

ROSE WEINER

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#66

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RW: "...my daughter is very frum. Very frum...the second generation, when they were in Jerusalem, when it was in - 1981. She participated as a second generation...in the high school she was one from the top 6% from the country in English. She wrote about the Holocaust, the Warsaw Ghetto. An essay."

WH: "How many children do you have?"

RW: "Two...Yohanna)and Deborah... (a girl and a boy)... they went to yeshiva....Yohanna has semicha from Meir Yeshiva...and Deborah lives in Israel...a big Zionist...a Stern College graduate...she was at the Hebrew University. She got a full scholarship. She's a high school teacher in English...and NCSY she was very much involved..."

WH: "What town were you born in?"

RW: "Poland... (?Sandonewich?)..."

WH: "...your son went to Philadelphia for high school and your daughter stayed involved in NCSY. And then when she started college, so she had a different orientation."

RW: "Entirely. Entirely...she's a high school teacher in Enei Akiva... my son-in-law...is from Reading Pennsylvania...he graduated from Columbia. He has his master's...in school psychology...they have seven (children)..."

WH: "...you spent the war - where?"

RW: "I spent the war in a concentration camp...and I was treated...like a non-Jew..."

WH: "So you passed as a non-Jew?"

RW: "This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy."

WH: "What was your maiden name?"

RW: "Szoor..."

WH: "Did you wind up in a camp?"

RW: "Yes...in 1942 they sent me to (?Sca^{z d}ritzko?) an amunition factory in
(?Kerev?...in ?Hasag?)...then they sent me to (?Chenzlehof?)...and I
was liberated there..."

WH: "...after the war, where did you go?"

RW: "...I didn't have nobody. I met some people, my hometown, and my
cousin was...he was driving around all over Poland because he heard I
was alive...then... I got an aff¹idavit from...people from my hometown
in Poland...made somebody sponsor me (in the United States)... but I
didn't go... because I was alone... I was a young girl...alone, I
didn't know from the United States, so I didn't go."

WH: "But you were 25."

RW: "Yes, but I was alone, I didn't have anybody living in the United
States so I was in a kibbutz...in Germany..."

WH: "Do you stayed in Germany for 4 years..."

RW: "Yes..."

WH: "And you got married there..."

RW: "Yes...same person...42 years...you ont married because you want to
settle, you want to make a living for yourself, and I - ."

WH: "You didn't want to be alone."

RW: "I wouldn't be alone. And that's all. Because we didn't have nobody. I didn't know I have a cousin. My cousin, first of all, he was not religious. He wanted, by all means - he wanted to help me, but he didn't help himself. He went to Israel. He didn't have himself, but he - I hardly know that cousin because he was much older and he was married before the war already, but in that time he wanted to help he wanted to do something for me it was a different world between us..."

WH: "You left from Bremenhaven?"

RW: "Yes...my daughter was born in Germany..."

WH: "...who sponsored you (this time)?"

RW: "...HIAS...our boat came to Boston...then we went by train to New Britain...in Boston...we stayed only one night...we were the first refugees to come to New Britain."

WH: "What was that like?" *(in New Britain)*

RW: "I wouldn't say - nice is not the word to say, but they treated us like people from (Outer Mongolia?) out of Mongolia. (Did you ever see a light?) They asked us. I mean, we came from Germany, in Germany was some - it's a modern country. (inaudible) Pretty developed. (Do you know how to open the lights?) And things like this, I was amazed. And then one woman, we came the end of 1949 - 1950 and I'll never forget, I went to. I mean they took us to meetings, and to shul and this, an one woman says to me, (look at! Look at her face! She says, (And she doesn't look it!) And the lady says, (Look at her cheeks: Such a healthy face! Such a healthy skin!) So I said, (The

"So then she brought me shoes, she brought us - twice that size. So I said, 'I don't need it. (inaudible) We brought some things.'

Whatever the government gave us before we left - we brought some things. I mean, not that we had fancy clothes, but it was enough for now...but on the other hand there were some people like there was a doctor...he was like a father to us. I used to go to him, 'Doctor, I owe you!' 'Don't worry, in 30 years you can pay me. Don't worry.'...and then the Director of the Jewish Federation, he was a father...in any way he could help us. He used to bring us tickets to concerts, he used to bring us tickets, if need some - 'I'll go, I'll bring.'..."

WH: "Was there an Orthodox shul there?"

RW: "We were the first one..."

WH: "Did you find that you yourself moved more to the right over the last 30 years?"

RW: "No..."

