HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

RITA HARMELIN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Edith Millman
Date: April 26, 1992

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RH - Rita Harmelin[1] [interviewee]
EM - Edith Millman [interviewer]
Date: April 26, 1992

Tape one, side one:

EM: This is Edith Millman, interviewing Mrs. Rita Harmelin. Mrs. Harmelin lives in Australia. Today is April 26, 1992. Rita, can you tell me when and where you were born, and a little bit about your early childhood?

RH: Right. I was born on the 17th of June, 1925, in Bucharest, Romania. My parents were not Romanian. They were Polish, but my father went to Romania after the First World War, when he couldn't get a job in Poland—as a Jew—because they were giving jobs to Polish teachers first. And in Romania he had a relative who found, who had some contacts and he had a very good job in Bucharest. We [tape off then on].

EM: You mentioned that your father couldn't find a job as a teacher. Was he a teacher?

RH: Yes, that was his profession.

EM: Tell me a little bit what you remember about your life in Romania. If anything.

RH: I remember quite well. Our life in Romania was very, very good, very pleasant as a child. My parents were very young, and they hadn't been married long, so they had plenty of friends and lots of entertainment. I'm not sure, but I think, that after ten years of their, of my father's stay in Romania, he had some difficulties with extending his stay in Romania, because at that time in Romania antisemitic, ...

EM: Feeling?

RH: Feelings started to show, and they were at least towards foreigners. And perhaps my mother was homesick, so they decided to return to Poland. And that was 1931.

EM: Where in Poland did you live?

RH: We went to, in Poland we went to live in a little town called Sambor in the southeast of Poland, where my, both my parents came from. They used to live close to each other and the families were very friendly.

EM: Could you tell me about, something about your early religious experience? Was it an Orthodox home? Or was it...

RH: No, it wasn't Orthodox, but it was traditional in the way that, my parents came from a traditional religious home. They, the grandparents, I know, were very religious, but I don't think the distinction between Orthodox and, and Conservative was so great, because there was no Reform in Judaism then. So everybody did the same

[1]née Brauner.

thing, actually. Perhaps my parents, having lived abroad, did not observe it so strictly, but the home was kosher and they used to go to the synagogue twice a year as...

EM: Regularly? Twice a year.

RH: I mean they, for the holidays, for the great holidays. I remember my mother telling me that while she was in Bucharest she used to go every Friday evening to the synagogue as well, because they had some very nice and very beautiful services. But I was not, exposed to this, and I don't, was not made to do it. On the other hand, when I started going to school, I also went every day six days a week, for two hours to Hebrew school, where I learned some Hebrew language, and some history, as well as prayers.

EM: Was this Hebrew school a private school?

RH: It was a private Jewish school. It was supported by the Jewish community and also we paid fees for tuition.

EM: Tuition.

RH: Tuition, yes.

EM: Who were the teachers? Do you remember?

RH: There was only one teacher, and his name was Feingold. He was a poor man, because the Jewish children gave him a little bit of trouble, and he also was, I think he was an asthmatic. So, I remember we gave him a lot of, because there were classes for, from, I think from eight year olds to twelve or fourteen years old. So, every class was a different...

EM: Level and a different kind of children. Was it co-educational?

RH: Yes. Yes. It was co-educational, and there was even a voluntary school inspector. And I don't remember, I think we have even exams once a year, which, in Poland we didn't have exams in ordinary school, in the elementary school. We didn't have any exams at the end of the year, but in this school we did.

EM: You went to a public school for your...

RH: I went to a public school for a formal education.

EM: Secondary?

RH: For a primary education. For a secondary there was only one high school in our city, which was private.

EM: In the public school, do you remember approximately the percentage of Jewish kids?

RH: I would think there was at least 30 percent, possibly more, possibly less. I really can't remember.

EM: Uh...

RH: I mean, if I could think about it longer, but I can't remember.

EM: Do you remember about religious instructions for the non-Jewish kids? Was it in the school?

RH: There was religious instruction for non-Jewish school, but then also in the public school there was instruction for Jewish children at the same time. Only, they were

taught by a priest. And we were taught by a layman, but a civilian religion teacher he was called.

EM: What did you learn in this religious, religion class? Was it history? Was it prayers?

RH: It was a little bit of everything. And not so many prayers, maybe the main ones, which we learned more of in this Hebrew school that I went to after. But we definitely had religious class once a week. I can't remember how long it was, possibly an hour. And we definitely learned history. And we learned Torah. Perhaps this was combined, or this was considered history, but we did learn.

EM: Could you tell me if you had any Gentile friends, and any antisemitic feelings that you detected among your classmates?

RH: Well, antisemitic feelings, we always detected, slightly. And they were never flaunted by the teachers. There were some antisemitic teachers, but as far as the primary schools was concerned, there wasn't so much of it as later perhaps, in high school. Not, notwithstanding that the high school was private, and it was actually founded by a Jew. But as far having Gentile friends, I did have some.

EM: Could you tell me approximately how many Jews lived in, was this all in Sambor?

RH: No, because after three years we settled in another town, in, not very far from Sambor. It was an oil well town called Boryslaw, and so called *Zaglebie Naftowe*, which I don't know how to translate into English. And we had about a third in the, the population before the war was about 30 odd thousand people.

EM: There were, I'm sorry...

RH: Population before the war, in Boryslaw, was about 30 odd thousand people. It later grew to about 45. And it was nearly evenly divided between Jews, Poles, and Ukraines.

EM: In your experience, were, who was more antisemitic? The Ukrainians or the Poles?

RH: Well, I can't say that one was worse than the other. They were both, and, you know, they, there were a lot of them who didn't know much about Jews, who were taught by their priests to hate them, so they hated them. Once they came in contact, for instance, at school, or in business, my father for instance has a very, had a very good friend. We found out that his son was a great anti-Semite, and he used to beat up Jewish students in Lwow. But were not, he met me after the war, and he said, "Where's father?" I said, "He's gone." He says, "I didn't know if he survived it." And he started to cry. And he said, "Brauner [RH's maiden name] was the only honest man I ever knew." You see? So only on, on the level of individual acquaintances, there were some who may have been antisemitic in theory, but they were decent people, and they did the right thing. A lot of them did the right thing, but, the majority, whether they were, and also, Ukrainians hid me during the war.

EM: Eh, regarding...

RH: Ukrainians...

EM: Oh, Ukrainians?

RH: So, you really can't, can't say who was better, who was worse. They were all more or less tagged with the same...

EM: I'm, yes, I want, I am driving at, in school, did you have more trouble with Ukrainian or Polish?

RH: Well, it's hard to say. I had only Ukrainian girls with me in high, in primary school. In high school, they didn't come to the same high school. They traveled, Ukrainians traveled to the next town, where there was a Ukrainian high school. But I also had friends, Ukrainian girls, single. I wouldn't say a lot, but, I can't say who were, that I had any trouble with anybody, really, personally.

EM: Did your parents socialize with non-Jewish...

RH: No.

EM: People?

RH: No. My father told me he had a good Polish friend during the war, the First World War, in, when they were in trenches together, a Pole. My mother had a school friend, a Ukrainian girl, when she went to school, before the First World War. But they never socialized in our town with anybody ever.

EM: What kind of job did your father have?

RH: Well, what I, when we went, when we came to Boryslaw, he was self-employed. He owned a printing factory in partnership with, also his old buddy from, from the war times, who was a Jew.

EM: You men-, could you, do you know in which army he served?

RH: Yes.

EM: During the First World War.

RH: Sure. He served in the Austria-Hungarian army, and he attained a rank of lieutenant. And when the war was over, he was demobilized and he came back, because that was somewhere on the front. I don't know. And then, he came back to his place of, of birth. All of a sudden that was Poland already, because Poland got, had independence, got into the Treaty of Versailles in 1918.

EM: All right, tell me something more about your family. Your, did you have any brothers or sisters?

RH: No. I was an only child. But my parents both had quite big families. My father had four brothers and one sister. My mother had five brothers and two sisters. And most of them were married, and most of them had children, but very few survived. [tape off]

EM: Could you tell me what you remember about the atmosphere in Boryslaw shortly before the war?

RH: Well, there were a few people who did expect the war to come. We knew about the things happening in Germany, because there were refugees from Germany and Austria on the Polish borders. And they weren't allowed to come into, so far east to Poland, except singular cases. So we did hear about the atrocities that were happening all over Germany towards the German citizens. But frankly, very few of us believed it. And there was a, no, no, special apprehension. And there was no, no special preparation for anything.

EM: Did you expect the war to break out?

RH: Well, I was only 14, and I really didn't care very much, because I didn't understand this. My parents were talking about it, and other grownups were talking about it. But I really can't tell now what they were really saying, what they meant when, what they were saying, I know, that we didn't know what war was. We didn't know what to expect.

EM: One more thing. Did you belong to any Zionist organizations?

RH: No. Because, in our city there were some, but I was really too young to be interested, and I was terribly busy with school work, and with Hebrew school. And I learned music and I was running around all day, from one type of learning to another. And I didn't, I didn't belong to any.

EM: Or did, do you know if your parents or any other members of the family belonged to Zionist organizations?

RH: Well, I know one cousin that, but I don't know, my parents, my mother belonged to *WIZO*. That I remember. I don't think my father did. I know another cousin belonged to the *Betar*. And that's all I remember.

EM: Was there a *Kehillah* in Boryslaw?

RH: Yes, I'm sure it was. There was also apart from the Hebrew school there was a Talmud Torah. And there was a *shochet*, where we took our chickens to be killed. That's all I remember.

EM: Did your mother light candles on Friday night?

RH: Yes, yes she did.

EM: All right, let's go back to the war. What do you remember of the first days of the war?

RH: That's very silly, because I, what I remember is when the war started and we started hearing the planes—now I should have known better because I was 14—but I climbed into the attic, and looked through the opening somewhere to see the planes better. And that's about all. In a few days after the start of the war, we heard a noise, and there were German troops came in. And we, of course then, we started being scared. Although we still didn't know, because they were just in, troops. And they didn't do anything much, because just then Germany and Soviet Union signed a treaty, by which they divided Poland. And within, I can't remember that, it was a week or two or something like that, the Germans marched out again, and the Russian troops came in.

