

-TITLE- GERTRUDA BABLINSKA  
-I\_DATE- JULY 2 1987  
-SOURCE- CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT  
-RESTRICTIONS-  
-SOUND\_QUALITY- FAIR  
-IMAGE\_QUALITY- GOOD  
-DURATION-  
-LANGUAGES-  
-KEY\_SEGMENT-  
-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
-PERSONAL\_NAME-  
-CORPORATE\_NAME-  
-KEY\_WORDS-  
-NOTES-  
-CONTENTS-

01:00 Her name is Gertruda Bablinska.

02:00 Born in a little town , Sarroga(ph), near Gdansk, Poland, in northern Poland. Born in 1902. Had five sisters and two brothers. She was the oldest child.

03:00 Her father worked in a post office. She grew up in a good, religious family.

04:00 In their home was the proverb, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

05:00 As a matter of fact, when she came home from the German side and her sister called, "Mother, Gertruda has come back," her mother opened the door and didn't ask how she was, but first asked, "Where is the child?" The child was the child she had saved.

06:00 (Gertruda speaks in her native language) 07:00 0 8 : 0 0

09:00 (She is asked when she first realized what was happening to the Jews; the interpreter mucks the answer up a bit): It is very hard for her because she did not read(?) publications or tell or speak of Jews. She cannot speak of little things. However, she was hired to teach the children of a very, very rich Jewish family when she was 15. There were a daughter and a son. The daughter died before the war.

10:00 She decided to stay with the family when they asked her.

11:00 (native language) 1 2 : 0 0

13:00 With the mother and the boy, she left Gdansk and went to Warsaw. In Warsaw, they got news that things in Veerno(ph) were better, so they got an apartment in Veerno(ph).

14:00 The mother and boy only spoke Yiddish and Russian, but she knew German. The German regiments were already in Veernoph) when

they got there. The Germans would give bon-bons to the children. Some "with illness" (poisoned?), some without. She helped the little boy who stood near her. She told him not to take it -- he understood German. The Germans asked why he would not take the bon-bon and she said that he had to go to the dentist that day. So they believed her and she got it and threw it out. It was very good that she knew German.

15:00 At the end of that year, the mother of the child died from illness.

16:00 The child was five years old when his mother died.

17:00 (native language)

18:00

19:00

20:00 She got a place, got money from a family, the Rosens(ph)

21:00 In the beginning of the war there were Lithuanians as well as Germans in Veerno(ph). They were very big, very anti-Semitic, and not gentle. For Christians, there was a holy place called the Kabrama(ph) -- it was so holy that a Jew must take off his hat coming through its gates. She was standing and praying there when a Lithuanian came and struck her so hard that it was still painful years afterwards.

22:00 All the four years, she stayed in the same place that she had come with the mother and boy. Her sister sent money from Lipschen..(ph) to a man who lived close by who then passed the money on to her.

23:00 She also got a little money from teaching German to children.

24:00 The boy's father had been in France. On September 4, he had sent a telegram saying he was coming. However, he was not allowed to cross the border and returned to France. He tried to go to Switzerland but had to return to France. Then, the Germans sent him to Auschwitz.

25:00 Only one person knew the boy was Jewish. They lived in a big building-- the landlord knew.

26:00 His name was Stanislo(ph).

27:00 He didn't say anything, but was very nice and gave advice and good things to the child. In the highest flat of his building lived Polish people who had lived in Germany and called themselves Germans.

28:00 Perhaps he knew the boy was Jewish because they had come

with the mother, but he didn't tell.

29:00 (native language)

30:00 At one point, the child got a very high temperature. She didn't know what to do, because the doctor who was her friend had gone to the ghetto. She asked around and got the address of a German doctor who lived far away. She brought him home.

31:00 Along the way to her home, the doctor told her it was good that she knew German, and that if anyone asked, she was his sister. When they reached her building, someone said, "Halt!" and she thought, God, the boy was only 40 feet upstairs and she was going to die. But the doctor said, "She is my sister," and they let her go. It was very hard to bring the boy back to health. The doctor remained with her a week and together they brought him back to health.

