FOUR GERMAN JEWS REMEMBER THE 20TH CENTURY

THE CENTROPA ARCHIVE

four German Jews tell their stories

Although Centropa conducted more than twelve hundred interviews in fifteen countries during our decade of gathering oral histories (2000–2009), we never carried out our project in Germany itself. We did, however, interview four people who spent their childhood there.

Our chief interviewer in Vienna is Tanja Eckstein, and in 2002 Tanja met with Rosa Rosenstein, who, like Tanja, had been born in Berlin. Over the course of five visits, in an apartment thick with cigarette smoke, the ninety-six year old Rosa Rosenstein (born 25 December 1907) painted a picture of growing up in the poor Jewish quarter of Berlin, raising her family there, and then surviving the war in Budapest. She and her second husband moved to Vienna in 1947.

In 2008, in a prim suburb in north Tel Aviv, Tanja knocked on the door of the diminutive, elegantly clad Hillel Kempler. Mr Kempler (born 26 October 1925), also his mid-nineties, still maintained his prim suburban house, tended the plants and flowers in his garden, and shared with Tanja a remarkable story of growing up in Berlin, where he lived only one street away from Rosa Rosenstein. He told of his family's harrowing escape to mandate Palestine as if it were yesterday.

A year later, Tanja met with Erna Goldmann (born 22 December 1917) in an assisted living facility in Tel Aviv. They spoke every afternoon for four days and Erna Goldmann spoke of her childhood in Frankfurt, her Zionist youth club, and about her grandfather who was sure that being a First World War veteran would protect him from the Nazis. Our partners at the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt and the mayor's office made this interview possible.

With the support of the United States Embassy in Vienna in May 2006, and then-ambassador Susan McCaw, we at Centropa held a thank-you event for the elderly Austrian Jews we interviewed over the years, and some seventy-five of them showed up. They immediately asked: can we do this next month? We have been doing just that: meeting with our Holocaust survivors every month over the decade since.

Not surprisingly, by 2016 our group has grown considerably smaller, and we all miss being regaled with the stories of Herbert Lewin (born 1917), who grew up in a small town in East Prussia, emigrated to mandate Palestine, and made his way, postwar, to Vienna. Even though Herbert Lewin was legally blind, until he was ninety-three he never missed a Café Centropa event.

Tanja Eckstein (standing) at Cafe Centropa in 2016.

In the following pages, the interviews with Erna Goldmann, Hillel Kempler, Rosa Rosenstein, and Herbert Lewin have been edited by Lauren Granite and Dominique Cottee. Each of them looks back at their lives and shares with us stories of a world that exists no more, about how they managed to escape the fate that had been written for them, and how they rebuilt their lives in the decades after.

ERNA GOLDMAN

Tel Aviv, Israel

Erna Goldmann, born in Frankfurt am Main in 1917, was interviewed by Tanja Eckstein in Tel Aviv in August 2010.

I never got to know my maternal grandmother. Her name was Eva [Hebrew: Chava] Rapp. When I was born, she had already died. My Jewish name is also Chava; I was named after my grandmother. My grandparents had four children: my mother Rosa—people called her Rosi—and three sons. All the children were born in Frankfurt.

My maternal grandfather's name was Michael Rapp. In Frankfurt, we lived together with him at Eschenheimer Anlage 30. Eschenheimer Anlage was a huge complex—there were houses to the right and to the left, and the street between them was called Eschenheimer Anlage. At it's beginning, there was the Eschenheimer Tower landmark and the oldest building in Frankfurt. The house we lived in belonged to my grandfather. It had three floors. On the lowest floor, a doctor lived with his family; my grandfather occupied the middle floor and we lived on the second floor. There were also rooms for the service staff in the attic.

My grandfather was a tall, handsome man. Supposedly, he was very well known in Frankfurt. They told me that he had a coffee import company. Until inflation set in in 1923, he was very wealthy, but then he lost a lot of money. But when I think back, we still had a good life. We had a cook and housekeepers—and a seven-bedroom apartment. The way I knew him, he didn't do anything. He was sitting at home at his desk, where he read newspapers and wrote letters every morning. That is the only thing I remember.

My grandfather was religious. He only ate kosher food [followed Jewish dietary laws] and didn't drive on Shabbat [Hebrew: Sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday]. He kept all holy days and went to the synagogue regularly. My father and my grandfather went to the synagogue together. But my grandfather also bought a Christmas tree for our non-Jewish staff, organized presents, and lit candles. I remember that, I saw it. I was a child, and something like that always looks beautiful and impressive. But otherwise we didn't have anything to do with Christian holidays.

My grandfather's life ended tragically. He didn't manage to get out of Germany. My brother, my mother, and I had already been gone. He had to give up his house and lived in a Jewish hotel. When the hotel was Aryanized and the owner deported, a Christian family hid him in Frankfurt. I don't know when he died, but I know he didn't die in a concentration camp. But he was alone, without his family.

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim) and her family at the beach. From left to right: her aunt Flora, her grandfather Michael, and Erna. Katwijk, the Netherlands, 1933.

My father's parents came from Worms [Germany]. Their name was Guggenheim. I never got to know them, even though they had become fairly old. I don't know, why I didn't know them, why they never came to visit us. My parents went to visit them; that I know.

I don't know exactly where my parents got to know each other, but I know that it was—as it was common at that time—an arranged marriage. There were no youth movements, where young people could have gotten to know each other. My parents got married in 1903 or 1904.

My father was a corn merchant. He took over the business from his father. He had two or three employees at the office. I remember that I visited him at the office when I was a child. There were no typewriters yet, only big books and inkbottles. They wrote in Sütterlin script back then. My god, that was such a long time ago!

We kept a kosher household. There were few kosher butchers in Frankfurt, even though there were many Jews. But Frankfurt was not a big city back then, and it wasn't as nice at it is today. We celebrated Shabbat each Friday. They cooked in the morning and warmed it up later. We used to light candles at Chanukah [Festival of Lights, celebrated for 8 days in winter] and at Yom Kippur [day of atonement] my father spent the whole day at the synagogue. My mother wasn't there all day, but she also fasted until the evening. My brothers did not go to the synagogue at all. They were good Jews, but they were not religious.

I continued to celebrate Shabbat later with my family, [after I married]. We thought that this was a nice evening. We also celebrated Chanukah. We lit the candles and gave presents to the children. It doesn't have anything to do with religion, though; we just thought it was homey. We celebrated all the high holidays. My husband led the Passover seder [ritual marking the beginning of Passover that tells the story of the ancient Israelite exodus from Egypt]; he liked to do it and he did a good job, and we used to invite a lot of friends and children. We spent a lot of time preparing for these evenings, and we really looked forward to them.

My oldest brother Karl was twelve years older than me; he was born on January 12, 1906. My brother Paul was seven years older than me; he was born on April 18, 1910. I was born on December 22, 1917, in our house in Frankfurt. Back then everybody was born at home, and not at the hospital. "My dear granddaughter Erna Guggenheim was born during the night of December 21–22, 1917"—that is what my grandfather noted in our Tefillah [Hebrew: family register].

My mother was a tall, blonde, respectable woman. She was a loving mother. When I was young, she often kissed me, but when I entered puberty, a certain distance developed. I think that this is perfectly normal. My father was crazy about me: a little baby daughter, after two sons. That always makes parents happy, doesn't it?

My mother often said—I still hear her—"Oh, how your brothers spoil you!" I had a great relationship with my brothers. They did spoil me. Karl studied medicine at different universities; in Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, and every time he visited us in Frankfurt, he took me out to Café Laumer at 67 Bockenheimer Landstraße. That was really something special. There were not a lot of cafés in Frankfurt at that time, and Café Laumer was a very famous one; it still exists today. I was always very proud when my brother took me there.

My parents did not go to the theater very often, but sometimes they went to see concerts and they often invited guests. We only had Jewish friends and acquaintances. My mother attended a Jewish girls' boarding school, where she was taught home economics. She had made many friends back then and still spent a lot of time

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim) in front of her childhood home. Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1922.

with them. She talked to them on the phone in the morning, and then they went for a walk together. My father worked all day. At the most, he read the newspaper in the evening.

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim)'s older brother, Paul. Delft, the Netherlands, 1933.

Until 1929, we had a good time. But after 1929—when I was 12 years old—the economic crisis had completely changed our lives. Our store did not generate sufficient profit. First, we remodeled our apartment: from a 7-bedroom into a 3-bedroom apartment. Even today, after decades, I still admire my mother, how she could take all this. She was very realistic.

I went to a Jewish school together with my friends. I attended the Samson Raphael Hirsch School, which was named after a famous rabbi. It had been modern in our circle to send the kids to a Jewish school for the first four years, and then to a Christian school, so that they would learn as much as possible. But in my days that was not the case anymore. We were already approaching the Nazi era. So, I didn't go to a different school after the first four years. I attended the Samson Raphael Hirsch School for 10 years. I liked languages, but I was not a good student. I didn't study.

I returned home from school at 1pm. Then our maid served lunch, and we all ate together. After lunch, my mother used to take a nap, or would sit next to me and help me with my homework. Then I went down to the street to play with my friends; sometimes we played hopscotch [Hickelkreis]. We would draw different forms onto the street and hop on one leg from one box to the next. I would also ride my bicycle a lot. My parents gave me a very pretty bike; it was my Rolls Royce. I can't remember how old I was when I got it. Everyone had a bike at that time. I didn't cycle to school, though; I went by foot. It took me 20 minutes to get there. In the afternoon, I would ride around with my girlfriends.

My brothers—and me too—attended a Zionist [Jewish nationalist movement] youth movement named "Blau-Weiß" [German: Blue-White]. This youth movement was

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim)'s older brother, Karl. Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1930.

just one of many Zionist groups back then; it was very well known at the time. We didn't go out to cafés, or to eat, we didn't do that. We went hiking, we sang, and we talked a lot about Israel. My life was never boring, because we were always together. We went to the Frankfurt City Forest with our bikes and we went to camp together. We met several times a week, even after Hitler had risen to power. In 1933 we went to a camp in Döringheim, which is located on the right bank of the Main, very close to Frankfurt. We slept in tents or in youth hostels and cooked over an open fire. We went swimming and hiking. For our summer camp we went to Switzerland. I loved these camps.

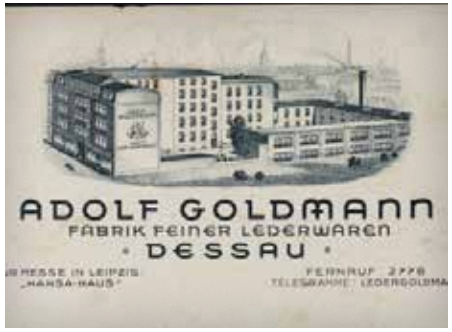
My brother Paul was a handsome man. He used to smoke his pipe, which was very modern back then. He went to Holland. He was done with school after ten years, but I don't know what he did afterwards. We had an uncle in Holland, my grandfather's cousin. His name was Karl Rapp. He owned a paint factory in Delft. It was profitable, and Paul went there after Hitler had risen to power, in order to get commercial practice.

My brother Karl was a fervent Zionist. In 1933, he had finished his studies and even completed an internship at the Virchow-Hospital in Berlin. After his internship, Karl left Germany and went to Palestine. It wasn't easy back then, you needed a certificate from the British, because Palestine was ruled by Great Britain. Karl had realized early what happened in Germany and wrote to my parents over and over again: "You have to come, you have to come!" When he got to Palestine, he went to Jerusalem. He had a girlfriend from Frankfurt; they met at the Zionist Youth Movement and they got married in Palestine. Karl had three children, two sons—David and Amnon—and a daughter, Ruth. Karl died on October 15, 2002, in Jerusalem.

I met my husband in 1933 at "Blau-Weiß." His name was Martin (Hebrew: Moshe) Goldmann. He was 20, and I was only 16. Moshe lived in Dessau. I think his mother came from Vienna; his father, Adolf Goldmann, was born into an Eastern European Jewish family from Poland; he had no formal education. Every letter he sent was written by my mother-in-law. She was the only one who wrote. She tended to everything that had to be written. She was religious, but traditional. They celebrated the holidays and kept kosher.

My father-in-law immigrated to Germany from a Polish small town when he was 19 years old. He didn't have anything. But over the years, he established a big leatherwork factory, got a house and a car with a chauffeur. Before the war, he even presented his

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim)'s husband, Moshe Goldman, in front of Erna's childhood home. Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1933.



Postcard of Adolf Goldmann (Erna's father-in-law)'s factory.

products at the Leipzig Trade Show. "If you're smart and on the top, buy a purse in our shop"—that was one of his slogans for his products. Lotte, his oldest daughter, also worked in the factory.

My grandfather, too, was a fervent Zionist. He went to the 17th Zionist Congress in Basel with Moshe and Moshe's sister, Lotte. They got there, and my father-in-law was asked: "Mr. Goldmann, do you have an invitation?" Of course he didn't have an invitation. So he said: "My name is Goldmann, I want to get in there with my two kids." They told him that he couldn't come in without an invitation. So my father-in-law took the work clothes and brooms from the cleaning staff, everyone put on the clothes and took a broom, and that's how they got in, and they even got good seats.

So Moshe was the child of a good, Jewish family—but an Eastern European one. And my father was a very Western European Jew. That was a huge difference back then. The Western Jews disliked the Eastern Jews. They were not classy enough, even though many Eastern families had come a long way and had often achieved more than us. But Eastern Jews remained Eastern Jews.

There was a quarter in Frankfurt—Ostende (East-End)—the eastern part of Frankfurt. Many poor Jews lived there. Those who were better off, the assimilated Jews, lived more towards the West. There's one thing I'm thinking about at the moment. The Yekke [Jews from Germany] lived secluded from the non-Yekke, i.e., the Jews who came from the East. I had a girlfriend at school, her name was Sonja. That's all I remember about her. We were friends, and once I was invited to her birthday party. And my mother said: "Should I let my child go there?" I'm telling you this, because it was typical of that time. Sonja's family was from Eastern Europe. That's the way it was back then.

Moshe was born in Germany. He completed a tanner's apprenticeship close to Frankfurt, because his father wanted him to help with his factory, as well. But in the end it was completely useless, because he couldn't do anything with it here in Israel.

Moshe went to Palestine in 1934. He visited me frequently between 1933 and 1934. But we spent the most time together at "Blau-Weiß." When he was not in Frankfurt, he would write me.

Frankfurt was my home. But during the last year before I went to Palestine, there already were Nazi parades. We pulled down the shutters, because we were afraid. What life is that?

I learned how to make jewelry. It was not a profession that would be of much use in Palestine. But I had a talent, and my mum encouraged that. My mother knew some-

one who was a bit of an artist, and he introduced us to Kurt Jobst. I got an apprenticeship at Jobst's precious metal forge, where I stayed for almost a year. Mr. Jobst was a real artist, I learned a lot from him. He was not a Jew, but he only had Jewish apprentices, three Jewish girls. We had a close relationship with the Jobst family. In 1934, we even had a garden party at their house. In 1935, we made an enamel piece for the county Hessen-Nassau, I think it was for the city of Frankfurt. Kurt Jobst and his wife were wonderful human beings. He didn't want to live in Nazi Germany and left.

Then I started at the Städel School [School of Applied Arts], which was located in Mainzer Landstraße, I think. One day, it was an afternoon in 1935, we wondered, why our boss wouldn't give us any more work to do. Before we went home, they told us we couldn't come back the next day, because they were not allowed to have any Jews enrolled at the school.