EM: In that one week that the Germans occupied Boryslaw, were there any antisemitic incidents perpetrated by the...

RH: By the Germans or by the population?

EM: Well, both. First by the Germans, and then also by the population.

RH: To tell you the truth, I can't remember. I can't remember, so, [tape off]

EM: What happened when the Russians marched in?

RH: Well, when the Russians marched in, everybody at first was more scared than when the Germans marched in, because we knew the Germans at least were civilized people, and we didn't know much about Russians except what old people remembered about the Cossacks, the First World War. And then, and they started first of all dissolving, taking over the industries, taking over the so-called bourgeois flats and houses and so on. The one good thing that I can say about them was that within a few weeks, they reopened the schools, which the Germans closed, for Jews as well as for non-Jews. And of course after that they started the great Russian propaganda, Soviet Communist propaganda. And, for instance, because my father owned a printing factory before the war, which was not a printing factory like you can imagine. It was a small thing that we just earned a small living at, but because he was an owner, some of his own workers, to whom he was very good and very human, even more than that, they sort of told the authorities that he shouldn't be working there, even as one of them. And they gave him a card which prohibited him from getting any job at all.

EM: Were these workers that worked for your father Jewish or non-Jewish?

RH: Jewish. They were Jewish, particularly I remember one boy, right, who my father stayed, he was quite capable, but he, because he was very poor, he couldn't have any education. My father used to stay three times a week after work with him, to teach him, since he was a teacher anyway. He taught him a lot of things, and he was the first one who, who said, "Now, he's a rich man. He mustn't be here." And they took away, of course, the printing factories were one of the first to be nationalized by the Russians, because there was the danger that something will be printed which, of which they don't approve. But, they wouldn't allow him even to stay there as a worker, because his ex-workers just weren't behind him. And they never supported him.

EM: What kind of job did your father get?

RH: After a few months, a good few months, we used to have a neighbor, who was a Ukrainian, who was, in, in Polish times he was a school teacher. And when the Russians came, they made him a school inspector, because the Soviet population thought that the Ukrainians were all with them, which of course they weren't. But, at least they had a little, a few more privileges, definitely more than the Poles. So this man became a school inspector. And he didn't care about that paper that I told you about, and he gave my father a job as a teacher.

EM: What did your father teach?

RH: First he taught in primary school. He taught arithmetic, music, and I can't remember what else. But then they opened a, I wouldn't know how to call it, a trade school. It was like a high school, but it taught general subjects too, but mainly prepared girls and boys for trade. And there he was teaching German, history I think, and music. And he always volunteered to make a school orchestra, so he always had a choir also I think.

EM: So your father was a musician?

RH: My father was a musician too, but he wasn't a professional musician, only an amateur. He played the violin. He conducted orchestras whenever he could get enough music lovers together.

EM: You stayed in the same apartment that you lived in before the war?

RH: Oh.

EM: Or did you have to move?

RH: During the times of the Russians, of the Soviet U-, I mean, I call them the Russians, we didn't have to move. But then, after two years, as you know, the Germans came back. You want me to talk about it, or...

EM: Yeah, that'd be fine. Well, let's talk a little bit more about the Russians.

RH: Russian time.

EM: When the Russians occupied Boryslaw, did you still have religious education?

RH: No. Nobody had.

EM: Did, but you were in the high school?

RH: Yes.

EM: Did you experience more antisemitism than before the war?

RH: No. No. Because, the people who showed antisemitism before the war, they knew that at least in theory, on paper, the Russians were against it. And they was plainly scared. So, I'm sure the antisemitism didn't die out all of a sudden. It's just that people were afraid to show it. Because there were cases where Jewish people were, you know, in with the authorities, and they could definitely take care of somebody who showed them antisemitism.

EM: Were there many Jewish Communists at the time?

RH: Quite a lot, because the Jewish Communists only, I mean, they came out. There were two kinds of Jewish Communists. They were suppo-, working class, and particularly printers were mostly Communists. And there were people of, sons and daughters of rich people, who were so-called *salon* Communists, who felt the injustices of the world. And perhaps it was fashionable, or something like that. Or, there were people who had all the qualities and they had the education, because for example, by some hook or crook, the parents send them overseas, over, abroad to study. And when they came home with a high degree, they couldn't get a job. So these young people tended to, Communism. And they were very disillusioned later. But while they were,

while the Soviet, and they were disillusioned in two ways, because the Soviet authorities didn't trust them. They didn't consider them as good Communists.

EM: Because they were children of well...

RH: Not, not necessarily because of that. Because, I don't know, because they were foreigners, because they were not Russian or Soviet or something.

EM: What citizenship did the Jews in Boryslaw have at that time? Were they still Poles, or did they, a Polish citizens? Or did they have to get some Soviet citizenship?

RH: Well, we didn't really have to get anything, because they forced, the Soviet Union annexed that part of Poland, and incorporated it in the so-called, the Ukraine, by creating the so-called Western Ukraine. And one day everybody had to go to an office where everybody was given a passport. This passport was not like you understand a passport today, because you couldn't go anywhere with it. It was just a...

EM: Creden-...

RH: Identity passport. But if you didn't have it, and somebody asked you for it, you risk five years in Siberia, because this was your identity card, and you have to have it. So, that made us Soviet citizens.

EM: Were there people that refused that identity card?

RH: I doubt it very much. Because if you didn't have that, you had nothing else. So I doubt that anyone refused it.

EM: Were there refugees from western Poland?

RH: Yes. Refugees from western Poland started to come over and I mean I can't tell you the numbers, but there were quite a few, because a lot of people had relatives in the east. And they grabbed their suit or an suitcase and a little bit of food and they came over. But a lot of them, after a few months or so, were very disappointed with their life there, and they decided, "Well, it can't be as bad in the west as it is here." And one day the Soviets played a neat trick. They advertised that everybody from the west of Poland who came to Boryslaw could register for going back. So, people registered in droves, and they were taken to Siberia instead of the west.

EM: And they, these people were never given the...

RH: Cards.

EM: Soviet identity cards, that Soviet passport.

RH: I really can't tell you. I think they, if they were there, they must have. So that really didn't mean anything. That...

EM: [unclear]

RH: They had it or not. If you wanted to go back west, that meant that you were an enemy of the State. You were not to be trusted, and you had better be put away so that you can't do any harm to the Soviet Union.

EM: So, not too many of the original local Boryslaw Jews...

RH: Yes.

EM: Were sent to Siberia at that time?

RH: No, when those people from the west were sent to Siberia, they also caught and took a few of the largest oil well owners, or land, there were no landowners, Jews, in Poland anyway, because we were, you were close to the borders, and within 100 km of the borders of Poland with any other country, Jews were not allowed to own land. But there were a lot of people who owned oil wells, or big factories, or something like that. And these, that handful of them, they were sent to Siberia at the same time. [tape off] Also, there were again not too many, but there were some people who, some men who were officers in the Polish army and they either died in the war—in the first weeks of the war—or they were interned in countries like Hungary. Their families were sent to Siberia.

EM: Were there any Jews in the Polish army? I mean, Jews from the Boryslaw area?

RH: They must have, they, well, every boy of 20 was, not enlisted, but was conscripted in the Polish army, and Jews among them. They had to be. Very few Jewish people became officers, but officers had to, had, if they had a university degree. They had to make them officers. They couldn't help it. But there weren't many. I know just a few. But quite a few-

Tape one, side two:

EM: Interview with Mrs. Rita Harmelin. So, during the Russian occupation, you still stayed in your old apartment, and your father worked. And you went to school.

RH: I went to school. We stayed in our own apartment, thanks to the fact that it was very small, and [unclear].

EM: Did you have contact with the rest of the family?

RH: Well, we had very, well we had contact with the people who lived in our town. We didn't, there was a bit of the family in our town. There were two brothers of my mother's, and one sister. Both sisters, actually, came to Boryslaw. Well, both were from the west, not so much, Aunt Eva, one was from Sanok, and one was from Katowice, which is in the west. And she came to stay in Boryslaw. We had very little contact with the people who didn't live in that town, because we weren't allowed to travel for, unless it was a really very good reason. For instance, in my father's family, we hardly had any contact at all.

EM: Now, when the war between the, Germany and the Soviet Union started, could you describe the condition in Boryslaw?

RH: Well, the conditions in Boryslaw were more or less the same for two years, close to two years.

EM: That means, during the Soviet...

RH: During the Soviet occupation there was nothing much changed. Sometimes there was more food to be bought, and sometimes less, but somehow everybody managed. Then, on the 22nd of June, 1941, and that was the end of the school year, and there was a school party. And I remember, and oh, the, what I also remember, the, oh well the radio station was pretty far from where we lived. Somebody said that all, through the whole day and night before, there were, what do you call, the tankers, the railway was sending tankers with petrol west. All day and all night. It means that Russia was supplying the petrol, Boryslaw petrol, or perhaps also their own, to Germans. And on the 22nd of, like I said, after that school party, we were going home about 11:00, we saw fires. And we saw all sorts of things happening. And someone said that Germany attacked the Soviet Union. And in a few hours or so, again I don't see...

EM: How far from the border was Boryslaw, approximately?

RH: It was less than, which border?

EM: Between Soviet, ...

RH: Soviet and...

EM: German, and German...

RH: Yeah, in the west. Well, I know the border was in Przemysl. I don't know, it would have been about maybe 500, 400 km. I'm not sure.

EM: About 400-500 km?

RH: 500.

EM: So, it didn't take the Germans too long to come to Boryslaw?

RH: No, because they, first of all they came in with tanks. They came in with all sorts of things.

EM: Was there bombardment?

RH: Yes, there was a little bit bombard-, not too much, because probably they wanted to keep everything whole for themselves.

EM: Because that's the oil well...

RH: Because of the oil. That was very crucial to them, always.

EM: Were they near refineries in that...

