



Interview mit

Kurt Goldberger

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Teil 1

PG: This is an *Austrian Heritage Collection* interview with Mr. Kurt Goldberger, conducted on 6th March, 2012 by Patrick Gyasi, in...where are we here?

KG: Hicksville.

PG: In Hicksville, Long Island. Mr. Goldberger, please tell us your life story.

KG: *Okay, anfangen...* I should start when I was born.

PG: Yes, exactly.

KG: Well, I was born on 5th August, 1925, and I know it was in a hospital. I do not know which hospital my mother was in, but when I finally came home...the address is Esslinggasse 8, *im 1. Bezirk*, and this house is still standing today. As a matter of fact, I went back to this house the first time I was in Vienna. I was, in the beginning, apprehensive about going back to Vienna altogether – whether I wanted to do it. But I finally did in 1980, and we were part of a tour. We were first in France and then in Vienna for three days. And we checked into our hotel, which was part of the tour, and I said to my wife and some friends who were with us, “Let us go to the place where I used to live.” And I took out a map of Vienna and found my way to the house, which was...it looked the same as when I left it in 1939. I go inside, the door is open, and I said, “Should I ring the bell?” – “No, let us go upstairs.” I went up to the third floor, to the apartment, the door is open. What is going on? It is open? I go inside and there is nothing inside, no furniture, nothing at all – just empty rooms. I showed this to my wife and our friends, which room was which, and...walked away. I went across the hall, where there were other Jewish people who had left, and the third apartment on the same floor...all the same, they were empty. Subsequently, I found out...I went back there again at a later date...it is now an office building, with two buildings together. Anyway, I finally went down *zum Hausbesorger*, and the woman did not understand any German. She said, they are renovating it and eventually they did. I jumped ahead a bit, because my mother was born in the same apartment. So the family lived there for over 50 years.

Both my parents were born in Vienna and were fortunate to leave. So let me go back: I grew up in Esslinggasse 8 and eventually went to school and my formative years were normal...for a normal child, growing up in a middle class family...and I grew up with a neighbor’s daughter. Across the hall was another Jewish couple and they had a daughter who was six weeks younger than I was. We were like siblings. We grew up together. So I spent a lot of time with her, until I finally went to school, Börsegasse...*Volksschule in der Börsegasse*, which is still there. The same school is still there. The difference is now, of course, which you recognize...and when I went to school in Vienna, it was all boys. There was no co-ed education. So elementary school was all boys, and *Realschule* was all boys. So when I went to *Realschule*, which was in the Börsegasse, and I started my education there. And it was interesting at the time, that the teachers...which I found out subsequently and I do not know whether they still do this in Vienna...that the same teacher is with you for the four years. Is it still the same?

PG: Yes, in the *Volksschule*.

KG: Because it is totally different here. Of course, I did not know better when I went to school. We had a lovely teacher. I remember her name: *Fräulein* Vicary. As a matter of fact, what happened was, when I finished school in 1936, I...*Fräulein* Vicary said to us, "I am not teaching anymore. I am resigning, because now, they want me to teach girls. And all my life, I have taught boys." Under the new regime, under [Kurt] Schuschnigg, they insisted that male teachers teach men, teach boys, and female teachers teach girls, and no cross-education. This has changed now, of course. It is all co-ed, which I saw when I was there, in Vienna.

1/00:06:01

While I was growing up in Vienna, I got interested in *Fußball*, like most boys. And it turned out, when I spoke about it to my father, he eventually told me that he used to play amateur ball. As a matter of fact, I have a watch which he got, when he played in Hungary. It is in Hungarian, I do not understand what it says. [Lacht.] I eventually also joined the boy scouts, die *Wölflinge*...and got involved, which was an interesting experience. We used to go on outings into the Vienna woods, mostly. And it is very different than the *Boy Scouts* [of America] in the United States. We used to take a train or a bus to a place and walk with a heavy rucksack. Here, the kids go by car right to the place. [Lacht.] As a matter of fact, when I was back in Vienna with *A Letter To The Stars*, I spoke to Austrian boy scouts. I spoke to them and another man, who was there also from the United States. He was also in the boy scouts. So we spent a good afternoon with them and recorded it. In fact, I have a video about it.

Anyway, back in Vienna, that was life in...changed in Austria, which of course, I did not understand at the time...when [Engelbert] Dollfuß took over. Actually, Austria became at that time a fascist country, although there was not an open anti-Semitism. But it is well known that the mayor of Vienna, Dr. Karl Lueger, was an outspoken anti-Semite, which is... And when Dollfuß...when the bombing took place, of course, my parents talked about it. I did not really understand what was happening. I was too young. But I knew it was not good. Interestingly enough, in Austria, how you get your citizenship...my father was born in Vienna of parents who...particularly his father came from what is now Hungary...what is now the Czech Republic and used to be Hungary. And my father served in the First World War in the Austrian army, and was assigned to...he spoke German, but it was an Hungarian regiment and they spoke only Hungarian, so it saved him. For two years, he sat in an office, then he went on the front. But the thing is, I was old enough to understand partly what happened in 1934, when they bombed the workers' buildings...I remember--

PG: --Justizpalast [meint: den Justizpalastbrand 1927]--

KG: --Justizpalast und die Wohnungen in Heiligenstadt [meint: den Beschuss des Karl-Marx-Hofs] 1934. Dort haben sie geschossen.

PG: Ich weiß von Schattendorf [1927], wo sie die Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei beschossen haben.

KG: Ja. Und dann natürlich ist Schuschnigg gekommen, der etwas besser war als Dollfuß, aber trotzdem haben wir gewusst, es war nicht so gut, zu leben als Jude. Ich erinnere mich an etwas, das mir passiert ist in der...ich glaube, das war schon in der Realschule. Ich war bei einem anderen Jungen auf Besuch. Ein anderer Bub und ich, wir waren zusammen dort spielen. Gut, da haben wir zusammen gespielt, und auf einmal hat er auf die Uhr geschaut: „Ich glaube, es ist besser wenn ihr geht. Mein Bruder kommt nach Hause. Mein Bruder hat nicht gern Juden.“ Okay, wir sind gegangen.

1/00:10:36

It was not...we did not talk about it. It turned out later, interestingly, that I met somebody who went to the same school, he was a friend of the brother, who was two years older, a Jewish guy. But the two boys would not admit to each other that they had Jewish friends. It was that bad already. I mean, the anti-Semitism was there and we knew it. My parents were...most of my parents' friends were Jewish. And in the school, about a third of the students were Jewish. So we had in school, both in *Volksschule* and *Realschule*...one of the subjects which we had was religion. They still taught religion in school. So we had a woman come in who taught us in Hebrew and other Jewish history. That was in *Volksschule*. And in *Realschule*, we had a rabbi, who came and taught us Jewish history and Hebrew. As a matter of fact, he was arrested almost immediately when Hitler marched into Austria, and obviously was killed. We were very aware of being Jewish and most of the people I associated with just happened to be Jewish boys...and girls. I was not exposed...since I lived in an area where there were...obviously, enough Jews lived there, so I was not really affected by anti-Semitism...not until Hitler came, which of course changed my whole life. Until that time, I attended school, I played some soccer, I went on outings with the boy scouts, and interestingly enough, what we had in our classroom was a program which was new, where they taught skiing...on dry land. So we learned how to ski. And I used to ski a little bit, not too much. I used to take a trolley to the Vienna woods and ski there. And my parents used to take me for walks on Sundays. The family used to get together and we went for walks, sometimes in the Prater, sometimes somewhere else. We got to know the whole area. And as I said, my school time was pretty...was not too exceptional. It was like most kids going to school, day in and day out and trying to learn whatever they taught you.