My father thought Hitler would just go by. Just like a lot of the German Jews thought, Hitler would just go by. Oh, it's horrible just to think about that! My grandfather and my father felt like German citizens: "Nothing can happen to us!" That was their attitude. My grandfather, for instance, used to go swimming in the Main River. There was a designated public swimming area, and one day a sign was put up: "Entry is forbidden for Jews." So my mother said to my grandfather: "Dad, you can't go there anymore. Didn't you see what the sign said? Entry is forbidden for Jews." "Well, but they don't mean me," my grandfather said. He couldn't believe that this would apply to him, as well. I remember this conversation as if it were yesterday.

My mother, my grandfather and I were at home alone, my father had died and my brothers had gone. We had a janitor, who lived in the room in the attic. What I'll tell you now was typical of the time back then. The janitor had a daughter, she was my age. Of course, she went to a Christian school, but because we were children, we used to play together on the street. One day, I think it was in 1935, we met on the street. She looked at me, but didn't greet. That's the way it was. It was the Nazi Youth education, and their parents were Nazis, too. It hurt a lot. It's strange, I think about it a lot.

My mother then decided we had to go, too. It was probably also because my brother always wrote: "You have to come as quickly as possible!" Thank God he had already been in Palestine, and thank God he wrote that.

Because I was a member of "Blau-Weiß"—where we talked a lot about Palestine, *kibbutz*im [Hebrew: pl. of *kibbutz*, a collective, agricultural community in Israel] and other things in Palestine—it was self-evident to me that we would immigrate to Palestine. It wasn't only self-evident, it was our goal.

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim) as an apprentice at Jobst's precious metal forge. Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1934.

Erna and Moshe Goldmann's wedding Tel Aviv, Palestine, 1937.

In the summer of 1936, before I finally moved to Palestine, I was on a tourist visa to Palestine for three months. I wanted to visit my friend Moshe, and I thought that maybe I could stay there. But my visa was not renewed by the British after the three months. So I had to go back.

My brother got a certificate for my mother, and I got one because I was supposed to attend the Jerusalem Academy of Applied Arts, the Bezalel School. It was clear to us that we would leave Germany forever. Most of my mother's friends had already left. Only a few stayed behind. It was a time of dissolution. We didn't know what was going to happen in Germany. We experienced this strong sense of antisemitism, but what eventually happened we had not anticipated. Of course, no one could have anticipated something like that, even though there were Hitler speeches, in which he really stirred up hatred against Jews. In Frankfurt, there were Nazi flags everywhere. I still shudder today when I think about it!

Then my mother and I started to pack our things. We dissolved our household; at that time you could even take big boxes to Palestine. I still own a lot of things that we took from our house in Frankfurt. We didn't take any furniture, but smaller things. We also wanted to bring carpets, but my brother wrote: "Don't bring carpets, you won't need them here." Everything was so primitive in Palestine back then; we only got carpets much later. But still, I've regretted that we didn't bring them.

My mother got her certificate [to go to Palestine] first, mine came a bit later. Because the certificate had to be used before a certain date—otherwise it would have expired—my mum had to leave without me. I stayed in our house, in a room in the attic. We had already abandoned our apartment. I was alone for two, three weeks. I can't remember how I felt, and I can't remember what I did. Finally, there was a note from the Jewish Agency in the mail that I could pick up my certificate. The only thing I had with me was a suitcase with a few dresses.

When I arrived, my brother picked me up again. My mum stayed in Jerusalem. Moshe didn't come to Haifa, either, but we met the next day. I went to see him, and I got there with a sherut, a shared taxi. Moshe rented an apartment from a Yekke family. And when I got there, they had a bed prepared for him in the living room, so that we wouldn't sleep together.

I left Frankfurt for good during the summer of 1937 and I got married in the garden of a small hotel on Yarkon Street in Tel Aviv, on December 25, 1937. This hotel doesn't exist anymore. It was an intimate wedding.

My father-in-law came from Dessau to Tel Aviv for the wedding, and after that, my husband and Ickel [husband of Moshe's sister, Lotte] said: "You are not going back!" But he left nonetheless. But he didn't go back to Germany, he went to Czechoslovakia. From there, he called his wife and told her to drop everything and join him immediately. My mother-in-law took whatever she could grab and left. They never went back to Germany.

What I've always appreciated a lot is that we all got here together, and no one stayed in Germany. You know, the family staying together. You don't find that very often. And thank God, I left early. But the whole thing is still close to me, as if it were yesterday. The older I become, the more it gets to me.

You could find everything you needed in Tel Aviv in 1937: streets, movie theaters, cafés. We sat together with friends, talked and drank coffee. My sister-in-law lived on Ben Yehuda Street, and we lived on the corner of Keren Kayemet/Emile Zola. Keren Kayemet is Ben Gurion Street today.

We had a beautiful apartment. In the morning, we went down Ben Yehuda Street, and we had to stop every five minutes: "Oh, hello, when did you get here, how long have you been here?" I was feeling great. I could go to the beach in shorts and meet friends. The whole Ben Yehuda Street spoke German!

But when I think about it today: everything was so primitive! When I got married, we didn't have an electric fridge. We had this kind of refrigerator, where you had to put in ice. And we didn't have any gas for cooking; we had to cook on a Primus stove. But it seemed natural to me. I adapted, and I knew that this is how it was and that there wouldn't be anything else.

My husband had a small transport company. We didn't have a lot of money, but somehow it worked. Then World War II broke out, and he joined the British military. But he didn't have to go to Europe, he stayed around here as a chauffeur. My son Daniel was born on June 2, 1940. Just after the war broke out. Even Tel Aviv was bombed sometimes. We lived on the third floor, and I didn't want to go down each time the alarm went off. Then we moved to Petach Tikva, where my parents-in-law owned this big apartment building. It was terribly primitive, too, but what was I supposed to do?

When Ben Gurion declared Israel's independence in May 1948, war started immediately afterwards. My husband took our son Dani—he was eight years old, and Rafi wasn't even born—and took him from Petach Tikva to Tel Aviv. There was a big fuss, and there was an assembly on the main square and in front of the municipality. It was very exciting for me, for all of us. We had waited so long for the English to leave and for us to become independent. Until then, Israel was under British mandate. From this day onwards, it was Israel; it was our country. And from now on, Jews could legally immigrate.

And then, immediately, war broke out. In this war, too, my husband was a chauffeur for an officer. He drove his own car, though, because the state of Israel didn't have any money to get official cars. Much later, my sons went to the military, as well. There were many wars, but they never really had to go to war, it was only military service.

We lived in Petach Tikva for about ten years. I made my own jewelry, which I sold at a WIZO store in Tel Aviv. I had a table and a small machine—just what you need to make jewelry. Back then, for the first ten years, my mother-in-law often looked after Dani.

Then we moved to Ramat Gan, and in 1951 my son Rafael was born. Rafi was completely different than Dani. Dani was blonde at first, then he got darker. We lived for about ten years in Ramat Gan. In 1963, we moved to Ramat Chen, where we built a house. I lived in this house for forty years. We had a huge garden. When we moved there, I stopped making jewelry. When you have a big house and a huge garden, you want to invite all your friends, and you don't have any time to spare.

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim)'s son, Daniel. Tel Aviv, Palestine, 1940.

My husband established a profitable business. He started out with rubber. There was a *Kibbutz*, HaOgen, where they produced plastic foil. It was the beginning of plastic. My husband bought this foil and then re-sold it, so that curtains, tablecloths, etc., could be made. That was very profitable! Then we also imported from Germany. My husband was one of the first people to do something like that. Then he even established a factory, where plastic was produced.

In 1964, Dani got married. At that time, we already lived in Ramat Chen. His wife, Pnina, was a teacher. Her father was born in Israel; I think her family has lived here for generations. Pnina's mother was born in Egypt, though. I liked her family a lot.

My husband was a very active man. He loved cultural events, especially concerts, because he was very musical. He died in 1967 of heart failure. I think about it much too often. He had a heart attack, and they brought him to the Tel Hashomer Hospital. Then he was lying there and they didn't do anything. Today, I still can't believe how they couldn't do anything. I've been alone for such a long time, forever. I was 49 years old back then, now I am 92 years old. I should stop thinking about it...

My son and his wife had two children. They named their son after my husband, Moshe. He is 43 years old today; and their daughter, Joni, is 40. Moshe was born on the first anniversary of my husband's death, and Pnina's parents decided he should be named after my father. I didn't want to get involved; I thought it was her decision, but of course I liked the idea. Moshe and Joni have kids of their own now. All of them live in Israel, and I keep in contact with them. My son Dani died in 1990, in a car accident between Eilat and Tel Aviv.

Like Dani, Rafi started to work in my husband's factory immediately after he had finished school. We still own the store today, but it is not as profitable anymore. A lot has changed. There is so much competition, everything is produced in China, everything is so cheap. Rafi is 59 years old. He lives together with his wife Hannah. She teaches Jewish History and her parents emigrated from Russia, when all the Zionists came to Palestine. His daughter Odet and her son Adam live close to me.

I've been living in this retirement home in Ramat Chen since 2003. It was the year of the second Iraqi war. I didn't want to stay at home alone at that point. So I got an apartment here. I thought that, when war breaks out, I want to be here, and not at home alone. And then I saw this beautiful apartment and I stayed. It is a really nice retirement home, the house is beautiful. My son Rafi only lives a few minutes away, and he visits me regularly.

All our friends in Israel had come from Germany. We talked German at home, and I still speak German. I speak Hebrew, too, but it's hard for me to read and write. With my daughter-in-law and with my grandchildren I speak Hebrew, but with my son Rafi I always speak German. But only when we are alone. Otherwise the other people don't understand what we're talking about, and that's not very polite.

I didn't talk to my sons about my own history, and they were only interested in things they had read or heard somewhere. Personally, I didn't really experience anything, you know, but there were people in our family who died during the Holocaust. But my parents and my siblings, and my husband's, as well, we all managed to stay together. Our closest relatives survived.

My sons went to Poland with their school classes, to visit Auschwitz. My grandson was there, too. For young people, its not the same as it was for us. Even though I did not directly experience something terrible, it feels as if the dread and murder is still with me.

We celebrated my 90th birthday in Yaffa. Rafi picked a very nice restaurant. On this evening, it was decorated beautifully, just for us. It was a wonderful celebration, and even two nephews and a niece from Holland—my brother Paul's children—came for a surprise visit.

Erna Goldman (née Guggenheim), her husband Moshe, and her oldest son Daniel. Tel Aviv, Palestine, 1943.

ROSA ROSENSTEIN

Vienna, Austria

Rosa Rosenstein, born in Berlin in 1907, was interviewed by Tanja Eckstein in Vienna in July 2002.

My father was a tailor—a home tailor. Later we had a wholesale men's ready-to-wear business and a retail shop. My father was never drafted. He was inspected four times during the First World War but was always sent back because he had bad varicose veins. That was his luck! He was at home and could take care of us. He drove out to the farmers and got groceries for us so that we wouldn't starve. He also soled our shoes. My mother could also do everything. We were never hungry. At some point the food was a bit scarce and we ate turnips. The whole house smelled of it. The jam was even made of turnips—the bread, too.

My mother was engaged to my father for a long time. That was a prearranged marriage. They were distant relatives. My parents were married in Galicia on 7 February 1907. I came ten months later. I was born on 25 December 1907 in Berlin. On my birth certificate my name is still Rosa Goldstein, after my mother. My parents first had a Jewish wedding. At some point my parents needed to marry again at the civil registry office, since the marriage wouldn't have been recognized otherwise. Later, "Jakob Braw recognizes Rosa Goldstein as his daughter. And she carries the name of the father" was added to my birth certificate. I still have it.

My sister Betty came second and was born in 1909. Erna was the third—she was born in 1911; and Cilly was the youngest sister, she was born in 1913. My brother Arthur—with the Jewish name Anschel—was the youngest. He was born in 1915 during the First World War. We still call him Anschi. He and his wife were just here for a visit. All five of us siblings are very close. Each one of us has a distinct character, but we were never mean to each other. Sure, we each had our own opinion, but we never really quarreled. That doesn't happen in many families.

My mother cooked kosher [according to Jewish dietary laws]. In Berlin, on Grenadier-Strasse, there were only Jewish shops. There was the kosher butcher shop from Sussmann, there were poultry shops—all of it was kosher. That's where you went shopping. Everything was kosher at home. Blue utensils were for the milk products, for which we had blue-checkered hand towels. The red-checkered ones were for meat products. [Jewish religious law requires separation of milk and meat.] The dishes were also separate and were washed separately. The tablecloths were separate—red for daily use, or otherwise white. It was very nice at home. The Passover dishes [Passover: holiday commemorating the ancient Israelite exodus from Egypt]

Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) with her siblings Betty Chaim (née Braw), Erna Goldstein (née Braw), Cilly Brandstetter (née Braw), and Arthur Braw. Berlin, Germany, 1919.

were in a giant suitcase in the dropped ceiling. Bringing it down was always very festive. My mother would buy geese and roast them in the Passover dishes so we'd have lard. The goose liver at Passover was wonderful.

My parents went to Jewish prayer houses. One was called "Ahavat Zedek," and the other was "Ahavat Chaim." The prayer rooms were in some large back courtyard.

In Berlin we lived on Templiner-Strasse. We had a large four-room apartment. The toilets were in the apartment and we had a bathroom. It was a very primitive bathroom, but there was a bathtub and a large wood-burning stove so that we could have hot water for our baths.

We four sisters were together in one room. It was narrow and had a window in the corner. There were two beds on each side and next to the door was a large dresser with a mirror. Each girl had her own drawer—where we kept our underwear—and another drawer with all sorts of odds and ends. Then we had a wardrobe where we hung our dresses.

Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) and her siblings. From right to left, seated according to age: Rosa, Betty, Erna, Cilly and Arthur. Bad Buckow, Germany, 1927.

We always got new things for the holidays—for Passover and Rosh Hashanah [the Jewish New Year]. We always got winter things on Rosh Hashanah. Those were ready-made beige coats. Of course, I immediately tore a triangle on the side, which was then sewn and patched. But it looked pretty shabby after a while. Then we were given new coats again—I was already wearing my sister's old one since mine was no longer decent. My mother would rant and rave at me. I didn't spend much time on clothing. She said to me, "Rosa, if you would just stand for five more minutes in front of the mirror." My mother always said, "A boy was forfeited for you. How are you always ripping your things?" I got everything just like my sisters. Their things would hang in the wardrobe for half a year and every time they took something out they asked, "Do you like it?" Then they would hang it up again. By the time they started wearing their things mine were already long gone—already cleaning rags. I didn't pay attention to what I wore or how my hair looked. My skirt just needed to be loose enough and my shoes couldn't pinch so that I could run easily. After I got a bob I started going to the hairdressers—but only because I was working in my father's shop. We had long braids at first, which were always plaited early in the morning when we went to school. We would always go to our mother's bed and she would braid our hair.

My brother slept on a divan in the small room. The room faced the street. There was also a desk in his room, as well as a large wingback chair next to the tiled stove. Everyone had tiled stoves back then. We would heat the stoves ourselves in winter.

I went to a Jewish girls' school. I had to learn French; English was an elective. Of course, I was much too lazy for English, so I only learned French. There wasn't any preschool back then. It began at grade nine and went to grade one. The ninth grade was like today's first grade and first grade was the last grade. They called them Lyceum.

I had no contact with Christians whatsoever. My parents didn't either—only professionally, not privately. But I had one Christian childhood friend who lived in the same building. I always came along when she went to confession.

Three times a week for three hours we read biblical stories and Hebrew with Dr. Selbiger. We didn't learn cursive handwriting, but we learned the block letters. I could do all the prayers. I had to pray. My grandmother took care of that. Early in the morning we prayed "Modim anachnu lo," and in the evenings recited the "El Male Rachamim," the evening prayer.