RH: Refineries were not in Boryslaw. Refineries were in a town called Drohobycz, which was, I think, 11 km, which is about 7 miles away. And those were bombarded, but much later, by the Americans.

EM: Now, describe the entrance of the Germans to Boryslaw.

RH: Well, mai-, they started coming, and we all hid, because we knew what was coming. And the first day, they, the Germans allowed the Ukrainians—more than the Poles—the Poles didn't take much part in it I think—free hand, in killing as many Jews as they like.

EM: It was a pogrom.

RH: It was a pogrom. And the pogrom was, there was a building which used to be a mining school.

EM: What schools?

RH: Mining.

EM: Mining?

RH: For the people to, who wanted to work in, that was in Polish times. And that building, because it was very convenient for them, was taken over by the NKVD, which was the precastle, pre-cursor, pre-something of NKVD, which was the...

EM: The secret...

RH: The dreaded Secret Police. And they apparently killed some people before they left, and left them in the cellar. And that was apparently, that pogrom was supposed to be in revenge for those killed there. Why should you kill Jews in revenge for other people who were killed? I don't know, but, anyway, in fact, my father was taken. I don't remember whether from the street or from the house. He was taken to that NKVD building. Luckily, he was beaten up very badly when he came back, I remember.

EM: But nothing, I mean...

RH: But he wasn't, he was alive.

EM: He was alive to come home.

RH: Yeah, he was alive to come home. I think I should go back a little bit, because I didn't mention about the fires in Boryslaw. When the Russians were leaving,

they fired as many oil wells as they could. They dynamited the electric works, where electricity, and...

EM: Installations...

RH: Installations so that we actually till the end of the war we didn't have any electricity. And they set fire to everything that could be valuable to the Germans. But the whole town, the houses, not many houses burned. And I remember this, because our house was set between three oil wells, and they all burned. But we were watching all night so that something doesn't fall on the house. Because we still lived in the same house.

EM: Was this an apartment house, or was it a...

RH: No, no, it was a tiny little cottage, which had only one bedroom, one big bedroom, and one big kitchen, a hall, a bathroom, and that's about all. So, that was why nobody wanted it, wanted to live in it, and we lived there because it belonged to our relative, who moved to another city. And he let us live there relatively cheaply.

EM: Now, how long did the pogrom last?

RH: The pogrom lasted 24 hours [tape off]. So that pogrom lasted 24 hours. As a matter of fact, it was like this: the people—I don't think they were Gestapo yet—they were just some German police or something who gave the order for the pogrom—didn't say how long it should last. And, since Boryslaw was a small town, they went to Drohobycz, where they had the head office, or they set up. Because it was just in the first few days. And that was, we were told, or everybody was told, it should be 24 hours. But the people who could give the order to stop were not in our town. They were in Drohobycz. And we had a neighbor—not close neighbor, but a neighbor—who, quite a young couple, Ukrainians. And I don't think we knew them personally then, but the wife we always knew, because she was a very beautiful girl. And they were not married very long. And she went by foot, on foot, because there was no transportation already. She went on foot to Drohobycz, and she found this, this, man who could give the order to stop, and she made him telephone the local person and give the order. Because otherwise, I mean, it was 24 hours already, but nobody had the right to tell them to stop, so they wouldn't stop. And then there was a teacher, I think I mentioned to you, the teacher who gave, who became the inspec-, school inspector and gave my father a job. They lived quite close to us too. So, his wife, who was also my husband's teacher when he was a little boy, went and sort of got my hus-, father out. I mean, they were letting everybody go anyway, but, with her he came home and he wouldn't be attacked again or something. So she brought him home that night. And then there was a few weeks' peace, because that's how it happened from, between pogroms and actions there was rela-...

EM: During that first pogrom, do you know if any people were killed?

RH: Yes. There were, but I don't know how many. I don't remember how many.

EM: But, they were mostly Ukrainian that took part in it, not Germans?

RH: Yes.

EM: Or whether Germans took...

RH: Well, the Germans sort of egged them on and I'm sure they didn't spare a few things, but nobody was shot if I remember correctly. I'm not sure.

EM: Now, describe life after the pogrom a little bit.

RH: Well, we just lived life, in a cage. Because everybody was afraid to go out, and then they sort of organized a *Judenrat* slowly, and everybody was registered. And...

EM: Did the Jews have to wear any arm bands or a star?

RH: Yes. They made us wear arm bands, blue and white arm bands with the star of David on it. No yellow stars like they did in Germany. And I remember one Ukrainian girl, who used to go to school with me. She probably didn't realize that, what the arm band meant. It wasn't just degrading us. It was also that if somebody sees us from the back and knows I'm Jewish, they could s-, they could hit, shoot me! But this girl said to me, "Well, I'm Ukrainian. I would be proud if they made me wear a yellow, blue band." I said, "Well, I'm not ashamed of it. But you realize the danger." But she said, "What danger?" And she didn't know.

EM: Now, did they establish a ghetto in Boryslaw?

RH: Well, it was a ghetto, but not right away. It took a while. And it wasn't really a ghetto like in other towns, because Boryslaw was built in a very haphazard way. There was one very long main street, and Jews were living all along everywhere, mixed up with the other population. So it wasn't really possible. And I really don't know the date when. I think, between the first pogrom there was another one, the second one. Any of those dates I have, but just now I cannot remember.

EM: The dates are not important.

RH: Important. And there was only, the third one was in, in August, 4th of August, '42, I think, where they took a lot of people to Lemberg, to...

EM: What?

RH: To the Janowska. And after that only they told us to leave our houses and to go to a certain, well, it wasn't a suburb, a certain little district where we, they told all the Gentiles to get out of there, and we lived in those. This was a very poor housing thing, and we had the ghetto there.

EM: Was this, was it surrounded by a wall...

RH: No.

EM: Or anything?

RH: No. No, no, they didn't build a wall. They set around police, the Jewish police to guard us. There weren't any Germans guarding us then, because a lot of people used to work in the petrol industry, and that's what they needed most. They didn't want to stop producing petrol, so they kept a lot of those Jews there.

EM: So, do you know of any organized deportations from Boryslaw, or, so-called actions?

RH: Well, every, yes, I know, I'm just, after the first one, which was a pogrom, this, from then on, there were organized deportations. The second one was I think in the same year as the first one. I can't think even on when it was. And then I don't know where they took them then. From the third one they took people in the, to the Janowska [unclear]**.** Then there was a fourth one, where they took them again. I was in it. I was caught in it. But by then I was working in the...

EM: Where, how were you caught? From the street? From a place of work? How were you caught?

RH: From the place of work. It was a very, it's also, again, a very long story, because, being a petrol industry, they knew that a lot of the Jews who still lived in Boryslaw, they knew an awful lot about the petrol industry. They were, most of them were owners before, who was not deported to Siberia and was still there. So they put us in a, I mean, not that I was one of them. I was only about 16 or 17 then. But, all the Jews who, who could, got a job with, in this industry. And we used to, here's another digression. My father, being a teacher, somebody found out that he was a music teacher and German teacher. And one of the people who, one of the German directors of the, of the petrol industry, was a man called Siegemund.

EM: Siegemund?

RH: Yes. And he, he was a captain I think in the German army, but he was wounded, and he was lame [tape off]. That shows you how I, because he helped me, he saved me.

EM: O.K.

RH: Yeah. And this, *Herr* Siegemund found out that my father was a teacher, and he, through somebody, asked him to come and teach his son to play the violin. So my father used to go there. He got a thing that he could cross the street.

EM: Pass?

RH: Pass, at night, because we weren't allowed to walk at night. And he used to go to that place once or twice a week, I don't know. And he used to teach this little boy violin. And I remember my father telling me how remarkable it was, because the par-, both parents and the little boy treated him just like one of them. They asked him to eat with them. They, the little boy climbed on his knee. But they had also a daughter who was about 12 then. So she started making a big fuss that a *Jude* is eating with them and playing with the boy, so then it became a little bit more strict. And this Mr. Siegemund was my boss. So, in the so-called fourth action, there was another German I must mention, because he was very important. And his name was Bertold Beitz.

EM: Beitz? It's B-...

RH: Yes, Bertold Beitz. It's a very well-known name everywhere now. You probably heard about him too? No. Well, he was apparently a nephew of the...

EM: Do you know how to spell the name?

RH: Of course. Of course. B-A-, B-, German, B-E-I-T-Z. He was our savior. He was really, he was also very handsome. And he was a bigger director than Siegemund. Siegemund was my immediate boss, and he was the boss of the whole, it turned out that he wasn't even a party member. He was a nephew of Frank, the governor of Galicia. And he was a very young man, about 26. And he used to have, I wouldn't say, a soft spot for Jews, but he was a human being.

EM: Was he in uniform...

RH: No.

EM: Or in civilian...

RH: He was a civilian. He was not in uniform and, actually in industry there was nobody in u-, even this captain was not, because he was wounded by the Poles and then he wasn't in the army anymore. And this Beitz had a lot of people. Somehow he had a human contact with us, with the Jews. He didn't, I wouldn't say he was a Jew lover, but he was just a human being. And being our director he of course knew from the Gestapo or from others when something was happening. And somehow Jews also sort of smelled it in the air. And there was one guy, very courageous, we used to ask him, straight out, "Mr. Director, will there be a, an action?" So one day he found out that they're planning an action for the next day. So he told us that we can sleep in the office. We don't have to go back to the ghetto or wherever we live. We can sleep in the office. So, I don't remember where I hid my mother, or whether she hid herself. And I and my father, because we were both working there, we stayed in the office. Somehow in the evening, not in the middle of the night, I went home to see whether my grandmother was all right, because she was still alive then. And, she was...

EM: Did your grandmother live with you?