Until the infamous day of 12th March, 1938, when Hitler marched into Austria and was welcomed with open arms. The Austrians fully accepted Hitler. And eventually, the things they did were worse than the Germans'. That is why, when I go to Vienna now – and I have been a number of times –, I will not speak to people my age, because I know exactly what they are going to tell me. – “I did not know, I did not this...I did not know what happened...” I do not want to know any of these stories. I talked to the younger generation and I am amazed how well informed they are. They are taught about the holocaust in their schools today, and they know what happened and realize that this should not happen again. I will come to it later when I talk about when I spent time in Vienna, what I did.

When Hitler marched into Austria, my parents of course knew what was going on in Germany. And most Jews realized, there is no future. My father said, "We have to try and find some place to go and get out of here." And a couple of them said, "I used to be a *Frontkämpfer*, they are not going to do anything to me", but it did not make any difference at all. The first thing that we saw when Hitler came in, I went to a park, and the benches said, "Juden unerwünscht! Nicht für Juden!" You could not go to many other places too. Public places were closed to us. So life was very confined. With the family and your closest friends, you used to get, because anybody else, you were afraid to talk to. I certainly did not talk to anybody non-Jewish. My father realized that we had to find some way to get out, to get to a safe place. And it was not easy. And it was not the fault of Hitler, it was the fault of the rest of the world, that they closed their borders, really, and did not let you in. So you had to find some means to get out. What was possible is, you could go to England as a domestic servant, because that was a job nobody wanted. And of course England had a depression and unemployment, so they did not want to have adults come in to compete with the British for the jobs, but as a domestic servant you could go. So my mother applied and was accepted as a cook, with her sister, who was not married, as a chambermaid. And originally, I was supposed to go with her on that same visa, or whatever, but then the laws were changed. And to this day, I do not know who's laws were changed, the Germans' or the English's, so that I could not go with my mother. My mother said, "I am not going", leaving my father and me behind – I am an only child. My father insisted, "You have to go! And see what you can do to bring us out." So she did leave in February 1939, with her sister, for England.

And my father and I moved out of the apartment. At that point, I had finished the school year at Schottenbastei, where they brought in other Jewish kids from other schools at a *Sammelschule*, and finished the school year until June 1938. And then they assigned us to another school, where everything was mixed up...in the Sechskrügelgasse. It is in the 3rd district, which was quite a ways from where I was. I had to take two trolley to get there. And when I got to this school, it was just from age ten to fourteen. I was in the highest class at fourteen. There were 60 boys in the class and seats enough for 40. And they had a Jewish teacher, who had to commit herself or himself, whoever it was, not to emigrate during the school year. And I understand that they had a Jewish and a Christian principal in that school. And of course, we could not learn anything, because everyone had a different background. Kids there were from *Realschule*, *Realgymnasium*, *Gymnasium* and *Hauptschule*. Everybody had a different educational background. And then some left, as they emigrated, so it was really almost a loss of time. The only thing that did happen, the Hitler Youth used to come and beat up the little kids, the ten-year-olds, eleven...they left earlier. So we took it upon ourselves to protect these children. We used to just walk out of class and go downstairs and stand with these little kids, so they do not get...the Hitler Youth left them alone. We beat a couple...one of our guys was a real...came from a real bad background. Wenn man ein Pülcher ist...*is a bad guy*.

PG: How do you say that?

KG: Pülcher. It was a derogatory remark about poor people. And he beat up a kid, that Hitler Youth...may have killed him even...I do not know.

1/00:20:09

So I went to school for a while, and my father and I had to move out of the apartment. He had to give it all to some Nazis or whatever. We moved in with some relatives who lived in Böcklinstraße *im 2. Bezirk*. And I started going to school from there, but it used to...why do I have to go to school? So I stopped going after a while. Nobody cared whether you were there or not, anyway. My parents heard of the...that children could get out to England, and went to the [Israelitische] *Kultusgemeinde* to find out what they have to do. So they registered me to get out. And fortunately, at the end of June, I got a call from them, saying that I should be ready to leave Vienna on 4th July, 1939. Fortunately, everything went fine. But let me just go back, because you hear so much of children, whose parents, particularly whose fathers, were arrested. My father was in the shoe business on Meidlinger Hauptstraße *im 12. Bezirk*, and he gets a call one day...he was in the store, which only lasted for about four months. After four months, he lost...no Jews could work anymore. But he gets a call from somebody, "Mr. Goldberger?" – „Ja?“ – „Gehen Sie nicht in Ihr Geschäft heute.“ Da sagt er: „Wer ist das?“ – „Gehen Sie nicht in Ihr Geschäft“, und hängt auf. On that same day, every Jew on Meidlinger Hauptstraße in a business or *mit Anstellung*, was arrested. So he tried to figure out...it had to be one of his customers. He was the one good Jew...to him, obviously.

I always used to say that many Nazis had their *Hausjuden*. Because going back, when Hitler marched in – in March [19]38 –, there was a family living above us. There were four boys and two girls. They were already men. The four men went to Germany before Hitler marched into Austria. Because one of them, I remember, there was an incident at the *Realschule*, where there was a boy who was being tested by a professor, *und er hat gesagt*: „Kein Jude wird mich unterrichten!“ It was a Jewish professor, and he said, "I am not going to be asked questions by a Jew." He left, was kicked out of school, and he went to Germany. He was one of the four brothers who lived in our house. When they came back...one of them, his wife was pregnant, and they had a baby. And we used to hear through the *Hof* what they taught the baby...not to say, "mummy", or, "daddy", but to say, "Heil Hitler!" – „Sag' schön Heil Hitler!“ And this kid grew up with "Heil Hitler". It was his only knowledge up to that point. And one day I am out in the street and I see, across the street is a man in his black uniform, an SS [Schutzstaffel] uniform – one of the four brothers. And I, on this side, I start going that way and he motions to me to come over. I go over to him and I was scared. I thought I was going to make in my pants. And he put his arm around me, „Ich will dir was sagen! Deine Eltern, die sind gut, aber die Rafaels und die Hermanns“, who lived on the same floor, "they deserve everything that they get!" What was different about us, my father was a small businessman, the others were lawyers. Maybe that made a difference, but that was kind of scary, because you never know if you are going to come home, when you went out. I mean, I know I had to go and get some papers, and...I am trying to remember what the reason was, because I thought I was leaving with my mother, so I needed to do certain things, and then I had to get some papers which I went for. And I do not remember where it was, but a lot of people were there and they used to call you in by number. Then some were called in and put into a room, where there were people with white frocks on. And I am sitting and sitting and finally they call me in there with about three or four other

people, and the people in white ask me, "How old are you?" I said, "Thirteen." – „Was machst du da?“ – „Man hat mich hierhergeschickt.“ – „Geh' hinaus!“ What they did, whether they made some medical experiments or things with them...I have no idea. All I know is, I waited there forever, they finally let me go in and I got whatever stamps I needed, whatever...and I left.

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From there, my story goes on and I got the permission to go on a Kindertransport. And the interesting thing was, where we lived with my relatives...who became our neighbors again here. We bought houses next to each other. [Lacht.] It was at the end of a street. Next to it was just wilderness with parks and so forth, no buildings. And they used to work out...the Nazis used to...what do you call it...they got together and learned to shoot and do other things together. On the day when I left, on 4th July, they had fireworks there, which we watched, and my father took me to the train eventually. The 4th July is a national holiday in the United States, and we have fireworks. They, of course, had no idea of the United States celebration. It was just a coincidence. And I was never sure whether I really left on 4th July. I thought I did, until I met somebody when I was in Vienna one day, and he was on the same transport. He told me it was 4th July. So when I talk about it, I say that my leaving for England was really on an American holiday, and it means a lot to me, because that was the day I went to freedom.

PG: It is your personal Independence Day.