My sisters also went to that school. But then I had to leave the school. I had to go to a trade school because my father needed me in the shop. At the trade school you had to learn everything in half a year: typing, stenography, bookkeeping—and everything at a quick pace. I had classmates who were 20 years old; I was 15 but I was better than the others.

We were always Zionists. My brother, for example, was already in a Zionist-Socialist association at the age of 14 and wore the blue shirts that they wore. All my siblings were in Jewish associations that had a Zionist element. There were the German Jews who said, "For God's sake, what do we want with that—Germany is our homeland." But that wasn't for us; we were Polish. I was in the Jewish gymnastics club, "Bar Kochba." That was a Jewish association—half sports, half discussion. In the summer we trained in Grunewald, did track and field. In winter we were in the gymnasium.

My mother was a bookworm like me. In Galicia she only attended school for a year. She had seven brothers who all studied. Grandfather always said that it's enough

for a girl to be able to write her name, bake bread, roast, and churn butter. She was from the countryside; that was enough. My mother told me that the first thing she ever bought in Berlin—later on she was working in Berlin—was Grillparzer [Austrian writer, 1791–1872], a whole series of books by Grillparzer. She taught herself to read and write. We had a proper library at home. We had a worker, he was an older gentleman—and there were four of us girls at home. And he always said, "Of all the five women in the Braw house, the mother is the cleverest and most beautiful." When we all emigrated after Hitler came, my heart ached because we had to leave all the books behind.

I lived at home up until my wedding day. My first husband was also a tailor, a Hungarian. He was a dashing young man. I was working for my father in a factory building with large windows. My desk was at the window. There was a menswear business across the way. A young, good-looking man sat at the sewing machine. We would often smile at each other. I didn't know who he was and he didn't know who I was. One day a man came by—earlier the merchants would go from shop to shop—and he brought me a box, a kilo of sweets: "This is sent from the young man over there." That's how it started. I took it, of course, and thanked him. I wasn't yet 18.

Once I got to go home earlier. I was in the shop in Neue Friedrich-Strasse and went through Hackescher Markt to a large bookshop on Rosenthaler-Strasse. I browsed the books. So I stood there and looked, and then I suddenly heard a voice speaking slowly from behind me: "Isn't that niiiiice?" I turned around and he was standing there. He had the same route as me. He lived with his sister. He asked if me might accompany me, he was heading the same way. I said, "please!" That's how we found out that he was the nephew of the proprietor for whom he worked, and that I was the daughter of the proprietor from across the way. He thought I was an employee and I had thought that he was just a worker. His name was Maximillian Weisz; we called him Michi. He was born on 30 November 1904 in Nitra [today Slovakia]. And that's how it all began!

Afterwards he would sometimes accompany me, and then he asked me out. That was a Saturday evening, since there was no time during the week. Our meeting place was on Schoenhauser Allee at the subway station at the corner of Schwedter-Strasse. I got dressed up, went to the hairdresser's—since I had started working for my father I was always at the hairdresser's on Saturday. My parents knew that I had a date and my mother said, "Come on, get going already or you'll be too late!" And I said, "If he is interested, he'll wait." So I went down but there was no one there. Just great, I thought, I'm too late. Five minutes went by and all of a sudden he came running, out of breath. "What happened?" I apologized for being late. He thought I was waiting at another station, so he ran to the next station and back.

There was a restaurant called "Schottenhamel" by the Tiergarten [a large park in Berlin]. It was a very elegant establishment. He said he hadn't had dinner yet. We took the subway to Wilhelm-Strasse. We went in and it was very elegant. But I kept kosher. He ordered a meat dish and I ordered coffee and cake. I wasn't eating anything treif [Hebrew: unkosher]. I didn't know where any kosher restaurants were; my parents didn't go to restaurants. Later there was music.

When I was engaged I received three very pretty dresses. A black satin dress with a white satin inset, a white-blue crêpe de Chine dress, and the third was a dark-blue dress with Bordeaux. Our family accepted my fiancée like a son. We were both hard workers. We only went out on the weekend. Then about seven, eight months went by. It was Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur [Day of Atonement and the most important Jewish holiday] and my parents were in temple. I was also in temple. Of course, we weren't working.

Maximilian also wasn't working because his uncle was Jewish and they didn't work on the holiday. He came to visit me in temple: the young people always gathered there and stood around with their friends. My parents invited him for coffee on Rosh Hashanah. Two of my mother's brothers also came with their wives. So we were sitting around and my father said, "Let's go into the next room!" My uncles and father called Michi in. I asked myself what was going on. After a while they all came out laughing. Michi was beaming and they told me they had asked him what his intentions were, since they couldn't accept seeing me strung along like that, as I would get a bad reputation. He said his intention was to marry me. So it was settled. I was really annoyed that they had done that. I really didn't like what my father and uncles did with Michi, but please! Michi was beaming and I was very embarrassed, but afterwards we went to the cinema.

Then we had a real Jewish engagement party. That was 8 March 1928. His mother and sisters came from Budapest for the party. There were eighty people. We had a four-room apartment back then and three rooms were cleared out. My mother cooked the entire dinner herself. I had friends and the girls were all there. I received a lot of gifts. It was a really large party. The cloakroom was set up in the last room. We had an apprentice in the shop and he came to help with the cloakroom. I still remember that there was fish, then soup, and then farfel and tarhonya [Hungarian: egg-based pasta shaped like barley] with poultry and all sorts of things. And years earlier my mother had preserved sour cherries in alcohol for liqueur.

During the engagement I crocheted and knit sofa pillows and received handicrafts from friends for the engagement party. Michi then started working for himself. He had been working for his uncle up until then. He purchased and borrowed machines. He was working with his brother-in-law and I said, "That only works as long as we're not married. Afterwards I'll be co-partner." And that's what happened.

Then we got married. I insisted on the temple on Oranienburger Strasse. The wedding was on Sunday. Before the ceremony we went first to the photographer. The temple on Oranienburger Strasse was one of the most beautiful temples in all of Berlin, some even say in all of Europe. People were invited just for the ceremony and others for the meal in the restaurant afterwards.

The restaurant was on Kupfergraben, right on Alexander-Strasse. Next to it was the large Hermann Tietz department store.

The food was good. My mother made the fish—real Polish carp, cold with a jelly and challah [Jewish holiday bread in the form of a braid]. After eating, people were supposed to dance—there were enough young people there. But the music was awful. The brother of a friend was a wonderful pianist. He could play anything—just from his head, without notes. He then sat himself at the piano and played. Then we could really dance.

Afterwards we went to our apartment... we had found an apartment on Alte Schoenhauser-Strasse that had previously housed a police station. It was an apartment and workshop together.

Then came the wedding night. Early [the next] morning I heard the apartment door shut. My husband jumped out of bed, pulled on his pants, and ran out. It was my father! He wanted to heat the room so that it would be warm when I woke up. He even turned the heater on in the bedroom! Well, my mother was probably furious!

On 10 December 1929 our daughter Bessy was born. She came ten months after the wedding. I got married on 10 February and she was born 10 December. We were both still so young, but I had my parents. For the first six weeks I stayed at my parents'. My husband stayed in our apartment. He came to us and I went to him.

On 6 May 1933, my second daughter Lilly was born. That's not really what I wanted. I only wanted one child since it was very modern back then to only have one. All my friends and my sisters-in-law only had one kid.

My husband, who was not at all kosher at home in Budapest, adapted himself completely. It wasn't difficult to keep kosher. You could get everything. There were only Jewish shops and religious people on Grenadier-Strasse, on Dragoner-Strasse, and on Mulack-Strasse.

In 1938, just after the November Pogrom, my father was arrested and deported to Poland. He was allowed to take ten marks and a small briefcase. I remember we gave him his golden watch with the chain. We still had relatives in Poland and I was always

Wedding picture of Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) and her first husband, Maximilian Weisz. Berlin, Germany, 1929.

the go-between. I was married to a Hungarian and wasn't afraid yet. I got a visa for Poland. I wanted to go to my father and bring him money. Just as I was leaving the passport office my mother came up to me and said, "You don't have to go to Poland. Your father got the approval to come back and pick me up. We're going to Palestine together."

When my father got back from Poland, everything was packed. At that point my youngest daughter was about to start school; she was six years old. My sisters didn't give up and got entry permits from the English. My father left with such a heavy heart, since I was staying behind with my family. My father said, "I'm sinning against myself!" He couldn't separate himself. "I'm sinning against myself, I am leaving my child here and going!" And he said, "I won't rest until I bring you over."

My father had saved 300 dollars—in 100-dollar notes. He had to pack his things. The boxes were already gone. Even the silver cutlery was in the boxes. I ordered a crate of beer. The customs officers got drunk and the Jewish moving company packed, even my silver candlesticks, which you were not allowed to take. And we thought that the boxes, if the customs officers were packing in the apartment, would just be sent off. But to our misfortune the boxes were opened again at the customs office. They saw the silver things and took them out. But the Jewish packers—it was a good Jewish moving company—managed to pack them in again.

But where do you hide 300 dollars? I had, for example, my silk clothing that slipped onto these folding boards. You could buy them ready-made and attach them with these pink ribbons so that they were nicely laid. My mother had the idea—she got her hands on a piece of cardboard and also had some colorful fabric embroidered with little roses—of replicating a board and tucking the 300 dollars inside. It was not as nice as the real ones; it was a bit smaller. Only my parents and I knew about the money. My youngest sister Cilly and I went to Alexanderplatz to check the suitcases. My sister stood on one side and I stood on the other. The customs officer took out every piece and laid them out, even the folding boards. There were even more folding boards inside. All of a sudden he said, "So, where have you hidden your dollars then?" My father couldn't relax; he kept leaving and strolling around. And my sister said cheekily, "You know what, if I had wanted to smuggle dollars I would have found a better option." He put everything back. My father said, "Resi, one hundred is yours!" And he held on to that one hundred dollars until I went to Israel for the first time. But I never saw my father again. He did learn that I had a son. He died in 1947. My son was born in 1945.

My husband said, "Nothing can happen to us in Hungary." In 1939, after three weeks of war, you had to darken the apartment and there were ration cards. The Jews received less, of course. And besides that there were only specific times during the day for shopping. We couldn't do our shopping throughout the whole day. We packed our suitcases and went to Budapest, because my husband maintained that that wouldn't happen there. To be safe, I brought along my children's travel documents for Palestine.

We found a small apartment—two rooms and a kitchen—in Ujpest. I already had the boxes with my things from Berlin. We had already sold the furniture. Those were emergency sales. For my bedroom set, which had cost 4,000 marks, I got 400 marks. But I had sent other things: linens, curtains, the silver candlesticks, silver cutlery. For my wedding I had been given down bedding that was made in Poland. I also sent a portion of my things along with my mother to Israel in case we went to Palestine. "Wait in Hungary," my parents wrote.

One evening my husband was sitting with my father-in-law in the coffee house, watching other people playing cards. I was at home with my children. It was already dark and my father-in-law came to me and said, "Resi, I need Michi's papers. There were detectives in the café and Michi only had his passport on him." The passport had been issued in Berlin. It was a Hungarian passport and was valid for two more years. He had identified himself with the passport and they said that it could have been forged and arrested him.

I didn't have my husband's *Heimatschein* [German: certificate of family origin]; it stayed behind in Berlin when he took his passport. On the second day—my daughter Lilly was lying in bed, she had do desire to go to the Purim celebrations at school, and Bessy was at school—I was ironing in the kitchen. There was a knock and two men came in. They asked me who I was and introduced themselves; they were from the foreign division, and if I could please come with them. They wanted to take the children and me. Lilly was at home and my neighbor picked Bessy up from school. I had a Jewish neighbor and asked her to tell my in-laws in the bakery what had happened—that we had been arrested.

I didn't let go of my passport. They took away my husband's passport. I didn't show mine. They didn't ask. They took my children and me on the tram to the internment camp. That's where my husband saw us. When he saw us, the children and me, he had a crying fit. I comforted him and said, "Michi, the main thing is that we're together!"

We lived in barracks built onto the temple. I was able to go to my apartment with a detective to get clothes and to get the down blankets for the children so that they could sleep better. There were bunk beds in the barracks. I was on the bottom and the two girls were on top. Men and women were separated. During the day we were guarded by a detective and at night by a police officer. There were maybe 40 or 50 of us there. We

were there for three, four weeks, then we were sent to the countryside where there were closed camps on the Czech border. Those were former customs houses. People from the Jewish Community came and looked after us. The guards were Hungarian.

I still had the travel papers for my children. And I always wrote Red Cross letters—through my cousin in Argentina who forwarded them—that's how we connected to my family in Palestine. My brother-in-law wrote from Palestine, "Send the children, please send the children. We will raise them as if they were our own!" They were right, since the children would be safe in Palestine.

The Jewish Community in Budapest organized it. My sister-in-law made sure that my children got on the list and received entry permits for Palestine. The children were given stateless passports. Our Lilly didn't want to. She was eight years old when she left. Bessy was eleven. Then they both agreed, but the little one said to me that her sister hit her to make her say yes. But she saved her life by doing that. I was given permission to accompany the children to Budapest. My husband, who was in the men's camp, was only allowed to bring the children from the bus to the station. There he said goodbye to the children. That's the last time the children ever saw their father. The last time!

We took the train to Budapest. A detective picked us up and accompanied us to the station. Lilly stood at the window of the train, tears running down her face. They then took the train to Bulgaria and then a ship over to Turkey where they went by bus from Syria to Palestine. My parents collected them in Palestine. They already had a nice apartment and took in the children.

On my husband's death certificate it read "cardiac arrest." Later I was told he died of spotted fever. He was sent to Russia, to Kiev, for labor service. He needed to dig and search for mines.

I was granted leave from the internment camp and still had the small apartment. I worked for a lawyer but needed to report to the police every eight days. I was the widow of a labor serviceman. I had a widow's certificate.

Then it was 1944. Eichmann came to Budapest to create "order." I was free with my green widow's certificate and had to report myself. My husband was dead, so I had advantages. I wanted to see how my husband's family was doing. I didn't want to get disconnected from them. I took the tram out to visit them. That was the same day Eichmann came to Budapest, on 21 or 22 March—I still know the date. I exited the tram and was arrested.

I was led to a house where there were about 400 people, all Jews. We were imprisoned there and no one knew what was going to happen. We were squeezed into a

Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) with her daughters Bessy Aharoni (née Weisz) and Lilly Drill (née Weisz). Berlin, Germnay, 1935.

freight car and rode and rode and rode. There were no windows, so we didn't know where we were headed. Suddenly we were unloaded and found ourselves in a large courtyard. I looked around and saw a lot of imprisoned men standing on the other side; we were about 400 women. There was a water pump in the center; you could drink a little bit of water from your hands. We stood and stood. All of a sudden the women were called into a building.

It was the Budapest detention center, near the Keleti train station. It was nighttime and we were locked in. That night Budapest was being bombed: by the Americans and English during the day, by the Russians at night. We sat and saw bullets, the blazing bullets the Russians shot before they started bombing. The women prayed that the next bomb would fall on us. We feared the worse. We were inside for four days. We arrived on Tuesday and were released on Friday. They didn't know where to put us. We knew the men were deported. But they didn't know what to do with 400 women. They didn't have any trains. That was our fortune.

I was afraid to go [back] to my room, since you had to give your address when they released us. We had a Viennese friend, a widow, who had been married to a Hungarian

in Budapest. He was Christian. They had a 15-year-old daughter back then, Susi. I walked to her place. When she opened the door for me she was so surprised, "Resi, you're alive?" And what can I say; I opened the door and there sat my future husband, Alfred Rosenstein, with a friend. I knew him from the internment camp. He looked at me. We didn't have a relationship yet, nothing at all, and he rushed up to me, hugged me, and said, "Resi, no one will ever separate us again!"

