

THINGS. PLACES. YEARS. 70min, DV-CAM / Beta SP, 4:3, Colour, A/GB 2004

[Text: Title:]

Klub Zwei and Amour fou present

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

The lamp beside me was part of my inheritance. And I think what this is leading to – in fact it took me a long time to come to terms with any inheritance. The lamp is part of the inheritance, the little cabinet over there, and it took me a long time to feel comfortable with the ownership of these objects. These were my parents'. These were objects that they had acquired in my lifetime. I remember them acquiring them. So they belong to my parents. They didn't–, there was no sense of history with these objects. So when my parents died, I felt that things like this lamp should have gone with them.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

I think I feel a certain attachment to places, but less so than other people might feel, because the attachment to those places is only based on a generation, it's not based on something long term and it would be wonderful to have a sense of being attached to a place because it's connected to one's family story or family history for a number of generations.

[Audio: Tamar Wang:]

Coming from Europe you can be quite defensive about being Jewish. Where identity was something to hide. Whereas I've noticed in the synagogue discussion group, that people who were Americans and South Africans, they had no difficulty being Jewish, in a way that they didn't mind telling anybody or to say–, they wouldn't hide it in any way. And not that British Jews hide it necessarily now, and I think the next generation, my children's generation, I don't think they do, but I think, my generation people still may sometimes, will keep it quiet in certain areas.

[Text: Title: Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things Past, p. 6, translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin:]

Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves and not anything else, by the immobility of our conception of them.

For it always happened that when I awoke like this, and my mind struggled in an unsuccessful way to discover where I was, everything revolved around me through the darkness: things, places, years.

[Text: Title:]

with
Geraldine Auerbach
Josephine Bruegel
Erica Davies
Lisbeth Perks

Katherine Klinger
Elly Miller
Rosemarie Nief
Anni Reich
Ruth Rosenfelder
Ruth Sands
Nitza Spiro
Tamar Wang

[Audio: Geraldine Auerbach:]

I love London. I think it's the most exciting city, because every square you go around, every neighbourhood is different. It has its own atmosphere, and when we had to go on holiday last month we decided to go to London. Even though we live in Harrow, we actually booked into a hotel very near here, near the British Museum. And we had really a wonderful time.

I love the Southbank, we walked from here, which is Euston down to the Southbank through the little squares of London. In the sunshine on a January morning looking at the buildings which you never see when you rush past in a motorcar; walking to see the skaters at the Somerset House through to the Riverside café; walking across Waterloo Bridge is always the most exciting thing to do, to look this side and see St. Paul's and the City and look this side and see the Houses of Parliament and the boats. It's just a very exciting thing to do.

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

I love London. And I love the dirty bits as well as the clean bits. Some of it is quite sort of scary and I probably wouldn't want to wander around those scary bits.

I've just driven past Kings Cross today and I got cross because it was all crowded and there was a traffic jam. But I love it. I love the dirt and I love the beauty of London. If you cross the river, the very famous Waterloo Bridge, it is just—, every time I cross it, it is heart stopping. So I love the stones of London. But I think I've said this before, I feel a sense of privilege; I don't feel a sense of ownership.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I suppose I like where I live, more than any other place in London. London doesn't—, emotionally doesn't mean very much to me. What means to me, is more how I live rather than where I live. I've chosen—, since I have arrived in England, I've lived most of the time here, in Belsize Park, because it's not very English, it's full of—. Oh, it was, 40 years ago, full of foreigners like me. And I felt much more comfortable in a part of London, which had more foreign people, rather than English people. I've never felt very comfortable with true English people.

[Music: ZENZILE and Jamika Ajalon:]

*she landed here
she landed here
with the distinct taste for flying*

[Text: Chapter:]

Arrival

[Audio: Josephine Bruegel / Anni Reich:]

[J.B.] I remember very clearly, I arrived on the 4th of April 1939 with a lot—, I think, the whole train was full of refugees and when we arrived at Liverpool Street there was nobody but refugees. Then there was a man standing there and had a sign: "Refugees from Czechoslovakia". And I went to him and he took us in the underground to the Refugee office which was in the middle of the town.

[A.R.] Was it Woburn House?