RH: My grandmother lived with us since a few years before the war, because both my aunts who used to take care of her got married, and then she came to live with us. And she was an invalid. She was, for certain reasons, bedridden for the last sixteen years of her life, and she was already pretty old and pretty broken by all her, all the things that happened. And she couldn't have gon-, she couldn't be taken anywhere, because she had one leg amputated, and an arm—her arm was stiff. She couldn't walk, she couldn't, she had to be carried. And there was nobody else then. But she was all right at home. I went to see her. And we went to, with my father to sleep in that office. In the morning, this *Herr* Beitz came once more, and he told us, we thought about him like, you know, Messiah. He said, "*Bleibt ruhig*," or he had to go to, to Lwow for some reason. "*Bleibt ruhig*, nothing will happen to you until I come back." Unfortunately, somebody noticed that so many Jews stayed overnight in the office, I think 180 or more. And they, whether it was the Germans themselves or somebody told them, I don't know. But about half an hour after Beitz left, the *Reiter Politzei* came, and they chased us all out of there onto the, onto the railway station.

EM: The *Reiter Politzei*.

RH: Yes, that's a...

EM: That's cavalry?

RH: It was, a cavalry, it was a, it was not army, although they had very similar uniforms. They...

EM: Were they on horses?

RH: They were on horses. Sure. They were on horses. And they, I don't know what exact authority they had, but they certainly had authority over Jews. They were not Gestapo, and they were not the army.

EM: And they were, were they S.S.?

RH: No.

EM: No? Not S.S.

RH: No. But, they told us to get out, because they were on horses and had guns and what could we do? So we went, and then...

EM: It was you, and your father?

RH: My, me, and my father, and all the Jews who were there. And we spent a day and a night—and I'll never forget that night—I mean, I'm trying to forget it. But, the next, I can't remember how many people, I think two-and-a-half [? 200 ?] people were in that, that warehouse, waiting to be taken away. We didn't know where. Just before, just before they started segregating us, Beitz came back from wherever he was, and found out that the *Reiters* took, played a trick on him. So, I don't know, he couldn't come, but he sent Siegemund and a few other people, and they started to bargain, to haggle with the Gestapo, who was then, who then took us over, for all the Jews. And of course he, he managed to take out 180 men and seven women. Among the 180 men was my father. And there were six women only to go, and then, Siegemund said, "*Da ist die kleine Brauner ich muss sie haben auch.*" [There is the small Brauner, I have to have her also.] So they looked at me, well, I mean, I was 16 or 17. What, what can I do? What, how come I'm so important? So they asked me what I do, and I said, "I am a typist." So they asked me what system do I type, and I didn't know what they meant. I was so frightened. So I said, "Underwood," because I had a typewriter, an Underwood typewriter. So he looked at, this Gestapo man looked at Siegemund and said, "*Sind sie Wahnsinnig?*" [Are you crazy?] He said, "You mustn't praise Jews particularly as stupid as that." And he turned away.

EM: You mustn't what? Praise?

RH: Praise the Jews. You mustn't fight for the Jews.

EM: Oh.

RH: So, and he turned away. And Siegemund just grabbed me by the arm and pulled me out to the other side, and I was the seventh woman that was saved that day. So then we went home, not to work, and you know how it works with the...

EM: So, and there were some people that were not saved then...

RH: Yes. And they went to, I don't know where. I don't know. I, maybe also to Janow. Or, I don't know. But they were never seen again. They were killed, sooner or later. Maybe they went to, what was the camp close to Lublin?

EM: Majdanek? Belzec?

RH: No. Majdanek was near Krakow I think. Majdanek, Treblinka, they were near Krakow. And that might have been Belzec, I'm not sure. I can't understand how I don't remember these things. You know so many years. Anyway, it worked like this, that once they had their quota of Jews and the action was finished, it was finished. You could go home and nobody caught you on the street. Sometimes the Poles or the Ukrainians helped the Germans out, but after it was finished it was finished for some time. So we went home, and my mother was still hidden. So I went home to see about my grandmother. And she was there and she was all right, but she was already dying. And she took me for my mother. She didn't know who I was. And she had pains in her leg. So, I used to do that with her. I used to treat her, because we couldn't get pain killers. And there was this painkiller "*Kogutek*" in Poland, and we had very few of them that we could get. So I used to half them or even less, and add some sugar and salt to make it taste bad, and I used to give it to her and it sort of helped, because, like a placebo or something. So I remember she said she had pains and I gave her "*Kogutek*" like that. And she went to sleep, and in the middle of the night, or maybe in two hours, I don't know, I woke up, and went to see whether she wanted something, and she was dead, in her sleep. So that was one lucky thing, and she was, she died in her own bed, more or less.

EM: Do you know how old she was?

RH: Yes. I think she was 76 then.

EM: Was, were you able to bury her in a cemetery, or...

RH: Yes, there was my father, and there was one uncle left, my uncle David. I think he was still there then, and Adam, who was the Gentile husband of one of my mother's sisters. The three of them went to the cemetery and they buried her with their own hands.

EM: Um, [tape off] so your grandmother died in, what was it, 1943? Or 1944?

RH: No, I think it was '42.

EM: '42.

RH: November, '42, something.

EM: After this action, oh, did your mother work in, at the off-...

RH: Yes, later. Later, my mother worked with me and with my father in the same office. And that was also thanks to Siegemund.

EM: Do you remember the next action?

RH: The next action was the so-called, the fifth action. Now, between the fourth and the fifth, peop-, or maybe even before, the Jews who were working for the

Germans, I mean in the factories or in maga-, in warehouses or in the offices, we got a so-called arm band "A", which meant arm band *Jude*. They had a letter "A" and a number. And I was too young for...

EM: That was in, in addition to the other...

RH: Oh they were, no, no, instead.

EM: Instead.

RH: There were ordinary arm bands, and the *Arbeits Juden* had the, the other arm bands. And I didn't have an "A" arm band, even though I was working. But, about that time, they also gave us a letter "R". This was a little square of perhaps four inches square, 10 cm or 12 cm, about 12, of ordinary linen, on which was embroidered the letter "R" in black, and a number.

EM: And it was on a white linen, or...

RH: On a white, cream, something linen. And this letter "R" meant that we were working for the *Ristungs* industry. And this is why we were important. And we were supposed to be left alone.

EM: Where did you wear that star?

RH: On the lapel.

EM: On the lapel.

RH: It had a little hole, and we put a safety pin through it. And, we were so proud of, the ones who-

Tape two, side one:

EM: ...Could you describe the type of work you were doing at that time?

RH: Well, I think, at that time, when we already had ice, I was working in the office, and it was colder in *Invertar Abteilung* [inventory department] where we were mostly writing in the stock, writing up the stock of the nationalized oil wells. All the oil wells that were nationalized first by the Russians, when the Soviet troops came, they were never given back to their rightful owners by the Germans. And forever there was something to stock about, and we were kept writing the cards, the stock cards. I mean that's what I was doing. Later I was, somehow somebody discovered that I could type a little bit, so I was typing whatever was necessary. I was sort of pretending to be a secretary, but I did type letters for the signatures of Directors and so on.

EM: At that time did you live in the ghetto?

RH: We still lived in the ghetto, though it wasn't a real ghetto. It was called a ghetto, or the Jewish Quarters, because we didn't have a wall. We just had Jewish policemen patrolling the street so that nobody could get in and out, but we did really. We were taken to and back, under guard. But, Boryslaw was in such a peculiar situation because people who were living, they didn't work too many of them in one place. There were two in one place, one in another place, so, up to a point we went together, but then they had to let us go our separate ways. [tape off then on]

EM: Did any non-Jews work with you at that time?

RH: When I was working in the office, yes, there were.

EM: What was the attitude of the non-Jews towards the Jews?

RH: Well, Boryslaw being such a small town, practically everybody knew everybody else. Some of the people who worked with me were in my school; they were schoolmates. Some didn't want to have anything to do with me, and some really helped. Some gave me some soup or talked to me.

EM: What was the food situation among the Jews at that time?

RH: Well, the food situation was very bad, because we were, all right, we were told to move from our own houses to the ghetto. By then, most of us were robbed or practically nobody had many more belongings. So there was very little we could sell. Actually we had, what we could sell we sold a year or two before. And we did have a food ration. I think it was a pound of bread a week. I'm trying to think what else they gave us, if anything. I don't remember. A month or, the time while we were in the ghetto we had to sort of scrounge something. Once they opened the *zwangs arbeitslager* [forced labor camp], the camp, then it became a little better, because we got a piece of bread and some soup, and a dish of black coffee or, *erzatz* coffee, daily.

EM: Where was the camp in relation to the former ghetto?

RH: It wasn't very far, but the camp was a, also it wasn't a real camp. It was a previous, oh, I don't know what to call it in English. We called it the *kaserne* [barracks],

although there were never any soldiers in it. But, before then, I think there were great stables for somebody's horses. And there were several buildings, somewhere, obviously, for people to live, but somewhere really only for horses and they were somehow prepared for us. But, they didn't just move the ghetto, all the people from the ghetto immediately to the *kaserne*, only slowly. And, it took quite a while before the ghetto was entirely abolished. And, when we were there, they had a kitchen in which Jews were, and they gave us at least regularly some food. Of course it was never enough.

EM: What year was it, or what, now what month?

RH: I think that was '43. Early in '43 there was the so-called "fifth action," when I was caught. Because, even though I had this "R" I didn't have the "A" and I was going from the ghetto to work and again some *Reiter* [rider] took and sort of caught us and brought us to a building which used to be a movie theater before the war. And there were quite a lot of us there. And it was just opposite our office. Now somebody quickly, who saw me there, went to my father and told him that they caught me. I don't remember why my father, because we usually went to work together. And my father again went to my boss Siegemund, who was also his, his boss, and said that I was caught on the way to work. So he just walked over, and—it wasn't immediately—but he walked over to this place after a few hours and started calling me out, and just told the, the German *soldat* guard that I am his worker. And he practically dragged me out by my sleeve. On the way he said "*Ich habe schon wieder dich zu...*" again I have to... you. And he brought me to the office. And then, he decided that it wouldn't be safe for me. My parents were all right, because that action was, I think for young people, for non-"A", I don't know.

EM: What was the "A" again? I forgot.

RH: *Arbeits, ArbeitsJude* [work Jew].

EM: *ArbeitsJude*.