My husband Alfred Rosenstein was born in Vienna on 17 April 1898 as the fifth child of Suesie Rosenstein—born in Rohatyn, Galicia—and Beile Rosenstein, née Bienstock. Suesie, a descendant of Shelah ha-Kadosh [a famous rabbi], was a tailor or textile merchant and died in 1926. Beile passed away in London in 1945. My husband had six siblings: Moritz, Franziska, Samuel, Josef, Cilly and Hedi.

I knew my future husband from the camp. He was so charming; the women were crazy for him. My husband then moved in with me for the time being. Not just him, a friend of his came along, and then a niece of mine from Hungary came. She got a birth certificate from a friend, a Christian, and then fled. A beautiful girl, Jola.

I realized that I was pregnant. I said that the child will either perish with me, or I will do something. My husband said, "You will do nothing. If we survive we are having the child." He didn't allow it. But I went anyway. The doctor, who was in the ghetto, said, "I won't do anything. Do you want to die of sepsis?" He didn't have any instruments, nothing. And my husband immediately said, "That's out of the question. We are getting married!" Our son Georg was born in Budapest on 27 June 1945. Well, it took a while until we got married—that was in 1947 and our son was a year and a half.

We lay with coats in a room—there were no longer any windows—and suddenly I heard a voice through a megaphone: "This is the Russian Army. People of Budapest wait, we are going to liberate you!" There is a hill around Budapest. It took days for them to come over it. "Hold on, we will liberate you!" In German, in Hungarian, in Russian. And so we waited. And one beautiful day—it was Sunday—I was standing behind the window, it was deathly quiet and I saw a Russian coming through the garden with a fur hat and a machine gun. I turned around and said, "There's a Russian!" One guy ran down to the garden and hugged the Russian. When he came back—Steiner was his name—his watch was missing. But he said, "Doesn't matter!"

After liberation I walked through the streets of Budapest. I stood at the temple fence and watched how the Russians buried the dead from the ghetto. Survivors were able to take out their dead and bury them privately. Tony Curtis, the film actor, is a Hungarian Jew. He had a tree set up there, a magnificent willow that shines like gold. You can have the names of the murdered written on the leaves.

Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) with her second husband, Alfred Rosenstein, and their son, Zwi-Bar. Budapest, Hungary, 1946.

I stayed in Hungary. I said I wouldn't go back to Vienna until we had our own apartment. My husband always said that there was still nothing to eat, no meat—or else just pork. I was very comfortable in Hungary. I said that I'd only leave when I have my own apartment and there is enough to eat. So he would go back and forth and it was always the same thing: not yet, not yet.

His sisters had a restaurant before the war—it was called "Grill am Peter"—but it was Aryanized. Then my husband wanted to apply for restitution and get the property back. My husband sought trial—there were return courts back then. There were always just two judges there. The Aryans that had taken over the restaurant were dead. Their son took it over. At the first trial my husband was given the offer of 35,000 shillings as a reparation payment. Our lawyer was Doctor Pik, who was later president of the Jewish Community. He had been a schoolmate of my husband's. 65,000 shillings were offered on the second date. The lawyer then said to my husband, "If they're ready to give 65,000, then they'll give even more." At the third trial there was a third judge

Rosa Rosenstein (née Braw) with her son, Zwi Bar-David, and her brother, Arthur Braw's daughters, Ruth Dickstein (née Braw) and Jael Rappoport (née Braw). Tel Aviv, Israel, 1949.

present. Two said they had to give it back. My husband didn't want the money; he wanted to get the restaurant back so that we could have a future. The judge said you couldn't take the young man's living, since he, who currently owned it, didn't have anything to do with the Aryanization. That was the attitude back then. The young man got the restaurant because the judges weren't all agreed. My husband got nothing for it.

My husband had a certificate saying that he was racially persecuted and in a camp. The districts in Vienna were divided amongst the victorious powers back then. Our district had a Communist mayor and my husband was assigned an apartment with this certificate.

Originally I didn't want to go back to Austria. I wanted to be with my children and parents in Israel. But my husband said that he didn't have the right profession for Israel. He was a businessman and had worked for his brother, who had a large oil company. He was the representative. That wasn't a job for Israel. You needed to have money there—money to be self-employed. What could he have done at his age? He was already ten years older than me and no longer such a young man. He wanted to go to Austria to apply for reparations and get the money so we could go to Israel.

I stayed here in Vienna because I didn't want my children or relatives to put up with me. In 1949 I went with my son to Israel for the first time. You still had to go by ship back then. The first money that my husband received was a restitution payment of 16,000 shillings. He said, "Go. See your children." The money wouldn't have been enough for us both. We were on the ship for five days. It was nice. My mother was still alive back then. She had a pretty two-and-a-half room apartment in Tel Aviv. My sister had a wonderful apartment directly on the sea on Hayarkon [street on the sea in Tel Aviv].

My daughter Bessy was already married to Mr. Aharoni and had a five-month-old baby. She got married at 18, in the Israeli military. She later worked for the city administration for ten years and looked after old people. Lilly, married Drill, came to Vienna a year after me. At that time she was 18 exactly—that was 1951. She went to school in Israel but could, of course, speak German. My mother never learned Hebrew. I never saw my father again. That was horrible.

My son went to Israel after his exams. That was shortly after my husband's death [1961]. He lived on a *kibbutz* and studied psychology. There he took on the name Zwi Bar-David. He married Illana, whose mother's side of the family was from Berlin, from the Scheunenviertel [German: Jewish neighborhood in Berlin], and they had two daughters and a son. Because of his son's muscle disorder, he moved with his wife, my then three-year-old grandson Ofir, and Noemi, his younger daughter, to Vienna.

I disliked the Austrians. I always saw them as Nazis. Once, in the early 1950s, I was in Israel for two months. As soon I was back in Vienna and went to my bakery to buy bread, the baker's wife asked me, "Where were you for so long, Mrs. Rosenstein?" "I was in Israel!" I said. She looked at me and said, "You're a Jew? But you don't look like one!" To which I replied, "Why, Mrs. Schubert? Don't I have horns on my head?" She said, "No, for god's sake, I don't mean anything." That was the early `50s. Things haven't changed much over the years. Haider or Stadler [Ewald, FPÖ politician] have surely given us enough of an opportunity to think about it. Even if you want to forget, you cant. We're constantly being reprimanded.

I didn't experience any anti-Semitism in Germany. I would laugh and joke with our Christian workers in my father's workshop. Many even knew when our holidays were. I would have preferred to go back to Berlin after the war. I think my husband would have also happily come along. But that wasn't possible. Since there was that misfortune with the illness: he got cancer. He died in 1961. He was 63 years old.

I didn't want to remarry. I was offered—by a friend of my husband's, even. My husband had been dead for two years then. It was Christmas, my family was living here and the children were still young. I wasn't interested. I only had two men in my life and I know that both loved me. It wasn't mediated. They just met me as I really am.

I was with my sister in Berlin, but it was still East and West back then. We had a childhood acquaintance, a neighbor kid, Sali, who was already in the West. We wanted to go to the East, to visit our home. You had to change 25 marks into East German Marks. He said, "No, for God's sake, who knows what will happen, you might meet trouble." He talked us out of it. Later, I was with my granddaughter in East Berlin. I didn't go back to where we used to live. I couldn't do it.

HERBERT LEWIN

Vienna, Austria

Herbert Lewin, born in Osterode in 1917, was interviewed by Tanja Eckstein in Vienna in November 2002.

My paternal grandfather's name was Louis Lewin. He had already died when I was born. My father carried on my grandfather's tavern. The signboard still hung above the store; it said "Louis Lewin," and in small letters below: "Owner: Ivan Lewin." My father did it for the sake of my grandmother; he was being really honest with us, when he said: "Kids, you can do whatever you want, but no one of you will inherit the tavern; it's a hard craft." In 1914, during the First World War, he was supposed to join the military, but then there would have been no one behind the counter, so he worked half the day in the orderly room of the regional headquarters, and the rest of the day he spent in the tavern. On weekdays, Sundays, and holidays he opened at 7 am, and the tavern stayed open all day, without a break. He only sold tobacco and alcohol. Early in the morning, the civil servants from the post office across the street used to come over for a beer. Same in the evening: after they had finished work, they came over for a beer and some corn schnapps.

My grandmother's name was Helena Lewin. I remember that she was really old. She was a very religious, but also very tolerant woman. Our tavern was small, and during the summer, as well as during the winter, she sat next to the tiled stove. When we were children, we thought this was great. All the guests—mostly farmers or craftsmen—who came in knew her. And she knew their families: "How's your kid, how's your wife?"—that was the first thing she asked the customers. Everyone shook Mrs. Lewin's hand, talked to her for a while, and then they went into the bar, drank some beer and corn schnapps, and then they went back home. My dad didn't want customers who sat there forever; it was not customary for his guests to sit down at a table. They stood at the bar gossiping. The interesting thing is that there were no political arguments in my father's tavern. As children, we used to watch the guests: on the one side, there were the German Nationals, and on the other side, there were the masons and carpenters—they were Communists. And the two parties stood there at peace, drinking their beer and their corn schnapps.

My grandmother wore a wig, a sheitel [Hebrew: worn by religious Jewish women to cover their head], and on Friday evening, she silently disappeared. She had her apartment above the tavern: two rooms and her meat kitchen. Her dairy kitchen was on the ground floor, just next to our store. [Religious Jews do not eat meat and milk together in the same meal and often have separate dishes and utensils for meal preparation.]When Shabbos [Hebrew: the Sabbath] came, she went up and blessed

Herbert Lewin's father Ivan in Osterode (today Poland) in the 1930s.

the lights [candles]. She knew that our house was treif [Hebrew: not kosher, which requires separating milk and meat and not eating certain foods]. She loved to see us at her place, so we were up at her apartment very often. But she didn't go down to our apartment, because she knew that she couldn't even drink a glass of water, because our apartment was treif. So she really was tolerant: she knew that we ate ham and roast pork—she never said a word about it, and that's why she was really popular and we all really liked her. I remember that she always had Kaiser's fudge in her apron pockets, which she gave us. On the High Holy days [the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement] we went up to her place and wished her all the best. But then

we went back down again. We left her alone, because she was praying. She went to the synagogue, too. My cousin Ilse, the daughter of my aunt Cilli from Berlin, grew up with my grandmother and she cared for her when she was old. Ilse also helped in our tavern, at noon, and when my dad had to leave for a while. She worked in the tavern and she also took care of my mum.

We lived in Osterode, East Prussia. The closest capital city was Allenstein. Osterode was the pearl of the Masurian lakes. There were no kosher food stores in Osterode, because there were not too many Jews in this area. But there was a Christian butcher who owned a kosher chopping block. Behind our store, there was a small yard, and we always had a turkey or a goose running around. When my grandmother wanted to eat something, she put the turkey or goose into a basket, put a lid on it, and we had to bring it to the rabbi, so that he could butcher it in a kosher way. It was terrible for us. When he started to sharpen the knife, we had to go out because we couldn't watch. After the animal had died, he put it between his legs, plucked some feathers from its throat, cut it, and it started to bleed out. It was gruesome! It had to be completely bled out before we could bring it to my grandmother. She died in 1929, and half of the town accompanied her coffin. My dad recited kaddish [Hebrew: Jewish prayer for the dead] for her.

My father, Ivan Lewin, was born in 1880 in Osterode. He had a brother and a sister. His brother, Arthur Lewin, emigrated when he was a young boy. He told his mother that he wouldn't take over the tavern and went to South America. On the ship there was a gentleman who asked him: "Aren't you the young Lewin boy from Osterode? I am Kamnitzer's brother. I know you, I saw you in the synagogue." The Kamnitz family had a leather goods store in Osterode. "If you want, you can come work in my jewelry store; I'll take you as an apprentice and you can learn the trade of a goldsmith." It didn't take long, and my uncle became partner at the jewelry store. Since then, he sent money home regularly. Each month, he sent money for my grandmother, my father, and my sister in Berlin. Twice a year, we received a sack full of coffee, which a friend of ours, a captain on the Hapag Loyd [the Hamburg-America line], brought to Hamburg duty-free. We only took what we needed, the rest we sold to the coffee shop next to us. Because of my uncle we were able to live a good life. He had two daughters and a son, and once he visited us with his children in Osterode. His son was attending a diplomatic academy. My uncle lived in a hotel, because he was used to taking a bath every morning. We couldn't offer him that in our apartment.

My father's sister's name was Cilla Lewin. She lived in Berlin and married Adolf Scheidemann. They had two daughters: Ilse and Ella. Ilse married Benno Pottlitzer, a salesman for textile goods. Both of them were killed in Auschwitz [source: Gedenkbuch Berlins der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus].

Herbert Lewin's mother Bertha shortly before she fled to England, in Osterode in 1939.

Herbert Lewin's mother Bertha with Herbert and his younger brother Werner in Osterode in 1921.

My mother, Bertha Lewin (née Guth), was born in 1890 in Prussian Stargard, Pomerania. Uncle Max, my mother's brother, was married and had two daughters. We went to visit him once. He lived in Landsberg and he had a textile store. He had a car and a chauffeur, who drove by some farmers to collect the installments. You would usually buy things in installments back then. We only saw my grandmother once. She lived with uncle Max and had a room with barred windows, because she used to sleepwalk; she had some kind of mental illness. It was terrible for the children.

Rahel, my mother's sister, lived with us. In 1920, there was a national referendum and everyone who voted for Germany received a small pension from Germany. Aunt Rahel opted for Germany. My father brought her into our apartment. But later, she became kind of a red rag to him, because she didn't pay for anything. All her pension went straight to the savings account. She sat at the table, ate with us, and blamed my dad for tossing money out of the window, because he was a bit of a gourmet. He liked delicatessen, and he went out shopping for dinner himself. He picked up salmon and the best cheese. And this is what she blamed him for. It went on for years, and my dad just took it. Until the day he said that she should leave. Then she went to Allenstein and moved into a Jewish retirement home. Now and then, we visited her; we used to sit with her for half an hour, and when we left, she went to the oven—there was a tiny flap, and inside were two shriveled apples, which she took out and gave to us children.

My parents met at a Jewish feast in Danzig [today: Poland]. My father was working at a sawmill in Danzig, and my mother was working in a porcelain store. My mum then moved in with my father in Osterode, and they got married in 1915. I was born in 1917; I wasn't the first child, a baby girl was born before me, but she died. My brother Werner was born in October 1920.

In Osterode, it didn't matter that we were Jewish. If one of the townspeople knew that the next day was a Jewish holiday, he would go to the Jew Lewin and would say: "Mr. Lewin, today I get a double, because I know that the tavern is closed tomorrow." My dad closed the tavern on Jewish holidays; you would know it: if he wore a top hat, it was a holiday. But he didn't keep the high holy days, even though he could pray and read from the Torah [five books of Moses, on a scroll] because he had a Jewish education. My mum didn't know anything. But she went to the temple at *Rosh Hashanah* [the Jewish new year]. She sat together with the other women, and a good friend of hers sat next to her. Once she told her friend: "Selma, can you tell me where we are?" Then Selma took my mum's booklet, skimming the pages, and she said: "Well, if you take the Passover booklet at Rosh Hashanah, you won't find the right page." So, my mum really had no clue. Nonetheless, she was a conscious Jew.

