HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

RAOUL HARMELIN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Edith Millman
Date: April 26, 1992

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RH - Raoul Harmelin[1] [interviewee]
EM - Edith Millman [interviewer]
Date: April 26, 1992[2]

Tape one, side one:

EM: This is Edith Millman interviewing Mr. Raoul Harmelin. Today is April 26, 1992. Mr. Harmelin, could you tell me when and where you were born, and a little bit about your background?

RH: Yes. I was born in Boryslaw, Poland, on the 11th of September, 1924. I am the only son. My mother's family was quite large, and they were living in Boryslaw. My father's family, and my father come from Brody, close to the border--in Poland, but close to the border of Russia. I had a very pleasant youth, and a reasonably good education, due to the fact that my father was a doctor in the city, and also because I was the only son. I was the darling of the whole family. And my schooling, in primary school, was in Boryslaw. Later on, in high school, at the gymnasium, also in Boryslaw, until I was 15 years old, when, on the 1st of September, 1939, the war broke out. [tape off then on]

EM: Could you tell me a little bit about life in Boryslaw before 1939? Specifically, could you tell me about any antisemitism that you might have encountered?

RH: Yes, well, our city was equally divided between Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. The city's population was about 45,000 people, and there were about, approximately 15,000 of each nationality. Due to the reasonably good economic conditions in our city--because we had about two-and-a-half thousand oil wells--the workers were reasonably well off. Consequently, there was not as much antisemitism as it was in the other parts of Poland. Of course, there were sections of Jewish populations that was very, very poor, as well as in other populations, but I think, perhaps in Jewish population, the percentage of the poor was bigger than in others. There was not much between the population. The Ukrainians and the Poles tolerated to a certain degree Jews, and in my opinion, the Poles, because of the Church influence, and because of their own nature, were perhaps more antisemitic than the Ukrainians. But, generally, the people were living together in peace and harmony, which was also the result of the fact that Boryslaw belonged previously to the Austro-Hungarian empire, and there was reasonable freedom of all nations there.

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[1]Note: Collateral Material available through the Gratz College Tuttleman Library are photocopies of these German documents:

1. Certificate for Raoul Harmelin that he can walk in the street unaccompanied by an Aryan.
2. The same document for his father, Dr. Elkan Harmelin.
3. Work I.D. Card for Raoul Harmelin.
4. I.D. Card for Regina Harmelin, his mother.
5. Tags with letter "R" which indicated that Raoul Harmelin and his parents were assigned to a work detail.

[2]See also Edith Millman's interview of Raoul Harmelin's wife, Rita.

EM: Okay, could you tell me a little bit about your religious upbringing?

RH: Yes.

EM: Was your family Orthodox, or Zionist, or, could you tell me a little bit about the religious affiliation of your family, and of most of the Jews in Boryslaw?

RH: Most of the Jews in Boryslaw were religious, and Conservative. First of all, my mother's family, my grandfather and grandmother, they were not Orthodox Jews, but they were religious Jews. My grandfather founded the biggest synagogue in Boryslaw, and he was quite a wealthy man before the war. And all my mother's sisters and brothers were also religious. Both my grandparents on my mother's side, and in our home, there was a religious kosher home. On my father's side of the family, they were even more religious. My father comes from Brody, as I told you before, and he had two uncles. One of them emigrated to America immediately after the First World War. The other one was a printer and a scholar. He was printing Bibles, and the same as you have a commentary in the Bible with Rashi, he was having his own commentaries. We had the Bible until the war. In the middle of the war the Bible somehow disappeared and I don't have it again. When it comes to myself, I was brought up in a religious home. I'm not very religious, and not Orthodox at all. My Jewish education was every day for two hours in the afternoon in the Hebrew school, and also every day I had the rabbi, who was teaching me Yiddish. That rabbi was the son of the head rabbi of the synagogue my grandfather founded. He was an extremely clever man, extremely intelligent, and apart from teaching me Yiddish, he was also introducing me to Jewish life, taking me to Jewish films, for instance, *Dibbuk*. And, being a modern rabbi he was also caring for my general education as well.

EM: Could you tell me what language was spoken in your house?

RH: Well, my parents spoke either Yiddish or Polish between them. I spoke with my father and mother only Polish.

EM: So, you had to have a tutor, the son of the rabbi teach you Yiddish, or do you mean Hebrew?

RH: Yiddish.

EM: Hebrew...

RH: Hebrew I was learning in Hebrew school.

EM: But, the rest of your education was in public school? You went to a public school?

RH: We had, the primary school was a public school. The gymnasium, or high school, was a co-educational gymnasium, which was semi-private. We had to pay for our education. And because the high school was founded partly by a Jewish philanthropist, a certain amount of teachers were Jewish, too. We had excellent schooling there, because we had, for some reason, we had excellent staff. And my basic education was excellent, due to those teachers.

EM: Did you find antisemitism in this school?

RH: To a lesser degree, yes, mainly from Poles, who was, who were from some, sometimes for fun, kicking or hitting a Jew. But generally the atmosphere was quite friendly.

EM: You said your father was a doctor in Boryslaw. Did he treat Jews and non-Jews, or did mostly Jews come to him?

RH: No, he treated Jews and non-Jews. My father was working for *Kasa Chorych* which later on was renamed *Polyklinic*, and we had in our city a specific system. And the oil companies that were in our city were mainly overseas oil companies. The biggest one was a French one. And they provided for their workers health insurance and education, which covered their health and their medicines. They provided free housing, free electricity and heating, and free education for their children. That means that they were paying for education of their wor--for their children. In addition to that, my father had a private practice where he, again he treated everybody--Jews and non-Jews.