RH: And he said, just at that time they opened the *kaserne*, they opened the camp. And I was perhaps one of the first 20 to go there, because it was safe, supposedly. Whoever was in that camp was not molested any more. Of course it wasn't true, but at least for me it was right. And this camp, as I said, it wasn't prepared, but it was just starting, so it was still in a very primitive status. It wasn't to be compared with any of the concentration camps. It was like a, like a holiday place in comparison. But, for instance, there were no windows. And winter in Poland is quite harsh, so you had snow inside the house, in the room. There were about 12 girls in my room...

EM: What do you mean, no windows? That there were no...

RH: They were broken.

EM: Oh, broken windows.

RH: Yeah, broken windows. And there was no heating. But, after, and you, I remember having to sleep in my coat. My winter coat was stolen, but my summer coat and some rags around my head, and something more around my feet, because it was very cold. There were about 12 girls in my room, that we huddled for warmth, and a few men

in another part, because we didn't live together. But, somehow we managed. And slowly, slowly, they, because Boryslaw had a lot of natural gas, the, the ground gets. So they brought in some gas to burn and it was, became a little bit more possible. And from there, every morning at 6:00 we went to work again under guard, and at 6:00 in the evening we came back under guard and then we got something to eat. And slowly, the camp was filled up, because then they started to close the ghetto. And my parents came over too to the camp. And this is how we lived for some months there.

EM: Your father still worked in the...

RH: My father's work in the same office as I did. He was a little bit my superior because he had a lot of experience. He spoke German very well, so they gave him some little bit more important work, but it was definitely not any authority or anything. [tape off then on]

EM: At that time did your mother work?

RH: Yes. She, actually, she worked with us. She worked in the same office too. Yes.

EM: Did you all live together?

RH: No, I lived with my mother in the women's quarters, and my father lived in the men's quarters. We saw each other in the office, and at meals, and, but...

EM: How long did this last?

RH: Well, this, we were in the camp actually until about March, '44.

EM: Well, did this camp have a name? What did you call this camp, besides being the *kaserne*?

RH: We called it in Polish *koszary*.

EM: *Koszary*.

RH: But, it was called officially a *zwangs arbeitslager* [forced labor camp], but it didn't have a particular name.

EM: Nothing?

RH: And, because of this peculiar position of Boryslaw, it wasn't as harsh or as difficult. They needed, because not only they needed the hands to work, because they had enough hands. They weren't such good workers in this, always hungry and, but, a lot of the Jews who still were there in Boryslaw and who were made to work in this office were previous owners. And they knew an awful lot. Each knew enough about his own oil well, or his own several oil wells to help them in the cataloging all these thing, all these machines and all the equipment and all this that we were doing there. And I think this was really an excuse for this Mr. Beitz. Because if he let all the Jews be taken away, now he would have nobody to be a chief of, a director of. So he kept us alive, which was very good. I can't say that he did it only for his sake. He didn't do it particularly for our sake. He was a decent man, but he also profited by not having to go to the front. He was a very young man, and...

EM: When you say about Jews owning oil wells, did the Jew or any person have to be very wealthy to own a oil well in Boryslaw?

RH: No.

EM: Because here when you think about oil wells you think about...

RH: Yes, well, Boryslaw's oil wells were, this was a very old oil field. It was the first established in Europe. And it was by then partly exhausted. Now, it wasn't that you have to be very rich to own one, because you could actually own a part of one. You could, in partnership. And oil wells was just a gamble, like anything else. It could be a gusher, although there were none in Boryslaw in my time. They were all gone. But it could be just a hole in the ground where you poured money in and very little came out. There were quite a lot of wealthy Jews who, perhaps, weren't wealthy when they bought it, but that, over 20 years or 30 years of their life made them wealthy. But actually they, as usual, the wealthiest companies owning oil wells, were foreign companies like, *Limanova*, for instance, was a French company. There was a Belgian company. There was somebody else. They owned not just one or three, but they owned a lot of them. So, and they employed a lot of people. So, these were really the wealthy owners. But, in a place like Boryslaw before the war, if somebody had one or two oil wells he was considered a wealthy man. I mean, it was not a Rockefeller, but, they were clinging to it and they made a very good living off.

EM: Did these people live in Boryslaw, the ones, the owners?

RH: Yes, they...

EM: Before the war.

RH: Mostly, the ones that I'm talking about who worked with us, they usu-, they mostly did. And there were quite a lot who, Boryslaw wasn't any in great shakes to live in, so they lived either in Lwow, or even abroad.

EM: Could you tell me what happened later?

RH: Well, after this fifth action, there was another one, very shortly, when the Germans were beaten at the Stalingrad. And that was I think February, '43. And that was a big, still a big action in Boryslaw. And then, I think that was the first time that they didn't take them away anywhere. They shot them in the, in the town, behind the town. I can't remember how many people died then, because my memory for figures is very hazy now. And then I must say that we had, we, the girls who lived in the women's part were guarded always by the Ukrainians, Ukrainian volunteers. They weren't soldiers, but they were Ukrainian youth to whom Hitler promised a free Ukraine. Of course he didn't keep his word, but they believed in him, and they volunteered for all functions. So they got their uniform and they got a gun, and they were guarding Jews or beating Jews or whatever they like. And there was a, during the sixth action, we had a little bit of panic in the camp, and there were only, there were, there was one guard outside our door, and of, off the women's part. But there were also two guards outside the main gate. But, perhaps we knew some ways where we could slip out some other way, and we couldn't,

because the guard in front of our door wouldn't let us. And one of the girls knew his family, and said to him, "Why don't you want to let us out? Let us save ourselves." And he just stood there with a, with a gun and would laugh and wouldn't let us go out. And then we found out that he actually saved our lives. Because everybody who left the camp then was caught, and shot. And we, the few girls that we, he wouldn't let out, we were free and then, you know, after this was finished, it was finished again for some months. And, like I said, people with "R" or with "A" they weren't supposed to be touched, but it wasn't true, only after this last big action, sixth, there were little small ones, which we stopped counting already, because it was, the life was quiet for a while and then was another big, another thing, and another few people or a few hundred were taken away. There weren't many left anyway.

EM: Tell me something, what was happening with the children at that time, since they wouldn't have...

RH: Well, people who could, people who could, brought the children to the camp. Some were hiding them or giving them away to Gentile families, for keeping, for safe keeping. Some were using all sorts of things. I know in our room there was a lady who, who brought her, I think he was 11, a little boy with her. And every day she would, when she was making the bed, she would put him under the mattress, and he would stay there all day until she came back from work. And then she fed him, and he had to be quiet, and nobody was supposed to see him. And I think that boy actually survived the war. And I can't remember many children around. And if they were, they were hiding. For children not being productive had no right to live.

EM: Could you describe what happened later, after a few months of your life in there?

RH: We were sort of living from day to day. We were always scared, but we had a lot of this, this *Galgenhumor* [gallows humor=grim humor], which was probably a defense mechanism for the young people, though we were all 17, 18. Nobody wanted to die, but we never thought about it all day. And, we just lived that way for a while. And then, we started getting news from the front. After Stalingrad we knew that Germany cannot win the war, and of course some had more hope. Some had less hope. The camp...It was not very far from a forest. And people started slipping out at night and trying to build little hiding holes that you, bunkers, in the forest. And they were taking a little bit of food at a time. They were some boys who used to go every, work all day, and at night they went to the forest and worked all night, and they used to come back. And quite a few people escaped then, and hid in the forest. Not too many survived from that, because when the peasants found a hole like this, immediately they, they called the Germans, and they were brought back to the camp, or shot on the way, or something or other. Some did help, some who did help with food or didn't say anything, I mean, if somebody didn't shoot you, he already was considered a nice guy. So, we didn't have this, anybody who could do it for us or who could, asked us to go, we didn't have any

money. And we, and that time I, I mean I knew Rolek my husband all my life, because we went to school together and his father was my family doctor. And then he started asking me to go, his parents were prepared to go to hide in a place, in a house of a certain Ukrainian guy who was a patient, whose father was a patient of his father. And he wanted to take me with him. And I said, "I don't think your parents will want me," but I said, "Yes." He said, "Yes. I talked it over with them. And they said, 'Yes,'" which I don't think was the truth now. But I said, "I'm not going anywhere without my parents." And then he went to my mother, and my mother said, and I'm not sure she didn't like him. She told me that they have a proposition from a Polish woman to hide them. I knew this woman. She was very nice, and she came to my mother often. And she has room only for two people. And since everybody knew that Rolek's family can provide me with one, then, mother said, "If you go with him, then we will have a better chance." And I, being stupid and young, believed it. Anyway, this is what happened, that in a while, we had news from the front that things are going badly for the Germans, but at the same time, when they are retreating, they probably won't leave anybody alive to be a witness. So I think in March, at the end of March, '44, Rolek came to me and said, "Well, this is the time. Tomorrow we have to go." And I said good-bye to my parents and I went with him and his family to this Ukrainian's place. Now where we stayed, in his cellar. [tape off then on] There were Rolek, his parents, his aunt, and I. There were five. There was another family—two sisters and a nephew. That's eight. There was a married couple and a young boy, that's eleven. And there was another young couple, thirteen. I think that was it. And we were all hiding under his, under the floor of his bedroom. And he allowed us to come out at night. All day we were sitting in the, in the cellar and were quiet. And at night he allowed us to come and go upstairs and cook a little bit and have something to eat. And then we went back to the cellar. And I don't know how the neighbors didn't notice that the light was on there and that she was, ac-, we thought nobody else knew about it. But it turned out that the wife of this guy had six or seven sisters. And each of them knew about us, and each of them did a little bit of shopping so that she wouldn't stand out at buying too much food. We actually paid them for it, but I mean, what was money in such a situation? And it was very dangerous for them already. Because then, if we were caught, they would be shot too. But somehow we stayed there till the beginning of August, '44, when the Russian troops came back. And that was the end of the war for us. Of course, there were, when we left, there were still quite a few people in the, in the camp. And my parents, for instance, wanted to prolong the time when they wouldn't have to go to that woman. But they waited too long, and they were caught and taken to, they were taken in April, 1st, to Plaszow, and then my mother was taken to Auschwitz, where she was killed on the 14th of May. And my father went, I don't remember whether he went directly, I think directly to Mauthausen. [tape off then on]

EM: So, your parents really had an arrangement with this Polish woman to hide them.