KG: Right. So from there...I was exempted and left on the train. The train ride was interesting. They put us in compartments and they sealed the outer doors into the...particularly the *Abteilungen* of the wagons where the kid children were. There were quite a few children on that train, but I do not know how many. We could not off the train. It went through Austria, then through Germany. It stopped in certain places, but we could only look out through the window, which we were not allowed to open either. It was interesting, at the border, the German border, the German officials came. They walked into our compartment – there were about eight of us sitting there on two sides – and they asked, „Kann mir jemand sagen, wie spät es ist?“ We all looked at our watches. They wanted...which I did not realize until later why that happened, because you are not allowed to take out any gold. Well, you maybe had a gold watch. They used these tricks, the Germans. Anyway, they took our car, took it off and attached it to a train that went across the border to Holland. And from there they put it on to another train, and we got into Holland and stopped at the first town in Holland. I do not know the name of it. All I know is, they opened the doors of the cars, and there were ladies there – Dutch ladies – who had hot chocolate and cookies for us and they made us welcome to freedom. We felt a great deal of relief, because particularly kids my age – I was almost fourteen – knew what was going on. Of course the little ones, they were as little as two and three years old, who went on a Kindertransport...they had no idea why they were separated from their parents or anything. Mostly the parents told them, "Look, you go ahead and have a good time. We will see you soon, we will come and follow you." Unfortunately, we do not have any exact figures, but 70 to 75 percent of the children never saw their parents again.

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Just under 10,000 children went to England on the Kindertransports from 1st December, 1938, until the end of August, 1939, when the war broke out. It is a sad story, because when I talk about it now, about the children who came out – the 10,000 children –, it really is not 10,000 children. It is 60,000 people, when you take into consideration their children and their children's children, who would not be alive today if it were not for Great Britain to let in these Jewish refugees. Which they did...because a lot of people say that the British were not particularly friendly to the Jews, because they made it very difficult to get into Palestine. They created a lot of...put them up into Crete and into camps. And there was a Jewish [unklar]. And they said, "How can you praise the British?" I said, "I do, because what they did for us, for the children, it saved us. It was an act, which the United States did not do." A similar bill was introduced, that they did in the House of Commons in England, into the Congress in the United States by a senator from New York and a congresswoman from Massachusetts to admit 20,000 unaccompanied children into the United States. It never got out of the committee, and they used the excuse in our religion, that you do not separate children from their parents. And so, lives could have been saved, but they never were.

So I came to England. First, we went to Harwich...first to Holland, took a boat from there overnight, across the English channel, and wound up in Harwich. Then they took us by train to London, where my mother met me with the woman she worked for. Then they took me back to the house, but only for three days. Because the saying was, "Domestic servants have no children." So I wound up in a hostel for boys in Croydon, which is near London, and there were twenty boys there, with a man in charge – who when I got there, was not there. His wife was there, he had to be somewhere else. And when he came back after two days, I recognized him. He was a rabbi from Vienna. I used to go to the...what they had in Vienna, they had six days of school. Do they still do that today?

PG: No. Some of them, but--

KG: --we had six days of school. So we had school on Saturday and could not go to religious services on Saturday morning. So they had special...what they called *Jugendgottesdienst* in the synagogues. So I used to go to the synagogue in Seitenstettengasse, which is the only one that was not bombed on Kristallnacht. And he was one of the rabbis there, and I recognized him – not that I was that religious, but we had to go. He insisted that we went every Saturday afternoon. So he was in charge of the hostel in England. I was the oldest boy there. There were kids from, I think, seven or eight to...I was fourteen. And his wife sort of took me under her wing, so I guess she had some pity on me, that I really had no schoolmates. It was one boy who was almost my age. All the others were younger. And of course we had one problem. I came to England, but I hardly knew English. I had taken some English lessons, but I realized how little I knew when I got there. And within about a week of my being in England, they sent me to school. – "Sink or swim, you are going to school." The teachers were very good, they tried to help. They said to me, "Write whatever you can,

as good as you can about you trip.” And that did not last long, because that was mid-July and the war broke out in September, [19]39.

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And the school was in what they considered a danger area. We were evacuated to Sussex, which was south of London, which was supposedly safer. And our whole school, we went on the train, went to Sussex. And when we got there, they had us lined up in twos and went from house to house, asking people to take in a couple of boys from the school. I wound up with another boy, another refugee, with an elderly lady, and there was a housekeeper there, with her husband and son. And the two boys, we were there with this family. I went to school from there. I used to walk to school, and we used...that was the craziest thing. We went passed a field of fruit. It was rhubarb. You know rhubarb?

PG: Rhubarb? No.

KG: It is very sour and it is very tough. You do not eat it...you have to cook it with sugar, which I found out later. But it used to hang around and we used to break it off and eat it. I would not do it now. [Lacht.] Anyway, I went to school and I learnt English pretty quickly. You had to. You had no choice. My teachers were English, my schoolmates were mostly English – there were a few refugees there – and...learned to speak English and I got involved in sports. I made the school team in soccer. There was nothing to do in the summer. They played cricket. I had never played cricket, but I tried out for cricket. I made it, I became Wicket-keeper. [Lacht.] So that was an interesting experience, which lasted for about a year. My mother...what the British did...they interned many...most males over sixteen were interned, because they were afraid, the British. They did not know whether these were really German spies or really Jewish refugees. They were sent to the Isle of Man, and they also classified some people as enemy aliens, particularly women, and some as friendly aliens. My mother was classified as an enemy alien. Why, I do not know, because my mother was so meek and so afraid to do anything wrong. And eventually, she was interned on the Isle of Man. There was a women’s camp, about 4,000 women, mostly Jewish. My father was fortunate. He got papers to come to the United States and got his affidavit and visa in October or November, 1939. The war was already on in Europe.

PG: But your father was still in Vienna? He got it in Vienna?

KG: He was in Vienna. I left him in Vienna. When I left, my mother was in England, my father was in Vienna. And fortunately, he got an affidavit and papers to come to the United States, and he left at the end of November, 1939. Coincidentally, his brother and his family wound up on the same boat, coming to the United States. Just a coincidence. And he came here, and he had a problem. He came to the United States, to New York, stayed with the same relatives where we stayed – who are our neighbors – and where my...I am trying to remember. My cousin was...I think was in the Navy at that time. No, it was not until

after...whatever. He stayed with them in Brooklyn and went to the HIAS, which is the *Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society*, which still exists today.

1/00:41:06

He saw people hanging around, they could not get jobs, they could not do anything. And he realized one thing: He had three strikes against him. He did not speak English, he had no trade and he had no money. Otherwise he was in good shape. [Lacht.] So he finally went to...he saw what was going on and said, "Look, I will do anything. Can you get me some...send me anywhere, where people are willing to give me papers for my son and wife to come to the United States." So they gave him...they said, "Okay, I am glad to hear it." So they gave him a bus ticket to Chicago. And he takes the bus, cannot talk to anybody – he does not speak English. He was sitting next to a man and he cannot talk. He gets to Chicago, to an address, which I think was the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], where they had a room for him. And who does he see there? The same man who was sitting next to him – another refugee who also did not speak English. And they could not talk to each other. [Lacht.] So from there, they got him, eventually, a job as a janitor in a furniture store. And they got him a room with a Jewish family in Des Moines, Iowa, of all places. The reason I am telling you this is, eventually I wound up there. [Lacht.] So he wound up there, and of course what happened is...at that point there was no communication, because the war was on in Europe. So we could not communicate for a while. We wrote to relatives in Holland, but then that was invaded. So when my father got to the United States, then he contacted us in England. And we did get papers. At that time, in 1940, while my mother was in the internment camp, my mother thought it best if I am with her, rather than in the school that was evacuated in Horsham, Sussex...so when we got the papers, that we were together. So I wound in the women's internment camp – 4,000 women and about fifteen or sixteen boys, from the ages of fourteen to sixteen. [Lacht.] It was an experience. They got me a room...through my mother...they got me a private room, which was nice. But I remember it was over the Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. They had somebody giving services, but we had to make sure that all the boys stayed in their rooms, to have the required ten people...you have to have in order for the services. So I was there.