EM: Could you tell me about a Zionist movement, if there were any Zionist movements in Boryslaw?

RH: Yes, they were many. There were many organizations, who competed with each other. There was the *HaShomer Hatzair*. There was *Akiba*. There were many, many other organizations. There was a Jewish sports club, *Kadima* [Hebrew for forward]. There were, then there were religious organizations, like *B'nai Akiba*, and so on, and *Beit Ya'acov*, and the Jews were very active in their social life.

EM: Did you belong to any Zionist organization?

RH: Well, I, well, more or less, because I was introduced to *Akiba*, for one and only reason, because we had a good table tennis table. And then later on I joined a Jewish club, *Kadima*, which was perhaps the backbone of the Jewish Zionist movement. And that was until the war broke out. [tape off then on]

EM: In general, would you say that your upbringing before the war was an upper-middle class, or middle class upbringing?

RH: I think middle class would be the answer. We had, that is my mother and father had, no financial worries, because in addition to my father earning very good wages at the *Polyklinic* and having a very good practice, private practice, we also had four oil wells. Three were fully owned by my parents, and one was in company with a certain Mr. Landau, whose wife survived the war and is in Tel Aviv now. But, because my grandfather on my mother's side lost everything during the Depression, and because my father's parents were poor, my father was supporting not only our family, but was supporting the two other families, helping them financially in any way he could. [tape off then on]

EM: Could you tell me what the situation was in Boryslaw just prior to September 1st, 1939, and the first days of the war?

RH: Everybody knew that the war is approaching. There was a general tension in the air. Prior to, already a year or two before the war, we had first inklings. First of all the, Hitler's invasion of Austria, or *Anschluss*, people came from Au--ran away from

Austria, and one of those was my cousin, who came and who stayed with us. And he was telling us horrible stories. And we listened to them, and somehow it did not make any impression on us. It's always like that, when it happens to somebody else and not to you personally. Then they were, in the western part of Poland there was a place where they kept, the German Jews ran away from Germany at the time, also telling everybody terrible stories. And they were widely published in, particularly in a Jewish paper which came from Lwow. That was *Chwila*. And, we all hear about it, and somehow again, the general apathy became the Jews, eh, was there, and nobody was paying any attention. Everybody was living their normal lives. From time to time you heard about young people going to then Palestine. And, that was all. I was with my father on a summer vacation, in Szczawnica in western part of Poland. And, already then they were building ditches, anti-tank ditches, and everybody was talking quite often about the approaching war. I came back from that holiday only a week before it started. And the beginning of the war I remember very vividly. I was at my friend's place. His name was Karol Wanderin [phonetic]. He later perished in the Janowska camp in Lwow. And the sky was blue. There was a beautiful summer weather, and suddenly we heard a roar of the planes. And, well, of course la--before we learned about gas masks and all kinds of things, and, but we didn't have any gas masks. So everybody ran and grabbed a little bit of soil and put it in a handkerchief and covered their faces. But nothing happened. The planes just passed over, overhead. And then we heard the speech on the radio of the Polish Foreign Minister Beck, who announced that there is a war between Germany and Poland. The Germans crossed, and so on…

EM: Could you describe the first few days of the war?

RH: Well, the war didn't last long. There was, there was only one bomb dropped on, in our city, which fell in the field, not hurting anybody. And the pieces of bomb imbedded in the [unclear] everybody was going there to look at it. And within a very short time, less than two weeks, the Germans were in our place. The first German troops arrived on bikes, and they, of course there was no Polish resistance. There were a few shots fired here and there, but the Poles simply disappeared. And we were, of course, very much afraid what's going to happen, and we expected a pogrom or something to happen, but nothing happened. And I remember being in the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, and somebody ran into synagogue and said that the Russians are on the outskirts of the town. And we all went there, and there were rows and rows of Russian tanks with the radio station, with a peculiar smell of their petrol, and the next day the Russians came in, being greeted by everybody, but especially by the Jews, who, who, for whom the Russians were their salvation.

EM: Could you tell me if the Ukrainian population greeted first the Germans, and then the Russians? What was the attitude of the...

RH: They, now, they ju--the Ukrainians greeted only the Germans. The reason for it was that Hitler promised them a Ukrainian state, and they were both anti-Jewish and pro-Germans.

EM: How about the Poles?

RH: No, the Poles stayed on the outside. They greeted neither the Germans nor the Russians.

EM: Was there an increase of antisemitic incidents in the, during the war and just as the, for the first days of occupation?

RH: Well, it was only, that happened only after the beginning of the Russian-German war. Prior to that, the, a lot of Jews, of course, were pro-Russian, because the idea of Communism, not the practice, promised them something which they didn't have before. It promised them equality. It promised them the possibility of an equal life, both in education in the beginning, and getting work. Because, during the Polish rule, Jews could not study, only very few of them. And even those who did study, you were greeting by Polish gangs of youth who were beating them up.

EM: You mean, at the university?

RH: The university. And, the Jews had to stand at the back of the hall. They were discriminated against. Even those who gained a degree could not get jobs during the Polish rule. So, a lot of parents, and mine, too, either intended, or did send their young people overseas to study--either to Czechoslovakia, which was more liberal, or to Italy, who had good universities. And despite the fascist rule, they were not so much anti-Jewish.

EM: Could you tell me, how long did the Germans stay in Boryslaw before the Russians came?

RH: About a week.

EM: And there were no major pogroms.

RH: Nothing.

EM: All right.

RH: Nothing at all.

EM: Now, could you tell me about life under the Russians?

