their memory, but if you have said everything you want to say that's fine.

11:18:59:18

Francis Deutsch

No I don't think I want -

11:19:01:18

Interviewer

That, that's fine, thank you. It must have been very emotional for you to lay the stones for both of them and very important.

11:19:07:18

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:19:08:07

Interviewer

And they deserve to have a memory somewhere in the world.

11:19:08:13

Francis Deutsch

Yes. Yes. Well, my mother has me and she's got children and grandchildren who have heard about her and read about her. But, as I say, the aunt didn't have anybody and, er, as I say my mother was a very good, very dutiful mother. A good mother in that sense and very, very warm and affectionate person so, er -

11:19:42:08

Interviewer

That's enough. Thank you. Um, when you reflect on your experiences - and what happened in that period of history - can you forgive?

11:19:55:12

Francis Deutsch

Of course. We must. As I say I, I emphasised forgiveness with the boys, with the neighbours, er, although putting it in that way sounds almost racist. Er, and certainly the conduct of the German state - and Austria to a lesser extent and very much later - er, it's very much an act of forgiveness. It's very much an act of contrition and their behaviour towards Israel. Their behaviour to the United -, voting at the United Nations. Er, from Merkel's attitude to the Syrians in the last few months. Er, no I -, one must forgive.

11:20:54:02

The ones who cannot be forgiven are dying off even faster than we are because they were older than we were.

11:21:03:11

Interviewer

Some people find it very hard to forgive, don't they?

11:21:06:04

Francis Deutsch

I -, yes, er, that is where I think at -, where I think my foster father, er, was very helpful. I was brought up a pacifist. And, er, so love, love, forgiveness, er, is very much was very much a fundamental thing, a given in my adolescence.

11:21:35:02

Interviewer

When we started this conversation you were, you were sure or you, you presumed that you wouldn't get emotional and you've become more emotional as we've discussed it.

11:21:47:17

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:21:48:07

Interviewer

Are you OK about that?

11:21:49:21

Francis Deutsch

Yes, fine. Yes.

11:21:50:13

Interviewer

Yeah, I'm sorry if I've upset you.

11:21:51:18

Francis Deutsch

I've recovered.

11:21:54:00

Interviewer

You've recovered. Well, it's a very important part of healing isn't it to be able to, to be emotional?

11:21:57:04

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:21:58:03

Interviewer

the main bulk of the interview is finished and how do you feel now that it is?

11:22:04:23

Francis Deutsch

I'm hoping it'll be useful. Er, I'm thinking ahead sort of, er, you're providing archive of quality material, and I'm sort of thinking 20, 30, 40 years ahead when people write PhDs about the middle -, what is no longer modern history but mid period history: 19th and 20th century. I can see them considering the French Revolution to the end of World War Two as being, er, a, a, as being a period that is taught as such and dare I hope that these conversations and various attitudes you must be getting from people will serve a useful purpose.

11:22:59:12

Interviewer

Absolutely. And that's the whole premise of, of this project is to record the voices that we - at one point - won't be able to hear anymore.

11:23:09:00

Francis Deutsch

Yes.

11:23:09:23

Interviewer

Um, so again that opportunity to, to issue a warning or give a message or, you've already given me an answer so you don't have to again but if there is a message for future generations that you may want to say something else after the interview that you've given?

11:23:39:14

Francis Deutsch

[*Pause*] Perhaps this is current politics, but I hope that it will contribute towards, er, nations coming together and, er, nation state become increasingly less important and to become far better integrated national-, nationally and culturally and ethnically and that this contributes showing a section of a racial group reaching out to others.

[Cut for direction]

11:24:18:08

Interviewer

in preparation for this was there anything that you, you wanted to get across that you don't feel you've had a chance to yet?