Then we were sent to London to...they put us up in...I do not know what it was, a prison or whatever, to wait for the consulate, the American consulate, to call us for examination and get our visas. Which we did eventually, after...I think it took about two or three weeks until we got them. And we got our visas. Now, where do we go? I do not know how we wound up in Leicester, England, with my mother, her sister and I. Basically, my mother and then her sister came later. And that is where I spent about four years with my mother, until we finally got papers to come to the United States.

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In England, I was fortunate enough, I got a job with a company called *The English Glass Co*, which...the owners were from Czechoslovakia and a good part of their employees were refugees, of all kinds. There were Jewish refugees, there were political refugees, particularly from Czechoslovakia there were some Communists or Socialists. And I spent the next three and a half years working for them, until I left England. While in England, I have made friends. There were a few refugees in Leicester and we became friendly. A whole group of us used to get together and play together and talk about problems and so forth. Some were without parents. I was lucky, I was with my mother. And I belonged to a club, which was called *Young Austria*. You may have heard of it. It was--

PG: --in England?

KG: It started in England, by Austrian people, young people from Austria, mostly. They used to get together and...some were politically involved, left-wing. And we had a little group in Leicester, of Austrians and also Germans and Czechs. We used to get together. Then I...I am trying to remember. I spent most of my time in Leicester. From time to time I went to London, a couple of times, to get a break from where I was. Until 1944, March, 1944...by the way, after we got the papers in 1940, we could not get transportation. So that was the end of the affidavit, of the visas to the United States. We had to start from scratch again to get new papers, which we did and finally got papers in...we got called to the Consulate in 1944. I do not know the date exactly. We went down to London to get our visas, our papers and had to wait for transportation. They told us to be ready to leave on 24 hour notice, from Leicester, where we lived. We had no idea when and where. So they got in touch and told us to go to Cardiff, Wales, and check into a hotel on a certain date, and the next morning to come to an address, which we did. We took the train, checked into a hotel, the next morning we got up, went to that address, which was on the water, in Cardiff, Wales. They had some shipping offices, where they examined us again. And right across was the ship. It was a cargo ship. As I said, they examined us and what happened is, there were supposed to be twelve passengers on that ship. And there was an elderly man, who obviously had some problems. They would not let him go, because of the possible danger of the crossing. So my mother and I went on that ship, walked up the side of the ship – they had sort of a ladder going up or whatever –, they gave us a cabin, for my mother and me. And that same late afternoon, we left Cardiff. The next morning, the ship stopped and we were in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and they told us they were waiting to pick up a convoy. So eventually we were, I think, 80 ships, a convoy with escorts, ready to go to the United States. We had no idea where we were going, where in the United States we were going to land. It was all a secret. So with a small ship--

PG: --which year was that?

KG: 1944. We left in March, 1944.

1/00:50:11

And we got on this ship and, being a small ship, you get to know the crew. I was, at the time, eighteen. Some of the crew members were close in age, and...it was uneventful. The weather was fine, it was clear, no attacks, except one morning I get up and I see water splashing up. They had military on the ship also, because each cargo ship had guns on it. And I see that, and I said to one of the navy people, "What is going on?" He said, "I should not tell you, but we had a U-boat scare, but everything is clear." So anyway, after three weeks zigzagging across the Atlantic, we landed in New York. We stayed on the ship...we came in the afternoon and wound up in the Hudson. The ship was stuck there and they said, "We will be here overnight. The immigration officials will come onboard in the morning." So I could not wait until it got dark. I got up on the ship and looked at the windows. There were lights in the windows, which we had not had in England. It was a blackout. We did not see any lights in the windows, and to me that was fascinating...quite an experience. The next day, the immigration officer showed up, came on board, and one after one we go to him. And finally I get to him, to the first immigration official, and he looked at my papers...they already asked me at the consulate in England, "Are you willing to take up arms for the United States?" I said, "Of course!" So he asked me again, "Are you willing to take up arms?" – "Yes, Sir!" – "Okay, go to the next official." He also looks at my papers and says, "Wait a minute, you are eligible for the draft, for the army." I had not set foot in the United States yet, I want you to know. I was still on the ship. He said to me, "You have to register with the draft board, with the people who examine you and everything else." I said, "Fine, I will do it when I get to my final destination." He says, "When is that going to be?" – "In about a week or ten days. I have to go out to my father in Des Moines." – "No, five days to register for the army." Which I did...while I was there, I was staying with these relatives, near there in Brooklyn. There was an office for the draft, and I registered there.

I think six or seven weeks later, I got out to Des Moines, and I already got my papers to report for physical examination...in New York. After the transfer to Des Moines, I wound up...now, I am coming to Des Moines. When I came to the States, I of course went to my father, to Des Moines, Iowa. I was miserable. [Lacht.] I was not happy there. Anyway, I had my papers transferred to the Midwest, finally, and I eventually had to go to a physical, a five hour train ride from Des Moines to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, where twenty of us went for the physical examination. And the army did not want me. I was, as they say, *untauglich*. So what am I going to do in Des Moines? I tried to go back to school, and I had an interview with somebody from the schoolboard, and they asked me to write an essay, which I did fine. Then they asked me about my schooling. And I said, "Well, in Vienna I had schooling from six, in *Volksschule*, grade school, for four years and I had about three years of *Realschule*." – "What did you learn?" – "Well, in the first year, I learned algebra, and arithmetic's and geometry." He said, "No, at ten years old, you do not learn algebra!" I said, "Yes, I did!" [Lacht.] So I went to this hall examination, and they finally said to me, "We can put you into eleventh grade", which is sixteen year old's. I was twenty, I was nineteen. I said, "I am not going to go to school with kids."

1/00:55:06

[Übergang/Schnitt.]

So I never went back. That is the one regret I really have of my years--

PG: --not going back to school?

KG: Not having enough of an education...a lot of self-education, but no formal education. That was missing. Unfortunately, my wife went through a similar experience. She also went out on a Kindertransport, from Berlin, and also had a school problem. In most instances, people do not believe it. I think I speak English well enough, and portray myself well enough to...people do not realize that I do not have a formal education, that I stopped learning, really for all intents and purposes, when I was about thirteen and a half, fourteen years. Anyway, so I wound up in Des Moines, where I was really unhappy. First of all, most of the males my age were in the army, or navy or whatever. They were in the services. I did not really find...friends. I wound up with a couple of girls here and there, but nothing was really...and I was really not happy there. I could not put my finger on it, until...that was in April, 1944, when I went to Des Moines, and I again got a call from the army, for the induction, for a physical examination from the board in New York, where I originally was, to report for another physical examination. Of course, the war was...that was in August, 1945. The war was over. At that point, I was not anxious to go into the army. I always wanted to fight Hitler and get my revenge on Hitler, but...I said to my parents, "Look", I was working in Des Moines, I had a job, "I am going to New York for the physical. If they keep me, if they want me, I will come back and wait to be sent to the army. If they reject me again, I am staying in New York." So I called my relatives and said, "Can I stay with you for an unspecified time?" They said, "Of course!" Because my cousin...the parents were there, my cousin and his wife...she was on the west coast, he was in the navy. So I came to New York, was rejected again by the army, got my 4-F [Klassifizierung der U.S. Army, bei der eine Person als nicht für den Militärdienst geeignet identifiziert wird], as they say in the United States.