RH: Life under the Russians, economically, was difficult, because, although they promised--and they did--give everybody work, the supply, of goods, was inconsistent and we simply were getting whatever we could. In addition to that, a lot of Jews specially, but other populations too, were beginning to work for the Russian secret police, and people who were, in any case, in any way connected with authorities or with the police, were slowly being deported to Siberia. That also...

EM: You mean, people who worked for the Russian secret police were deported to Si-...

RH: No, no, no. People who worked with the Russian secret police, denounced certain people to the NKVD...

EM: Oh, were denouncing...

RH: Yes. And, usually it happened during the night, where about two or three hundred people suddenly disappeared from their homes. They were loaded into the rail wagons and deported to Siberia. Also affected were people, Jewish people mainly, who had members of their families in the Polish army in any way, because they were considered suspicious and they were either deported to Siberia or resettled in other cities.

EM: Was there an influx of peop--eh, Jewish people from the western part of Poland, or from...

RH: Yes, yes, quite a big one. We had a lot of, especially intelligentsia, educated people, as well as anybody else who could run away from western Poland, came then to our city. It enriched our cultural life, because we got some excellent teachers and tutors. For instance, one doctor of mathematics from Krakow who was an excellent teacher. And also the Russian educational system was very good, because it gave students the possibility not only to learn and study, but it was done in such a way that it was made pleasant. We also had several circles like mathematical circles, geographical circles, and so on, in the afternoons where we received special attention in certain subjects.

EM: So the, a schooling system continued uninterrupted? You continued to go to school?

RH: That's right. We continued to go to the Russian school. Immediately we had to learn Russian, which we did. But it was easier for us, because, in our primary school, we had to have the language, which was called Ruski [Ruthenian], which is nothing to do with the Russian language, but it was perhaps very similar to Ukrainian language. That's why we could learn Russian more easily.

EM: So, but the language of instruction before the war was Polish?

RH: Polish, yes.

EM: And you had to learn Ruski?

RH: Ruski, which was, because, this is, this part of Poland, northern Romania, and part of Hungary, formed all that region of people they used to be called Rusini, not Ukrainians, not Russians, but Rusini. And this is, they still remain in that form.

EM: And you had to...

RH: We had to learn officially the same as Polish language. And we had marks [grades] out of that.

EM: How about your religious education during the Russian occupation?

RH: Well, the Russians first of all mounted a propaganda against religion altogether, any religion. I still received my education from the rabbi, that is the Yiddish education. But the Hebrew education was finished because the Russians forbid it.

EM: Now, could you tell me about the life when the war between Russia and Germany started?

RH: Well, the war started on the 22nd of June, 1941. It was the end of our school year, and there was a dance at school, when suddenly the German planes appeared. And we all ran home. We didn't know what happened. The next day there was Stalin's speech

announcing the beginning of the war. The funny part about it all is that we, only la--the night before the war broke out, the oil transports from our city went to Germany according to German-Russian agreement. And, the Russians were completely unprepared for it.

EM: How long did the war last in your area? How soon after the outbreak of the war did the Germans occupy Boryslaw?

RH: Approximately a week after the beginning of the war the Germans came to our city. This time they were loudly greeted by Ukrainians, and also by some Poles. And the next day they found bodies of prisoners in the Russian Secret Police cellar. They were bound by wire and the following night, the first pogrom started.

EM: What prisoners were there? What nationality?

RH: All nationalities. Poles. Ukrainians. All nationalities.

EM: But who, or, who imprisoned them?

RH: The Russians...

EM: Were they [unclear]?

RH: The Russian Secret Police, yes. And, so the first pogrom started. And it was terrifying. People were dragged out of their homes, chased and beaten, and they had to go to the row of Germans, and Poles, Ukrainians, who were beating them on the way, and then they were placed in the same cellar of the Russian secret police as, the ones who could make it, because about 200 of them were beaten to death on the way to the cellars.

EM: Who was doing the beating?

RH: Poles, Ukrainians, and some Germans. But very few Germans. Only, mainly the local population.

EM: Was this an act of revenge for the people that had been found in the...

RH: Yes, that was a combination of act of revenge, and the antisemitic feeling which was to some degree hidden, and then it came out. It was also, I think, jealousy, because they wanted to get Jewish things and, for nothing. So, it was a mixture of all those three feelings.

EM: Do you think it was also because of possible greater cooperation between the Jews and Russians during the Russian occupation?

RH: Yes, well, the cooperation perhaps was not as, as strong as the Poles and the Ukrainians implied. Because there were quite a few people within the Polish and Ukrainian operation, eh, population who cooperated with the Russians. But, the Jews were blamed for everything. Don't forget that a lot of Jews, who were real Communists, and they were imprisoned by the Russ--by the Poles prior to Russians coming, they came out of jails and concentration camp, which was a camp made by Poles, a long time prior to the Second World War.

EM: Do you know where the...

RH: In Bereza Kartuska, in a place...

EM: Where?

RH: Bereza Kartuska. And those Jews, of course, looked for revenge.

EM: Where was that camp? Bereza Kartuska?

RH: I don't know. I only know the name.

EM: But it was in Pol-...

RH: In Poland. In Poland, and...

EM: East, do you know if it was in Eastern...

RH: And as far as I know, the concentration camp in Bereza Kartuska was established even prior to Hitler coming to power.

EM: Oh, you mean, in Poland?

RH: In Poland.

EM: Prior to Hit-...

RH: Prior to Hitler coming to power in Germany.

EM: To power in Germany. And mostly Communists were held there? Or were criminals or did they...

RH: No, no criminals. It was a political camp, and I would say a biggest part of prisoners were Jews.

