
(Beginn Band 1 von 2)

Question: we'll start now...At first I would like to start with a question about your family. Can you tell me about them?

Answer: Well, my father, his name was *Julius*, but you know, *Deutschkreutz* used to belong to the Hungarian authority, and nobody called him *Julius*, he was called *Gyula*, you know I think that's the Hungarian translation. He was born in *Deutschkreutz*. My mother's name was *Resa*¹, she was also from *Deutschkreutz*.

Q: And what was their profession?

A: My father was a baker, my mother had no profession...

Q: She did the household...

A: The house, yes.

Q: When were you born?

A: Me, yes? I'm not one of those ladies who (???)². I was born in...6th of February 1928.

Q: So you went to school in *Deutschkreutz*?

A: I went...we had a lady named *Tante Hedwig*, she had a kind of kindergarten. And when there were school holidays, all the children used to go there. And I went to a...Jewish *Volksschule*. I think there were three schools, after eleven...the *Hochschule*, I think, was protestant. And across the road, there was a catholic school. I don't know where the girls went, you know, I think they probably went to a convent. That is something I am not aware of.

Q: Do you remember the house where you used to live? Can you describe it?

A: Very clearly. Well, the houses would...you had the street level, and quite a lot of the houses were built...you had to go down one step. You went to the baker shop there. Next to it, there was a...what is it called...living room plus a bedroom, yes. From there, there was a big hall. The one door led to the bakery, the other one, went to the park where the oven was, you know where they baked. Then you had some stairs going up to the attic, which was semi-bedroom, and part of it was used...but I'll come to that later. They used to hang up grapes that they brought. I don't know if your familiar with Jewish holidays, yes? You heard of *pessach*, passover, right? My father was baking mazzes³, so we used to take to all the neighbours. And the ones who had vineyards, when they collected the wine, they used to bring baskets of grapes. But you can't keep them. So I remember...they used to be strung up on rafters, and they were kept for a few months. Funny thing to talk of the grapes...In the hall, when you came in, there was a door, trapdoor...we used to keep apples in there, over the winter. You know, when you opened the door, it was full of apples. That was about where we lived. Let's see...there were two houses together next door to us. There was a...it was the shop. But they all had throughroads, you know? Next to us, going down, I forgot his name, he was...what do you call a *Spengler*? I just try to...I find now that I lose words, sign of old age. Then, there were two sisters...three. They were dressmakers, and further down, there was, now can I describe it? Like a bit of a yard, and yet not a yard. It had wild wine growing there, and all the kids used to play there. Then there was (???)⁴, and then this way there was a shop, they sold stockings. Opposite them, on the other side, was another baker...a Jewish baker. So, I'm beginning to forget the names...primitive, it was very, there was a...

(Türglocke läutet)

¹ Name nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

² leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

³ Wort nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

⁴ Wort nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

A: ...there was some, like (???)⁵ and they were use to stuff the geese, to give them to eat, cruel, but...I don't know if you know what I'm talking about. Then, the...I've got to (???)⁶ in English, the one who made the pots and pans. He had a yard with pigs, he kept his pigs there. And first down opposite us, there was a house with a first floor. She was a widow, and I think she had two daughters (???)⁷. Underneath that, there was a...a couple, quite elderly...maybe they just appeared to me, because I was a child. He was a (???)⁸. They had a daughter, *Pauline*. We used to be very good friends till Hitler came, and overnight she wouldn't talk to me. Funny enough, I remember when I was back, I asked somebody if anybody knew what happened to her. I was told she went to (???)⁹. That'll give you roughly, I mean I can describe to you what was opposite as well. On the left, not far, there was a...a pump, let's say, to draw water...a well, yes? Everybody drew water, but for drinking, there was very well known a *Quellenwasser*, yes, and a man used to go out or whoever, I can't remember that, and he brought this spring water and people bought it of him. That was for drinking. To the right, there was a grocer...a little bit like a supermarket, come to think of it. Not a Jewish shop, that one. They had fruit and groceries, but you know, people sold all kinds of things.

Q: So next to your house lived your friend *Pauline*, and she was not Jewish?

A: She lived on one side, and she was not Jewish.

Q: That means that Jewish and not-Jewish families had social contacts?

A: Oh yes, oh yes. Very much so. Well, I remember our rabbi and the padre walking up and down, talking, whatever they discussed, you know...

Q: Did you ever feel anti-Semitism in any way before 1938?

A: No. I think I had a very happy childhood, and a very normal one, you know? There was, I can't remember any unpleasant incidents. The school and play, that was the life of the children. Well, it's different now, you've television, you've all the other things. And, of course that changed by the *Anschluss*.