[J.B.] Woburn House, yes. And when I got into Woburn House the first person I met was somebody from my town whom I used to know very well. And he took care of me, and had me registered and got me a place straight away, you know. And that was it.

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

I don't understand why England has to commemorate the Holocaust. England fought a very honourable war. England, had perhaps not been the Americans, England might have lost the war, but I thought it was a honourable war, seen from the English point of view.

I don't know why they're doing it. And I think they've run into trouble, they set it up as a sort of Blairite spin. And that was fine except then he had to decide what he's going to do with this Holocaust Memorial Day. He couldn't just memorialize one set of tragedies. He then had to open it up. Where do you end? Whom do you memorialize?

[Text: Chapter:]

27th of January

[Audio: Anni Reich:]

Yes, it should be remembered, definitely. This is not anything which we can just wipe under the carpet. No, no, it has to be – for the next generations.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

In this country, I think it's very debatable, because 27th of January, the liberation of Auschwitz, has no particular meaning or echo over here. Probably the only connection that this country has in such a direct way with the liberation of the camps would be the liberation of Bergen Belsen, which was later. So that maybe would be a more appropriate day.

[Audio: Elly Miller:]

I think it would be important to have a day everywhere. The date should be the same. Because it was a world event.

[Audio: Rosemarie Nief:]

[R.N.] In Germany this day is also Holocaust Memorial Day. I don't know in Austria – have you?

[Klub Zwei:] No.

[R.N.] But in Germany they introduced it in 1996, I think, so the British have come with a time lag, but better late than never.

[Audio: Erica Davies:]

I would prefer it if it took in other Holocausts, if we thought about Holocausts – I know that they all differ, but – Rwanda, Cambodia, anywhere where one set of people have tried to eliminate another set of people.

[Audio: Lisbeth Perks:]

As an institutionalized event I think, yes, it is good and it is necessary to remind people. For me myself it's not necessary to have one day set aside. I think of people and I think of the situation, as it was, throughout the year, many, many times, some days more than others, but it's a recurring theme in my life, in my thinking.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I have a Holocaust Memorial, I think – without sounding gruesome – I have a Holocaust Memorial every day of my life.

[Text: Chapter:]

Going Back

[Audio: Josephine Bruegel:]

We went once or twice to Austria and I wasn't happy in Austria. I used to say, and that was in the Fifties, you see, that was in the early Fifties and I said to my husband, you know, there are many more Nazis in Austria than in Germany. In Germany, there was a very lively discussion about, you know, what happened in the Nazi time and what happened Jewish and German and – äh, Nazi affairs. But there was absolutely dead quiet. There was–, no, never anybody discussed anything in Austria. It was like on a cemetery, you know, they didn't speak. There was nothing in the newspaper. It was very, very impressive.

[Audio: Elly Miller:]

I like Vienna. I've recently been back to Vienna. And I think it's a wonderful city, really. I have this curious thing when I go to Vienna that I do feel very much at home nevertheless. When I go there. It's very odd. But, you know, especially when you got the right kind of air and the wind or something, and I go, I walk and I somehow feel that I remember it. You know, and I feel at ease. No, I don't feel at ease. I feel at home.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

[K.K.] I think when I first went to Vienna I was 14, so that was 30 years ago, and then my mother was taking me to that sandwich bar of the Graben. What is it called? Trz–

[Klub Zwei:] –Trzesniewski.

[K.K.] Yes. And she said to me: "Well, you know, these are the same sandwiches that they've been making, I mean, I remember these sandwiches from the 1920ies. And they still got the same fillings". And I remember we sort of looked at some of the people serving there and thought, you know, probably the same people making those sandwiches and serving them. And you know, the difference is a small price change – not even that much.

And I suppose, because in London everything just changes so much, so fast, seeing that there and also from that time, is very strange. And you just sort of wonder – well, to me it explains why there is that feeling of things having not been worked through, because everything is still the same: the food is the same, the waiters are the same, they walk in the same way, they talk, they treat you in the same way, they serve you the same food, and you can move around the city on the same tram number as you did 75 years ago, because the roads are still the same.