EM: Was it because there, so many Jews were Communist? Or was it just because of general antisemitism and suspicion of Communism?

RH: Well, one and the other. Jews were Communists because they were underprivileged during the Polish rule. They thought that the idea will give them some equality in life. And, that was their solu--the solution of the Jewish youth, because there was lack of education, lack of employment, and there were a big, very big part of Jewish population, despite claims by others, were very, very poor.

EM: [tape off then on] Now, could you descri-

Tape one, side two:

EM: We are continuing the interview with Mr. Raoul Harmelin. This is tape one, side B. Would you describe your life under the German occupation?

RH: Well, I will start with the first pogrom. Not far from our place was living a petty criminal, with his wife, very, very poor.

EM: Was he a Jew?

RH: No, a Pole. And my mother was good to him, sometimes giving him some food or some clothing. And when the pogrom started, my mother went to him and told him that, you know, that we know each other so well and so on, he should be kind to us. And then we were hiding in the attic end of the house. And...

EM: In whose house? In his?

RH: In our own house, but his, he really helped us then, because he was the leader of, for the district, to drag out the Jews. And he protected us that nobody came and took us out.

EM: You say he was a petty criminal before the war?

RH: Before the war, in Poland, during the Polish times. So, after the pogrom has finished, because...

EM: Well, what...

RH: Typical to German efficiency, the pogrom was a 24-hr. one, and when after the 24 hours passed, the pogrom stopped immediately.

EM: When was the pogrom in relation to the occupation? What, what, how many days after the...

RH: Second day after the Germans came. Then, the Germans and the city authorities started their persecution of the Jews. First of all we had to wear armbands at all times.

EM: What color were they?

RH: White, with a blue *Magen David*. We had to register for work. We had to register altogether to get food rations, and already then hunger started. We were picked up individually or from, by, by, em, eh, by *Judenrat* to go and work and regulate rivers and do all kinds of manual labor. And during that labor, we were beaten continuously. And the situation was becoming worse and worse. At a certain time, we had to, we had to register again, and each of us has, on top of the arm band, on top of the Jewish arm band they had to, we, each of us received a number. My number was 102669. I still have the documents to prove that. I still have the *Arbeit*, *Arbeitskarte*, [See attached copy of documents] to, which shows my profession and so on.

EM: Who organized the labor battalions?

RH: The labor battalions were organized by the *Judenrat*, who was requested by the Germans to do so.

EM: Who belonged to the *Judenrat*?

RH: Various people, usually intelligentsia, who...

EM: Did the Germans appoint them, or were they...

RH: No, they...

EM: Selected by the Jews?

RH: They were selected by the Jews, or they selected themselves, because there was no selection. And later on, they were responsible for supplying labor and for distribution of food and everything else, by the Germans.

EM: Was a ghetto established in Boryslaw?

RH: Not for a long time. We were living in our own quarters. Boryslaw had a special, a special treatment, because of the oil wells situatious [situated] all over the place, and because a lot of Jews were specialists in that field. And, it was not feasible for the Germans to do so. We were living there until the first action started, that is in November, 1941, where about 1,500 Jews were caught and executed.

EM: What do you mean caught and ex-...

RH: Col--caught, caught.

EM: Oh, caught.

RH: Caught.

EM: Caught. And...

RH: And executed.

EM: Where were they executed?

RH: On the outskirts of town. And they had to dig their own graves, and they were shot usually two or three with one bullet, and then covered, and covered with lime.

EM: Were these people specially selected, or...

RH: No.

EM: Were they caught in the streets?

RH: They were caught in the streets at random. To some degree, the workers, who had already the number, were treated sympatically, that is, they, in some cases they would be released. But any other Jews, old, or children, or whoever else, it doesn't, doesn't, it did not matter whom they caught. And they were shot on the outskirts of the town, and that was a 34-hour action.

EM: That, you say that was in November of 1941?

RH: '41. Then, we had the second action, yes, in, sorry, 1942, beginning of 1942. And again 600 Jews were caught and killed, again on the outskirts of the town.

EM: But, at that time, the Jews didn't live in a special ghetto.

RH: No, they lived all over the place. But also at that time, hunger started. Hunger and typhoid fever. My father, being a doctor, also caught it, and the situation was tragic, because the Germans were succeeding in the war with Russia, and there was simply no hope in sight for us, except who, and when was going to die. Then, the most terrible action of all, came in August, 1942. It was the third action. We already knew about it coming, because it was already in other towns, and we received telephone information that

it's coming towards us. The action was conducted by special German *Vernichtungskommando*, [annihilation command] under General Katzman.

EM: General who?

RH: Katzman.

EM: K-...

RH: Katzman. K-A-T-Z-M-A-N, who was a crazy man, small, redhead, crazy man, whom I saw when I was passing already in a truck, when they were taking me. He was all the time screaming and behaving like a lunatic. But...

EM: You mentioned in a truck when you were taken...

RH: Yes.

EM: Where you, where were you...

RH: I have to explain all that from the very beginning. We knew that the action is coming. And everybody tried to find a hiding place. I was working in Fanto. We did...

EM: In where?

RH: Fanto. F-A-N-T-O. That were repair shops, metal repair shops. We were repairing machines, pumps, motors, and so on.

EM: For the Germans?

RH: For the Germans, of course, or, for the local industry mainly. They were established before the war, during Polish...

EM: Was it...

RH: Times.

EM: Was it under German administration? Was...

