

-TITLE-ALIVA PRESMAN-TARNAWSKI  
-I\_DATE-NOVEMBER 6 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-

1:00 She was born in December, 1941 in small house. At the time, her family was living in a small town in hiding. Her mother and a nun took care of them.

2:00 She was born in the town of Koperchinze (ph). They lived there for two years. The house was specially built with a room on top where 18 people lived.

3:00 Because the house was nice, German soldiers lived downstairs. This caused problems: when there was movement upstairs, her mother would say it was geese. During the winter, the heat from the bodies made the snow on the roof melt.

4:00 Her father then had to put more snow on the roof to protect from wind and so the Germans would not notice. She wants to write a book of her father's stories.

5:00 They lived in Poland until 1957. She remembers crossing the border into Germany after the war. She remembers a terrible fear.

6:00 They had problems with the Poles; she was also afraid of the Russians who took over their house. She says they should have gone to Israel. She remembers her father disappeared for 3 days-- the Russians knew they had family bound for the U.S., but they had no trouble because of hiding Jews. At their father's encouragement, the family went to Israel. He didn't want his wife and children to be made less than human.

7:00 Her mother is Jewish and had to bribe an official to get passports. Her father, who is Polish, had to escape. He would not have been allowed to leave otherwise.

8:00 She remembers great happiness, but no fear, before they left. It was all done quietly. Her father's family came to say goodbye. They went from Poland to Italy.

9:00 As a child, she was excited to leave -- it was like a trip abroad. But she was unhappy once they got to Israel.

10:00 Their home in Israel was ugly; the attitudes, language, and traditions were all different. She did not speak Hebrew. She was like a tree without roots. She loved Poland. She saw black Jews for the first time.

11:00 She forced herself to go to a kibbutz, which was the turning point. She was 15 1/2. Her sister went with her to learn the language. They were there for 6 months until their father got ill and they had to return home.

12:00 She went into the army when she was 18. She heard stories of the war from both her parents all through childhood. She is asked whether her parents felt like heroes to their children or themselves.

13:00 She thinks they enjoyed to get it out; they wanted their family, close ones to know what happened. It made them feel better because their children knew about it.

14:00 Only recently have others (besides family) known the story of her family. The people they hid did not tell who rescued them.

15:00 She is asked whether she thinks Israel has done enough to honor rescuers, to support them.

16:00 She says there are 40 rescuers in Israel. They were found when an Israeli social organization a couple, rescuers, living in poverty. The man, a Pole, saved his wife and another couple. Their story was shown on t.v. and the government then began giving pensions to rescuers.

17:00 Before the rescuers were not kept track of or helped.

18:00 That was not the story of her family. Her father had to work and he became very ill and he went to the hospital. Her mother had to work; friends helped her.

20:00 She is asked if her parents could do it again which she answers no.

21:00 When the war began, her parents were 28 and 21. her parents say it was sheer revival (?); they could have died any day.

22:00 When Germans came looking at the house, her mother and children were hidden. Her father had to face them and he was "knocked around."

23:00 Her parents knew they had to do it. Their attitude was: "If they take us, we die; if they don't, we survive." She remembers the Germans came to stay one night. One, drunk, put a pistol to her mother's head and said, "Do you know we kill Jews, that's how we do it." Her mother was terrified, but "she laughed like she had to."

24:00 When the Germans slept, her mother would take their guns to the forest where they were hidden. Her father worked for the Polish underground and stole gasoline, etc from the Nazi's.

25:00 Her family saved more people than anyone. There was a compartment on top and underneath the house.

26:00 The kids were put in the underground, and it was often difficult for them to get air. Once, they poked a stick through the floor boards for air and the Germans were in the room. Her father had to very slowly step on the stick so the Germans wouldn't see it.

27:00 She tells a story about her father helping the Germans with the fire, and while he was loading coal, 2 Jews appeared. Her father told them to hide in the coal pile. The Germans found them, told him and the 2 Jews to go line up against the wall. He went like a robot.