[Audio: Lisbeth Perks:]

The last visit was a very pleasant one, quite an emotional one, because it was a time that I had been invited to come to my old school, along with 2 or 3 others, to be present at the unveiling of a plaque which was erected in memory of the Jewish children who had been expelled. An occasion where they had speeches from government ministers. In retrospect I realized it was very impersonal and it was very—, it was all very correct, almost too correct. At the time I thought it was good and right, but it lacked a certain cordiality – 'Herzlichkeit'.

[Audio: Anni Reich:]

I didn't like the people. I think the language has changed so much. It became very vulgar, very vulgar. When I came back after the war I was quite surprised how the language changed.

And of course when I went to Vienna which I did mostly, somehow it was very strange, the feeling. You've never noticed that, have you?

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

Going back to Poland was really quite horrid. And we found that we kept having to travel by train, which was not particularly pleasant, because we kept seeing cattle trucks. We also found that we were constantly being importuned, constantly being asked if we wanted to go to various sites: camp sites, museums, places of massacre, which I found totally unacceptable.

We didn't want to go to Auschwitz, which is quite interesting, because most of my family perished in Auschwitz. And I felt it was a violation of them to go to a sanitized, you know, museum. So we went as far as the gates, because somebody said to me: You have a duty to them to go. So we did and we went as far as the gates and we spent 15 minutes at the gates.

And, as I say, this is a family I don't know, but I knew that something had happened to them, something horrendous had happened to them at this particular point.

So that was my feeling with Poland. Again something distant and yet in a way relevant to me. It's complex, but it's really not a lot there. So when I try to describe it, it's not very deep, but it's very complex. And I hated it, I hated Poland – from beginning to end. We were there for a long weekend and what was very interesting was, we were there in February, so it was quite sort of wintery, and my husband took photographs. And when

they were developed there was colour. And I don't remember any colour whilst we were there. It was totally monochrome as far as I was concerned. And so clearly, I mean, some of the photos were really very nice. But it's not what I remembered. I had obviously imposed my anger, my resistance. But I felt it was something we ought to do. This was about 10 years after my parents had died. I would have never gone in their lifetimes.

[Text: Chapter:]

Generations

[Audio: Nitza Spiro:]

Most of the people who were with me at school, most of the children, their parents came from Europe and we all, all the parents were a kind of remnants, very few people have uncles or aunts, but definitely hardly anybody had a grandparent.

So when somebody came to collect the children from school and we didn't know that they were the parents, they were slightly older, and they said: Oh, you know, those are our grandparents. They were like a special animal. We all were going to the fence of the school to look: "Wow, a grandparent!"

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I watched – in Paris, as a little girl – people, little girls, having grandparents and it was totally alien to me. I mean I wasn't jealous, it just had nothing to do with me. Nothing, nothing at all to do with me. And I never thought about it – not even when I was married, not even when I had children. The thought of grandmother had just never occurred to me.

But I have to say that once the first grandchild had arrived, it was absolutely wonderful. It's a new aspect of me, a totally, totally new aspect of me, which obviously was there, but it didn't even occur to me that there may be such an aspect of me. And I think it's the most wonderful thing. And I think as well that it answers a question, which I only had it in theory.

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

We are talking about a non-loss, which is a very strange sort of feeling that I have. I have this non-family and a non-background. And I don't know if I told you once before, but in fact I had to tell a doctor my medical history, my family's medical history, and I said I don't know.

A – I don't know the medical history of my family anyway and

B – most of them didn't survive long enough for a proper medical history to be revealed.

So I can't tell you whether my bones are going to crack up and I can't tell you whether there was, I don't know, strokes, a history of strokes – I don't know.

[Text: Chapter:]

Transmission

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

This is something which someone one day told me, a pediatrician, when I had already teenage sons. He said: "You know, you are very lucky that you have sons and not daughters." And I said: "Why?" And he said: "Well, because of your story with your mother. Had you had daughters, you probably would have transmitted, whatever there was to transmit between women." And it probably would have been very difficult for them to take on board, what I have—, I would have transmitted to a woman. And I think a mother behaves totally different to sons than to daughters. And I don't think I transmitted—, of course I transmitted a lot of things to my sons, but I don't think I transmitted very much the baggage that my mother gave me.

[Text: Question:]

Did your parents talk about their experiences?