In our town, there was no Jewish school. We were all together in one class, 24 children, and two of them were Jewish. The parents of the other Jewish boys owned a shoe store. His name was Jacoby. One time, when I went to elementary school, the rabbi came over to visit my father, and he said: "You know, your child attends Christian religious classes." My father, then, went to talk to the class teacher and the teacher said: "Mr. Lewin, I do respect the rabbi, but what's the difference between the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Old Testament? We are teaching the Old Testament until 8th grade, just like the rabbi. And your children tell me that they are getting bored sitting in the schoolyard for an hour, so why shouldn't they just sit in and listen?" My father accepted that.

The synagogue in Osterode was pretty big. Jews from the surrounding towns came to Osterode at the high holidays. In a small house next to the temple, we had our

Hebrew lessons. There were seven or eight children—that was all. Once a week the rabbi came to our school and told us a biblical story. Our rabbi, Dr. Mannheim, was a rabbi you wouldn't find in any of today's Jewish communities. Once a year, the chairman of the Jewish Community came over with two teachers in order to check on how our rabbi was leading the religious classes. But the rabbi was warned in advance every time, and he would give us a booklet and say: "You will read this part, and you will read this part, and you will take this one. Write down what you don't know with your pencil." After they had asked two students, the chairman would say to the rabbi: "Mr. Mannheim, we can see that your lessons are very good." And there was no Jewish kid with less than an A or a B. My father confronted the rabbi at one point: "Mr. Mannheim, how do you do that? All the Jewish kids getting away with such good grades?" And Mr. Mannheim said: "Mr. Lewin, may I tell you something: wouldn't it be a shame if a Jewish kid had less than a B?"

We had many friends; our house was an open house. My father only felt comfortable when he was in company. My mum took us aside once and said: "Kids, I'd like to tell you something. Everyone is praying to God, God has many names. One calls him Allah, the next Jehovah, the other Jesus. And in the end everything comes together up there, because there is only one God. He has many names, but there is only one! And this is something you have to respect." This is how we were raised. We were allowed to have a party on our birthdays. It never mattered whether the children were Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant. My friend Hans was always there, of course.

We had a huge five-bedroom apartment. There was a Gentleman's Room, a dining room, and a living room which was used as a dining room on high holidays, when our friends and family came from the neighboring towns with their children and spent the holiday with us.

The Hirschfeld family lived close to us, in a town called Liebemühl. They owned a big textile company. Their two boys went to school in Osterode. After the First World War, the trains were very unreliable. Because they had to take the train for two stations, my parents let the two boys sleep in our apartment until the trains became more reliable again. My mother didn't take any money from the Hirschfeld family, and it became a lifelong friendship. I wanted to marry their daughter, Liselotte Hirschfeld. But the rabbi found a very religious young boy for her. His father had a fishing license for all the Masurian lakes. The rabbi married them at home. It was a great wedding. They even had a *chuppah* [Hebrew: wedding canopy], so I got to see a real chuppah at least once in my life. My dad brought his employees and taught them how to mix cocktails in a small room in the house, which he adapted as a bar. And four people played instruments. We went back home with the musicians on the first train the next morning. On the train, I saw that the musicians wore swastikas under their coat. There were no Jewish musicians. So my dad said to them: "Dear

Herbert Lewin, left, with his younger brother Werner, in Osterode in 1926.

Lord, what will happen to you if they find out that you played at a Jewish wedding?" "Mr. Lewin, if there were no Jewish weddings, we would starve. Look at what Mrs. Hirschfeld packed for us: cartons full of food. We need something to live, too; the swastika doesn't feed us." This happened in 1935, I was 18 years old back then.

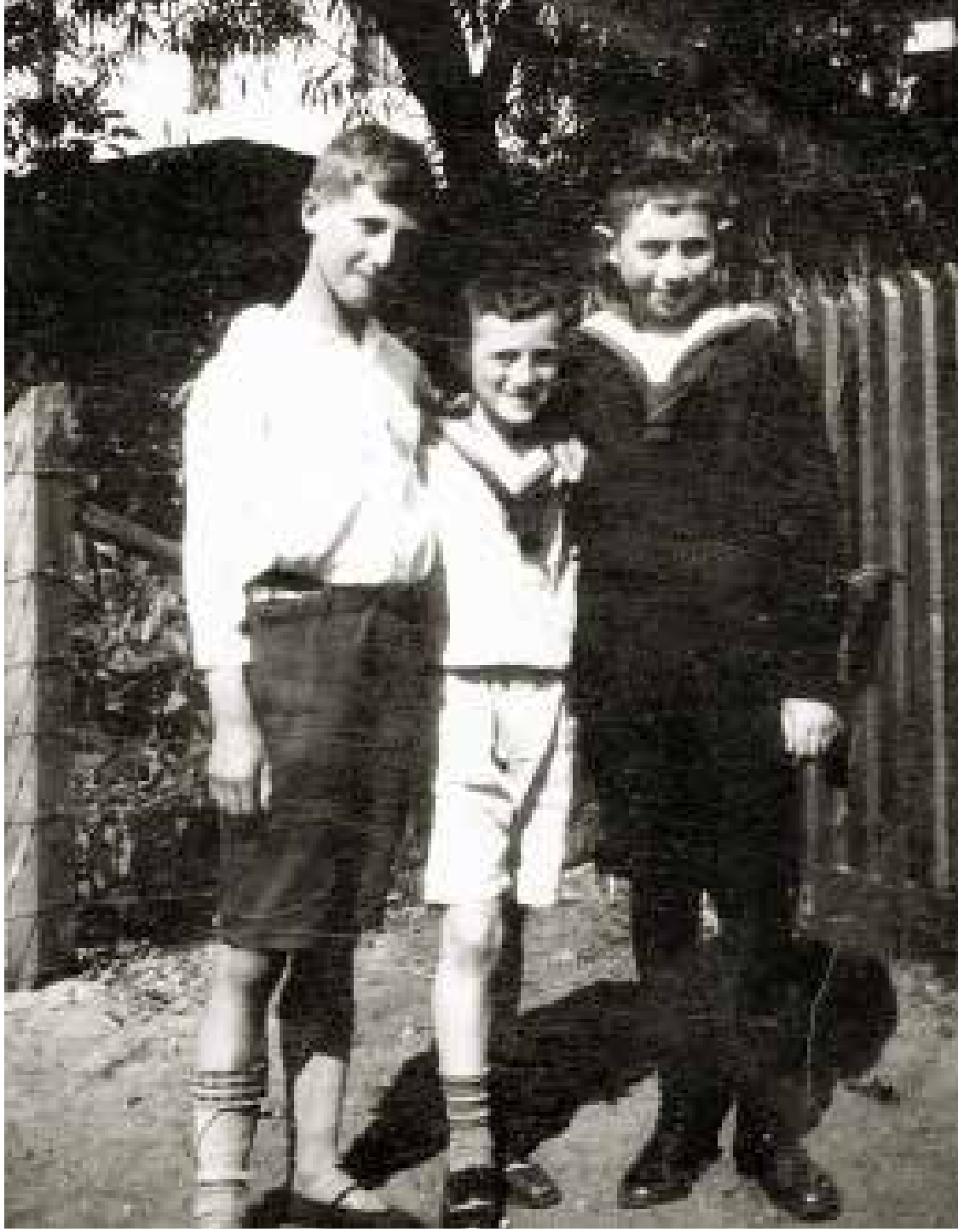
Adolf Hirschfeld had a very unhappy marriage. My mother often helped out in the Hirschfeld's store, but Adi's wife eventually forbade it. She said: "That's all fine, but I

just don’t like people rummaging about in our cash desk.” After that, my mum didn’t want to go there anymore. Then Mrs. Hirschfeld died; my mum sat at her deathbed for the last three days, until she closed her eyes. But after she had died, she didn’t go there anymore for quite some time. A couple years later, I went to a *hakhshara* [Hebrew: preparation—here it means organized preparation for emigration to Palestine] in Yugoslavia, and we got a list of things we had to bring: warm clothes, boots, summer clothes, and so on. But we didn’t have any money. So my mum didn’t know what else to do and went to see Adi in Liebemühl, and she showed him the list. And Adi said: “Aunt Bertha, take whatever you need. It’s better you take it, before someone else takes it away from us!”

I had a "milk brother" [Herbert Lewin was nursed by his nanny], Hans Schaller, whom I dearly loved. The Schaller Family lived in adverse conditions; his stepfather was an alcoholic, and his biological father died in the First World War. Mrs. Schaller worked as a cleaning lady at the post office; the eldest daughter was a maid. The family lived at the outskirts of Osterode. Back then there was no electric light. Hans and I always shared our sandwiches. His sandwiches were made with lard, while mine were bologna sandwiches. When I came home after school, I got rid of my satchel and ran to Hans without doing my homework. On the cold stove (they still had a coal-burning stove back then), there was a pot of lard and a tin can full of coffee substitute. We cut ourselves a slice of bread, coated it with lard, and washed it down with cold coffee substitute. That was our lunch, and we had plenty of fun. Outside there were piles of sand from the brickyards. We built sand castles there. And when it snowed, we made a jump. When the jump had frozen and was covered with snow, it was ready to use.

Hans had to join the Hitler youth; otherwise he wouldn't have passed the journeyman examination for his apprenticeship as a baker. He joined the Hitler youth but didn't have a uniform and went to the roll call in plain clothes. The group leader went berserk: "Hans Schaller, next week you have to attend roll call wearing a complete uniform." Hans said: "I can't, my mother doesn't have any money." A week later he came in uniform. He burst out loud that the boots were from the Jew Jacoby and shirt and pants from the Jew Jablonsky. The group leader was very angry, but Hans explained calmly: "My mother doesn't have any money, and had to purchase on credit. And only the Jews will give her credit." Hans worked in Osterode at the bakery that baked all pan loaves for the military. We were friends during all these years and he even visited us at home with the swastika uniform. He remained true to himself until his death. He had to serve with the Marines, and died during the war.

After elementary school, my parents wanted me to attend high school. I was a first-class student, so I was free to attend high school, but I didn’t want to, because Hans continued at the elementary school. I should separate from Hans, just because



Herbert Lewin on the right, with his younger brother Werner and his friend Hans Schaller in Osterode in 1930.

of high school? I made it through the entrance exam, and I made it through the first grade there. But then we were required to study French and Latin—and by that point, it was over. So my father sent me off to commercial school, and immediately I became an A student again. I liked doing all that stuff: stenography, bookkeeping, working with the typewriter, typing business letters. I was good at that.

1933 was my first year at commercial school. One day, we had to go down to the assembly hall and listen to [President] Hindenburg talk, when he appointed Hitler chancellor. My class teacher called me and said: "Herbert, I'm sorry, but you have to come, too. When all the people stand up and raise their hand for the Hitler salute, you just remain still; otherwise they would think you're being provocative. I don't know what they would do then." When I came back to the classroom, there was a piece of paper on my desk. "FREE ONE-WAY TRIP TO JERUSALEM!"—that's what was written on it. A shipping agent's daughter brought the piece of paper to my class teacher's desk. He tore it apart and threw it in the garbage. Before the second year started, my parents got a letter, which said: "We are very sorry, but we can't accommodate Jewish students at our school."

My brother was an A student. He would sit down, read the irregular Latin verbs twice, and they were inside his head. He made it to third grade in high school. Then the director of his school called my father and said: "Mr. Lewin, I'm very sorry to let such a great student go, but we received orders that we can't have Jewish students at our high school." My brother, then, sat around at home, too. After a while, he went to see a Jewish landowner, who prepared Jewish children for Palestine. He wasn't really thinking about going away; it was just something that would occupy him. But as he was there, he liked the idea of going to Palestine.

My father told my uncle in Brazil that Werner and I couldn't get a proper education any longer. My uncle wrote back immediately, and he said that he would take care of it; he said that he would see to it that Werner could go to England and continue to go to school. He had a business associate in London who managed to get a permit for Werner in 1937. He graduated from high school there, and he began studying pedagogy at university. But then the British entered the war, and he was interned on the Isle of Man. But he could continue his studies; it was a correspondence course. Then he volunteered to be a paratrooper. He was among the first of the invading army to parachute behind the German lines in Dünkirchen [France]. He stayed there until the end of the war and worked as a translator. My brother went back to England after the war and became a teacher. He died there in 1997.

Until 1933, I had not experienced any form of antisemitism. The Jewish community didn't think that anything could happen—they were German citizens of Jewish faith. For many German Jews, this idea was their downfall.

A birthday party at Herbert Lewin's home. Herbert is sitting third from the right. His friend Hans Schaller is also pictured with his mother. This picture was taken in Osterode in 1932.

In 1933, after Hitler had risen to power, the police were accompanied by the SA [German: "Die Sturmabteilung," abbreviated SA, Nazi paramilitary organization], because the SA didn't trust the police. The policemen came from the *Reichswehr* [Armed Forces of the Weimar Republic]; it was a professional army, where you had to sign up for twelve years of service. During these twelve years, people were trained to be policemen and officials. After twelve years, they went to work at post offices or for the police. These men didn't know antisemitism; some of them had been in the same school class as my father. There were no Jews harassed in Osterode; it would have been impossible.

In 1934, my dad had to let the house. Nobody came in [to the tavern] anymore, because there were two SA men standing at the entrance, controlling who went in and out of a Jew's door. These two SA men did not come from our town. No idea where they got them from. No one in the SA was from here. My father went to the head of the local party headquarters and said that he'd like to let his bar. A waiter from Elbing was interested. But he said that, in order to decide upon the rent,

Herbert Lewin's brother Werner Lewin in England in 1936.

he did not want to see the books, but rather observe the customer flow for a day. But there were no customers! It was a huge scam! After the waiter had taken over the business, all the SA men sat in the bar day and night. The kitchen was remodeled as a seating area, and the waiter and his wife were serving all day long. Thank god, my grandmother had died before the Nazis came, so she didn't have to see this.

My parents couldn't pay the rent for their apartment anymore, so we had to move to the outskirts of town. Fortunately, there was still my father's brother, who sent us money from Brazil every month.

I was unemployed for a year. Every Sunday I rode my bike to see Hans, even though sometimes I didn't even know if he was at home. But I knew that there was a key under the mat in front of the house. I went in and sat down at the window; they only had one window facing the yard. There was a radio set standing next to the window; I would listen to Radio Warsaw, because they had a beautiful concert every Sunday. I sat there and left my cares behind. I knew that nothing would happen to me because, all around me, there were only proletarians, Communists, and social democrats.

Then our rabbi organized an apprenticeship in a colonial produce store. I wanted to get away from home, because I saw that my parents didn't have anything to eat anymore. My father accompanied me to see the owner of the store, but when he saw that I would have to sleep in the same room as the family's mentally handicapped child, my father took me straight back home. A few months later, our rabbi managed to get me an apprenticeship as a baker. I was very happy, because my friend Hans was a baker, and so I wanted to be a baker, too, because we were of one mind.

The baker was a Jew, but in the bakery there was also a Nazi, who waited for the bakery to be Aryanized. I learned by watching and practicing. My parents had to pay the boarding wages, I had to send my dirty laundry home, and I had to eat with a friend of my parents'. Every Sunday I took the bike and rode out to the small villages and to the farmers, together with a young man I knew from work. We knew that nothing would happen out there. He told me once that there was a Zionist organization close to Königsberg. We went there one Sunday. They gave lectures, sang, and danced—

we liked it. We got enrolled as *chalutzim* [Hebrew: "pioneer, fighter," here it means members of an organization of immigrants to Israeli agricultural settlements.]. They said that we would be notified, once we could go to a hakhshara.

After a few weeks, the time had come. We went to Upper Silesia to work for a farmer, in order to be prepared for life in Palestine. We went to the village, met in a Jewish store, and then I was brought to a big farmer, who also had a small restaurant. My chore was to feed ten fattened oxen and to keep the stable clean. I was afraid of the oxen, but the farmer said that they were more docile than a lamb.