RH: Yes, all, all, everything was under German administration. And there were I think seven of us doing manual labor there. We were bringing coal from the railway station in five-ton trucks. Four of us had to go, load up the truck, and came to unload the truck. We were helping to put the big engines in their proper place for servicing, generally doing the manual labor. Because of, nobody knew where is the safe place, I was there, and my mother and father were hiding in the radiology room at the *Polyklinic*, who, one of the workers closed using his key, and they were hidden there. In the action...

EM: Was this a Jewish worker, or a Polish worker?

RH: No, no, no, that was, that was a s-...

EM: No, the one...

RH: The one who closed, this Polish worker.

EM: Yeah.

RH: Polish.

EM: And did he know that your parents are...

RH: He was my father's patient. Anyway, the action consisted of two parts. The action started on the 5th of August, 1942, and about 3,000 people were assembled at the railway station a day and a half later. About 200 of them went to a camp, at the Ulica Janowska in Lwow. About 200 were released still for the work in the local industry. And

the rest was loaded in rail cars, approximately 100 to a rail car--children, women, men--it doesn't matter who it was, together, and taken directly to Belzec and murdered there. We thought that was the end, but about, they were taken away in the morning, but in the afternoon about lunchtime, the action started again. This was when we were taken from our work place. Somebody denounced us, and we were taken from our work place in a truck to...

EM: What do you mean somebody denounced you?

RH: One of the workers in the plant...

EM: Denou-...

RH: Denounced that there are Jews there. And so we were taken in a truck to assembly point, which was in Kino Grashzina [Grazyna] in our city. And...

EM: Kino Grashzina? Grashzina is...

RH: "Grazyna." "Grazyna" is the name. G-R-A-

EM: A movie house.

RH: Yes.

EM: A movie house.

RH: A movie house, yes. And I was one of the first who came there. Then, they brought, because we were still not out, we were still outside, not inside the hall, they brought another group of women. One of them was carrying a tiny baby, and one of the *Vernichtungskommando* men grabbed the baby by the leg and smashed his head against the wall. And...

EM: You saw that.

RH: I saw that, yes. I don't know who the woman was. I don't know the name. So later on they put us inside, and they were bringing people in. You don't know the names, but, but a, a funny thing happened to me then, because they brought in a lady who was both relative and my mother's best friend. And before the war, about two years before the war, she sent her son away to Australia. And her name was Rappaport. They had a business in our city of parts, machine parts. And her name was Szichta. She came in, they took them from their work place, which was the office of an oil company. And I gave, I still had with me a piece of bread and a cucumber which I gave her, because she was hungry. And we started to talk and she said to me, "If you survive the war, please remember, tell my son to take revenge for me." So I said to her, "Are you crazy? We are all going to die here. There is no, this is the end." She said, "No. You'll survive the war. Remember to tell Milek to take revenge for me." Anyway, they started to bring more and more people in. The place was becoming more than full. They were using police dogs and butts of their guns to hit us and to chase us into one corner. There were no...

EM: Were they all Germans who were doing it, or...

RH: No, that was, Germans in combination with the Ukrainian police. One of the police was a man named Babiak [phonetic], who was my school friend, a Ukrainian. My mother, prior to the action, my mother gave me a string of pearls, just in case I may

have to bribe my way out. And he took that away from me, and he beat me up with the butt of the rifle. And there were no toilet facilities, of course, there, so all people had to do had to do on the floor. We were simply swimming in it. And, then at one stage, they, one of the young girls apparently went crazy. She started to scream and, she was the daughter of--her name was Malach--and she was the daughter of a man who had a strip iron business in our city. And, they shot her through the head, and they asked for two people to take her body out. I had been trying to escape whenever I, and so I did, I volunteered to take the body out. I thought perhaps being outside I might be able to run away. But, the girl was still alive, and the blood was oozing out of her head, perhaps from the artery in the head, and it was like a fountain. I was completely covered in blood. Anyway, we took her out, and I, when we took her out, they shot her again, and they shot her dead. But, I had no chance to escape at all, and they brought me back in. Then, the following day, they took us, all of us, to the station. There were about two-and-a-half thousand people. And again, there was a selection on the station. The director of the oil company, who was to some degree sympathetic to the Jews, whose name is Beitz, and he was later a very big figure in Germany, a director of Krupp Works, and also the first man to introduce business relations between Germany--West Germany--and Russia. That...

EM: His name was Beitz?

RH: Beitz. I...

EM: And he, was he a German that came from Germany or somebody that...

RH: No, no. He was a German who came from Germany, apparently a nephew of, governor of Poland Frank. He was a very young man. He was, he looked like a film actor. He dressed extremely nice. And so, his wife was very beautiful. And she had a...

EM: He was a civilian?

RH: He was a civilian in charge of the oil industry in Poland. And...

EM: In Poland, or in Boryslaw?

RH: Sorry, in our city, in Boryslaw. That was the only city that, apart from small quantities in the west, Boryslaw was the main producer of oil. And, at one stage he arrived at the station and started to greet the Germans who were there, who were segregating the Jews. Somehow I, and a friend of mine who is now in Israel, because their attention was diverted there, and despite the fact that we were guarded by police dogs and machine guns and everything else--the two of us ran away. The rest...

EM: You mentioned that he was a little sympathetic to the Jews.

RH: He was helping--right through the German occupation--he was helping the Jews. In that respect, for instance, he knew in advance when the action is coming, so, before the fourth action started, he assembled all the Jews in his office, and told them not to move from there. But, the *Reiterzugpolizei*, which is the mounted police, came when he was asleep and took all the Jews in the fourth action out of the place they were in. But generally he was sympathetic towards Jews. He was rewarded after the war for his sympathetic work for the Jews.

EM: By whom?