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

My father used to start with, "Bei uns in Wien...". And my mother in French would say: "Rien, il n'y a rien, 'Bei uns in Wien', qu'est-ce que ca veut dire? It doesn't mean anything. What are you talking about?"

It seems as if my mother's life started in 1943, when she arrived in Paris. At which she was 35. I have never found out anything about her, through her, about Vienna. She never, never, never mentioned the word Vienna, never. To the day she died. Never.

[Text: Chapter:]

Past and Present

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

This was a postcard that I came across a few years ago from a New York artist called Melissa Gould, her father was Austrian. And so she did this postcard, Souvenir Wien 1938, which she called: "Schadenfreude", part of the series called: "Schadenfreude". It's witty and very sharp and straight to the point. And it deals with the subject of what happened, but not in a sentimental way that just makes you sort of intone some kind of a phrase, you know, like: "We shall never forget what happened and it will never happen again..." I mean, it's just on a completely other level to that, because it creates—, it takes something from the past and it puts something in the present onto it in this new way, in this very—. I mean, it is like a punch in the stomach. And yet, I think, you know that it's true.

And particularly in a city that is so proud of its history and makes so much of its economy out of tourism and souvenirs. So why shouldn't this be another part of that, another artefact from then?

[Text: Question:]

Did you talk to your children about your history of emigration?

[Audio: Lisbeth Perks:]

I have never told them any of the dreadful things, and they never learned about the terrible things that happened, until they were really, virtually grown up. And I think, coped well, with the knowledge of what happened, but put them in the context of, of

world happenings, perhaps, more than what happened to our family. I think, I've always tried to avoid bringing them up with any prejudice.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I didn't do it consciously, but I thought, I felt that there was enough of the past through my parents. And I myself no – not, not when I brought them up. No. I would say not at all. They may say it differently. But I personally would say not at all. What ever they got, they got from my parents.

[Audio: Tamar Wang:]

I am very suspicious of Austria. And maybe I don't have had much contact, as I said, compared to Germany. And why am I suspicious? I'm suspicious, because of the whole history and, that I haven't really addressed my relationship with Austria at all. And I wonder about whether the other people also felt–, well they seem to. And I also wondered, whether the second generation people would–, did–, but their work seemed to relate much more to Jewish things. As if there's a sort of need to readdress that balance or something, where the parents have come away from it. And the second generation, somehow you have to bring it back into your life in some kind of way.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

Well, obviously when you have a background where both parents come from there, from that part of the world where in my father's case most of his family perished, and in my mother's case as well asking questions and looking at how that has affected the generation born immediately after those events, seems to me to be a meaningful and important, necessary kind of work to do. And by whatever ways, I mean, whether one does it through writing or art work or taking photographs or making a film or a piece of architecture or–. It doesn't matter what it is, but creating some kind of a relationship to those events. In whatever way one does that it seems to me that that is important to do. And so that's what I've tried to do in the last decade.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I met Katherine Klinger when I was doing some voluntary work, I was still working and one day a young woman walked in and she was trying to put together what I thought was a fantastic project, she was trying to set up a conference in London.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

My interest then was more specifically on looking at the issues of how the generations born post Holocaust both from the perspective of those who have been victimized as well as of those who were connected to the families who had done the perpetrating, of how we have been affected both on a personal level and also in society by the cataclysmic events of what had happened before we were actually born in the 33 to 45 period.

[Text: Title:]

Conferences in London, Berlin and Vienna

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

I organized a series, I suppose one could say, a series of conferences. They didn't start out as a series. I didn't know with the first one, that there would be a second, and then a third one. But looking back on it, they look as if they're a series, a series of meetings and conferences. The first one was in London, in which the 2 sons, one from camp survivors and one from—, the son of a Gestapo Head of Police, they spoke about their experiences of meeting together and the difficulties and impossibilities of their friendship. And then we developed that into a much bigger conference that was held in 1997 in Berlin, which was a 2 day conference.

[Text: Title:]

The Presence of the Holocaust in the Present, Berlin 1997

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

We had about 500 – 600 people in Berlin. All second generation descendents of both: Jews and Germans. And it was an enormous success. It made a big noise in the world of Holocaust. And then we did the same 2 years later in Vienna.