WH: "You were just as religious then as you are now?"

RW: "Yes..."

WH: "You stayed religious...what kept you that way?"

RW: "My mother, the last minute when I went down from the house, 'You should remember - wherever you come from.' "

WH: "So you felt that you were doing it for her."

RW: "For her. For the memories. Nobody told me not to do..."

WH: "...when you think about the war, do you ever question how G-d could have done it? Could have allowed it to happen?"

RW: "I don't question...maybe if I wouldn't be as frum I would question. But now, - thank G-d, I brought up two wonderful children. And they are going the same way..."

WH: "Do you feel that when you see that your grandchildren are being brought up in this way that this makes a connection to your parents even though they are not alive anymore?"

RW: "Yes, yes. Exactly. I have that feeling, yes..."

WH: "...those Jews that came here before the war, they were not necessarily religious...more religious Jews died during the war than non-religious Jews and you wonder (what) is the reward - the Jews kept the mitzvot."

RW: "Yes, you have to be frum not to question those things, but what is bothering me now, that the frum Jews now don't realize this, they don't, it doesn't - that heimishe is not - ."

WH: "You mean that they are not sensitive to one another."

RW: "No..."

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

WH: "...when you came to Harford, what was it like...you came to Hartford from New Britain..."

RW: "...my daughter was a year and a half when we came, when she was 4 year old I wanted to send her to camp, day camp, she couldn't speak English... they (the camp) took her in...(inaudible) extremely nice to us. ...when my son was born, I had nobody. My husband has to go to work, he worked nights. I had nobody... we lived in New Britain...the Director was very nice...they were so nice...they were extremely nice... very nice to us. Like a family..."

WH: "...your grandchild is going to yeshiva...?"

RW: "Yes...in Long Beach...my son is a business...calligraphy ...Judaica ...he didn't go to art school. He's very talented. Brilliant."

WH: "...so then you moved from New Britain to Hartford..."

RW: "Yes...my daughter went to kindergarten in Hartford...my husband... became a mashgiach...for a catering business in Hartford...and I worked also, for 32 years in a store..."

WH: "When you think back, what are you most proud of?"

RW: "The children..."

WH: "Did you ever think that you would have been happier if you had moved to Israel after the war?"

RW: "Maybe yes...but...it was a hard life. We were skeletons...we suppose to go to Israel, we sent things already...and then when there was opportunity to go to America...a Russian, a Jewish Major, and he told us...in Yiddish, 'Don't go to Israel!...please promise me, don't go! You were - I mean, people like you, look at the face the way you look, it's a hard life you had. Go to America.'..."

WH: "...do you think that the Poles are more anti-Semitic than other groups?"

RW: "Oh, and how! You didn't know what they did to us in Poland. The Pollacks? They were the first ones. They were the biggest help. Them and the Ukrainians."

WH: "Do you think that what happened in Europe could happen here?"

RW: "I don't think there - there is rising anti-Semitism now but I don't think that there is such a scare in them...(inaudible)..."

WH: "...in Hartford, did the Jews belong to a group of survivors?"

RW: "Yeh...we had meetings...David Chase, he does a lot for that...they had twice a year in the city hall they have gatherings... most of them who came to Hartford are (inaudible) well-established..."

WH: "Sounds to me like quite a few survivors wound up in Hartford."

RW: "I don't know..."

WH: "...do you ever have nightmares?"

RW: "Not once. Not once. And wherever we talk, with friends we come together, we always come out on the same subject. No matter what you say, no matter what. And then, when it comes to a simcha, whom do we have? (inaudible) Thank G-d, we have friends. That my daughter got married, it was a beautiful wedding in Hartford. Whom do I have? The Young Israel people, the members from the shul. My son, they said, give us a list, the whole shul. That's all. But I don't have - not even one single relative for the wedding. Not even a cousin. Not even a distant cousin."

WH: "So then doesn't that mean then that your friends become your relatives?"

RW: "Yes. Now, that's what I feel in Hartford too, and that's what I feel we are close to them and my son - ."

WH: "And that's why you don't want to move (to New York)."

RW: " - yeh. We are selling the house now."

WH: "Yes, but not without pain."

RW: "Very much so..."

WH: "So why does he want you to come?"

RW: "We should be closer, that's all what we have. He said we should be close with the family, with the (inaudible). I say it too because that's all what we have in life. The children. But, it's, - in our age, we not the healthiest people too, I mean, it's first of all we went through, I went through (inaudible) my husband went through, so it's not such an easy thing. And the people stayed behind us, the people in Hartford...I had a good friend...here..."