I did my work and for every ox we sold I was given three Marks from the customer for having fed and cared for the ox. I was happy! One day, the farmer called me and told me to come into the restaurant. He told me that I couldn't stay, because his customers said that they wouldn't come to his farm anymore, as long as he employed a Jewish boy. The farmer gave me a cigarette and said: "I know what you must feel like, but I can only give you as much as I own. My son brings me a box of cigarettes every year, and one of these cigarettes I want to give you. When you feel bitter, smoke this cigarette and remember that not all the Germans are as bad as you may think now."

I found another farmer in Golenic, which was also in Upper Silesia. I felt really good, I was part of a group there and I got to know Alfred Rosettenstein. He was the leader of our group; he was born in Frankfurt (Oder) and he was a fervent Zionist. Later, he would live in a *moshav* [Hebrew: "settlement, village," a type of Israeli cooperative agricultural community of individual farms] in Palestine. One day we got notified that the group would be dissolved and that we would go to a hakhshara in Yugoslavia.

I drove back home in 1937. My father told me that he had requested a passport for me and that it would be ready for pick-up in eight days. When we picked it up and left, the police commissioner said: "I wish your son all the best; may he get to know something different from what we have here."

The others were already in Yugoslavia; I was the only one who was late. In Subotica, at the Hungarian-Yugoslav border, a Jewish baron named Gutmann owned several estates. And he opened them to the German *hechalutz* [Hebrew: pioneers, newcomers], under the condition that the Hungarian stewards and the Yugoslav menials would keep their jobs. There were 120 boys and girls. We cultivated the whole manor, with its grapes and fields. I cared for two horses for a year, which is why I still love horses to this day. The second year I spent in the kitchen, then in the bakery. The oven was outside and it had to be heated by wood. I had to cut wood, heat the oven, empty it, and then put the bread in. It was an easy chore, five to six hours a day. The most important thing was to always have bread ready. These were the two best and most unburdened years of my life.

Alfred Rottenstein, from Frankfurt (Oder). He was a convicted Zionist and the leader of Herbert Lewin's group for Hakhshara. This picture was taken in Golenic in 1938.

After two years in Yugoslavia, there was finally a possibility to get to Palestine—illegally. What was adventurous about it was that we had to go into hiding for eight days in Yugoslavia. We had an entry visa for Ecuador. In Prague, there was a Jewish consul from Ecuador, and some Yugoslavian who had been on hachshara with us took our passports to that consul in Prague. He stamped our passports with entry visas under the condition that we destroy the passports as soon as we boarded the ship so he wouldn't be at any risk. We had also organized the emigration for five hundred Jewish chalutzim from Czechoslovakia. In Suschak (today's Croatia), someone from the Jewish community came and said that the Czechs are stuck on the border; they were actually kept in train wagons by the Germans, and no one knew what the Germans were going to do with them. We could stay in the synagogue until the Czechs would arrive. We ended up staying in the synagogue for more than a week, sleeping on straw mattresses. Nobody was allowed to go to the windows or into the staircase. The community provided help for us—they even brought us books and games. Finally, the time had come! We had bribed the police superintendent in Suschak and then secretly—but with the knowledge of the captain and sailors—got on board the Greek ship Galilea, where we hid in the engine room.

When the 500 people from Czechoslovakia finally arrived, the train with the sealed coach went into the port, straight to the ship. Otherwise, we could not have smuggled in the five hundred Czechs. In the ship's stowage place, there were three-story bunk beds for us, but there was hardly any space. When you lay on the stomach, you couldn't change your position. The air was terrible. In the evening, the shaliach (Hebrew: group leader) had already arrived from Palestine. I volunteered for night guard during the entire trip—that way, I could sleep during the day in the girls' cabins, where there was considerably more space and you would also get better food. For food reserves, we had a cow on the ship, and a butcher who was among us slaughtered it after three days. At night, we had to stand guard so that

Herbert Lewin with his colleagues on hakhshara in Golenic in 1938. Herbert is third from the right.

no one would steal from the cow meat, which was hanging in front of the kitchen. Then, one night, some of the sailors came with a large kitchen knife. One of them just cut off a piece of the cow meat. More sailors came, but we were afraid of them, so we didn't send them away. Later, they would invite us to eat these yummy steaks with them.

On the seventh morning we reached British waters. We received a radio call, saying that we would have to stay outside of British territory for one more day. We were only allowed to reach the coast after sunset, when our ship was supposed to go towards a red light. We were put in rowboats, each of which would hold 25 people, and at nightfall, the sailors took us to the shore. There we were greeted by members of the *Haganah* [Hebrew: "Defense," and the name of a Zionist military organization] who were standing in the water up to their stomachs. We jumped off the boats and they brought us to the shore. There we had to lie flat and wait, probably for three hours.We were happy. The cavalry escorted us, and no one was allowed to speak or even light a cigarette. Finally we arrived at an orange grove with a large storage hall. After we had received hot tea and cigarettes, we rested for a while. Then we were brought to a Moshav. It was in the middle of the night, and the whole population of the Moshav was standing on the market square to welcome us, and each person took two or three of us to their home.

In the morning we had a sumptuous breakfast, with coffee, tea, olives, cheese, and sausage. Then, several buses with darkened windows took us to several families, where we were welcomed warmly. I stayed with a Polish couple; the husband worked in the Secretariat of the *Knesset* [Parliament] in Tel Aviv. We received fake IDs for the British military controls, and on went the journey...

I wanted to go to a *kibbutz* [Hebrew: collective agricultural community based on socialist principles] with all my people from Yugoslavia. I was brought to Magdiel; it was a small *kibbutz* with no land. The *kibbutzniks* [Hebrew: people who lived on the *kibbutz*] worked outside, in the *pardessim* [Hebrew: orchards]. The next morning, I was given a small axe, and we were brought into the orange plantations. There was a group of chalutzim and a group of Arabs. Everyone was in charge of a few rows of trees under which we pulled out the weeds. And you had to build an embankment around the trees, for irrigation.

At some point, I thought I was pulling out my lungs. It was 34, 35 degrees [Celsius]; I couldn't work any more and lay down flat under a tree. But I couldn't do anything else, either. So they didn't know what they should do with me. Then they had the glorious idea that they could send me to Tel Aviv, to unpack wagons at the freight depot. It was wagons loaded with flour bags, 75 kilograms each. You had to get in there crouched, and they would put the sack on your back. When they put the first sack on my back, I became smaller and smaller. So one of them said: "Go, get lost, sit down in the shade, smoke a cigarette, and in the evening you'll go back with us." That was my debut at the railroad in Tel Aviv.

One day, we sat down for lunch in the dining room. When I looked at the guy who was sitting opposite me, his bread crumbled and fell into the soup; the crust was still in his hands. Of course I started to laugh! I mean, it looked hysterical. But he just looked at me angrily and said: "Who are you?" And I told him that I didn't have a job yet and that I was a baker. The next day, I went to the bakery. It was a great bakery; there was a mixing machine, an oven, and a gas heating system. The baker was a young Romanian man, but he had no idea what he was doing. He didn't even knead the dough; he just put it in the mixing machine. I was really surprised. Within three hours, he was done with the bread. The next day at lunch, the man whose bread fell apart asked me if I was at the bakery and if I could make some better bread. I told him that, yes, I could make some better bread. And he said: "Well, then you'll be working at the bakery starting tomorrow." So I made some delicious bread and everyone was happy.

After a while, I didn't want to live in the *kibbutz* anymore and I started looking for a room in an apartment. Through a friend of mine I got to know Hans Rosenberg, who was born in Berlin. He lived in a small house in Kiryat Chaim, together with his wife

Herbert Lewin with his colleagues in the Kibbutz Magdiel in Israel in 1939. Herbet is in the top row, second from the left.

Esther—who was born in Hungary—and their daughters. I rented a bed in a two-bed room in his apartment. And we became friends. He helped me a lot. When I was conscripted in 1948, my wife lived in his house. His wife Esther died of cancer in the 1950s in Israel, so he went back to Berlin in 1957. His daughters stayed in Israel.

I found work in Kiryat Motzkin. There was an English base camp for the troops in the desert who fought the Germans. They always needed people to reload and sort everything; they had steel, wood, planks, tar barrels, barbwire, and all sorts of other things. My roommate Arie helped me a lot; like me, he worked there, in the wood-division. Arie loved the sea. He had lived in a *Kibbutz* at the sea and he worked for the fishing fleet. He always had a yearning for the sea. One day he went to Tel Aviv and he bought a fishing boat together with a few Arab men. But the boat sunk in a storm; luckily, Arie was not on board. I gave him money, and I asked friends to give him money, so that he would be able to buy another boat. With this new cutter, he transported munitions for the English navy. Later, he worked for the Shoham Company, the Israeli shipping line in Haifa. He started out as a sailor at a cargo ship and he rose to be a naval officer.

I left the Rosenberg house and slept in the camp. I met Kurt Holzhacker there, my future brother-in-law. He worked with a heavy crane. I had a small gramophone and twelve records—it was all I had. But I couldn't bring it into the camp, so I left it with the Rosenbergs. In the evenings, I went back to the Rosenbergs. They had a patio in front of their house. Sometimes a dozen people would meet there in the evenings, sing Viennese songs, cry and dance with each other. One day, there was a new girl. I stood there, fiddling around with my gramophone, and she started to dance. I felt entranced the moment I glanced at her. She had a nice figure, was funny, and vivacious. But I wouldn't dare talk to her. I didn't know who she was with or who she was. Then she asked me to dance with her and I fell in love with her. Her name was Gertrude and she was Kurt Holzhacker's sister from Vienna. In Vienna, she had finished an apprenticeship at a knitting factory called Altmann, but after that she couldn't find a job. So she came to Palestine in 1933.

We had two days of bathing vacation for ourselves, so we went to Nahariya. There was a really good pastry shop in Nahariya: Gretel Mayer was from Vienna, and she made original Viennese iced coffee, and original Viennese apple strudel. After we had gone swimming, we sometimes indulged in Gretel's pastries. Nahariya was so tidy. There is a joke about the *Yekke* [German Jews]: A foreigner visits Israel. They show him all the sights, and then they get to Nahariya, where a new house is being built. People are nudging up bricks, shouting: "Sh... sh... sh." So the visitor says: "They are masons, right?" Tourist guide: "Yes." "But what's that sound they make: 'Sh, sh, sh.'?" "You don't know that? They say: *"Dankeschön, Bitteschön, Dankeschön, Bitteschön."* [German: Thanks! -You're Welcome!—Thanks!—You're Welcome!]

That's the kind of jokes you would hear in Nahariya; everything was *Yekke* around there: the restaurants, the stores—all of them *Yekke*. And that's what it looked like: impeccable!

Israel declared its independence in 1948. Everyone danced on the streets, and Trude and I stood outside. I said: "Trude, nothing good will come of this. I can't dance with those people, because I know what it will be like." And shortly after that, we were all conscripted. So I married Trude immediately, for financial reasons. All our friends came. In the rabbi's apartment, they had a small chuppah. And then the rabbi said: "Oy vey, there are only nine [people] for the *minyan* [quorum required to pray], but we need ten, we have to find another one!" So my friend Moishe just went to get someone from the street. The rabbi started talking Hebrew:

"What's your name?"
"Herbert Lewin."
"And your Jewish name?"
"Zwi!"
"And what's your name?"
"Gertrude Holzhacker!"
"That can't be true. What's your Jewish name?"
"I don't have a Jewish name."
"Then you're not a Jew."
"I am a Jew!"
They argued back and forth, until they agreed that she was a half-Jew. Trude said: "What can I do, I don't have a Jewish name!"

Trude would visit me a lot during my time at the military. When I was dismissed from the army in 1950, Trude wanted to go back to Vienna, and I wanted to go with her. My friend Arie found a job as a chef on a ship for me. I spent five years on the ship, and Trude was in Haifa. It was hard work. We worked for eighteen hours a day, even on Sundays and on holidays. It was a passenger ship; we even brought survivors from concentration camps to Israel. It was five hundred people at a time sometimes. I came back home every twelve days, but we didn't have much time; sometimes I just took a cab, brought home my dirty laundry, and picked up the clean clothes.

We got divorced in Israel, so that Trude wouldn't get Israeli citizenship and lose the Austrian one. The only thing it took her to start crying was listening to "An der schönen blauen Donau" ["The Blue Danube," a waltz by the Austrian composer Johann Strauss II] on the radio. She suffered a lot from homesickness... she suffered a lot. It was complicated for me to get a passport, but we managed.

In 1955, we went on a ship from Israel to Italy, and then we took the train to cross the border via the Brenner Pass. For many years, I was a foreigner in Austria and had to

check in regularly with the police. My brother-in-law, Kurt Holzhacker, vouched for me. He was in Palestine with the English military, then he went to Holland and from Holland to Vienna. Later I learned that he was a member of the KPÖ [Kommunistische Partei Österreichs / Austrian Communist Party]. I think that I had quite some difficulties because of that. After my residence permit had expired, I had to file for a work permit. Every six months, the same thing, back and forth.

My future boss was a member of the Communist party, too. He took over one of the USIA businesses [The Administration for Soviet Property in Austria], and I think that he really advocated for me at the employment agency. Once Trude went to Bäckerstraße, because my residence permit had expired again, and afterwards she said: "Don't go to the aliens branch anymore. I went there and I thought there were Nazis sitting in front of me. They treated me like a piece of dirt. I'll go to the Department of the Interior and see the minister right now." When she came back she cried and said: "You know what they asked me? If I really was that stupid, or if I were just acting. They said that they had already expelled you and that you weren't even here anymore." So we went to the office of the Jewish Community. They said we should hire a lawyer. I did, and after a while he really did manage to get me the Austrian citizenship. My first ten years in Austria I worked as a product tester for an industrial product testing company named Controlla. The next ten years I worked for a forwarder named Express. My wife Gertrude worked as a waitress and as an operator. She died in March 2001.

I've never been back to Osterode, but my nephew went. I wanted to go back, but I never got around to it. Now it's too late, my eyes are getting worse and worse. My nephew says that it was rebuilt fantastically, according to the old, original plans, but with completely new buildings. They built a shore promenade all around the Drweckie bay. He sat there with his wife and kid, drinking coffee.

Herbert Lewin's wife Gertrude in Haifa, Israel, in 1950.

HILLEL KEMPLER

Tel Aviv, Israel

Hillel Kempler, born in Berlin in 1925, was interviewed by Tanja Eckstein in Tel Aviv in August 2010.

We were five siblings; I was the youngest. My sister Fanny was born in 1914 and my sister Gusti in 1917 in Vyzhnytsia [today Ukraine], where my father, Nathan David Kempler, and my mother, Liebe Kempler, lived until 1918. Vyzhnytsia belonged to Galicia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After the end of the First World War and the fall of the Monarchy, my father saw no future for his family in Vyzhnytsia, and my parents relocated to Berlin. My brother Isi was born in 1919, my sister Miriam in 1923, and I on October 26th, 1925, in Berlin.

My father was born in Lviv [today Ukraine]. I never saw his family. At the age of 14 he was an apprentice in a pastry shop, and in 1906 he received his certification as an assistant in a gingerbread bakery. After that he did his apprenticeship. In the First World War my father was a soldier with the Austrian military and was stationed in Albania. Sometimes he would tell us how horrible the war was. He got sick with malaria and so couldn't fight any more. Then he cooked for the officers.

My mother's maiden name was Ettinger. This family lived in Vyzhnytsia, where my sisters, Fanny and Gusti, were also born. I believe my parents were married in Vyzhnytsia. I don't know how or where they met. But they both came from very religious families and in those days there was Schadchen [Yiddish: matchmaker], who connected the partners on behalf of the family.