32:00 She wanted to pay him for all he had done, but he (kissed her?) and said no, you've done something for me to feel as/a man. He was a big, strong man.

33:00 They came with the ship exodus to Israel after the war.

34:00 (native language) 3 5 : 0 0 36:00

37:00 When she came with the child on the ship, they did not live on the deck, but under -- inside the ship. There were many people. The food was terrible. For example, they got dinner in boxes which were already opened because they (the British?) were afraid the boxes contained ammunition so they opened them all. Thus, the food spoiled and was terrible.

38:00 She was a young, big, and very healthy woman so she looked for work on the ship and asked them to take her to clean potatoes. She had a dress with special pockets made to put potatoes in for other people, not just for herself and the boy. Later, a woman from the ship who now lives in Jerusalem asked her when she visited for a short time, "Do you remember that you gave me for my child a potato and an onion?"

39:00 The Englishmen were very bad. They didn't want to help with even the slightest thing. There was a Greek cook who was the only one who helped her a little. Every time he made cookies for the officers or a little bread, he gave some to her to give to the boy.

40:00 The English were not gentle. They put ropes in the air, not the floor (?) and everyone had to go up and down places in the ship on them. She was afraid when she did that the potatoes would fall on the floor.

41:00 When she came to Israel the English regiment was already

here She came twice. The first time was in 1946. Then, she got news of her family and went to look for them.

42:00 She went back to the same place she was born. Then she came back to Israel to live.

43:00 Her family was living in the same place where she was born.

44:00 She will explain why she is so nervous right now. Some people knew back then that the boy was Jewish. They asked her, wasn't she afraid someone would tell? She replied no and she was very quiet inside. When they asked her why she was so quiet, she said, "My mother is praying for me."

45:00 The reason she was so nervous for the interview was because she believes her mother was bringing her to it with her hand. Even though she knows her mother is not alive. Her reply "My mother is praying for me," was always her answer for everyone.

46:00 She wishes that every mother would have such a son as she has. He has the first place in her heart. It is hard for her to explain the deep love between them.

47:00 The boy is a grandfather already. He has four grandchildren. Every week between five and six , he calls her one day. He doesn't ask her how she is doing or feeling first, but always says, "I love you very much."

48:00 She replies to this that he is just complimenting her to which he answers that he loves her. She wishes every mother had such a son.

49:00 (native language)

50:00 She came to Israel, to Tel Aviv, with an address of a very rich family. She went to the family because they were relatives of this child.

51:00 They lived in a very big house with six rooms. She and the child lived upstairs.

52:00 When the child's mother died she had promised to go to them.

53:00 (native language)

54:00

55:00

56:00 She's very angry and will never forgive this family.

57:00 When she came, they gave her a little room without water or a toilet. They paid for half a year of schooling for the child but then took him out. She saw him with tears streaming down his face and she asked him if they beat him.

58:00 He said no, they wanted to adopt him, but that they had said she would have to leave. He had told them no, she was his mother and he wanted to stay with her forever. They had taken him out of school because they did not want to pay for it. The boy told the family that when she went, he would go too.

59:00 She, a Catholic woman, had brought a Jewish boy through such a war, and they did that! She decided to go to work to pay for his school. She put him in Aliah(ph), which had about 1000 children already. The head of the school, Nussbaum(ph), said they would just have to have 1001 children. She acted like a lion at first when they told her that the child would live with them. She didn't understand it was a boarding school and said that the child had to be with her.

1:00:00 So the child went to the school and she lived for 18 years alone in that room. She worked as a maid to be able to buy and send the boy shoes and sweets; things he wouldn't have to ask the family for.

1-01:00 She cannot forgive the family. She, as a Catholic woman, had brought a Jewish child to them, and they didn't want to give money for the child to study. This was around 1947.