WH: "...when you get together what do you talk about?"

RW: " (inaudible) my girlfriend. They used to call us the (?'holy three'?)
in the camp. One lives in New York, one lives in Israel. And we are
'sisters' these are 'sisters.'..."

WH: "Do you think that survivors look at the world differently than
American Jews?"

RW: "I think so. First of all, our background is entirely different. Our
whole - not only because of the survivor, but our background is
different..."

WH: "Do you feel that you have succeeded in life?"

RW: "...thank G-d I brought up the children - that way, they way that is a
continuation from my family, this alone be the achievement. The
biggest. That I would say."

WH: "Did you ever experience anti-Semitism here in America?"

RW: "At work. Yes, a lot...I worked for 32 years, I was a very hard
worker, not because I'm saying, a beautiful letter (inaudible) I just
retired...it was a Jewish business and so she used to fire them..."

WH: "...did you ever take vacations without the children?"

RW: "No..."

WH: "Did you ever get a baby-sitter?"

RW: "No. We never had a baby sitter, I would say. In my life, I think
we had twice together with a friend."

4 WH: "Why?"

RW: "First of all, I wouldn't leave. You see, this is also, I wouldn't
trust somebody because - "

WH: "...and you don't have nightmares?"

RW: "And how!"

WH: "You do?"

RW: "Yes..."

WH: "...your friends, did they every go to a social worker or
psychologist?"

RW: "Yes...she said it helped here ..."

WH: "...when you saw these programs on the Holocaust, what did you think?"

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RW: "...somehow, I felt that - I had a friend, she said she couldn't watch
them, and I said...it's my obligation I have to. I never missed a
program. I never missed a (inaudible). Never. Because I feel that I'm
alive because of that and I have to continue. This is my obligation.
And they feel it differently what the Holocaust the film...it wasn't
enough..."

WH: "But could they ever say enough?"

RW: "No... and nobody would understand it even, too."

WH: "...do you think a lot about the war now?"

RW: "Yes. That - it shouldn't happen again..."

WH: "...do you think that there's anything you can do to prevent another
Holocaust?"

RW: "I don't know..."

WH: "You don't feel like you have any power to affect the situation?"

RW: "I, myself, no...maybe the younger generation. I am already, we are
old, and we are sick...but if I could do something? I don't think
so."

WH: "There's a difference - ."

RW: "Yes...I wouldn't trust anybody to be with my children. Never had a baby-sitter. Twice, Yom Kippur, we went to shul so we had together, shared."

WH: "...do you think that your kids could understand what you went through?"

RW: "I don't know. You see, my daughter, I had a letter, I'm keeping that letter when she saw that tape, she said, 'Mother, you know you opened my eyes. Why didn't you tell me all those things?' I kept it always inside. And that tape is almost one hour and forty minutes, I didn't stop. I talked like it was - ."

WH: "What did you talk about on the tape?"

RW: "She (the interviewer?) told me - 'anything, start it from the beginning, as you were born, as you were raised, as you were growing up. Anything you want, your heart desires.' She didn't ask questions... otherwise I just talked. So my kids say, my daughter - 'Why didn't you never tell us, why did you never discuss it?' 'You never asked.' And it's a funny thing, then I was walking once before with my grand-daughter and she was asking, and she (my daughter) says, 'Mother, don't talk. Don't talk. I don't want they should have nightmares.' I said, 'First of all, I wouldn't like to hurt my grand (inaudible). But why shouldn't she know? I didn't tell you about the (unstink-needs translation) what I went through. (inaudible).' 'She'll have nightmares.' So I said, 'Okay.' Now she said, 'I didn't know all those things.' My son-in-law says, 'I have so many questions for you.' ...two years ago I was in Israel and I gave them the tape...he

WH: "Do you think that the fact that you went through this terrible experience that it helped you in anyway?"

RW: "Yeh, it did...first of all, I have an (inaudible) outlook of life. Everything is not so important. Because we had there a thing, and lost it, and so - ."

WH: "Why do you think you survived?"

RW: "I don't know. I say always my parents were behind me - ."

WH: "...do you believe in this world that maybe you'll see them...tell me, is there a difference that sometimes, you know you say, I don't want to believe it, just because I should want it to happen, but wouldn't it be nice if it were true...that someday, in some world, or something, you might see them?"

RW: "I, I am dreaming about that, too...somehow, whatever I do, I always think in terms of them..."

END OF SIDE TWO.

END OF INTERVIEW.