RH: By the Jews, several Jews, and also, they even wanted to put his name as a Righteous Jew in the...

EM: Righteous Gentile.

RH: Righteous Gentile in Jerusalem. But, coming back to the action, the rest of, was taken again to either Belzec or the work, or the, or the Janowska camp in Lwow. And within those three days we lost five-and-a-half thousand Jews from our population. It was a terrible blow to everybody, because everybody was affected to one degree or another. And, at the same time, there was hunger. There were dozens of people dying on the streets, people with swollen legs from hunger, people with open wounds and worms on those wounds, people crying and begging, because death caused by starvation is a terrible death and causes a lot of pain. And beatings, and everything else...

EM: But there was still...

RH: From beatings.

EM: There was still no ghetto? Or was this in...

RH: There was still no ghetto.

EM: So there were non-Jews mixed in with you.

RH: We, together...

EM: Together.

RH: Yes, yes. Then, just to continue the story, the fourth action came again in the end of October, beginning of November, 1942. Again, at that time the assembly point was a cinema, or a theater, this time *Koloseum*. And, they assembled about 1,500 people there. At that time I was hidden again by one of my father's patients, who was married to a Jewess, and she was also hidden. He hid me on the, on the, under the roof of a factory, where he was the manager. And, I was not supposed to move at all, because not, so that the people underneath me didn't know that there is somebody there. And so I didn't move. They took the 1,500 people immediately to Belzec, and they were destroyed there. When I came out of this hiding, he called me and he asked me how old I am, and I said, "I am 18." So he said, "Well, you must act as if you were a grown man, because your father was taken in this action." For some reason, they, out of those 1,500 people that they took to the station, at the station they released all the Jewish doctors. So my father was still alive, and he was still intact.

EM: How many doctors were there? Do you remember?

RH: Approximately a dozen. I can't tell you the exact figure. I remember a lot of their names, but not all of them.

EM: Were, just before the action, or before these actions, was your, were your parents hiding somewhere, or did they still live in their apartment?

RH: No, they, my father was working. They took him from the place of work. My mother was hiding. Everybody was trying to hide anywhere they could. It was just the chance that you could be hidden so the Germans and the locals couldn't find you.

Because there was, during the action there was not only the action by the German police and Ukrainians, and the *Reiterzugpolizei*, they were helped, all during the, all the actions they were very actively helped by the Polish and Ukrainian population, by their young people, hoodlums, and just young people, and generally the population who delighted in showing the Germans where the Jews live, or where they can hide, or if they were hidden, where they are. And *only* because of the very big cooperation of the local population, they could have such a success. In our city we had, apart from the helpers in population, we had quite, quite another form of, we had *Schutzpolizei*, which was mainly, not mainly, but all, Austrians. Only the *Kommandant* of the *Schutzpolizei* was a German from Hamburg. They were...

EM: Do you remember his name by any chance?

RH: I know his name, but at the moment it just doesn't come to me in the moment. We had, the *Schutzpolizei* consisted of Austrians, who were the most terrible, the most, the most sadistic people I know. In addition to that, we had *Reiterzugpolizei*, which is the mounted police, which consisted of *all* Austrians, young boys who were sadistic to an incredible degree. And we had the *Kriminalpolizei*, in which some Poles and Ukrainians worked, but which consisted of Germans. And we had the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst* from, appointed by *Judenrat*, and we simply were hunted like dogs. We didn't know what to do and where to hide, and whom to trust. The situation was absolutely catastrophic. And, so I come now to the fifth action, which was in December, 1942. That action was mainly for Jewish old people, Jewish women, and children. That action lasted five weeks. My mother was hiding at the Ukrainian's place, where he was keeping his utensils. He, she was standing up in a small wardrobe all the time, and let out at night for a short time. And all those five weeks she was there.

EM: Was this Ukrainian, was he being paid for hiding her, or...

RH: No, that was my father's patient. He hid my mother for nothing. At that time my auntie, my, that is, my mother's youngest sister, and my grandmother--my mother's mother--were taken by the Germans. And all those people were taken to the cellars of Ukrainian police. And the Ukrainian police was commanded by a Ukrainian by the name of Peretz...

EM: Peretz?

RH: Peretz, who was later on, after the war finished, found and executed in Poland, and, by a yo--an Austrian man. And he was the overall *Kommandant*. And he had an aversion to old people. At that time I could, a man could travel quite openly and nothing happened to them. I took my mother's fur and I took it to him, and asked him to release my auntie and my grandmother. He released my auntie, but she, he said to me, "*Die Alte muss sterben*" [The old one must die.]

EM: The old one...

RH: "The old one has to die." So, my father got hold of some poison. I took the poison to my grandmother, and she knew that she has to die. And, she then said to me,

"Yes, yes, my son. One mother can bring up ten children, but ten children can't save one mother." The unfortunate part of it...

EM: Was this your mother's mother?

RH: My mother's mother. The unfortunate part of it was that she gave part of the poison to another lady there, consequently her death was not immediate. She was dying for one day before she died. And then they released the body to me and my uncle. And we took the body, we carried the body to the Jewish cemetery. We buried my grandmother and, with a penknife I made, I inscribed her name and the date of death on the tree that was standing nearby. After the Russians came again in 1944, we put a monument to my grandmother there. Then the, all the people that were there at the fifth action, all the women and children, were taken and shot on the outskirts of the town. In February 1943, there was another action. That action was on the 15th of February in 1943. It was because of the German loss in Stalingrad. That was a so-called revenge action for Stalingrad. Again, they took at random 600 Jews and they shot them on the outskirts of the town. The place was called *Doly*, which means graves or holes.