1:02:00 The boy remembered his real mother. He remembered everything. When his mother died, he said to her, "Look, I have no mother any more. Do you want to be my mother?" She couldn't answer for three days but

then came back and said, "Yes, I will be your mother." He was so happy  
he hugged her. He had seen his mother die.

1:03:00 She was not with the rest of her family. She was in Veerno(ph),  
very far away from them.

1:04:00 The boy had a very rich family in Israel. She is very angry with  
them.

1:05:00 The boy had two cousins. When he needed something, the family  
didn't give him anything. They weren't interested.

1:06:00 When the boy came home from school for vacation, she would go  
baby sit somewhere in the mornings while he was there. She did this because the family would invite them for a big breakfast but she would  
say no.

1:07:00 She would not eat without working or doing something for the  
food. On Sundays, her holiday, since she had no water, she would go to  
the zoo in Tel Aviv. She knew a Polish zookeeper there who would invite  
her to go along with the tours and wash herself. This was the only place  
where she could wash.

1:08:00 She didn't have a toilet in her room. She had to wash elsewhere.

1:09:00 The boy (Mikki?ph) worked in an office which offered tours and  
voyages. The agency opened an office in Miami Beach.

1:10:00 He worked in the Miami Beach office. When the agency closed its  
offices everywhere, he opened his own travel agency.

1:11:00 (native language)

1:12:00 He is now an American citizen. But he is also a good Israeli  
citizen, of which she is proud. For example, he visits her often. When  
he comes, he does so with an Israeli passport. She asked him why, and he  
said because with it, he must pay as a soldier. (?) He told her in

German, which they sometimes speak together, "Mother, I am an Israeli citizen so I have to come with an Israeli passport."

1:13:00 She is very Catholic. He grew up near this and yet now he is saying he is really an Israeli. He is a good Jew and so she is proud of him.

1:14:00 She has visited him twice in America, at Miami Beach. One difference between Israel and Miami Beach is that there, there is an ocean and here, there-is a sea.

1:15:00 (native language) 1:16:00

1:17:00 If she had known what would have happened to her forty years later, that she would have to be in an old folks home, she would never have come to Israel. There is no one to speak to, and a low intellectual level. Going to church is very important to her.

1:18:00 A Jew who becomes a priest is never really a priest.

1:19:00 For example, her son grew up with her and knew every prayer that she knew. She took him to church in Europe. But as soon as he came to Israel, he became a Jewish patriot. It is painful for her here because she needs her priest. If she had known before, she would;not have come to Israel.

1:20:00 Her son does not want her to live in America because he comes back to Israel. He doesn't want to take her to America because he doesn'-t want to become an American. She was shocked when he said he was an Israeli.

1:21:00 He will come back to Israel to live. He has lived in America for ten years.

1:22:00 (She is asked does she want to say anything to children about what they should know about Shoah)?

1:23:00 (native language) 1:24:00

1:25:00 She would tell Jewish children, it is important that a very religious Christian woman raised a Jewish child. But at the first moment he came to Israel, he became a Jewish patriot. To her, this is a miracle.

1:26:00 Not that she wanted him to become Christian, but that he became a warm, good patriot. To her, this was a big miracle.

1:27:00 (interpreter speaking)

1:28:00 He was nine years old when he came to Israel.

1:29:00 (pictures are taken)

1:30:00 (She is asked what were the best and worst times in her life):  
The worst was when the war came and broke out and everyone had to go to the front, including her brothers.

1:31:00 Her brother died....(because some came to Studhoff(ph)?)  
The most joyous time was when they came back from the front.

1:32:00 He (her brother?) worked as a soldier in the Navy. The reason he decided to go was to help his mother. If she wanted to leave, he could help her make the journey.

1:33:00 She is very lonely in Israel. She has no one to speak to. The people are not for her. She does not know Hebrew.

1:34:00 When she came to Israel, everyone spoke the language of their country: Polish, Yiddish, Russian, etc. No one spoke Hebrew. She looked at little children who spoke Hebrew and wondered) how did they? At the time she came, she didn't need to know Hebrew. With her son, she spoke German and Polish.  
.END.