28:00 The next thing he remembers, she says, is a German superior who liked her father, asked the others what they were doing. He told them her father couldn't be shot, he was helping him, the officer. Her father wouldn't move; it was luck that he wasn't shot.

29:00 Her father told her of another incident when the same thing happened. The Germans took her and her aunt to be shot behind the bath house and someone warned her father.

30:00 There was another incident when her mother was to be shot, but her father prevented it by telling the Germans she wasn't Jewish.

31:00 Her mother had given the Germans her jewelry when her husband came to say she was his wife. The Germans returned her wedding ring.

32:00 When she watches the movies and programs about the war today, she thinks they're too colorful. She recommends Shoah but thinks the others are nonsense.

33:00 She never saw the concentration camps until two years ago. She was not granted a visa until then.

34:00 She went to Auschwitz and Dachau. Seeing them was especially chilling for her -- she came to close to being in one.

35:00 She wonders how people survived them.

36:00 She says that when her father was in the Underground, he had to take pictures of Jews being shot in the forest. He hid in a tree. The first ones shot were those with beards, then the children were thrown into a pit of dying people. Or some children were taken by their feet and their heads were bashed against a tree. It was extremely difficult for him to simply watch and take pictures.

37:00 She talks about the introduction of Jews to the Germans. When the Germans came to town, they rounded up the Jews and told them to put their gold teeth in a bucket. She is shocked.

38:00 She knows the experience affected her in some ways -- she doesn't like Germans. She is very proud of actually belonging to a country for the first time.

39:00 She considers herself arrogant, somehow better than others because she went through such an experience.

40:00 She knows why her parents did it: no one else would. Poles gave Jews away; Germans hunted Jews; Jews were turning in Jews, even while 1000's of Jews were dying.

41:00 Her mother was very strong; her father loved her. When they married her mother was worried about her family. Her father was the first to say they would save the family -- he did it for her.

42:00 Her mother and father had to keep moving to find a town where no one knew that her mother was Jewish.

43:00 Her parents did not know much Hebrew.

44:00 After the war, they were headed for the U.S., but her uncle pleaded for them to go back.

45:00 They moved to Israel in 1957; her mother wanted to go.

46:00 She thinks that if she had stayed in Poland, she would have become just a Pole.

47:00 Her parents have expressed a disgust with religion because it causes so many problems. She doesn't think Israel really "bothers" with religion-- "we don't have time for it... If you have time to shoot on Saturday, how do you have time to be an Orthodox Jew? You see, Israel is just a country; it is Jewish... but not so religious."

49:00 She has one child who is 26, and he was born in Israel.

50:00 She is proud of Judaism and wants it for her children but she is not religious. She cares for the people and the state of Israel. She is Israeli and thinks belonging to the country most important.

51:00 Jews now have somewhere to go, if something should happen.

52:00 She wants to teach her child, nieces, and nephews about Holocaust.

53:00 She herself does not have any memories about it; she was too

young.

54:00 Interviewer comments that of all the people they've met, her parents seem the least scarred. She answers that even though her parents had a hard life afterwards, they're very strong. Now they're life is much easier--they don't have to worry about they're children. They are proud of their children and keep in touch.

55:00 If you have a good life now, it compensates for what happened before. Experience will always be there.

56:00 Her father says he did it because that was it; if not, he would have lost family. If they had taken his wife and child, he would have gone too.

57:00 She doesn't want their grandchildren to forget. She is assembling a video library. If we're not careful, she says, we'll forget Jewishness. We must not lose our history; without it, we have no identity.

58:00 She is asked whether it's possible to nourish something, like religion, if it's not worthwhile. She answers that she is not talking about religion in particular, she only worries that it happened to Jews. Religious or not, you must know where you came from.

59:00 Her parents are from religious families, bur are not practicing. They left their children to grow up and do what they wanted.

60:00 She was married for 10-11 years and divorced in Israel.

61:00 When she left Israel, she got a job in England. She brought her sister and son there and they've stayed since. She owns a small health club.

.END.□