I went to these relatives, looked around, got a job at the same company, a motion picture company, which I worked with in Des Moines. I went to their office in New York and thought, maybe they have a job. I got a job there. So I started to work there, and eventually looked for a room somewhere, a place to stay – other than with my relatives, where I could...I just wanted a room, not with family. I wanted a room for myself, with four walls. So I found a small room, in Manhattan, on 71st Street, which were these old brownstone houses. Of course, that neighborhood changed since *Lincoln Center* came there. So I found this room, I paid five dollars a week, and it had the bathroom upstairs, but it was mine. I locked the door, and it was mine. The landlady was not the cleanest, but she cleaned, as best as she could. I stayed there for quite a while, actually, until I met my wife. I got a job in New York at MGM [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer]. It was convenient. One thing it was...I lived on 71st Street and my office was on 46th Street, so I used to take the subway from 72nd to 42nd Street – one stop. The only thing is, I had to go and have three meals out – breakfast, lunch and dinner. And it did not make that much money, so I had to be really careful what I ate. [Lacht.] I used to figure out, where can I get the most for the biggest bargain. [Lacht.]

1/01:00:03

So I did this for about two and a half years until I met my wife, and we eventually decided to get married. In fact we had our anniversary two days ago – 63 years.

PG: Congrats! Wow! That is golden.

KG: Past the golden already. Not many people get there. We got married on 4th March, 1949, and my wife had not met my parents yet. Her mother lived in New York. I know I met her mother, and so on our honeymoon, we went to Des Moines, Iowa, of all places, to meet my parents...for her to meet my parents.

PG: You got married before she met your parents?

KG: That is right. They only talked on the telephone. [Lacht.] What happened is, in retrospect, when I finally told my parents that I am getting married, I called them up and I said, "I have some news for you." – "Well, what is it?" – "I am getting married." They said, "Well, that is nice." I said, "There is only one problem. It is a mixed marriage."

PG: She is not Jewish?

KG: I said, "No, it is not that. She is from Berlin and I am from Vienna." [Beide lachen.] There has always been talk between the German Jews and the Austrian Jews, I am sure you heard of it.

PG: It is the same between non-Jewish Germans and non-Jewish Austrians.

KG: We never had a religious wedding. We got married at city hall. Anyway, she met my parents and they got along. Eventually, my parents came to live with us, when they retired.

Ende von Teil 1.

Teil 2

KG: So, let me just briefly tell you about my father, who went to this furniture store, and got this janitor...he had to do whatever came along...he could not help it, he did not speak English, and so...as he learned English, they made him a salesman – they owned about eight stores – in a different store. And eventually, they brought him back to the original store and he became manager of this store, where he was a janitor. So he made what they call the Horatio Alger story. Eventually, he retired from there and came to New York to live with us. Anyway, in New York, I stayed with MGM until about 1950, and then I went to...I am trying to remember where I worked at first. I think I went to [unklar], and spent about five years there in the shipping department, and my boss promised me that I would become a salesman and then business order lacked off and I did not, so I left and went to another company, a smaller company. I worked both in sales and I was in charge of the shipping. And eventually, I wound up with an import company, that imported from Austria. It so

happened, which I did not tell...that a friend of mine worked there, and I was looking for another job. He said, "Why do you not come here? We are looking for somebody who knows German...who knows German for the job." So I said, "Fine." And I asked who he worked for, and I knew these were good friends of our neighbors in Vienna. So when they interviewed me...I never said anything about it, I did not want that to influence them...until they hired me. Then I said, "I just want you to know, that the Rafaels were good friends of ours. We lived across the hall from them." – "You knew them?" I said, "Yes, but I did not want this to influence you." [Lacht.]

So I stayed there for about eight years...and let me just double back now. When we got married, we lived in my mother-in-law's apartment. My mother-in-law was the housekeeper for somebody, so we lived in her apartment, until she remarried and needed the apartment back. So we had to find another place to live, so we got a sublease from some people we knew a little bit. They were going to Vienna for a couple of years on whatever business they were going to do. And we could sublease their apartment for a couple of years. Unfortunately, they came back after about four or five months. They got into trouble down there. I think they were in the black market or God knows what else. So what do we do now? Now we had to go find...it was tough to find homes, places to live...an apartment in New York. Friends of ours had an apartment with an extra bedroom, so they said, "Come, live with us until you find something." So we moved in with them. We did not have much. We had no furniture or anything, just our clothes, basically. So we did that. We had a good time together, because we figured out that four can live cheaper than two. [Lacht.] And it worked out and then finally, we took an apartment in Queens, in a building which was not a finished building yet. It was a small apartment. And we found a room...people there rented out about ten or twelve rooms. The apartment was cone...like this...sort of a triangle with rooms all along the way. We had the furthest rooms down the...that was our bedroom. And we had the use of a kitchen, which was at the other end...a little kitchen, but it was ours. We stayed there until our apartment was ready, and then we moved into Forest Hills. And eventually, our daughter was born. We had to get a bigger apartment, which we did. We had a one bedroom apartment, but with our daughter, we said that was not enough, so we looked for a two bedroom apartment. And it was expensive. They wanted 134 dollars from us, which was a lot of money at the time. And my cousins had moved out here and bought a house next door, but it was built in 1951. And we were talking to him and he said, "Our neighbors are looking to sell their house. They are moving. Take a look." So we came out here, met the neighbors and talked to them and arranged and eventually, we agreed on buying the house. And we are still living here. We moved in in 1955.

PG: Here?

KG: Yes.

2/00:05:55

And of course, my cousin has passed away. Their daughter still lives there. Anyway, I got involved – once we moved out here – in *B'nai B'rith*. Have you heard of *B'nai B'rith*?

PG: No.

KG: It is a Jewish organization. It is probably the...it was the largest Jewish organization in the world. It was formed in 1843 and it had branches all over. Prior to the war, there were a couple of lodges in Vienna – there still is one now, with no people. And I became active as a volunteer and eventually became a professional. I worked for the organization for 21 years...very active in the Jewish community and various aspects of it. My initial activity was in the *Anti-Defamation League*, which you may have heard of.

PG: Yes, I know it.

KG: I was active as a volunteer in the *Anti-Defamation League*. I was fighting for the acceptance of minorities and so forth. I got involved in the Civil Rights Movement also. What we tried at one time...a friend of mine and I, we were trying to integrate Hicksville. Of course, Hicksville was...there were no Blacks in Hicksville. In fact, they had a committee, which made sure that no Blacks moved in. Me and a friend of mine, we got one of the Catholic priests and another Protestant member...we tried to get people to move to Hicksville. We could not get Blacks to move, and they heard about the reputation. [Lacht.] It is still pretty much not integrated.

And I got involved in *B'nai B'rith*, as I said, for 21 years, as a professional, responsible for the organizations out here in Long Island. At its heyday, the organization had members all over the world – they still do – and about 250,000 in the United States. Unfortunately, things have gone down. It was active in keeping the stories alive, of our history. And of course, eventually, there was always a question whether...of holocaust survivor...who is a holocaust survivor?

PG: Yes, I know the discussion.

KG: And I was going to...there was a gathering of holocaust survivors in Washington D.C., and I was going there representing *B'nai B'rith*, but I always wanted to find out whether I qualified as a survivor. And I called the movement of which...of holocaust survivors, and they said, "Anybody who's life was affected by Hitler, is a holocaust survivor." There is still some controversy today. So I realized I am a holocaust survivor, so eventually I got involved in speaking about it, about my experiences. And my wife is a docent and speaker at the holocaust museum [Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County] out here in Long Island...very much involved. And I am also now...as I said, I am president of the *Kindertransport Association*, and vice president of the *World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust* [and Descendants], and also on the international board of governors of *B'nai B'rith*. I am deeply involved in keeping the Jewish story alive – from a secular point of view, not religiously.