Right after the First World War my parents immigrated to Germany with my sisters Fanny and Gusti, since the postwar situation in Vyzhnytsia and in the whole region was really tough. My father was a very ambitious person. He wanted to have something to show for his life. He had imagined, or else heard, I don't know, that there were more opportunities to advance professionally in Germany.

In Berlin he opened the *kosher* pastry shop "Krakauer Café and Konditorei" at Grenadier-strasse [today Almstadt-strasse] 20. In my father's pastry shop there were some baked goods—they would also be delivered from the shop—and you could eat breakfast and supper there. I own a photograph of the pastry shop that shows everything.

Grenadierstrasse was a Jewish street in the famous Berlin Scheunenviertel. The Scheunenviertel was located between Hackescher Markt and the current Rosa

Luxemburg Platz. During the time that I lived there, Rosa Luxemburg Platz was called Bülowplatz. In those days, in the Scheunenviertel, there were a lot of very religious Jews with *payot* [Hebrew: sidelocks worn by Orthodox men] and prayer shawls, modern Jews like my father and his friends, workers, and businesspeople. Initially my father rented the pastry shop, then later he bought it. It was a well-known pastry shop, it had a good reputation. In the shop there was coffee and a variety of cakes: cheesecake, apple cake, strudel, and such things. There was also ice cream and beer. The pastry shop was pretty small. From the street-level you would go down two or three steps, since the place was in the half-basement. There were two rooms with tables for guests, next to which were two more rooms, and in one was the bakery with the machines. My father had an employee, but my mother also worked sometimes when there were a lot of guests. I can still remember that, following the success of the pastry shop, my father—I don't know exactly what year that was, but it must have been around 1931—rented a large café across from the pastry shop. They café didn't exist for very long, however; it didn't work out. It was clearly too big for him. I know that it was there and then it was gone again.

A Communist group met regularly in our pastry shop. There were approximately ten to fifteen people. They spent a lot of time in the pastry shop. I know that there were Jewish and non-Jewish Communists. They exchanged information and played games—I can remember dominoes well. I really liked playing dominoes, as well. They often called to me: come, Hillel, play with us! And I was always very proud that I was allowed to play with them. They drank beer and coffee and ate a lot of cheesecake. My father's cheesecake was pretty well known. They always paid for everything. My father was a devout Jew, he didn't understand politics, since politics didn't interest him at all. It was good for him that the Communists came to him, since they consumed so much. That was his interest. Our street was very Jewish, but we coexisted nicely with the Communists. Of course, at that time I didn't know what a Communist was.

There were a lot of *kosher* [Jewish religious dietary laws] shops and many synagogues in the Scheunenviertel. These synagogues were not stand-alone buildings. In those days you would rent only one or two rooms and open a synagogue there. I went to so many small shtiebelekh [Yiddish: prayer rooms], or shtiebel. Shtiebelekh means room in Yiddish. I can still remember some of these shtiebelekh very well.

My parents were religious. Every morning my father would put on tefillin [Hebrew: set of small leather boxes containing Torah passages with leather straps worn on the head and arms during morning prayer], and Friday evenings and on Saturdays go to his shtiebel. All of his friends were at the shtiebel, and his community life revolved around the shtiebel. My father had a beard, but he was Modern Orthodox. You couldn't tell from his clothing that he was very devout, and as the Nazis came to power in 1933, he immediately shaved his beard.

We were *kosher*, of course, and weren't allowed to even think about pig. My brother Isi, he was six years older than me, took me by the hand one day and said: "Come, Hillel, we're going to buy sausages." There were small wagons on the street that sold sausages. Of course these were sausages made of pork. Isi brought me to one of these wagons and crept around it so that no one would see us. Then he positioned himself at a corner of the wagon and bought us each a pair of sausages. We quickly ran with the sausages to the next street and ate them in an entryway. Isi then made me swear: "Hillel, you must never tell anyone." And for years I was afraid that someone would find out and tell that I had eaten pork sausages. But that was such a thrill, the forbidden! Isi needed to try it once. We thought, who knows what would happen to us after eating the sausages?

My parents spoke a mixture of German and Yiddish, but it was certainly more Yiddish than German. Sometimes they also went to a Yiddish theatre, of which there were many in Berlin. My sister, I guess, spoke High German, since she went to the Jewish High School in Berlin. I was always playing with lots of kids in the street. All the children were on the street in those days, and someone said to me when I arrived in Israel: "I know your language, you're from Berlin." I had picked up a bit of Berlin slang from the kids on the street.

Our apartment was also on Grenadier-strasse, directly across from my father's pastry shop. The apartment had six rooms. It was on the second floor. There was a parlor, which was a large room. In the parlor there was a long table for twelve people that had been very expensive. I can recall it exactly. And there was a large bureau and a grandfather clock that needed to be wound once a week. Only my father was allowed to do that, no one else. My parents were very proud of everything that they had accomplished. My father often gave gifts to my mother. Once he even bought her an Astrakhan coat. That was quite exceptional, of course. In 1933 she sent the Astrakhan coat with our moving boxes to Palestine, but she of course had no need for it here.

We had two maids that looked after us children. One was called Herta. She was a young girl.

Before I went to primary school I would go to a shtiebel in the afternoon. There was a Rabbi and a couple of other children there, and we learned religion and Hebrew. When my brother Isi was young, he was certainly also in a shtiebel. Later we were enrolled in a completely normal primary school.

My mother was a beautiful woman, and she was a loving mom. I was once very sick as a child; I had strange blue spots on my legs and needed to go to a convalescent home near Hamburg for a couple of months. I don't know what kind of illness that was. Because of my sickness I was very spoiled. But because I was the youngest, I was also very spoiled by my siblings. My sisters often looked after me; we were all very close.

On Friday, on Shabbat, we always ate at the large table in the parlor. We were all so proud of the fact that we only ate at the large table on Shabbat and the High Holidays. During the week everyone came home at a different times and we didn't eat together.

Before Passover the whole apartment would be cleaned, food would be cooked, and the Passover dishes would be taken out. The dishes that we used throughout the year were put away. The Seder [Hebrew: Passover ritual retelling the story of the Jews' exodus from Egypt] was a very important evening. A large white tablecloth with religious symbols was laid out on our large table. On the table there was a plate with five sections—that was the Seder plate. There were various things to eat in it, each with a symbolic character. There were three matzoth [Hebrew: unleavened flatbread] in a cushion with three levels. My father took out one matzah, broke it, and hid one half. That was the afikoman. We children had to look for and find the afikoman. My father wasn't allowed to end the meal until he got the afikoman back. Whoever found the piece of matzah was allowed to ask my father for something at the end of the meal in the evening, which lasted a few hours. It could be a book or a game. Then he, my mother, and my sisters would bite the afikoman into a round shape, a hole would be made in the middle, and there was a nail in the room the afikoman would be hung on. It would stay there until the next Passover. For the Seder, my father wore a satin coat. He had to put the coat on over his head. The arms were embroidered with silver thread, and my father wore a flat cap on his head that was also embroidered with silver thread. He ate like a king. He wasn't permitted to sit on a chair. Two armchairs were put together for him, and so he would be half sitting, half lying down. That was the tradition: if he's a king, he should also sit like a king. Today when we read the Haggadah [the book read on Passover] at home, we always jump ahead because we want to eat. But my father read the whole Haggadah, and that took hours. We loved our father; we respected him.

My mother often read from the Yiddish woman's bible—the bible was called Ze'enah U-Re'enah. It is a very well known bible for Jewish women. [A collection, in Yiddish, of Biblical verses and stories, as well as the five scrolls and weekly readings from the prophets. The stories focused on women because it was created for women.] This bible was written in Yiddish. Often, once we were already in Tel Aviv, she would tell stories from this bible during Shabbat. I don't know where the book went. I would really like to have it, but it has disappeared.

It was a tradition in Jewish households to leave a section of wall in a room, not big, maybe a meter, unpainted. That was to commemorate the history of the Jews. We had that in Berlin, not in the parlor, but in one of the upper rooms.

We were a real Berlin family, and enjoyed ourselves. We often drove around and were always out and about. My father would come, too, since the pastry shop was closed on Saturdays. For example we'd go to Wannsee or Grunewald. We'd go to Alexanderplatz, which was really close by. There were always markets at Alexanderplatz, and often circuses. I can also still remember a Zeppelin from New York that landed in Berlin. We were there for that; the whole city was there. The Babylon cinema was located near Grenadier-strasse, on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, across from the Berliner Volksbühne [a famous Berlin theatre]. I went often to the Babylon; I knew it well. I would see funny films there—they were still silent, pictures without talking—with my brother Isi or my sister Gusti, and in winter I would skate on the ice on the square in front of the Volksbühne with other children. We also had good relationships with gentiles. It was totally normal and didn't matter if someone was Jewish or not. You were accepted. I never heard "Jew" associated with anything negative from the people on our street. Maybe in school, but I was only there for half a year.

I could already read before I went to school. I always loved reading. I read whatever I could get my hands on. And when I went out in the streets I read the signs on the storefronts. Maybe it's because of my siblings, who were always giving me newspapers and periodicals. Then in Berlin I was only in school for a half a year, and even today I can still read German well, which is astounding.

In 1932 I was enrolled in the primary school on Gips-strasse. Of course I also got a candy cone for my first day of school, which was already customary back then. I have a photo of myself in a sailor suit with my candy cone. Both Jewish and gentile children received a candy cone. I don't know how many kids in my class were Jewish; I didn't care in those days. My siblings were all at different schools, all in the neighborhood. Once my wife Ester and I visited my school on Gips-strasse. We wanted to see everything. The first time I went looking for the street I didn't find it. We were then in Berlin again and I had the right address with me. We went into the school and I looked for various things there and tried to remember, but couldn't find anything.

If Hitler hadn't come we definitely would have stayed in Berlin.

I want to talk about the day when everything changed. After Hitler won the elections in January 1933, the Nazis immediately took to the streets, breaking windows. They wore brown uniforms and boots. I can still see it right before my eyes. The Süssapfel family lived below us. One night we heard horrible noises coming from the Süssapfel's apartment. It woke us all up. My father was still in the pastry shop, preparing everything for the next day. Herta, our maid, quickly locked the front door. I think what I still know of it, things that I both remember and things that were told to me. I can't differentiate between them. We were really anxious. Herta said that the family was being beaten downstairs, and that we weren't allowed to go out. Isi, my brother, positioned himself at our front door and wanted to hear exactly what was going on downstairs, but Herta kept chasing him away. There were horrible noises, and then all of a sudden it was quiet. We waited a while longer, then Herta unlocked the door and went downstairs. As soon as she got back she told us that Nazis had been in the Süssapfels' apartment and had beaten the husband and two sons: they had placed them at the wall and drove their heads into the wall. I don't know what they wanted. Herta told us the wall was red with blood. Once the Nazis left the family wanted to call a doctor for help, but no one wanted to come. Then they called an ambulance, which also didn't come. Then the father went with the two sons to a hospital by foot. They carried themselves there and were bandaged. Afterwards, they came back home. No one knew at the time if the Nazis had been there officially, or if they could press charges with the police. They wanted to press charges, but were chased away. A couple of days later, I don't know who told us this, it said in the police log: Grenadier-strasse 36, 1 a.m., fight between father and two sons, sons were drunk, the people were warned that it should never happen again.

My life changed that night. I didn't know anything about politics yet, but that someone could just go into an apartment, beat the people there, and that there was blood in the apartment, is something that has stayed with me.

Everything was fine before that, and then all of a sudden something so awful happens.

The Communists who lived in our neighborhood knew my father. There were also Communists during this time who defected to the Nazis. Many thought my father was a Communist. That's why one day in April, shortly after the horrible event with the Süssapfel's, my father was searched by the Nazis in the middle of the night. They pounded on the door. Mrs. Heinz, the doorman's wife, heard it. She immediately knew what was happening. Mrs. Heinz was Christian. We had a very good relationship with her. My father often gave her cake as a gift. My father often gave the Communists cake, as well. He wanted good relationships and was a very likeable man. Mrs. Heinz ran very quickly from the backdoor of the courtyard to my father's bakery and yelled: "Mr. Kempler, Mr. Kempler, come quick!" Then she put my father into her wood cellar and let the Nazis in.

She said: "I don't know where Mr. Kempler is, I haven't seen him since midday." The Nazis stormed the bakery and cried: "Where is the Jew, where is the Communist!" They turned over all the tables and broke the machines and the furniture. Mrs. Heinz stood by and acted as though she didn't know where my father was. The Nazis left after slapping Mrs. Heinz twice across the face. My father stayed in the basement for the whole night.

Mr. Meier was a member of the Communist Party in Berlin and was among the group of Communists that would regularly visit my father. After two days we saw Mr. Meier on the street in a brown uniform. He went to the SA office and wanted to speak with the commander. He told them that the Communist Party had helped him and things were going poorly for him and his family. He was unemployed and the Communists had given him vouchers for food and coal for winter, his children got clothes and shoes and his wife a warm coat. That's the only reason he became a member of the Communist Party. Every time he was in the Jewish café he'd get cake for his wife and children, and sometimes even tickets for the circus. He knew that Jewish capitalists were responsible for the inflation, but Mr. Kempler was not a Communist. At this point the Communists were ready to go underground. Maybe Mr. Meier was one of those who didn't convert, but simply wanted to help by joining the SA and never actually abandoned his beliefs since, for starters, he helped my father go into hiding.

There were a lot of villages in the area around Berlin. The farmers drove through the streets with horse-drawn carts and traded split wood for potato peels. Even my mother collected potato peels and traded them for wood. The farmers fed their pigs with the potato peels. All the people on our street did it.

A relative of Mr. Meier's was one of those farmers with a farm. The next day he rode his horse-drawn carriage in front of the bakery. He brought special clothes for my father. My father got into the cart and they left Berlin. My father paid him 500 Reichsmarks.

My sister Fanny was 19 at the time. She and my mother went to the English consulate, since Palestine was an English protectorate then, and procured a tourist visa for my father, which he could use to flee to Palestine. A lot of women were standing in front of the consulate, very few men, and also people from the SA. At this time the SA still had some respect for women. They would insult the few men who were standing there, but never hit them. My mother had to pay a lot of money for the tourist visa at the English consulate. That was the deposit to get my father back to Berlin. Fanny and Gusti were politically educated through the Zionist youth organization Tchelet Lavan [Blue-White] and immediately understood that my father needed to leave Germany quickly, because the Nazis would never stop looking for him.

My father stayed with the farmer in the village until he could take the train through Switzerland to Italy, and then take a ship from Italy to Palestine without facing any trouble with his travel papers. That was still possible at this time. The Nazis didn't have search lists for people like my father yet, that came later. Luckily, it was still crude.

My father was gone and my mother was alone with us children. I assume it was awful for her. But as a child I didn't take notice. My father's employee was still in the bakery. My mother discussed with the employee that he and she would continue baking. Customers were no longer coming into the pastry shop, but people still came into the shop, made their purchases, and left again. I guess no one wanted to sit inside because it was dangerous. Because if someone sat inside, someone could have immediately said: you're also a Communist.

At this time the Nazis began hunting Communists and Jews. When they saw Jews on the street they would beat them. They broke windows on the streets where the Jewish businesses were. My father also took a few hits, but that was before they got really aggressive. Everything began relatively slow. It didn't start overnight—slowly, slowly!