[Text: Title:]

The Presence of the Absence, Vienna 1999

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

I had a very interesting experience where we were translating everything from German into English and one of the German speakers, a German historian, who was due to speak, who didn't actually speak in the end, sent through a title for the talk that he was going to give and the title was: 'Wie spricht man über den Strick im Haus des Henkers?' And my Austrian colleges would always send me a version in English that had been translated and what I would generally do, I would look over the translation and say to them, that this should be a little bit different or I would sort of put it into my version of a better English.

[Text: Title:]

Wie spricht man über den Strick im Haus des Henkers?

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

They sent through a version which went: "How does one speak about the rope in the house of the hanged."

[Text: Title:]

Wie spricht man über den Strick im Haus des Gehenkten?

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

And I wrote back to them and I said: "But we're not speaking about the rope in the house of the hanged. When we are in Vienna we're speaking about the rope in the house of the hangman. And there is a very important difference between being in the house of the hanged or being in the house of the hangman." And no matter how many e-mails we sent to one another, they would not understand what it was that I was saying to them. And they could not and they did not. And they kept saying: "No, no, it's the house of the hanged."

And I'm absolutely sure that had we had that title in Germany and translated in Germany, there would have been absolutely no question of whose house we were in.

[Text: Chapter:]

Fields of Work

[Text: Title:]

Freud Museum London

[Audio: Erica Davies:]

I studied archaeology and ancient history and I'm a museum curator. And I wanted to work on a collection of an extraordinary person that's still kept in context.

You know, because there aren't many interiors as extraordinary as Freud's that have survived.

And so it seemed to be an extraordinary and unique place in which to work.

[Audio: Erica Davies:]

Well, the Freuds' is a large family house, it's a detached house built in the 1920ies, which was found for Freud by Ernst, his youngest son who's an architect, who left Berlin in 1933. And the Freuds moved in in 1938 bringing everything from Vienna.

There is a presence in the London house which there isn't in Vienna; Vienna is more of an absence, of the person and personality.

[Text: Title:]

Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library London

[Audio: Rosemarie Nief:]

Wiener Library was founded in Amsterdam by Dr. Wiener. And in 1933 he fled Berlin because of the rise of the Nazis, and he went to Amsterdam, where he started to collect material, pamphlets and leaflets and photographs and books. Then in 38 it became too dangerous for the collection to be left in Amsterdam, so he moved it over here, to London and the archive opened its door in 1939 at the outbreak of the war.

[Text: Title:]

The Basement of Wiener Library

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

The basement contains the core of the collection here, which means around 60.000 books, two million press cuttings, hundreds of thousands of documents. About a third of the books are in German, and dating from the period 1933–1945, and the rest is from after that.

And the basement, as you can see, on a late January day is extremely cold, which is our own air conditioning that we have. It's cold most of the year and this time of the year it's freezing.

So as you can see, we have not very sophisticated conditions for this certainly one of the most important collections on this subject in the world. But I rather like the idea that it's here, in the basement, sort of residing down below, in these rather dusty, neglected conditions. I think it's much better than if it would be somewhere nice and warm and clean and completely watertight. But it's much more chaotic and I think much more connected to the subject. So that's what's down here.

[Text: Title:]

The Reading Room of Wiener Library

[Audio: Rosemarie Nief:]

Only recently, I think, by recently meaning in the 1980ies, more and more women have started to write about their own experiences. Up to that point scholarly works concentrated mainly on the experience of men.

[Text: Title:]

The Unsung Years. Lisbeth Fischer-Leicht. London 1996

[Audio: Lisbeth Perks:]

I had been told by an acquaintance that Wiener Library are always interested in material to do with our story, the Holocaust and experiences. So I got in touch with Wiener Library and Rosemarie kindly made time for John and myself and we visited her. That was in the early stages when I had just about finished the book and didn't really know what to do with it and how to place it, and I wanted some advice and she was kind enough to give us advice. And ever since we have been in touch and strengthened what I hope she thinks as well as I do as a friendship.

[Text: Title:]

Spiro Ark London

[Audio: Nitza Spiro:]

I realized now, while working in Jewish education that the emphasis has shifted into the Holocaust. I think the Holocaust is an important, essential part of Jewish history and the history of humanity. So not only Jews have to learn about the Holocaust, but others as well, but not as out of context and not only about anti-Semitism, I think, that Jewish history and the fact that Jews lived in many countries and had a very positive history, I think, that people should see that there is something good about living together,

blending in cultures and also to look at how Jewish history has effected their own people, their own country in a positive way.

[Text: Title:]

Jewish Music Institute London

[Audio: Geraldine Auerbach:]

You know, people come to me and say: "I'm not sure there is Jewish music." And I say to them: "Well, do you think I've been wasting the last 20 years of my life? Has it been a complete waste of time?"

There is music that pertains to Jews and the way we define Jewish music is, that if it is used for Jewish purposes or if it is based on a Jewish text, or if it's music that Jews use for Jewish purposes, like around the table or in their prayers or at their weddings or whatever – that's fine for us, we don't have to actually find the kosher particle in the music. It's enough that Jews accept it as Jewish music.

[Text: Chapter:]

Gender and Music

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

I did an M.A. on women in traditional Jewish communities and it was a total overview, but it took one through the bible, post-bible and various communities. Having done the M.A. and found and discovered this in the M.A. I then confined myself to 2 ultra orthodox Chassidic sects – one which is much more outward looking, the other which is a very, very closed society – to see how the women–, when they sing, where they sing, to whom they sing, what they sing and the whole notion of women singing and why there is this objection to women singing. And I've just completed it.

[Audio: Geraldine Auerbach:]

Gender, there are gender aspects in my work, I have to say. First of all in the music itself, because certain things can only be sung by males or females, certain things can only be listened to by males or females. For instance – you probably heard from other people, like Ruth, about men not allowed to hear women singing. The reason being, that they will be so-called put off their prayers by other thoughts, but it seems to me that's the men's problem not the women's.

[Text: Chapter:]

Jewish Women

[Audio: Elly Miller:]

One is a woman as person and one happens to be Jewish. And I think those things don't necessarily have to be coupled.

I mean, you speak to somebody like perhaps Ruth Rosenfelder, she is a Jewish woman, she lives as a Jewish woman. I don't know that I live my life as a Jewish

woman. I live my life as a – if you like – a thinking human being who happens to be a woman and has all the advantages and disadvantages of a particular gender. Now the Jewishness is another aspect. I am Jewish. I am very consciously Jewish and I'm not an orthodox Jew. But I believe in the traditional religion. And I certainly believe in the religion that Judaism professes.

[Audio: Tamar Wang:]

It's not that easy, I think, as a woman. You are making a choice between–, you know, your role changes depending on which community you're in. If you are in a traditional orthodox community you have one type of role which is based in the family and it's not much to do with liturgy or the services or anything ritual.

Well, it has ritual in the home. But your place is divided, I mean, we are talking about place. You are definitely in the home as opposed to being in the synagogue. And the synagogue is much more the sort of men's club really.

So in fact I find myself as a Jewish woman now quite kind of torn between both sides – tradition and moving forward. Ideologically I'm moving forward, but emotionally I have strong ties with the past.

[Audio: Anni Reich/Josephine Bruegel:]

[A.R.] I'm completely different from the English Jewish women.

[J.B.] Oh yes. That's right.

[A.R.] Completely.

[J.B.] I have no English–.

[Klub Zwei:] In which way?

[A.R.] They are different, they have, I mean, they are different people, either they are Orthodox or they are just Jewish, because they were born Jewish and that's what I am: I was born Jewish and that's all. But I don't think that I'm quite–, I might be different, but I don't think so – from the ordinary English person.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

I think probably one of the biggest changes in the last 2 years, since we met and spoke in terms of this whole Jewish identity business, if we can call it that, is that I definitely have seen in the last year, in a way that other people would tell me: "Well, it was always there, you were just burying your head in the sand," but I definitely have felt the presence – not in a direct personal way, but in a sort of collective tribal way – the presence of anti-Semitism.

[Text: Chapter:]

The presence of anti-Semitism

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

And it's quite scary. And it's something we'd never ever, I have never ever experienced before. Nobody has actually beaten me up in the street, I don't know, but one hears of people who are in organized Jewish groups being beaten up, people who are obviously Jews, because they are wearing obviously Jewish clothing.