2/00:10:09

And I think we are succeeding in getting our story told. And people are recognizing that we must do something in order to avoid future problems. Unfortunately, as I said in the beginning, the world has to learn a great deal yet, in keeping things...it is interesting, there is a story about the holocaust museum in Nassau County, where one speaker was out speaking to a school in Queens, and he talked about his experiences with the Kindertransport...not the Kindertransport, really, but his holocaust experience. He was in a camp. And one of the young women, a high school student, got up and said, "Let me tell you my story, what happened to me." She grew up in Rwanda, was the only one of eleven children who survived, who was not killed. And eventually, the two of them went out to speak together about the problems of the holocaust and what is happening in today's times. And as I said, unfortunately, we have not learned anything yet. But on the other hand, there are ways that our children are taught. They are taught in schools in the United States, not as well as in Austria, but the story must not be forgotten, because it is a horror that this could have happened in the twentieth century, in the most literate country in the world – which was Germany, actually at the time. That is essentially, in rough form, my life today. I am 86 years old and I am still trying to go strong.

PG: I would like to go back to Vienna and ask a few questions. First of all, how did your dad get the affidavit? Did he have relatives here?

KG: I never found out exactly how he got it. Somebody asked...you tried every possible way. I think it was my cousins who got in touch with somebody who was willing to sponsor him. And he got an affidavit, as I said.

PG: Was your dad in any political organization in Vienna?

KG: He was a social democrat.

PG: Okay, he was. That is why you were telling me about the--

KG: --he was for instance...not active, later on, but when he was a young man, he said, he used to give out leaflets for Viktor Adler. [Lacht.]

PG: One question is...I mean, most Jews stayed in Vienna, because they did not expect Hitler to come to Vienna. Even after Hitler came, after the Anschluss, they still stayed in Vienna, because they thought it will only last like two months or three months and it will be over. How come your parents decided to leave? They wanted to leave from the beginning, right?

KG: It was my father who, I guess, figured out...he saw what was happening in Germany. People were not anxious to leave to begin with, the Germans...and were not forced to leave. And he realized that there is no future there, that there cannot be. And of course, as life progressed and Jews lost their jobs immediately in government service, in politics and professions...for instance, my cousin, she was in medical school. And in her last year, Hitler came in. They threw her out of medical school, so she never got back to medicine.

2/00:15:03

PG: What was your mother's occupation in Vienna?

KG: Housewife.

PG: Do you remember your grandparents?

KG: I only knew a grandmother, my paternal grandparent.

PG: Do you know what happened to her?

KG: Yes. As a matter of fact, both...it is my father's mother...both my father and his brother left Vienna at the same time. They put her into an old age home, and she still died a natural death, in about 1940. In fact, I tried to find her grave in Vienna. I went to the *Friedhof*.

PG: Zentralfriedhof.

KG: Zentralfriedhof. I went to 4. *Tor*, which was...first and fourth were the Jewish *Friedhof*, and it was not there. Then I went to the office and they said, "No, she is buried next to her husband...*beim 1. Tor*." And he told me that there is only a small stone for my grandfather, and he gave me the names of the people who were buried next to him, because he said I might not be able to read his stone. We found the place, and found the stone, which could have been the place where my grandfather was buried. And then next to it, I scrubbed the stone down and I noticed part of the name who it was supposed to be. So I figured it was the right place. How they buried her next to him, I do not understand, but that is what they...

PG: How long did you stay in England?

KG: In England? From July, [19]39, to March, [19]44.

PG: Did you experience any anti-Semitism in England?

KG: I had one experience...in Horsham, Sussex, while we were playing. We were playing one afternoon in the park, a bunch of us. And there was this man there, who was...I do not know what he was doing. It was a man in his twenties, I guess. And somebody must have said something, that there were some German children around. And he comes over to me and he says, "I am always proud to shake hands with a German." I said, "If that is where you are, you can get lost!" He was a fascist. They had the fascist party [British Union of Fascists] in England, still. I mean, that was my...other than that, I cannot remember any direct...personally feeling any anti-Semitism.

PG: You went to England as a child, or as a teenager. Was it difficult to learn the language, to adapt to a new environment? How did you manage to get along in England in these difficult times?

KG: Actually, I adapted...when I went to school, as I said before, I learned English pretty quickly. I had to! You had no choice...to exist. [Lacht.] It was the only way you could make yourself understood with the people you lived with. The exception was my roommate, who was from Germany, if I remember correctly. And I adapted pretty well to the way of life over there.

PG: Did it make it easier for you to adapt in New York, in the U.S., because you were able to speak English already?

KG: Once I came here, I was fluent in English. The only problem I had when I came here, was that I had a British accent. And everybody used to ask me, "Are you British?" I said, "No." I said I learned English... – "How are things in England? Are you getting enough to eat there? Do you have enough food? Do you get this and that?"

PG: What did your mom do in New York, when she came? What was her occupation in New York?

KG: She still was a housewife. She did not come to New York, she came to Des Moines.

PG: To Des Moines, that is true...I got it, okay. Did you know of any arrested family members back in Austria, or relatives that were arrested or still in Austria?

KG: Fortunately, my immediate family...I am talking about my parents, my first cousins and aunts and uncles...were all saved. It is one of those stories which is unbelievable, almost. Because they wound up in various places, from Palestine to New York, to England, but they all got out. My wife lost 22 of her relatives.

PG: Wow. Close relatives?

KG: That is right.

2/00:20:28

PG: You told me before, that you went to Austria. Can you tell me again about your experiences in Austria? I mean, most people I talk to, do not want to go back to Austria, because they are still--

KG: --yes, my father would not go back.

PG: So how come you went?

KG: Well, I was...the first time I went back was in 1980, and I was a bit apprehensive about it. I did not know how I would feel when I get there. And I went back to Vienna, eventually. And I said, the first thing I did in Vienna, I went to my old apartment and the synagogue. I called them up when I got to Vienna and I said to the synagogue that I would like to come and see the synagogue. They said, "It is only open on Friday and Saturday." I said, "Well, I will not be here. I am only here a couple of days. But I used to go and pray there Saturday afternoons when I went to school." So they said, "Okay, come over in the morning and we will open it up for you." Which they did. That was before they had all the guards there...when they did not have a quite as secure place as it is now. And from there...I had my experience, I saw it. And the only thing...the last night we were in Vienna, we were out for dinner, and sitting there, it was pretty late, and suddenly three well-dressed men go by...leaving the restaurant. And finally I said to my wife, „Und wo waren die unter Hitler?“ I said to myself...they were men, probably in their sixties at the time. They probably were active with the

Nazis. And once I could separate the newer generations from the old generations, I had no problem going to Vienna and I had some good experiences.

PG: Could you tell me again about your experience with Austrian students, when you spoke with them?

KG: Well, the first time...and I spoke to the class of that teacher in *Realschule*. They were fifteen or sixteen-year-old students, and I spoke to them in German – I guess, well enough that they understood what I had to say. And they asked some pertinent questions...what happened, of course. They were astonished what happened. At that time, nothing had been done yet at the school. Eventually, what they did at the *Realschule* at Schottenbastei which is now a *Realgymnasium* is, they put up a plaque with all the names of the 125 students who were Jewish or had to leave, which was put there in probably...[19]81/82 or maybe later. That was later, when I went to the school. That is why I said...I told you I was amazed with this one boy who asked a question, „“Wie hat Hitler die Juden behandelt?“ This was quite revealing. Also, I went for dinner with a teacher of the *Volksschule*, and she had two sons. My daughter and I...she invited us for dinner. My wife had to meet some other people she knew in Vienna. So we spoke to the two sons, and one had just finished his military service, and I asked them what they know about the holocaust. And they were quite well versed in it. The other one was eighteen years old, so he was ready for the army.

PG: Do you still have any relatives in Austria at this time?