RH: Well, I, for a long time I sort of doubted it. I thought maybe they did-, my mother told me that only to make me go with Rolek, because she knew I wouldn't leave them. But later I did meet that woman, and she said, "You know, I have your *eiderdown* and some other things," that my mother gave her.

EM: Your what? I'm sorry.

RH: Her, she had our *eiderdown*.

EM: What is that?

RH: A comforter. A comforter. We had a big one that we brought from, from Romania. And she had something else that my mother gave her to prepare for the time she would go there. So I said, and, her name was Mrs. Naparova, I remember now. I said, "Did she real-, did you really mean it? Do you really mean that she was coming?" "Oh yes," she said. "They were supposed to come as soon as they could. But they stayed in the camp as long as they could, because they didn't have any money, and I didn't have any money, to feed them. So, and they didn't want, they thought maybe they'll run away a few days before the end." So, but it didn't work that way. And...

EM: So this woman would have taken your parents without being paid for it?

RH: Without being paid for it, because they, she knew, she knew us that we lost everything already during the Russian occupation. We had nothing to pay her with.

EM: Was she a close friend of your parents?

RH: No, not really. She was a very simple woman. I don't remember whether she was some kind of dressmaker or something. I don't know where my mother knew her from. She wasn't a friend at all. She was just a woman my mother knew, a simple Polish woman. And, I don't even know where my mother knew her. But she came a few times to our house—I remember this—before the war.

EM: Now, when, did you know when your parents were taken, when you were hiding, did you...

RH: When I was hiding, they let me know, because the owner of the house we were hiding in, he used to work in a different office, but not far from the camp. And he saw them being taken to the station. Well he told, when he came back he told me.

EM: Were the people from the camp being transported by truck? Or by train?

RH: No, they were, they were marched to the station, and they were put on cattle trains, box train. And they were taken to the other end of Poland, to Plaszow. And of course, some died on the way. Some managed to escape from the wagons—not many. Some jumped down and broke their legs and were killed, you know. But some got right to *Plaszow* and...

EM: Was that, was that camp liquidated at that time?

RH: No, because when they took all those Jews who were there at that time, when there were a lot of Jews who were hiding in tiny little towns and villages around

Boryslaw, all the ones who escaped previously to the forest, we had mountains—the Carpathians—was just behind our town, and the forests were very thick. And for a while they, whomever they caught, or who was given away by the Poles or the Ukrainians, they brought to the, back to the camp, and sort of waited until there were enough to transport them again. And there were three such transports. And the last one went directly to Oswiecim, because *Plaszow* already was in the hands of the Russians. You see, the Russians went like this. They went with a column, they tried to fight. But if they couldn't take a town, if it was defended too strongly, they went further, and they left those pockets of Germans in other towns. So, when we, the last transportation from Boryslaw to Auschwitz was right in the, at the end of July. And we were already free on the 7th. So when we were, I was free, those people were still on those cattle trucks on the railway going to Auschwitz.

EM: So, were you liberated in July? Or August?

RH: No, in, on the 7th of August.

EM: Of August, I thought you said...

RH: Yeah, yeah.

EM: In July. [tape off then on] So, your parents were taken in one of the,...

RH: On the first, the first such transport they were taken, in April. It was two weeks or so after I went into hiding. And this is when they were taken. [tape off then on]

EM: At any time-

Tape two, side two:

EM: ...Do you remember if at any time there was any talk of resistance or actual resistance?

RH: Well, they were, there was talk about resistance, but people kept it to only those who could really do something about it. I was not in this circle. I was about 17, 18 then, very kept together with my mother. I couldn't do anything like that. But anyway, in Boryslaw it was very difficult, because there was never a great group of Jews together. Some were working here. Some were working there. Some were going and coming back from the, of course the boys were buying guns and it never came to anything, because we were surrounded by not only the Germans, on a, I mean, there were nearly as many of them as of us. But apart from this there was for instance the *A.K.,*[2] the Polish underground, who tried to provoke us into something. But they actually were not allowed to take, they came once, one guy came to the camp, I remember. And Rolek called me then. He wanted to sell them guns, and he wanted to take them to the forest. Luckily nobody believed him, because then we found out he was a provocateur, and didn't do much good. There were some boys who...

EM: Well what would have happened if the people would have gone to the forest?

RH: Oh, he would have taken them straight to the Germans! Or Germans straight to them. I mean, he was...

EM: He, he w-...

RH: He was a real, em, you know...

EM: Collaborator?

RH: Collaborator, yeah.

EM: Because you see he was from the *A.K.*, so.

RH: Well, he was from, he said he was from the *A.K.*, but as far as I know, the *A.K.* also didn't help...

EM: Didn't...

RH: Cooperate with Jews. They didn't perhaps cooperate with Germans to the extent that they helped them, but as far as Jews were concerned, the *A.K.* definitely didn't want any Jews left in Poland just like the Germans didn't want. And the Ukrainians were also, except for like you say, like I said before, personal friends or some decent people. You didn't do it from the love of Jews, but from their own decency. They also didn't have any interest in keeping Jews alive.

EM: Could you tell me, how did you learn about the fate of your parents?

[2]*Armia Krajowa* the Home Army of the Polish underground representing the Polish Government-in-Exile.

RH: All right. When I was still in Boryslaw, as I told you, we were free before the rest of, before all the other camps. I got a letter, which my father, who was freed in May, 1945, he was freed in a camp in Austria which was *Linz Drei*. [Linz Three]

EM: Linz-...

RH: -drei.

EM: -drei?

RH: Yes. Obviously they had... Two camps or three camps there.

EM: O.K.

RH: It was near the city of Linz of course, and they had there a great, big, and I think there were, I don't know how to call it, the Hermann Goering's work. I don't know what they did.

EM: Ammunition?

RH: Ammunition. And my father was practically dead, because not only was he very emaciated, but he also had some infection on his face. But, he was freed by the Americans. And of course they put him straight in the hospital, and starting feeding them a lot. A lot of people died just then, because they couldn't take the food any more. And my father somehow survived, and I don't kn-, survived, and I don't know exactly how he happened to meet or just, just, by coincidence, meet a Russian officer who was going into, was going back from the American Zone to the Russian Zone, or was going home. I don't know. He asked him to mail a letter, once he gets over the border into the Russian Zone. And that letter came to Boryslaw. And this way I knew my father survived, because he wrote to me. And from then on I made all the possible step, took all the possible steps to go and meet him. But it wasn't so easy, because you couldn't get out of the Soviet Union. But, after a while, that would be, also about August. No, no, that was, after June.

EM: June of what year?

RH: June of 1945. I must go a little bit back. When we were freed, of course we were freed by the Russian army. And they immediately occupied Boryslaw, and they were still the same as they were before. So they opened the schools immediately, and they allowed us to go to school. But everybody who was 18 was supposed to work during the day and go to night school, which we did. And we decided to do quickly our leaving certificate. [graduation certificate]

EM: *Matura*?

RH: *Matura*. Somehow, I didn't even try to do that, but they ma-, let me jump through one year. So I did the *Matura* together with Rolek, with, who was always one year ahead of me. And, just at that time we heard that there is going to be an exchange of citizens between the Soviet Union and Poland. I mean, after-war Poland.

EM: Because that part of Poland was annexed to...

RH: Annexed to the Soviet Union. So the Soviet Union wanted the Ukrainians who lived in the west, and, to come back. And for that they allowed the Polish citizens to

go west. And so we jumped at it as soon as we got our, our *Matura* we left. Even Rolek's parents stayed a bit longer. And particularly I was in a hurry because I already had that letter from my father. So I wanted to go to Poland. And as soon as we got there, we started looking for a possibility to go, for me to go to Austria to find my father. Well, it wasn't just as easy as that. You couldn't decide and get a passport and go away. You had to go through, through this so we could smuggle yourself through the border. And there were people who used to arrange these things. And I joined a group of Greeks.

EM: Greeks?

RH: Greek Jews who were deported, who were deported to Auschwitz from Greece, and a few survivors were allowed to go home to Greece. There weren't too many Greeks, but there were a lot of Polish Jews who wanted to get out of there, and I was one of them, and I had to pretend I am Greek by not opening my mouth all through the, through the border guards things, because nobody had any papers, any names, any nothing, and that was, I think early October, 1945. And it took me about two weeks to get to Austria, where I found my father. In the meantime while I already knew my father was alive, in the meantime people started coming back from concentration camps. And while I was waiting to get out of Poland to find my father, a friend of mine, who was with me, and her mother and my mother were in the same room at the later stage in the camp. And she came back, and she told me, cause she was together with her mother and my mother, taken to Auschwitz. And at this famous selection on the 14th of May, her mother and mine were taken one way, and she was hit with the butt of a rifle and she was sent the other way. So she lived. But she told me exactly what happened to my mother.

EM: So you know that your mother and her mother...

RH: Died together.

EM: Died.

RH: Yes, and she, this woman, she still lives, she is alive in Israel. We see her from time to time. [tape off then on] So, she even told me exactly what my mother kept saying all that way. She kept saying that she is very happy that I am not with her.

EM: Did she know how come your mother got separated from your father, in *Plaszow*?

RH: Well, they were separated in, Pla-...

EM: In...

RH: *Plaszow*. And the men stayed there longer. The women were taken away to Auschwitz earlier. And my father was I think a week or two—they were separated immediately—but then, my father, before my, they took my father to Auschwitz, there was, though, to, sorry, to Mauthausen, I think it was two weeks or so after. I couldn't be sure.

EM: So, your father was taken, as far as you remember, from *Plaszow* to Mauthausen?

RH: Yes.

EM: Or took first to Auschwitz?