Q: Your friend *Pauline*, there were no controversies between your families?

A: No, the relationship was normal. But I'll tell you, very soon after...it must have been a few days, they changed overnight. I remember, I'll always remember...you know we used to have shutters, iron shutters on the doors. And I remember my father...there was a bang on the door, taking us all and putting us all in the corner, yes. And, we could hear these rocks being thrown onto the shutters...stones at the door. And after it stopped, father said "One more, and it would have jumped open", you know? I used to stay a lot with my grandmother, because her son used to go to Vienna a lot, and I remember very clearly...I went to my grandmother's house, and I walked into the hallway, and the door to the front room was open...and I saw all the cupboards had been emptied out. My grandmother stood in the hall, she was an old lady, must have been about my age maybe. And she stood very upright and I looked in...a couple a men there. I remember the name of the one, because I think he was in charge, and he was beating my uncle. My grandmother never moved, she stood there like a statue. And then they left, and my grandmother said "*Geh nach Haus, Kind, geh nach Haus!*" That was there. And then I remember one night, why do I remember it, because I was just thinking about what I told you what somebody said to me. There were a couple of coaches, and that was to make *Deutschkreutz "judenrein"*, all the Jews had to go, I don't remember that...An aunt of mine was sitting next to me, and she was sick she whole way. And I remember when we arrived in Vienna, cause you know, there was no street lights going on the...suddenly I saw all this lights, and my father must have been in Vienna before, because we went to a...it used to be, one part used to be a shop I think, but I'm almost sure, and there were three rooms, *Vorzimmer, Toilette*, no bathroom. My grandmother stayed in, what you say in Vienna "*Zimmer-Küche-Kabinet*", and my father's sister, her husband and her son, stayed in another room. Some of us children were boarded out, because there were five of us and my parents. Every Friday, all the couples, Jewish couples from *Deutschkreutz*, had to go to the *Rossauer Lände*,

⁵ Wort nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

⁶ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁷ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁸ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁹ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

and (???)¹⁰...And there were two interview rooms. The one was a very decent fellow, he quickly asked the (???)¹¹ of the people, but our friend *Koch*, that was his name, he used to call a couple in, and then they had to watch while he drank. My father was quite a fantastic person. When he saw what had happened, he pleaded a commotion. Of course, he was called in, and he was there quite a long time. When he saw there's nobody else there, he didn't answer back. How do I know about it? Because people came in to thank him, you know, because we got a new...Somebody asked him "Didn't it hurt you when he hit you?" And he said "Yes, at first, I saw stars, but afterwards I couldn't feel anything anymore", you know? I remember an uncle of mine coming in with blood running out of his ears from the beating...I, let's see...I was, the housewife, the concierge, she had a granddaughter, I think daughter as well, but the granddaughter...she was I think two or three years older than me. Funny enough, we became friends. She had on her a swastika, and I remember we went, I think it was (???)¹²...and we were going, and there were, I don't know how many, four, five teenagers, boys and girls, mainly girls, and there was a Jewish boy there. And they were not been very nice to him. I went up and...and I told him "Geh!" So one of the girls started out on me "How dare you!", you know. I said "So what?" I don't know exactly how the conversation came when she said "*Mein Vater ist ein...*" how many, I was telling this story the other day to my sister-in-law...a *Gruppenführer*! So I said "My father is an *Obergruppenführer*!" And they all dispersed, and we went away, she said to me "Please, don't ever do that again" You know, I can get...(???)¹³ I was very grateful to her for (???)¹⁴ me up. I went back to Vienna, yes, my mother was there of course. I'm jumping, because I haven't told you about coming to England, but when that story came out about the Exodus, I decided that I was going to go to Israel, to become a soldier. But the point I wanted to make...Yes, all the way back, when I came back to England, I stopped off in Vienna, and I went to the house where we lived. And I saw the daughter of the old lady, you know, the mother of...and I said to her "Tell me, what happened?" So, she said, I can still hear it clearly in my mind, she said "One day, the SA, or the SS, I don't know which, came in and they made the house judenrein". And then she spoke with great contempt "They were all screaming and shouting...*die haben alle so geschrien, ja?*"...not understandable...Anyway, I came back to England.

Q: When was this, was it after 1945?

A: Yes, it must have been...oh, I'm bad with years, when was Israel...when was the War of Independence?

Q: of Israel? After 1948...

A: Yes, it must have been...must have been on the way back.

Q: Were they any people in *Deutschkreutz* who helped your family before you had to go to Vienna?