KG: No.

PG: Did your parents ever consider emigrating to Israel?

KG: No.

PG: Have you ever visited Israel?

KG: Yes.

PG: What do you think about Israel, about the importance of founding the State of Israel?

KG: It is...basically, if you really want to talk about it...if Israel had been in existence in 1939 or [19]38, we would not have had the problem that we had with emigration, where countries kept Jews out, rather than...being active organizationally...being pro-Israel a hundred percent. I am not always agreeing with what they are doing, but generally speaking it was a necessity that there will be a Jewish state. And it was born of the holocaust, actually, and the progress they have made there is unbelievable...what they have accomplished, the Israelis. I mean, I also talked...to skip back a moment...with the Kindertransport, that too many young people, who's educations were interrupted, many of them were able to go back to school. There were two Nobel laureates who were on the Kindertransport. So you had all kinds of people there.

2/00:26:32

PG: I have a question about your identity. How do you feel today? Do you feel American, Austrian or European?

KG: I am an American.

PG: American.

KG: I am an American at this point. I have lived here...my life was fashioned in America. My experience in Vienna...I was not quite fourteen when I left. My English experience was sort of on the periphery. It was not really as a whole family. I had my mother there, but it was not the kind of life where you really...my basic life is in the United States. Now, I call myself a New Yorker. [Lacht.]

PG: Do you often speak German?

KG: No.

PG: Did you try to teach your children German or Austrian?

KG: Not really. As our daughter was growing...we have one child, our daughter...as she was growing up, when we did not want her to understand, we spoke German, my wife and I. After a while she said, "I understand enough of what you are saying. You do not have to do it. You can say it in English." [Lacht.] Although she did learn German finally in high school and her first year in college. But she does not really use it.

PG: One last question. Did you make any effort to get back your properties or your parent's properties? For example your dad's business or your apartment in Vienna.

KG: We got...for the apartment, we got a minimal settlement. I got some money. I got, of course, all the payments from Austria, over the years. Not just the pension. There was a 70,000 schilling payment, the 7,000 dollar thing, then there was something else, where I got about 3,000 dollars. I got various settlements outside of the pension. I am grateful for the pension from Austria, because it sure helps.

PG: I am actually finished with my questions. You did tell me a lot. Do you still have anything you want to mention?

KG: Well, I am trying to put it into perspective. As I said, my experiences over the years, since I have been to Vienna and have met people from Vienna...in fact, we have...one person is famous in Vienna. On the other hand, in the house next door over there, a friend of ours had bought the house. They subsequently sold it a few years ago. Now it is an Indian family there. Their son is the concert master of the Vienna Radio Orchestra. So he made it.

PG: Interesting. Is there any kind of message you would like to leave for young Austrian or Americans, or any people who will listen to this interview, the younger generation?

KG: The message I would leave to them is from my experience and other people's experiences that we had over the years. We should have learned enough to avoid any future, major catastrophes in the world.

Unfortunately, it is not true yet. Maybe it will be in future generations, but today there are still many areas where prejudice is prevalent.

PG: That is true. Well then, thank you very much, Mr. Goldberger, for your openness and your time.

KG: It is okay. I am glad you are here and I am glad to hear what is being done with this. It is really important.

PG: We really appreciate it.

KG: The world has learned something, there is no question about it. Overall, I think, we lead a better life than we did before and that Hitler has taught us something through a lot of hardship. But the majority of individuals are good people. But there are those in the minority, who unfortunately have too great an influence from time to time. And we still have a lot to learn and this is from being an American. We still have not learned enough in our history.

PG: Let us hope this will change.

2/00:31:56

[Übergang/Schnitt.]

KG: For instance, where I lived...Esslinggasse was between *Börse* and the quay. And the quay was a park. Now, it is this busy street. I remember, we used to play football there, which was against the law. There was a big promenade along the Danube Canal and grass on the rest of it. And we used to kick a ball around there. I remember once, they picked us up – the cops – and took us to the police station. We were kids. They scared us a bit, but they let us go eventually. [Lacht.] The other thing I remember – talking of sports –, my father was a soccer player, and he used to take me to the *Stadion*, particularly to international matches. I loved that. That was fascinating. But in Vienna, of course, they used to talk about...do you know where Esslinggasse is? Das ist dort, wo der 31er gefahren ist. It does not exist anymore.

PG: No, it does not exist anymore. Did you ever consider re-emigrating back to Austria after the war?

KG: Going back to Austria after the war?

PG: Yes.

KG: No.

PG: Your parents?

KG: My parents would never go back. My mother...my father would not. It was not in my mind, I mean, I could not stand the Austrians, because my generation, as I said, is...when you look at the statistics, the leaders of the...camp commanders and camp personnel of the concentration camps were more Austrians and Ukrainians. And I would never have considered it. I know some people who went back to Vienna for political reason.

PG: Yes, social democrats.

KG: Communists or social democrats, they went back. In fact, my wife...one of the people she was with...she also lived in a hostel in England. One of the girls from that hostel went back to Vienna after the war, and eventually married a guy who had been in Palestine and came back to Vienna. And we have seen them since, in Vienna. They grew up in Vienna, have two sons, but...

2/00:35:03

The one thing that I remember in Vienna was Schwedenplatz and the Gestapo [Geheime Staatspolizei] there. That was bombed, partly. Actually, as I said, my experiences in Vienna were limited, because of my age of course. I am really amazed at some Austrians. I mean, with this *A Letter To The Stars*, when we were there...when was that, three years ago?

PG: Four years ago.

KG: Four years ago, and I spoke in Laa an der Thaya, where there was that one teacher, who was responsible for putting up a monument for the Jewish people who lived in Laa an der Thaya before the war. There were 33 Jewish families there, and three survived...three families out of 33. And they put up, in the middle of the town...as big as this, half-round, on a Magen David, the Jewish Star, were the names of the 33 families. And he had arranged to...after I spoke there with the students...the Jewish tradition when you go to the cemetery is, when you leave, you leave a stone.

PG: Yes, a stone or a flower.

KG: He gave a stone to every child in that class, so we could leave a stone there. These fifteen-year-old kids got a lot of meaning out of this. He took us around in his car, and he knew pretty much where these people had lived and where they had their businesses and so forth. And of course, there is no Jew in God knows anywhere near there. Because do not forget: In Austria, the vast majority of us lived in Vienna. Not like in Germany, where they lived in many, many cities...large Jewish populations. I think ten percent of the Austrian Jews lived elsewhere. I mean, there were people in Innsbruck and in Graz – Jewish people –, but the majority was in Vienna. It was a pretty active community. Now of course, if you look at the Jewish community in Vienna, they are mostly from the East. They came after the war, and from Russia.

PG: In Germany too, actually.

KG: In Germany even more than in Austria, the families were there for thousands of years. My wife's mother's family lived in their house from the year 1600.

PG: Since the sixteenth [meint: seventeenth] century?

KG: The house still stands. We have been back there. So, I mean, it is pretty solid. It is an interesting experience. I am glad I did what I did, finally, but I always hope that today's younger generation has an opportunity to get a proper education and lead – in quotes – a normal life.

PG: A better one.

KG: When you can accept the differences, that is the most important thing...to accept all differences. And at the same time, our sameness.

PG: Yes, that is true.

KG: I mean, let me go back 50 years, and you would not be sitting here as a black person. [Beide lachen.] That is right. Integration did not exist.

PG: Yes, that is true.

2/00:40:11

KG: When you look back, it is...where is your family?

PG: Back in Vienna.

KG: You have your family in Vienna?

PG: My mum is in Vienna, my dad is in Ghana, in North Africa.

KG: So you would not want to live back in Africa?

PG: It depends. I would like to finish my education in Vienna, as it is better and it is also free. So I would like to finish my education in Vienna, but afterwards I am not quite sure. But I grew up in Vienna, so...