RH: No, no, he wasn't in Auschwitz. He was taken to Mauthausen. You see, my father didn't talk about it much. He didn't want to tell me details. And I knew it distressed him enormously. But I knew he, he, all through his life he had nightmares and he was calling out in his sleep. So I had a few details, but I couldn't put them together. I knew how bad it was, but he never wanted to tell me, or my boys. He never, never wanted to tell me about it.

EM: So, what happened later? You joined your father and...

RH: I joined my father in Austria and he was by then working in the UNRRA.

EM: The United Nations...

RH: So, United Nations, Relief and Rehabilitation Organization, or, Association. And he was then manager of the office, because he was always into these, these jobs [chuckles].

EM: That was in 1945?

RH: That was, yes, in October, '45. And I got a job there too and we, I stayed there with him, and we were hoping that my parents-in-law and Rolek—actually, I wasn't married yet—but we were hoping that they could join us, and then we can all come to the United States. Because we had relatives here who were willing to send us papers for the whole family. But his parents weren't so very willing, because they had relatives in Australia and they preferred to go there. In any case, Rolek started, Rolek was in Poland. He started studying medicine, and he, they lived in Breslau, where he went to a university for a while. And he wrote me, also letters were very hard to smuggle through, but he wrote me through somebody to come back to Poland. With my father we can get a, somewhere to live and we can get jobs and all this sort of thing. And I decided that I didn't want to believe that entirely the way he said it. He was a bit too enthusiastic and my father was too old, and he went to, he wasn't so very old. He was only fifty-, '45 and four, forty-nine years old. But he was after such a terrible ordeal. So I thought I'd go to Poland myself, because it wasn't, you know, it wasn't just to sit on the train and go. I had to again smuggle myself through the, through the border—twice, not just one border. And I decided to go and see what happened, how, how does it really look? By the time I got there, my parents-in-law already had a permit, landing permit, to go to Australia. So, if I had come with my father, we would have stuck in Pol-, were stuck in Poland and that was it. So I was very glad. I smuggled myself out of Poland again, and I'm not such a big hero. I don't know how, people helped us, there were organizations who arranged these things. And then, Rolek came to, Rolek already had all the papers in order. And he got, there was this very short time when Poland was allowing people to emigrate and gave them passports. So he came to Austria, and we got married then. And he had to go immediately back to Poland within a week or so, immediately back to Poland so that he and his parents to go, could go to Australia. Because, as his wife I could get a permit to go to Australia in a very short time. If I were only the fiancé , first of all I couldn't bring

my father with me. And then it would have taken years. As it was, we didn't see each other for about 18 months. And then we, my father and I went to Australia.

EM: So when did you arrive in Australia?

RH: I arrived in Australia exactly on the 9th of January, 1949. My father immediately got a job, and he died in 1976.

EM: Oh, how, briefly, how was your life in Australia?

RH: Well, Australia is a very good country, only in the beginning you don't think so. You only begin to appreciate Australia when you have children. It's a good place to bring children up. And Australia is a very, as I said, is good to everybody. A lot of people had it much easier than we. I don't know, you need a bit of luck, a bit of ability. But on the whole, I have two sons who did very well, and they're happy there. And I think I must say that on the whole it was all right.

EM: Were you helped by any Jewish organizations when you arrived in Australia?

RH: No. When Rolek arrived, he was helped by a Jewish organization. They lent him some small amount of money to set up in business. But, I think, they promised, I'm not really sure what happened, whether they promised and didn't deliver, or whether they did give him some money, but that was before I arrived. When I arrived he was already in, doing a little bit of business. And I helped, started helping him immediately. And as I said, we arrived on Tuesday. By Friday my father had a job, so he helped us too. And after that, we didn't need or didn't ask anybody's help. [tape off then on]

EM: Could you tell me what you know about the rest of the family? You were an only child.

RH: Yes.

EM: But, do you know of what happened to...

RH: To the other relatives. Now, on my father's side, it's easy. Nobody survived. My father had four brothers and one sister. The sister died before the war. She was a very beautiful girl. She was a dentist. And she died before the war. I think she was about 28. But, out of the brothers, two were married, with two children each, and two were not married. Nobody survived. On my mother's side, my mother had five brothers and two sisters. So, on my mother's side, two brothers, and one sister survived. And each of the brothers who survived had one daughter. The others who died all have children and nobody survived.

EM: Nobody survived? Do you know...

RH: I have only, at the moment I have one living aunt, who is 88 years of age. [tape off then on]. So, apart from this auntie, there is one cousin living in the United States, and one cousin living in Israel.

EM: Do you know what happened? I mean, your cousins died. Do you happen to know where, or when, they perished?

RH: I'm afraid I don't know exactly when. And they were, one was ol-, a year older than I. He lived with his parents in a little town not far from Boryslaw, which was called Stary-Sambor. And, for a while, during the first months of the German occupation, they all stayed with us in Boryslaw. But, they were afraid, because they didn't belong there. They didn't have any documents, so they went back to their own town. But, somebody gave them away. And I don't know many details. But I know that nobody survived, but I don't know exactly when and what happened. Then there was one uncle who lived in Boryslaw. Two uncles, actually, lived in Boryslaw. But one died in the beginning. The other one died in the beginning of the occupation, but his wife and two children were taken by the Germans, and I'm not sure exactly when. The other uncle perished with his wife and two children. Also, I'm not sure whether they lived together or some went first and some later. Because we were not, we were separated. We were not together at all. We saw, we could see each other only very seldom. [tape off then on] The last aunt, which was my mother's middle sister, used to live in Sanok before the war, but she also came back to Boryslaw with her husband. Her husband was in the concentration camp with my father in *Plaszow*. I'm not sure when he died. And I'm not quite sure when aunt died. Either he, she probably was taken in the third action. And that was about it. That was the nearest family, and I don't really know much about any further. I'm sure there were quite a few, but we were not together in the same town.

EM: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

RH: There is a lot more to say, but I don't know exactly what. And just the fact that I'm here, it's very often a great source of guilt feeling to me, but, and I really, one thing I don't know is why. That's about all I have to say, unless you ask me more questions and I'll answer that.

EM: It's a very common feeling, the guilt feeling...

RH: Yeah.

EM: And the search for an answer, why.

RH: I'm not searching, because I know there is no answer, but it's, that's the only thing you can say about a thing like that.

EM: Your children, do they question you about your past? Do you talk about your past?

RH: Well, when they were little, I didn't want to tell them too much, since they, as I said, they were born in Australia. It was an entirely different world. There are not too many Jews there, although we were, we always had a little circle of friends. And not that I avoided the subject, but I thought, I'll ask them, when they ask me I'll tell them, but not before. We never hid anything from them. We never pretended things didn't happen. They did ask. But then after a while they didn't ask too many questions, so I s-, one day when they were already in their early teens, I asked them, "Don't you really want to know all this what happened and where you..." And he said, they said, they wanted to know very much, but they saw how distressed I became every time even the subject came up,

and they didn't want to make me upset, so they stopped asking. They are interested in it now, and they're trying to make sort of family histories and all this sort of thing, but now they're grown men and very busy with their lives. So we don't see each other too often, but definitely they were interested. They know quite a lot. They read a lot. They were both in Israel and they, they know quite a bit. But exactly my feelings, or exactly all my, all my what I went through, no, they don't know. I don't want them to know.

EM: How do they feel about their Judaism? Religion?

RH: Well, unfortun-, I mean, I don't know if it's unfortunate, they don't like organized religion. They feel quite comfortable being Jewish. They are not, I would say, obviously, patriotic.

EM: You mean patriotic as...

RH: As, as...

EM: As Jews, or as...

RH: I mean, Israel is important to them, but they don't make a big thing out of it. And, that's it. They don't hide it. They had little trouble at school because they were Jews. In Australia it's not very common. But there were cases when someone called them, "Dirty Jew," and they, they fought their own...

EM: Battle?

RH: Battles, and it didn't scar them, or it didn't make them bitter or anything like that. This is actually why I didn't want them to know too much. I know that when they, Danny was only a very little boy. He was at school. And, it was a public school. There were only two or three Jews in that class. And when the religion lesson came, there was not enough to have a rabbi, so they sent them to some other religion. And after a few weeks I noticed, or months, they didn't, they don't pay much attention to religion in Australia anyways, so they only had once a month a minister come and tell them. And I saw that he was too young. He was very, likely to become confused. So I went to the headmaster and I said would he excuse him for, from religion because, not because I have any, you know, they should know that other religion exists. But he gets confused and he's a little bit too young to decide what's what, and could he ask him to, tell, make him do something else, some extra homework or something in that time? So the Headmaster said, "Yes, I can do that, but don't you want him to be like other children? Because he'll feel different." And I said, "Well, he is different. And sooner or later somebody will remind him about it." So he was very surprised, because that, at that time that wasn't even an issue in Australia. But he did what I wanted and, sure enough in high school. Somebody reminded him, but it wasn't serious and it wasn't very bad, and this boy's father came to us, with the boy, to make him apologize. So, you see, it wasn't really this type that you'd find in Europe or in other countries.

EM: So you don't find too much antisemitism in Australia?

RH: Well there must be...

EM: O-...

RH: Because it's...

EM: Overt, I mean.

RH: No, overt there is, there are groups who, who have no work and no education, so they go and they smear synagogues with swastikas. But, Australia now has too many different religions and too many different nationalities that this is of any seriousness. And, I'm saying if the government doesn't encourage it—and it doesn't...

EM: Is there separation of, there's no separation of State and Church?

RH: Oh yes.

EM: There is. Because you say that they have classes of religion.

RH: Well, they have classes in the religious, in the religion, because the parents wish so, but it's not...

EM: Mandatory?

RH: Not mandatory. It's not separated like it's in America, that you can't even say a prayer. But, the State and the Church, I mean, there are too many churches. There is not one Church that is, like in Poland, the Catholic Church was...

EM: Not one dominant...

RH: No, no, not one dominant. There is the Catholic Church. There are different denominations of Protestants, and everybody's allowed to do whatever they want, and there are even, there are Muslims and Hindus and Hare Krishna, and goodness knows what. So everybody's allowed to do what they like, and provided there is no discrimination and no particular, you know, harassment. And then, everybody's allowed to go their own way.