A: I'll tell you who helped us. My grandmother had a, she was a Croatian, I think, a maid, yes, I don't know how long she was with my grandmother, but when my mother married, she decided that she wanted to go with her...*Agnes*. She was family, I'll tell you. She used to tell my mother what to do, she shouted at us if we didn't say our prayers, and yet she was a very...she also had a rosary, and...do you know what I mean, very strict with us. She used to come to Vienna occasionally, and she used to bring a few eggs and some things. But she didn't live very long after, and yet she was...I remember her, I don't know how old she was, she must have been getting old. She didn't have one white hair, this big woman, she had on this kittle, you know...And I used to go with her in the morning. We had a basket on our back, and we used to go into outlying villages, to the (???)¹⁵. She used to tell me all kinds of stories as we walked along. Funny that she never sat down to...you know what she lived on? A big pot of coffee and fresh rolls, that was what she lived on, from what I know. She used to go every few months, she had a house...*Nikitsch*, you know where *Nikitsch* is? She had a house there, she had to go ever so often to air it. We used to say "*Agnes*, you've got your own house, why do you want to stay here and be bothered with us?"

¹⁰ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹¹ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹² Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹³ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹⁴ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹⁵ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

Q: How soon after the *Anschluss* did you have to go to Vienna?

A: Yes, you're asking an impossible question. I can't...I'm not good on dates. Maybe a historian could know on which day *Deutschkreutz* became *judenrein*.

Q: I don't know exactly, but on the 12th of March 1938 was the so called *Anschluss*, and I know it from *Eisenstadt*, that three days after the Gestapo came and took the people with them...

A: It was two or three days, not weeks, but I do not really know. I'll be honest with you, except that I remember things like that, I'm hopeless, no...

Q: How long did you stay in Vienna?

A: I stayed in Vienna till, just before...I think the 21st of December. Then I came with the *Kindertransport*, you've heard of that, haven't you? My sister and my oldest brother came before us, why do I remember it? I remember I slept with my grandmother that night, I don't know why, and quite late, I sneaked out, you know, went through my aunt's room. I went to the door, and there was my father. I've never heard a man cry, and definitely not my father. He was a quite tough person, and my mother was standing (???)¹⁶. And I didn't go in, I just sneaked back again, but it was a...one of the unpleasantest, unhappiest memories I've got. And, well, I remember we came to Holland on the train, to Rotterdam I think it was, and we came on the boat, and we arrived in England in Victoria, I think it was. I remember all the children, it must have been more than a hundred, all the station, all this kids...And finally, I don't if you ever saw an old penny, they are about that big and made of bronze, yes...and Dr. Schönfeld¹⁷, he arranged for the children to come, to must have heard of him maybe. And I met with him and the station master, they walked along the long row of children and they stopped by every child until he came near to us, you know what, and he gave every child a penny. We didn't know what was a penny. And then we got to the place, not terrible far from here, and there we were distributed, you know. The host families, some people came and took children. I ended up in a hostel in Notting Hill. Funny, you know the building, the school my kids went to, it was pulled down...the houses. There were anything from eleven to thirty girls, and when I was...I finished school with fourteen, and I went to work in a dress factory. I hated it, I couldn't...couldn't get on with it. I decided I was going to change my job, change my place. That's where I learned to smoke...they used to offer me cigarettes, I didn't smoke, but...and later I can't accept without returning...and that's how it started. After that, I took a job in Gates¹⁸, you wouldn't know where that is...I had a cousin here...he was interned, you know...anybody who was foreign...I came down in the holidays. I decided...so about 15 I must have been, I went to visit somebody from *Deutschkreutz*, and we talked. Her husband was in the army, and she said "I can't manage on the Army pay, I've got to get myself a place and do Bed & Breakfast or something" So, I said to her...you think I could have the flat, three rooms and the kitchen. Bathroom and toilet were shared, downstairs on the first floor. When...she never used the bathroom (???)¹⁹, so we had to go to a public bath. She said, "maybe she's a little young, but listen, this is the landlord". I remember I dressed myself and made my hair to look older. (???)²⁰ And I went to her and said the flat becoming empty, and think I can have it. Yes, if you give a month in advance. They must have thought I was eighteen. So I said alright, I give you a month, I have to go back to...(???)²¹ It's a very involved story, because my brother and my sister ended up in Ireland, they could only come either in the army or as a student. My sister came as a an ATS...you know like soldiers, but ladies. Proper soldiers, yes. And my brother came as a student. Funny enough, he was, he went to a college where I was the au-pair, and I know one day when I came home, some person laughed about. I had been to the park with some of the children, and there was this woman soldier, you know. Then she said "Hello", "Hello, don't you recognize me?" No...this was three or four years probably after...When we left, she was skinny like a...big glasses...this girl I saw, no glasses...she was my sister. When I went back to give notice, my brother said "You can't stay in the place, the other two brothers are in the house" So I said that I would come back with you. So we took the flat. She had to come home on leave. My one brother was a year

¹⁶ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

¹⁷ nicht sicher wegen Namen, Anm. AP

¹⁸ nicht sicher wegen Namen, Anm. AP

¹⁹ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²⁰ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²¹ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

older than me, he was a worker, he was together with my youngest brother. He came also to live in this flat, and my youngest brother, he only had a few months to go... So, we got together.