KG: Well, you must feel certain experiences, I guess--

PG: --sure--

KG: --both ways and where you do really fit in.

PG: Yes, that is a good...yes, identity crisis, I know. I do, and it is a huge question. I grew up in Austria, I am from Austria and all that stuff, but it is not only about me personally and how I feel, but it is also about the other people. How do they accept you? How do they see you? No matter how Austrian I feel or no matter

how good I am with Austrian culture or how my German is or if I have a Viennese dialect, I am still black. It is how other people see me and how they accept. I can say I am Austrian, but they would not see me as such.

KG: It is a conflict.

PG: It is a conflict, yes.

KG: Because you are torn between what...because I know when we tried to do some things along the way, integrating in the United States...and we felt that there was...one thing was missing. There was no social contact. Intellectually, we may have understood the differences, but there was no social contact. So what we did is, we started a program of home visits, to visit Jewish families...it was from a Jewish organization for Jewish families to visit with Blacks in their homes and vice versa, and to get to know each other really on a more personal basis than in an intellectual way.

PG: That is a good idea. But things will get better, and Vienna is beautiful, Austria is a nice place to be, for all its flaws.

KG: Do you feel discriminated against in your daily life?

PG: In Austria? Now and then, not often. In Vienna, it is okay...in Vienna, not truly, but once you get out of Vienna, it gets worse. Like you said, Laa an der Thaya--

KG: --when you go to Klagenfurt--

PG: --oh, Klagenfurt is...let us not talk about Kärnten. [Lacht.]

KG: What is his name?

PG: [Jörg] Haider. But--

KG: --I mean, it was still...even at their best, it was 25 percent of the Austrian population who voted for the right wing.

PG: Now, it is going on 30. In Vienna, it is over 30. The one who followed Haider, the new one, he is even worse.

KG: Even worse? Also in Kärnten?

PG: No, he is from Vienna.

KG: Oh, he is from Vienna.

PG: Yes, he is Viennese.

KG: But the experience we had in Vienna with *A Letter To The Stars*...we were there for 1st May.

PG: Yes, the *Mai-Aufmarsch*.

KG: What they did is, they invited us to come to the *Rathaus* for some special thing. And of course, there were no trolleys running on the Ring[straße], so I took pictures of the different organizations who participated, from the communists to the...then the big rally by the social democrats at the *Rathaus*.

PG: I go there every year. I like it. I am part of the *Sozialistische Jugend*. So I like to go, it is nice.

KG: Yes, it is interesting.

2/00:44:45

As you asked me: How do I feel about--

PG: --yes, what I was asking. Before you apply for this project, you need to write your motivation and you need to set a goal and what you want to do or get from it. And you have to give an interview where they ask a lot of questions and I said, I would like to know how they feel about their identity or their experiences, being in a different place with a different language.

KG: Well, as I said, I grew up and, I guess, not having an unnormal experience...it is not to compare, what would have been, what could have been, where I would have been, if this had not happened or if I was born in the United States instead of Vienna. So it is hard to tell. It is impossible to determine what might have been.

PG: That is true.

KG: These days, unfortunately, things are so screwed up today, that you become suspicious of almost anything. The security...there are crazies around and you do not know what they are going to do. You are afraid of...my wife, just recently...we got a phone call. Somebody said, "This is the driver from United Parcel Service. We have a delivery for you of 250,000 dollars. Can we bring it over at one o'clock." I said, "Of course not! What is this?" And it went on like this. He said, "Can we have your e-mail number?" – "No, you cannot", my wife said to them. She said, "Can I speak to your supervisor?" Another comes on, with a heavy accent – both of them. "We have this delivery for you." – "If you want to deliver it to my house – you have my address –, the police will be waiting for you." [Lacht.]

PG: Yes, I know, it is--

KG: --it is frightening, because all things...we heard something else of somebody we know in Florida. She is active in the organization, so her e-mail is out there. So I get an e-mail in her name, saying, "I am in England and I was robbed, and I need some money to get back to the United States and get myself organized again." I happened to know this woman. I know she is very well off. She is retired in Florida, her husband is a retired lawyer, so there was not a question of doing this. But it was sent from her...in the winter, they are in Lake Tahoe...in the summer rather. And we had her daughter's address, so we contacted her daughter. Somebody stole her address book. Somebody got into her address book on the computer and sent it in her

name. So she changed the whole thing, but it happened again this year. Two years later, somebody still tried that.

PG: The worst is, some people really respond to those e-mails. They do not think about it and just send the money.

KG: They want something for nothing. There is no such thing.

PG: No, of course not. [Beide lachen.] No, you have to do something to get something.

KG: That is why some things...we have got to learn, and unfortunately some people are not learning. I am not happy about what is happening in the United States either.

PG: Yes, not everything is good that happens here.

KG: There are problems here. And as much as I see it...there is the frustration that you can do very little. You try and do something, but how much can you really accomplish? You go from here to here, but how do you get over here?

2/00:49:49

How has your experience been in the United States?

PG: It is different than Vienna or Europe. It is nice here, people are really nice and open, it is beautiful...I see that people do not trust the government, for which reason, I do not know. Social benefits here are not as good as in Vienna.

KG: Absolutely, that is one of the big problems.

PG: Yes, and that is one thing I really do not understand. I do not know. I mean, if you go to the hospital, you need to pay a fortune. In Vienna, I can go to the doctor any time I feel like going.

KG: And it does not cost anything.

PG: It does not cost anything. I can just go for a normal check-up. You do not even think about it, but here, there are people who have not been to a doctor's in ages.

KG: Because they cannot afford it.

PG: Because they cannot afford it. Just, I mean...a regular doctor's consultation fee is 200 dollars, and for a doctor to look at your eyes or whatever, you pay like 1,000...it does not make sense.

KG: Of course that is one of the big problems in the United States. And if you take party politics...if you take the Republicans, they are opposed to any kind of improvement, and some of the things that [Barack] Obama

has brought forth, they are against. I remember in Vienna, growing up, the doctor came to the house. The choice of the doctor...I know he was a family friend...he became a family friend. Social services in the United States are lacking. It is not...once you get...for senior citizens, it is not so bad. There is Medicare, which takes care of most of it. But it is costing me a fortune, even with the extra insurance that I have, that if you do not have a good retirement, you are in trouble, because it can cost you...my medical expenses for last year were over 12,000 dollars.

PG: Wow.

KG: Covering the extra insurance and what I have to take out over the Medicare...the Medicare insurance plus your doctor's visits, plus your...if you have anything which is not covered under the Medicare program, then you have to pay for it. I had to get a hearing aid...2,000 dollars. It is like this...and that is cheap.

PG: That is cheap? I can imagine.

KG: I asked why and he said, "Well, it is not as sophisticated as the one you can get for 6,000 dollars."

PG: I mean, it is a nice country and everything, but there is room for improvement.

KG: There is room for improvement and unfortunately, most Americans do not see it that way. They still believe, if I work hard enough, I am going to be successful. The difference was...I saw the difference even in England. In England, they said that there is a working class. People belonged to the Labor Party. They realized, "My progression is limited. I can make more money, but basically, my status in life is", because you are not accepted into the upper classes. Here, everybody thinks, "I can make it, I can become President."

PG: The American dream. Everybody can become whatever he or she wants. But that is not true.

KG: Well, yes...life is too short.

PG: Yes, indeed. What is your daughter doing?

KG: I have a daughter. She lives in California.

PG: Okay.

KG: Our grandson was just in Israel. They have a special program for young Jewish people, from eighteen to 26, called *Birthright Israel*. He was there. But he comes from a background of a non-Jewish father and a Jewish mother. But he identifies as being Jewish.

[Ende des Interviews.]

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