EM: Do you feel it's important for non-Jews to know about the Holocaust?

RH: Well, it's important of them to know, because, but I really don't believe that knowing about it would prevent them, or their children doing something. This is a hist-, this was a historic force which may repeat itself and I don't think this is so simple, that if we tell them how terrible that was, they will be scared so much of themselves that they will never do it again. I don't think.

EM: So you...

RH: But it's important. I mean, people ask me, quite a lot of non-Jews, ask me. For instance, I knew a very intelligent woman, a painter, who told me, "Look, I can ask you because I know you will tell me the truth." And that was at the time when Australia had 7,000,000 inhabitants. Now it's got 17. "You know, when you tell me," sorry, Australia had 12 then. "So, if you tell me 6,000,000 died in several years, short time, I just can't, I can't take it in. I can't believe it. After all, it's *half* of the population of Australia! So tell me, how much truth there is." So I told her. Poland had three-and-a-half million Jews. They're gone. So many French, so many Dutch, so many Hungarian. And then she understood the, the, m-...

EM: The enormous?

RH: The enormity of it. Of course not everybody pays attention to it. Nobody, not anybody's interested, but, I had an old babysitter, an English woman, who told me that during the war they collected gold for the Jews in Germany, to take them to, to buy them out of the concentration camps. And she gave her wedding ring, and she had a brooch, a brooch of her mother's that she gave away. You see? Of course it didn't go there, and it didn't help anybody, but there were people like that. And-

Tape three, side one:

EM: ...When you look back, do you feel that the Ukrainians were helping more or less than the Poles?

RH: No, I can't say that at all, because it was very individual, and it did not depend on what nationality they were. There were Poles helping, and Ukrainians helping, and at the same time, Poles helping the Germans, because everybody had an interest in getting rid of Jews. I can't say who was worse. The Ukrainians on the whole were more, shall we say, uncouth. They were less smooth and more, like peasants in their ways. But some had kind hearts, and you can say, you can quote anecdotes from both sides. As far as I know. I mean, there were people, there were, I have a friend who says that when she, even before the war, all she knew about Polish boys is that they were throwing stones at Jews. On the other hand, I was going to school with Polish boys, who were very kind to us, and who, a lot of them did help. So, you can't generalize. I can never generalize.

EM: Did you have any contact with clergy?

RH: No. I didn't. I personally didn't. I just, was one case in my family where my uncle's little girl was saved by another uncle, and her father went to the priest and asked her to save her, to have her baptized and give her Polish documents. So this particular priest, who was, it turned out, a very decent man, he said...

EM: Do you remember his name?

RH: Yeah, yeah, Ksiade Osikowicz.

EM: Osikowicz.

RH: Yeah. And, I didn't know him even personally, but we heard about him a lot. He saved quite a lot of Jews. He baptized some. Probably they reverted back later, but with this, with my cousin who now is alive and living in Israel, he gave her papers, and she was not baptized, because she didn't [unclear].

EM: How old was she?

RH: She was about three at the time. And as a matter of fact, this Ksiadz Osikowicz was killed in Auschwitz.

EM: She, she wasn't baptized. Did she say why he didn't...

RH: No, he didn't want to be suspected of trying to catch souls.

EM: To catch souls?

RH: To catch souls for the religion, no.

EM: So he didn't want to take advantage.

RH: Advantage of, yeah...

EM: Of the situation.

RH: That's right.

EM: And he gave her papers without...

RH: Without baptizing her, and she's a good Jewish woman to this day.

EM: This Ksiadz, em...

RH: Osikowicz.

EM: Osikowicz. You say he perished in Auschwitz?

RH: Yes.

EM: Do you...

RH: I don't think he perished in Auschwitz only for helping Jews. But, he was also active in the Polish underground. And for one reason of another, he was...

EM: Taken.

RH: Taken.

EM: Do you have any recollection of Jews helping other Jews or, for non-selfish reason, or even endangering their lives by being, collaborators with the Germans?

RH: Well, unfortunately I have more of those second recollections than first. Of course there were a lot of Jews who helped each other, without thinking. There were perhaps some Jews who...

EM: I don't mean family members, but...

RH: No, no.

EM: Strangers, or...

RH: Strangers, yes, but I don't know. It was, if it was, if it happened and when it happened it was taken for granted that it should be so. But on the other hand, there were some Jews who collaborated in the way that they became policemen or that they became a *kapo* and they were, they were, some who did help the Germans and to the detriment of other Jews, yes.

EM: [tape off then on] Can you think of any other incidents when you were helped by non-Jews?

RH: Yes. I had several incidents. I may not remember them all, but some, although they are small, they really stand in my memory, and I must never forget about it. For instance, I had a school friend, a Polish girl, whose name was Wadka Kusztak. And her parents, her father was an ordinary laborer in the industry, but she was a very bright girl and she went with me to high school. They were very poor, even in Polish circumstances. But we were very good friends. She came to my place. Only once she invited me to her place, and young as I was, I was shocked, because in her house, there was no floor. There was the earth. Anyway, they were decent people, and she, when the Germans came, she became a servant for an, a German who was sort of Lord mayor, like that. And this girl would come to my place, which was not the ghetto yet. We were still living in our house. And she—once a week—and she would bring me one roll with ham. And, this is like somebody would give me today a pound of caviar every day and a bottle of champagne, because this girl, she didn't have anything else, but she had a brother and a sister and two parents, for whom this roll would be just as great a, a necessity or a luxury as for me. But she did bring it to me for many, many weeks until later she lost her job. And the last time she came, she brought me a pair of wooden soled shoes, because she

saw that I grew out of mine, or didn't have any more shoes. So, this thing I cannot forget. They were, there was a Ukrainian, there were three Ukrainians, young Ukrainians. I don't know where they knew my father from, but they found out that he was a teacher of German. So, they came to him to give them lessons, because they liked to be well with the Germans. I don't know their names even, and I never met them before or after, but they were three young boys maybe between 18 and 19. And I was then only say, 15. But I was very small. And these boys used to come to lessons and not only they paid my father with money—which was also very rare, because we didn't have any way to get real money except selling our stuff—but, they used to bring a small bottle of milk, a little piece of meat, and a little sack of flour. And they used to give it to my mother and they said in Ukrainian, "*To dla detiny*." And that means, "That's for the child." That was me. Every such thing. I had a Ukrainian girlfriend that's, from primary school who, I don't know how she remembered that, but she remembered I like a particular dish, pierogi. So she came to the ghetto once, with a big dish of pierogi, and another dish of sauerkraut. There was only small things, but they just show, they didn't show a great solidarity with us, but they showed that they were human beings. And this is why I say I can't generalize. Some were like this, some were like that. There were a lot of instances. There was for instance, a neighbor of ours who used to go to school with my father. And, they weren't friends all the time. They just met by coincidence when we lived in Boryslaw. And he also had a daughter, an only daughter. And she was, her mother and she, the daughter, were considered very chauvinistic Ukrainians. And she even told me once that she would be proud if they made her wear an arm band like ours, only with the Ukrainian colors. But, when, one day, and my mother still had a fur coat, because we had to give away all our furs. But when we had to give away that, my mother took the fur coat to her, because she was a good neighbor, and said, if the times change, they will give it back, otherwise. So, after the, not after the war, but after that particular time when we had to give away all our furs, she came and she brought it back. And my mother sold it to her for some food, or, I don't know what happened, but at least, she didn't have to do it. And as I said, anybody who didn't kill me was a gentleman. So, we must remember those things. And there were some bigger deeds, too. There was one guy who was a young man, who was considered a little bit abnormal because he had religious mania or something, a Pole, a Catholic. It turned out that, after the war that he saved 15 Jews in his house. He fed them. He didn't make them, or let them pay. Actually, those people who he saved were quite well off. You see, you can't, you can't,...

EM: Now, briefly, help, any incidents of help from the Germans.

RH: Well, I had very great incidents from, of help from the Germans. I mean, not too many, but at least two, who were really, one is quite well-known all over the world for helping Jews in Boryslaw. His name is Bertold Beitz. I think he's still alive. And he personally pulled me out, and my father, from one action. And, not only me, I mean it, we weren't particularly friends of his. And it was quite a strange situation,

because he was a young man. He was not a *partegenosse*, which we found out after the war. He had an interest in keeping Jews alive as long as possible in Boryslaw so he could be the big chief and we were his Indians. Otherwise he probably would have had to go into the army. But nevertheless, he did save quite a few Jews. And, that was recognized. He was invited to Poland. He was invited I think even to Israel. I'm not sure of that, though. But I'm sure his name is somewhere in the *Yad Vashem*. And also he was invited to Moscow, and everywhere it was acknowledged the help he gave people. The other one was his subordinate, but who was also my boss. His name was Siegemund. And he...

EM: Do you know how to spell that name?

RH: Yes. S-I-E-G-E-M-U-N-D. Siegemund. I don't know his first name. And when he first came to Boryslaw we were living still in our house not in ghetto. And he, somebody told him that my father is a teacher of violin. So he sent for my father, to teach his son. He played the violin. And in his house my father was invited to, they knew we didn't have any food, so whenever they were eating, they were, invited my father to sit with them, which was unheard of. The little boy climbed all over his knees and played with him, and he taught him the violin. And the parents were very civil. There was only one girl, who was about 12, who was already Hitler *Jugend*. And she started making a fuss about not allowing a Jew to sit at their table. And so they were, probably the parents were scared that she'll tell somebody, and those lessons were discontinued. But at the same time, he used to be my boss where I worked, in the *Karpaten-aktien gesellschaft.* I just remembered. And then he also pulled me out, twice.

EM: Well, is there anything else that you can think of that would be worthwhile recording?

RH: I really don't know. I really can't think of. These are the, the, the single examples of decent people. Against that you can put all those thousands of murders, murderers. But I can't at the moment think of anything else.

EM: All right, Mrs. Harmelin. I do want to thank you very much. And that's about all in the interview. It's going to be of great help, and I know it wasn't easy. I do thank you.