Q: So you had three brothers and a sister?

A: With my brother it was the same story. He was in this boy's hostel in (???)²², and the first way to see him...and I was in the hall, he just came down the stairs. "Hello" who's talking to me...he had...you know, his voice, when I left, he was a kid...suddenly, there was this deep voice. Anyway, he was working as a baker, in a very good bakery. He was...when he was in London, he used to change jobs a lot, so that he could learn...he went to night school, he went to courses.

Q: Did you have contacts with your parents after you came to London?

A: Not while we were in London, only in the hostel, we used to get once a week pocket money to write home. And we got letters through the war, every so often, from the Red Cross. My sister stayed with the family. We were prepared to take my parents...they were slow because my grandmother, you know. But in the end, it was arranged, and then the war broke out, and that was that. I knew where they died...they died in the *Lubliner Ghetto*, you must have heard of it. My goodness, I'm jumping from one thing to the other. You've woken up a lot of memories. Ask a question, maybe that will give me a direction.

Q: So you were in London during your first years here?

A: No, I was here only for a couple of weeks. Then I went into the hostel. It is outside London, in Nottingham.

Q: Were you evacuated when the war broke out?

A: Was I evacuated? Yes.

Q: How did you experience the years of war and the German air raids, the so called "blitz"?

A: Well, I was still in the school. The school was evacuated, the castle, all the girls. But when I was in London, I wasn't a very peculiar child. I was a bit scared, I was a bit naïve...*blöd*...we looked out of the window and watched the dogfights²³. The (???)²⁴, they were the worst, you know, the pilotless planes, the V1, the V2. I remember I...on a Thursday, after work, you know, I used to prepare for Shabbat. And it was pretty late, it must have been half past one or two o'clock, it was warm. And all of a sudden I was thrown from the draft. There was one (???)²⁵ that fell opposite our house, a couple of streets away, but there was nothing between. And, I remember going on the bus from work, and everybody dived under the seat, because it had stopped. The war, well...there was rationing. I kept house for my brothers and sisters, and we used to have on Friday night, on Shabbat...a lot of refugee children used to come to our house. That was the war.

Q: After the war, you went to Israel. When did you go, and how did you plan your emigration?

A: I'll tell you how that came about. This was after the war, and I could see...I could not get any...all were looking for relations, yes. And when this came up with the Exodus, I decided I've got to do my part. I'll tell you a funny thing. When I first started looking for my parents...another list, another list, another list...couldn't find them. You see, in *Burgenland*, in *Deutschkreutz* rather, it was a religious community, and after I found no sign of my parents, I turned irreligious. I said "What kind of a God can watch these things?" Anyway, I went to Israel, and I came back...came back very young ...my brother was coming with me, he wasn't having it that go for myself...my oldest brother, he stayed there. Now the funny thing was, I went because I wanted to fight...I had three or four aunts living there. So when I came, they told me they were quite shocked..."a religious girl going to the army, no!" And, I was a coward that didn't want to offend them or to upset them, so I didn't tell them I'm no longer religious. I

²² leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²³ dogfight – Luftkampf zwischen Flugzeugen mit dem Ziel, sich gegenseitig abzuschießen

²⁴ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²⁵ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

remember going in front of the (???)²⁶ court, yes, and...I was asked, you know, whether I know laws, whether I know....whether I even know what I was talking about. Anyway, I got examined, it wasn't very hard...my brother became a soldier. I won't go into my personal (???)²⁷, let it be, I decided I was coming back. You ask, because my thoughts run away with me...

Q: So, you came to Israel just before 1948, and you left after '48?

A: After two years, I think. I think I was there for two years.

Q: Why did you only stay for this short time?

A: Yes, I...but please, if you ask me specific dates, I am hopeless...

Q: So you came back to England, to London. Was it like a new beginning for you?

A: No, no, it was like a continuation. England was very much my home. I'd gone to school here, I'd gone to work here, I had friends here...of course, when I came back, I was still a...what they called it...an (???)²⁸ alien. How did I come to be in Vienna? I had to wait there to get permission for me to re-enter...when I came back, I had to get a new identity card, and a work permit...

