

Interviewee:	<u>BEESE</u> , Hertha	Date:	October 12, 1983
Interviewer:	Hanna Silver		
Audio tapes:	1.5 German, 1.5 English trans. <sup>1</sup>	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
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		Translated:	German to Eng. (orally)
Restrictions:	None	Translated by:	H. Silver & E. Millman

## SUMMARY

Hertha Beese, nee Scholz, was born in Berlin, Germany September 10, 1902 into a non-Jewish German family. Her parents were active in the Social Democratic party (SPD) and trade unions. Hertha attended schools in Berlin, pre World War I with Jews and Catholics. She was forced to participate in Protestant religious instruction of the *Landeskirche* because she was not baptized.

In 1933, she and other SPD members lost their jobs. She describes Nazi persecution of Socialists and Communists as well as Jews. Her resistance group, one of more than 20 in Berlin, hid people until they could cross the mountains into Switzerland. She details sheltering Jews and non-Jews in her home.

She testifies to the beating of her brother by SA storm troopers, prior to 1933, and the terrorization of non-Jewish Berliners. In Berchtesgaden, she observed resentment of local residents toward the SS and the exploitation of German laborers. She describes her refusal to fly the Nazi flag, her children's refusal to join the Hitler Youth, and the devious means she used to avoid serving in the *Luftschutz*.

She had to work in the *Arbeitsdienst* from 1943 to 1945 as a teacher in the Spreewald area. She also worked illegally as a bookkeeper for Jewish cattle dealers who were SPD members who joined the Nazi party to avoid deportation. A local farmer hid several Jewish Berliners she brought to him.

She became vice-chair of the Brandenburg SPD in 1945, chaired an anti-fascist commission in Potsdam, and was deputy mayor of Reinickendorf, 1948-1965. She was honored with the Golden Rose of Paris for aid to French Prisoners of War and was declared an "Elder Statesman" of Berlin.

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<sup>1</sup>A German transcript is available for the original German interview and an English transcript is available for the English oral translation to tape.

## SUBJECT HEADINGS

Berlin, Germany: Pre World War I  
Social Democratic Party (SPD)  
Persecution  
Righteous gentiles in the Holocaust  
Hiding  
Resistance movements  
Forced labor