11:24:27:06

Francis Deutsch

I, I wanted to emphasise the -, so much goodness there was. [*Pause*] When I speak of the garrulous porter, I met a woman who moved to the house in 1944 or

45 and she tells me he was still garrulous and she was as scared of him as I was so, er, but he protected the people in his hou-. No doubt he was well rewarded but he did protect the people in the house. Er, there was a -, I mentioned the ambulance men. I mentioned the women in Holland. I've mentioned my family. I'm sure there...and the other people who helped me. I'm sure I have lots of other people I should mention as being kind and good and helpful. Yes probably my first, my first post-war boss who took that, that girl I met on the boat – Irene - and, um, me and gave us opportunities to qualify as lawyers. She didn't, I did. But, er, he did it also as a Quaker pacifist war resistor and, um, yeah I think that's

-

11:25:54:04

Interviewer

Yeah, to emphasise the kindness that you've been shown as well which has come across very, very clearly in the testimony that you've given, so thank you very much. Thank you.

11:26:05:03

Francis Deutsch [*over the end of Natasha*]

Thank you.

- END OF INTERVIEW -

ARTEFACTS

ARTEFACT 1: scan of a photo of his father's four sisters, 'taken before 1890'

11:26:06:20

Francis Deutsch

This is the oldest photograph I have of my [...] my immediate family. [...] it features my father's four sisters. He was the youngest. It was taken before 1890 because that was when he was born and he's obviously not in the photograph. [...] To show what happened to a family, eh, the eldest finished up in Argentina. The second next to her, [...] her husband [...] helped the Hungarian sugar industry almost through the war so much so that she was allowed to cross Germany and go to Switzerland. [...]The next one joined her son who was a doctor in the United States. And the youngest one [...] finished up in the camps.

ARTEFACT 2: scan of a photograph of his father taken in 1917

11:26:53:12

Francis Deutsch

This is a photograph of my father taken during World War One but wearing his civilian uniform. To judge from the posture, [...] he has obviously just been awarded a medal. The inscription and the handwriting I don't recognise. But it was certainly period. It says, [...] that this was taken in 1917. Uh, it's one of two

photographs my father had taken as an officer.

ARTEFACT 3: scan of a photograph of the Viennese Jewish school he attended in 1939

11:27:23:21

Francis Deutsch

This is the class of the Jewish School, a collective school they were called, eh, in my last year in Vienna, it's a school year so date '39, eh, eh, and those were the boys that were left. They had been emigrating right throughout the year. The class was much bigger at the beginning. There are roughly thirty boys in that, eh, in this photo, which meant the class must have been forty to fifty when it started. Eh there was a joke in Austria, that eh, Jews had all the best teachers because the teachers were all Jewish and I can see my uh, my eh, form master's signature that chap in the middle of the photograph, Dr [*Kurtig?*] [...] he signed it on the back.

ARTEFACT 4: scan of his mother's passport photograph

11:28:13:03

Francis Deutsch

This is my mother's passport photograph. It was taken on [...] the 8th of July, and I think I must have come in July, you have now discovered it. [...] on the 8th of July 1939. And uh, and I've got this copy because I was about to leave. [...] I know I left on the 11th of whichever month and now I see that is July, it's [...] very much a formal photograph.

ARTEFACT 5: scan of a photograph of Francis with the family who adopted him

11:28:39:24

Francis Deutsch

This is my English family with me, taken in 1949. I think I must have been home on leave [...]. it was taken in the garden of the manse and shows my foster parents, their three children and, uh, his mother: grandma we all called her.

11:29:02:21

Francis Deutsch iv

These are the only photographs which are not family. Er, this is my scout troop. It was not an explicitly Jewish troop, but eh, troop was entirely made up of Jewish boys. It was secular in that sense, because Austrian scouts normally Catholic. Eh, I treasure it.

ARTEFACT 6: scan of the founder of the Boy Scout troop to which Francis belonged

Francis Deutsch o/o/v

It shows the founder of the [...] new boys scout unit in one

ARTEFACT 7: scan of a photograph of Francis's scout troop
Francis Deutsch o/o/v

and the troop to which I belonged, including me and the other, with the scout master in the middle and the troop leader, whose handy work these photographs are, immediately underneath him. [...] I treasure it very much because the wording on it says, 'wir bleiben weisammen', 'we remain together', in other words we had, we were determined to carry on, and come back to re-establish ourselves. We were not going to be dumbed down, [...], indeed. The Nazis have gone, we had a reunion in the 1960s, Imperial College in London, to which people came from the United States, from Australia, halfway round the Universe. It was a great occasion.