EM: Where were they buried? Right at the outskirts of the town?

RH: That's right, yes. And that was the sixth action. Then, there were, after the sixth action started so-called liquidation actions, seven, eight, nine, ten and so forth. But every Jew called was shot on the spot--by anybody who was there. And then, that's when...

EM: What do you mean was called to report somewhere?

RH: Well, we had several sections of Jews. The Jews, those Jews that were working were to some degree protected. Apart from the arm bands with the number which we had and the documents that we are working, we also had a little letter "R" on a cloth, which we had to wear in front of our, on our chest. That letter specified that we are in the *Rüstungindustrie*, which means the industry necessary for war effort. And those Jews if they were called, were released because of that. I was one of those, and at the same time, because of the fact that we had to work in different places, in different oil wells, we also had *Passierschein*, which was issued by the oil industry, signed by Beitz--I mentioned before, who was the director of the oil industry--and that gave us the permission to move outside the ghetto, outside the Jewish quarter.

EM: So, oh, so, at that time the ghetto was established then?

RH: After the fifth action, the ghetto was established. Again, the conditions in ghetto were poor, because there was no food, no sanitation, no, the, the-

Tape two, side one:

RH: I will continue now. Of course, all the facts that I gave you were just cold facts with dates, and happenings. But, who can describe the fright, the expectation of death, the, the terrible conditions, the screaming, the choking of children by parents who were hiding and didn't want their children to utter a noise so that they can't be, they won't be shot, caught, caught by the whoever it was. And, and by the incredible feeling of being hunted by everybody in this world.

EM: Tell me more about the ghetto itself. Was it surrounded by a wall? Were there entrances?

RH: No, the ghetto...

EM: Was it guarded?

RH: No, the ghetto was bordered by certain streets. It was not surrounded by a wall. It was just that...

EM: Was there a fence around it?

RH: There was no fence, and, the only thing was that the Jews were not permitted to go outside the ghetto. If they did, they were shot at sight, and, or beaten up and shot, and whatever.

EM: Could you take your armband off and go outside of the ghetto?

RH: A lot of people were risking that, and doing that. Some who were caught were shot. Who were not caught, they were, they survived. We were living at the edge of the ghetto. It was so-called Doctor's House, where we were hiding during those actions, that were *Vernichtungs* [killer] actions. They were the last ones before forming a camp in the northern part of the city. We were hiding in the cellar of the house, and somehow nobody took us out, and we could hear all the screams and beatings and everything passing right in front of us each time the action was on. And, during those seventh, eighth, and ninth actions, whoever was caught was, of course, shot and killed. The people who survived, mainly those people who were working, or who had the permits to work, were collected in a camp, which was prior to death. In a place where they were holding horses, they converted the place to a Jewish camp. There were bunks there. They, they, we were sleeping in bunks. They, we, there was a kitchen who distributed the food. And every day those Jews who worked in different sections of town could go there, having the paper in their hands, and the site they are in industry. Other Jews were marched in columns from the camp to certain place of work, under guard, either Ukrainian police--mainly Ukrainian police at that time. At the time also Ukrainian police was designed to guard our camp. Again, for some...

EM: What month was it? Was, it was in 1943?

RH: '43, yes. Yes. That was beginning about February, '43. Even, I think, that's even in January already, '43, because it took some time to, for the camp to be established and then for all the Jews that remained to be, to be put there.

EM: So there were Jews that worked...

RH: That's right, in...

EM: In the camp. And they were taken out of this camp to different work sites.

RH: To, that's correct, yes.

EM: How about the ghetto itself?

RH: The ghetto was eliminated. The ghetto, there was non-existent anymore. The other population of town moved to those places that were reasonably good for occupation. Other Jewish homes--in amongst those, my grandmother's home--were sold to the population to be demolished and the material used to their, for their pleasure.

EM: So there were, how about older people, or children, or women. Were they all...

RH: They were all killed.

EM: They were all...

RH: Killed, or hidden away somewhere.

EM: All hidden away. And in this camp there were only men?

RH: No, men and women. And, it was mixed. It was, women had separate rooms, or separate sections. And they were mainly men and women, able-bodied people, who were still being used by the Germans for work. For some reason again, Doctor's House was situated opposite the camp.

EM: What do you mean...

RH: On the other side.

EM: Why was it called Doctor's House?

RH: Because doctors were still, because, they had no, not enough either Polish or Ukrainian doctors. They were using Polish doctors to work in the *Polyklinic* for the whole population of the city. And because the doctors have to be available at all hours, there was a doctor's house where doctors were permitted to go to work, again using their *Passierschein*, that document that permitted them to work...

EM: So there were some Jewish doctors.

RH: Jewish doctors. They were all Jewish doctors in that house. And...

EM: Did they treat non-Jews?

RH: They treat non-Jews, and Jews. Of course, they were under strict supervision and so on. The situation in camp was reasonably bearable, except for Ukrainians who delighted in beating us up. And towards the end of the camp, a few months before...

EM: Excuse me, the Ukrainians that were working there, were supervi--were they local Ukrainians...

RH: Local, all local Ukrainians. The whole Ukrainian police were locals. And then at one stage came two Gestapo men to supervise the camp--one older man and one younger. And for unexplained reasons, the situation improved immensely. The older man, both men, liked to drink heavily. And the Jews immediately found their soft spots. The

older man was not completely for war. He even made some jokes about the defeat and so on. The younger man was worse than he was, but not as bad, by far not as bad, as the Ukrainian police. And they were both being bribed usually by either money, but mainly by alcohol. And we could...

EM: Do you remember the names of these men?