Q: You only stayed in Vienna for a short time, like for one day?

A: No, I stayed there, I think about ten, then I got the...permit, but I didn't move out of my...where I had a room, because I felt that it had too many bad memories. I passed...in the *Malzgasse* there was a police station, yes...I remember they were all locked up there. (???)²⁹...coffee, *schwarzen Kaffee* and bread twice a day. Now, it had bad memories, I didn't want to often meet the others. People like to remember pleasant things...

Q: You came back to London, where did you start to work...or more generally, what was your profession?

A: My profession after that, believe it or not, was machinery. I worked hand bags, shopping bags, other things. I worked for a couple with no children. They did very glamorous underwear, and they taught me...no, that was before, you see. I'm mixing it up because I remember I did fire watching, so that must have been during wartime. And they had no children, and they wanted to train me, and they taught me so I should...but I said "no, I got brothers and...I can't" When I came back, I decided...when I was in school here, every morning we had assembly, yes, and every school had a motto. Now our motto has been "*I must be very much a guiding light of me*"³⁰ It as...I think it's part of a song, but I'm not positive..."whatever you hand find it to do, do it with all your might" So I decided, I was looking for a job...there was a job going for a machinist for shopping bags. You know, before your time, plastic was just in its infancy, and we used it unless you foiled it. We used to cut it, it was not good. Anyway, I became a very good machinist. I became such a good machinist that the people used to ask me to come and work with them. And in the end, I worked with piecework, I could make my own price practically. Yes, piecework. You know, you got so much (???)³¹... Well, I had to keep a house, you know, pay the rent, shop, cook, and while I was still working, I worked in one place, and that was funny. Well the boss came also from *Deutschkreutz*, and he had a tenant first floor. The father, the husband I think was born in Czechoslovakia, and the wife was from *Mattersdorf*. And they were saying, they've got a son, he was in Israel in the army, he was married, he was divorced, he was still very young. Didn't I know somebody suitable for him? You know, when people...And it was funny actually. We had a mutual friend, when we were in Vienna, a few doors away was another family. And they were acquainted with the landlord. I was acquainted to the girls, we used to play together, and what happened? I was very fond of children, let's say like this. I used to pick up this acquaintance, mutual acquaintance. She had a boy and a girl, and there was a park not far from us. So on Sunday afternoon, I used to pick them up and we went to the park. I took with them another friend's baby, and it was a sort of a ritual.

²⁶ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²⁷ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²⁸ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

²⁹ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

³⁰ Satz nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

³¹ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

And they, funnily, the girl made me aware that I got the habit to say "You know, you know" I wasn't aware of it, come to think of it now. Well, sometimes she used to say "oh, stop for supper"³², you know. There, I'm saying it now, but that's alright. It seems she invited him for supper. He didn't know it, I didn't know, and I think I was helping her in the kitchen. The husband must have opened the door. They lived in the basement. I remember when he came in, practically touched (???)³³. And he spoke to the husband, I was in the kitchen with the wife. And then we had supper, and then he said "Can I take you home? I've got a motorbike!", I said "Alright, I've never been on a motorbike before" And he had to shown off, when he went around the corners, you know, practically touching the ground. And we even met again, he used to (???)³⁴ me terribly, you know. I was very opiniated, you know. I've got my (???)³⁵ and funny, how do you say like "keep myself", cause we sat there not so long ago, not long before...I said "tell me, how did you propose to me, when did you propose to me?" He said "You're married?", he said "that's not in my mind, how or when" We got married, and in Winter my sister had gotten married, my brother...my youngest brother died. You know, sometimes you have an audience, they invited an audience. And we applied for tickets, "Life with the lions", it was a weekly, and my youngest brother couldn't come, he had to call. You know, sometimes you get a premonition, after we were coming home, I said to my sister "There's something wrong with Harry!" "Ah, du bist a Hex, you always say...", you know...anyway. The one brother went home, we dropped him, and when I got home, there was a phone call that they had taken my youngest brother to hospital, which I phoned up. And they wouldn't give me information, and I said "Look, I'm the sister, please tell me what's happening!" So she told me and said that he was dead on arrival. What happened? You know that these antique cookers you used to cook eggs, I don't know if you ever saw pictures of them, and you had to put money in the meter, and it seems it blew out...I don't know, the flame blew out...he couldn't smell it, he had a cold...and he was sleeping, and died in his sleep. And that was that. My other brother...that I don't want to go into, because...I'm a bit wary of that, because I've got a cousin by the same name, and...terrible.

(Ende Band 1 von 2)

³² nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

³³ leider nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

³⁴ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

³⁵ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP