



## Heinz's Story, Chapter 5

### **When did your visa arrive?**

It was February '39, sort of first week I think. I left Hamburg by air to London, London airport at the time was Croydon, my brother was there to meet me and we arrived in London. Some family members, uncles, aunts, were already there. We met them, we stayed in London a couple of days because we had to register with the authorities there, with the Jewish refugees committee, and then came to Leeds on the Saturday lunchtime, arriving Leeds central station ,and the first thing we did is drop my case in the left luggage office and we went to Elland Road to a football match before we even went home (laughs). I remember it was Everton, drew 1-1 (laughs). And that's when I had my first comeback down to earth, I thought with the college I'm at, which was very good, I learnt quite a lot of English and I thought well I'll see what happens. We were going to Elland Road on a tram hanging from the strap, it was packed, and there was everybody there, in those days people wore mufflers and flat caps and I tried to listen to what they were saying. And I couldn't understand one word, it was broad Yorkshire. That sort of dialect is no longer spoken certainly not in towns and I couldn't understand a word. I thought my god I've wasted my time at college (laughs). And then we went home to where Frank was living in the digs and he arranged for me to join him there and that was that. On Monday morning I started work in the clothing factory learning to do Hoffman pressing.

Workers were extremely friendly and helpful. The workers probably more than the management. They were extremely friendly and helpful, they showed us what to do, what not to do, you know the atmosphere there was quite happy. There were some problems, the trainee grade of pay was 30 shillings, that's £1.50 a week, on which you could just about exist, I mean no luxuries or anything but you could get into digs, I mean people didn't, men particularly didn't live in their own flats in those days, you went in digs you had either full board or half board or whatever, which usually cost about a pound or a guinea, and that left you enough for tram fares and for the odd cinema visit and you managed. I mean you didn't have enough to buy clothing or holidays or anything like that. But what happened is the 30 bob attracted the usual deductions – unemployment insurance, health insurance as well – which brought it down to about one pound 7 shillings or something like that. And that

was made up by the Jewish Refugees' Committee. When the tailors' and garment workers' union found out about that they went haywire, they said "You're subsidising cheap labour" and all that sort of thing, and eventually that was stopped and they had to pay us the full 30 shillings. So that was my first encounter with, that's when I joined my first Trade Union.

**Did you come across any anti-Semitism when you arrived in this country?**

In this country? There was, yeah there was some underlying anti-Semitism, it wasn't open as it was in Germany, it was more hidden. More or less on the lines as it is now, I mean there still is anti-Semitism, there still is a golf club in Leeds which won't admit Jews so it's always there.