My mother didn't know what was going to happen, but she understood that it wasn't going to be good. She said that either our father comes back and we go somewhere together, maybe to Poland, or my father will stay in Palestine and she'll go to him with the children. She went back to the English consulate and asked if she could have a visa for Palestine. "No, you can't have anything at all, because your husband went to Palestine on a tourist visa under the condition that he comes back," the official said. Unless he came back to Berlin my mother had no chance of getting us a visa for Palestine. She discussed it again with the official, but that didn't help. Then Fanny went to the English consulate. But even she couldn't convince the official there to give my mother a visa. So my mother decided—maybe she also consulted with friends and family—to cross Europe by train and bus, and then be smuggled into Palestine on a ferry. I was seven years old, Miriam was nine, and my brother Isi was fourteen.

My sisters stayed in Berlin. Fanny promised mother that she would look after Gusti, and that the chances to get to Palestine with the youth organization were very good.

My mother sold and gave away everything in the pastry shop. A mover helped us pack the crates for Palestine. We couldn't take furniture, of course, but other important things. The mover took everything and sent it to Palestine. My mother didn't take a lot of photos, that's why I only have a few. After our departure my sisters were looked after by the youth organization.

My mother had money for the trip. It wasn't difficult to get a visa for Czechoslovakia. Many Jews from Berlin would go regularly to Karlovy Vary for treatment at a health resort. My mother also went almost every year to Karlovy Vary.

We took the train from Berlin to Karlovy Vary. We didn't have many suitcases—two, I believe. My mother carried one, and my brother Isi the other. We arrived in Karlovy Vary without a problem. I had fun on the ride. I enjoyed it and didn't think about problems, I knew that we were going to my father.

The hotel that we went to in Karlovy Vary was rather empty since the German Jews weren't going there any more. We stayed there for about two days. I believe that my mother had an acquaintance at the hotel who helped us. We went to Prague from Karlovy Vary. My mother had connections with a Jewish organization there. We met a man in the Jewish Community office who showed us the Prague old city with the synagogues; he also showed us the Old New Synagogue and told us the story of the Golem. Many, many years later I went back to Prague, that beautiful city, a couple of times. After a few days my mother received a visa for Budapest, something that wasn't so easy. This visa was only valid for two days. We took the train to Budapest.

Budapest is a magnificent city. I also went back to Budapest a few times, and so I can't quite remember what I thought of it back then. We lived in a hotel again, and mother took care of everything. We wanted to go to Yugoslavia, and after two days my mother had the visa, which also wasn't easy. We were on the train again, this time to Belgrade.

My mother had already made a connection in Berlin with the director of the Jewish Committee in Belgrade. His name was Spitzer, I don't know what his first name was; he was Mr. Spitzer to me. He was on the managing board at the Phillips company in Belgrade, and was seemingly well off—not rich, but well off. He worked in a large store. Mr. Spitzer sent someone to the train station and had already rented a room for us, and everything, at the cost of the Jewish Community. He said: You're our guests here! He understood how difficult our circumstances were. My mother still had money, but didn't know, of course, how much she was going to need. We were in Belgrade for three weeks because we weren't able to get a visa for Bulgaria, despite Mr. Spitzer's help. During this time my mother and Mr. Spitzer's wife became very good friends; it was a beautiful connection. We were always invited to their place on Friday night for Shabbat dinner. After three weeks my mother succeeded in getting us a transit visa for Bulgaria.

Then something awful happened. On the Bulgarian border the Bulgarians didn't let is in, since my mother had one passport, which my sister Miriam and I were registered on. But she had nothing for my brother Isi. Isi was 14 years old at the time. He needed a passport; without a passport they wouldn't let him into the country. As I learned much later, the Bulgarians at that time were really afraid of Communists and communist youth who wanted to turn Bulgaria into a communist country. And they didn't actually know if Isi was a Komsomol or if he was Mrs. Kempler's son, as he said he was. To acquire a passport for Isi, my mother would have had to go to Poland. The officials said, "we're sorry, you can't come into the country if the boy doesn't have a passport." Oh God, that was horrible! The train left without us and we had to go back to Belgrade. My mother immediately called Mr. Spitzer in Belgrade. Luckily we had him! On this occasion he even sent a chauffeur to the train station. The room that we lived in was still free, and we moved back in. I guess Mr. Spitzer had sought counsel. After a few days he came by and said to my mother: "There is only one solution, the boy is fourteen years old, at that age he can stay here as an apprentice. It's very normal in Europe to have fourteen-year-old boys begin an apprenticeship. I know a woodworker; he'll live there and learn woodworking. When he has a profession, he can work in Palestine on a *kibbutz* [Hebrew: collective farm] . He won't be alone, we'll take good care of him. Take the two children and leave the boy here." My mother began to cry, but after a couple of days she saw that there was no other solution. So she decided to leave my brother in Belgrade and go on with my sister Miriam and me. We all cried a lot.

We took the train to Sofia. Until Sofia, all the cities we'd been to had the air of a European city. In Sofia the train station was next to a farmers' market, right in the street. There were horses and donkeys there, and the farmers sat in the street. Everything was very dirty. I had never seen anything like it. It was a whole different world, and it fascinated me. I became the leader of the family there. My mother wanted to call a taxi, which wasn't possible because all they had were horse droshkies. My mother couldn't even make herself understood. I said: "Wait, I'll bring you a droshky!" I went to the droshky driver and led him by the hand to our suitcases.

We were only in Sofia for a short time, since there was problem getting a visa for Turkey. Our next stop was Istanbul.

Istanbul was also dirty, our hotel as well. The food was oriental and very strange. I had no problems, sometimes it tasted good, sometimes it was even delicious, and sometimes we had to laugh when we got food in the hotel. The streets in Istanbul were completely different than what I knew—narrow and curvy. And then there were the mosque roofs and minarets—all of that fascinated me. In Istanbul I was also fascinated by the Turkish bloomers the men wore. My mother had to explain it to me; I found it very intriguing. I marveled at the beautiful oriental synagogues, and there was something else there that I can remember: there was a bridge over the Bosporus that they'd lift a couple times a day, twice maybe, so that the ships could get through. I saw it from afar and needed to get there so I could understand how it functioned. Since we had enough time, my mother went with us to the bridge the next day. That image will stay with me forever.

I was a very active child, I moved around a lot, asked a lot of questions. My sister Miriam was more of a nervous child, always clinging to our mother's apron, as they say. I ran through the streets of Istanbul and would find my way back. I was never afraid and never got lost. I really enjoyed the whole journey. We didn't know anyone in Istanbul, but I think in Belgrade or Sofia my mother got the addresses of a man

in Istanbul, and she got in contact with this man. We needed to go with a smuggler from Istanbul to Syria, and then cross the sea illegally with fishermen. But we needed to get to Syria first. After a few days in the hotel in Istanbul a man showed up who promised to help us as soon as it was possible for him. But he would have to deny ever having met us. A short time later a truck with boxes of fruit came, since Turkey shipped fruit to Syria. Said, the driver, wore bloomers that almost reached the ground, and I laughed a lot. First we needed to put on Arab clothing. Miriam and I were placed between the fruit boxes, and our mother sat next to the driver so that it would look as though we were a family—husband, wife, children. The uncomfortable trip lasted a number of days. The driver had friends on the Syrian border, so there was no problem—we could proceed. The man brought us to Haleb, a large city in the north of Syria. He left us at a boarding house, and then was gone. Our suitcases were also gone. We couldn't communicate—the people in the boarding house spoke Arabic and French, and my mother spoke German and Polish. The man from the boarding house didn't know how he should talk to us, and then he had a good idea. He went into the city and brought back a man, Mr. Chakim, who was from a rich Jewish family. This man and my mother were able to speak with one another, I don't know anymore whether it was German or Polish. My mother told him everything and he invited us to his house. We were given a room, and his wife gave us and our mother clothing. We had to immediately change out of the Arab things since we didn't want people to notice that something wasn't right. If someone had asked us something in Arabic, we wouldn't have understood and been able to answer. Then the police might have noticed us. After two days, I can't remember much more, I also don't know what the house looked like, the man brought us new suitcases filled with new, beautiful clothes, and he gave my mother the address of a Jewish restaurant in Beirut [today Lebanon]. At that time Syria and Lebanon were under French control. The restaurant owner was supposed to help us get to Palestine. He wrote a few words for him on a piece of paper then he brought us to an Arab bus that looked like a truck. He spoke with the driver; he did everything to make sure we made it to Beirut all right. He told the bus driver exactly where he was to bring us in Beirut, and gave him food and baskets of fruit. We sat behind the driver during the trip, I watched the Arab women in their burqas—I had never seen anything like that before and was fascinated by it.

In Beirut my mother gave the note to the restaurant owner and he brought us in his car to a house in a village. The house had a heavy gate and there was a fountain in the courtyard. The restaurant owner could speak a bit of Yiddish and told us to stay there, that he would take care of everything. He came every other day and each time brought one or more Jews with him. A family from Cologne arrived, a couple with two children in our age group. We played with the children. I remember that the husband was the headwaiter in a large café in Cologne. He spoke good French, and later really helped us out.

The plan was that we would be taken to Palestine on an Arab fishing boat and the fishermen would bring us to shore.

We were in the village for two weeks. My mothers had less and less money since the restaurant owner needed more and more money for the smuggler.

We kept asking when we would be leaving and they always answered us: "wait, wait, wait." Then there were about twenty of us waiting in the house in the small village. They would tell us that we'd be leaving some evening this week, and then it would be pushed back again, because of the stormy sea, for example. Until one day they said: we're leaving today! Two small buses came into the courtyard, our suitcases were tied to the roofs, and then we were really off. We were to meet the Arab fishermen who were bringing us to Palestine somewhere along the cliffs by the sea.

The bus driver was afraid that we would be stopped by the police and inspected, and so they took routes over sand and stone. All of a sudden we saw headlights in the distance. The bus driver knew that it could only be the police. There was a plan for this occasion to be used now: we were a group of tourists on their way to Egypt who had deviated from the road. There were arguments between the tourists and the bus drivers about the payment. One of the bus drivers began throwing the suitcases and boxes from the roof of the bus. He screamed to the supposed tourists, " We're not going any further. You can stay here!" In the meantime, the police had gotten out of their car and didn't know what they should make of this. First, they wanted the buses to follow their car to Beirut, and explain the situation from there. The bus driver explained that the bus' motors were not in good shape. Because the police had no interest in driving behind two broken buses, they said: "Take the people back in the cars, and go with them to Beirut. It's not our problem that you haven't received enough money from them, but we want all of their passports. You can pick up the passports tomorrow at the police station in Beirut, then everything will be cleared up." The police collected all the passports. They counted the people and the number of passports. Once they were gone the bus drivers said: "Quick, quick, we'll go on without the passports!" On account of the names in the passports, the police would figure out immediately that we wanted to go to Palestine illegally. The bus drivers quickly threw the suitcases from the buses again, and we drove to the sea. An Arab was waiting there and showed us the path with a flashlight. And then we were on the sea. Arab fishermen carried us through the water to the ship. Miriam and I were carried together by one Arab; he took us under his arms, Miriam under the right one, me under the left one. Even the adults were carried on the backs of the Arab fisherman. Everything needed to go very quickly. We got on the boat and were immediately under way. The aim was to bring us to Palestine as quickly as possible.

We slept on sacks in the belly of the ship. Everything smelled like fish. Many people had to throw up because of the rocky sea. No one was allowed on deck to get fresh air. It would have been too dangerous since we couldn't be seen. As we got closer to Haifa the fishermen saw searchlights that were sweeping the sea for illegal ships. They turned back to the sea. The following next night the ship was somewhere south of Haifa and the fishermen saw even more searchlights. That's how they knew exactly where the harbor in Haifa was. We needed to wait a few more days. All we had to eat was pita and olives. I didn't like the olives, they were so oily, and so I only ate the pita. That I can remember.

Someone told us later that the English really were looking for us because they knew we were coming when we didn't go to Beirut to pick up our passports. The French had understood immediately and relayed to the English that we were on our way to Palestine. On the fourth night their search efforts had subsided a bit and our ship went closer to the beach. We were brought to the beach in a small boat. "This is Palestine, the rest is your problem!" They left and a couple of suitcases were also gone.

It was September. We stood on the beach, our clothes were wet. Our skin began to itch. We got undressed, laid the clothing out on the brush so that they would dry a little. It began to get dark. I was very thirsty and wanted to drink, but there was no water. We began to cry. But no one could help. The next morning the adults deliberated on what they could do. They decided that we should head south, because the Arabs had said that that is where Haifa was, and we knew that Tel Aviv lay to the south of Haifa. We didn't know how far it was to Tel Aviv. Along the sea there was a path for horses and donkeys, and we walked along it. At first we encountered no people, then we saw Arabs. They were carrying vessels. We knew that there was water in the vessels, but we were certain that they wouldn't give us any water because they were going to work and the water needed to last the entire day. We wanted to speak with them, but we only knew the word maim, which is water in Arabic.

They understood us and one or two of them gave us children a little water. I don't know if the adults drank, but we children drank. Then the Arabs kept going. We schlepped slowly ahead; we were tired and sad. It was awful! We kept going until we saw a tree. It was the first tree we saw—finally a little shade. And the adults decided that we'd sit under the tree and wait until someone came by, since none of us could keep going.

After some time a large, black taxi came from the direction of Haifa. We signaled. We thought that if the taxi was driving in the direction on Tel Aviv it could take one or two of us. But the taxi didn't stop. After an hour we saw another taxi, but it was heading in the other direction. We didn't lift our hands as it wasn't our direction and it drove past us. But then the car came back and stopped under the tree. Luckily for us, the father of the other two children, the waiter from Cologne, could speak French. The driver of the car understood immediately that we were illegal emigrants and drove us to Atlit—first the women and children, and then the men. In those days Atlit was a small Jewish fishing village with a few small houses. He said to us: there are Jews here. Once they saw us, the families in the houses also understood right away what was going on. They brought us into their houses, and each person immediately began recounting what happened. They spoke Yiddish, and so we were able to communicate. They were probably Russian Jews that had already been living in Palestine for a long time. They brought us food, we showered, and then it became a bit easier. We also told them that they had been looking for us with searchlights and they said, "They're looking for you, and they want you! And if they find you, who know what will happen! It's dangerous to stay here, but you want to go south, anyway. Today is Shabbat, there are no more trains today, but tomorrow morning there is a train. Spread yourselves out in different compartments so that you're not conspicuous. A member of each of our families will go with you on the train; they'll help you if something happens." Luckily nothing happened. That's how we got to Tel Aviv by train.We stood there in Tel Aviv and knew no one. You must know that at that time Tel Aviv was a small city. There was a lot of sand, but on the other hand it was also European. The houses were small and had red roofs. There were already two-story houses here and there, but they were few. And there were very few paved roads—two, three main streets, otherwise there was sand everywhere. For example, Ben Yehuda Street was only about one hundred meters long, maybe even less. The train station was on Allenby Street, and there were sidewalks to the left and right made of wooden planks so that the people didn't get stuck in the sand. That was Tel Aviv in 1933, you got stuck in sand.

My mother had tied money and a piece of paper to her body with the address of a Jewish family in Tel Aviv. We took a droshky, she gave the driver the address, but as we were riding through Nachlat Benjamin, a woman suddenly yelled "Mrs. Kempler, Mrs. Kempler, welcome! Welcome to Eretz Israel!" It was Mrs. Rabinovich from Berlin. Her face was beaming. Mrs. Rabinovich and her husband had already been living in Palestine for a few years.

There weren't many droshkies at this time, and if a droshky went through the street everyone watched it. A droshky was an attraction. Other than that, droshkies always had bells, everyone heard that a droshky was coming. And that's how Mrs. Rabinovich saw our mother. We got out of the droshky, they kissed each other, and she brought us to her apartment and cooked for us.