[Audio: Katherine Klinger:]

I think it's much more amongst left wing circles where there has always been an anti-Israeli, pro-Palestinian tendency, but it's been much more suppressed or perhaps it hasn't been suppressed, I just haven't seen it.

And I think that is directly connected to Israel and the Palestinian situation and therefore giving people a feeling that they have a right to—, to be not only anti-Israel, which I think is one thing, but I think not very thinly disguised in it is anti-Semitism.

And I do think the two things are different, in that I think you can be against Israeli policy but that doesn't mean you have to be—, that doesn't mean you're anti-Semitic. But I do think it gets very muddled and caught up in the way it comes out. And for the first time, as I say, in the last year, I have felt that feeling of people's anti-Semitism.

[Audio: Lisbeth Perks:]

Well, if people want to find a reason for their anti-Semitism, they usually can find it – somehow either, yes, in different ways, you know: "The Jews do this," or "the Jews do that," or "they have too much money" or "they ...", you know. If you want to be anti-Semitic, I'm sure you can find plenty of reason.

[Music: ZENZILE and Jamika Ajalon:]

*i came to earth an alien
to make this peace with who i am
and though it is 'mother' land
i cannot be amerikkkan
some say that i am african
african american
bt what about my indian
i should be taking back my land
but while im in my african
i should be going back to my land
back to my land*

*crashing through sound barriers
her space ship disintegrating
into elecronic samples.*

[Audio: Tamar Wang:]

The issue of being Black or being Jewish was not an issue that came up for me in the synagogue, but in another group, a community that I'm active in.

And in one of these discussions somebody did get up saying, about being Black, that there is no dispute about your identity. I mean, you get up and people can see that you're Black, you got Black skin and that's it.

And being Jewish, well, you can look very Jewish. But basically you're white skinned, you're European, or actually you could be Black, actually you could be anything, you could be Japanese, Chinese, you could be Indian, Asian, or whatever.

But, for me, if I get up, not everybody knows necessarily that I am Jewish, and therefore the response you get from people is going to be different. And so the awareness of

identity, and having a dual identity or anything like that, or different communities that you are involved in is completely different from being a Black person.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

History has made me Jewish. Because we didn't come—, we came from quite an assimilated family. And yes, history, more 20th century history, the second world war has made me what I am today, yes.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

My life started—, if I hadn't been Jewish I would probably be today a very nice middle aged Viennese probably a bit fatter woman living somewhere in Vienna and having—, you know, that's what I would be, had I not been Jewish.

[Audio: Ruth Sands:]

I feel very strongly – had I not been Jewish – my life would have been totally, totally different. And if I am anything today, if I were to define myself today, describe myself today, I would say I'm a Jewish woman, yes. And then I'm French, and then I've lived in England for 45 years, but basically what I am: I'm a Jewish woman. That's my only sense of belonging. I don't belong to France, I don't belong to Austria, I don't belong to England and I need to belong somewhere. I do need it and that's my only kind of belonging, because everything else has changed in my life, everything else, except that. That hasn't changed.

[Text: Chapter:]

Epilogue

[Audio: Ruth Rosenfelder:]

When people tell me that they—, having left their family home for example, that they were deeply unhappy. I can't quite understand what they mean. And I know, I should understand. I know, if I were to leave here tomorrow I don't think I would feel any attachment to it at all. It's bricks and water.

And I think it has something to do with a rejection of material things. I think this is a conscious rather than an intuitive turning my back on it. That it is something I do almost—, it's a sort of cognitive turning my back on it.

[Audio: Tamar Wang:]

I mean definitely in Israel, I felt, I could attach myself. I think, in being able to enjoy being somewhere that had a huge history and that it was my history as a sort of cultural history. And also being with people, where the issue of being Jewish is not an issue. It was so relaxing that I just—, I felt this socially, I could kind of fit in.

[Audio: Elly Miller:]

Perhaps I'm afraid to get attached to places. It's possible that I don't want to get attached to a particular place in life, because I might have to leave it. And that may be the consequence of leaving Vienna.