RH: I don't, no, I don't. And we, the Russian, we, I was working outside in the oil well, and people who were working there, they were Poles who belonged to underworld, underground organization, A.K., and...

EM: That's the organiza-...

RH: *Armia Krajowa* [Polish: Home Army]. And they also received underground paper, which I read. And also at the same time I was...

EM: You mean newspaper.

RH: Newspa--or leaflet. It sort, it wasn't a complete newspaper. It was printed secretly, of course. And there they had a radio, where I could listen to news from London, in Polish, and after a certain time I was trained to such a degree that I could memorize all the news and where the battles are in the, in Russia and so on, and what's happening, and bring all the news to the camp. And I had to recite all the news so that people in the camp knew what's going on.

EM: How many people, approximately how many people were in this camp?

RH: At different times, different number, because...

EM: Was it in the hundreds?

RH: No, the, the, in the camp, between 1,500 and 2,000 people. And, what happened then...

EM: Excuse me, the camp, what was the name of the camp?

RH: There was no name.

EM: There was no...

RH: There was, the name what, was simply *Zwangsarbeitslager* [forced labor camp], of S.S. and *Polit*--the name was S.S. *Sturmführer* or whatever, of the *Zwangsarbeitslager* in Boryslaw. That was the name. And listening to the radio and then at later stage reading the Polish news by *A.K.*, which were warning Poles against hiding the Jews, and saying that, since the Russians are coming back, the Russian front is, was going west, and the Germans were, all being defeated on all fronts, the Poles, the *A.K.*, which is *Armia Krajowa*, was warning the Poles against cooperation with the Jews or saving the Jews, because they expected that immediately the Russians come, they would be working with the Russians...

EM: That the Jews would be...

RH: That the Jews will be helping the Russians to exterminate the Poles. The situation was becoming tragic, and everybody was, started to look for place where to hide.

EM: Now who was warning the, the *A.K.* was...

RH: *A.K.* was warning Poles, yes. And I read the paper. There was no secret about it. At, by chance, my mother, my father knew a man by the name of Makar, who was the mayor of the town, who was a very...

EM: Was he a Pole, or...

RH: He was a Ukrainian. He was a very decent man. And my father knew him from before the war. Before the war in Boryslaw there was a company by the name of Penier [phonetic]. The director of that company was a Jew named Freund. And, em, this...

EM: What kind of company was it?

RH: Oil company. They were all oil companies. It was very known oil companies. And this man Makar [phonetic] was one of the directors of a oil well district for that company. It happened so that before the war, my father, the brother of the Jewish director, Jozek Freund, and that Makar, we were together, holidaying together in holiday homes of that part of the oil company, which was situated high in the mountains. And they were playing cards together, and they were very friendly together. When the time came to hide, I had offers for some, from some Poles to hide us, and, but I thought that they were collaborators, and I didn't trust them. As it turned out to be, one of them was not only real, but he hid 13 Jews, and he didn't take any money for it. But I, you didn't know whom to trust, because a lot of Poles and Ukrainians were hiding the Jews only to rob them and to denounce them to the Germans. Anyway, my father went to this man Makar, and asked him if he could do something for us and hide us. And he said, "I can't, but I'll tell my son to hide you." This son was working together with my future wife, Rita, in the same office. And he was considered to be a very big antisemite. Anyway, we came in there during the night--my future wife Rita and my parents. Prior to that already in the hiding place was my auntie Ania, who is my mother's sister, who is still alive today in Sydney, Australia. And there were other people. Altogether there were 13 of us. And we were hiding under the floor of the house.

EM: Under the...

RH: Under the floor of the house. But that was not, it was, you could only crawl in there. And when we came to the hiding place, we were, of course, paying him for hiding us, but he would not take money for my future wife, Rita, because he was working with her, and he knew that she had no money. So he said, "For her, I will not take any money." He had a wife and two small children, and he risked his life all the time.

EM: This was the son of Makar.

RH: This was also Makar, but the son of the old man, who was the director of that oil part. And we were there for four-and-a-half months, until the Russians came. And we were hiding during the day under the floor of the house. We were coming out to the kitchen for the night to make something to eat. He organized the supply of food so that all his relatives, each of them was buying the food separately. Because if you would buy the food for 13 people, it would immediately be suspicious, and he would be found.

EM: That means that his relatives must have also known that you were hiding.

RH: We thought that no one knows, but everybody knew. That was, everybody from that family, from that Makar family. And when we came, then on the 8th of August, 1944, the Russians came.

EM: So you were hiding for, you said...

RH: For a, we...

EM: From...

RH: We went to the hiding place on the 13th of March, 1944. We came out on the 8th of August, 1944, when the Russians came.

EM: What was happening in 1944, between January and March...

RH: Right.

EM: 1944, in the...

RH: The Jews were, at that time all the eastern part of Poland was already *judenfrei*. The Jews that were found there were either killed or sent to our camp. On the 14th of April, 1944, they deported all the Jews. That was the first deportation of all the Jews from the camp. And the Jews went to Plaszow, near Krakow, to the camp there. And amongst those were my future wife's mother and father. But we thought that that was the end of the story. In the meantime they were bringing again Jews from all over the place, and the Jews that were caught in our city. And immedia--and again the camp filled. And they...

EM: This was the work camp?

RH: That was *Zwangsarbeitslager*.

EM: *Zwangsarbeitslager*.

RH: Yes. And again they took the whole transport to Plaszow. The third and last transport--of the same number of people approximately--was taken only two weeks before the Russians came. And apparently that transport could not go already directly west. They had to go to Hungary, where a lot of people on the way escaped. They went to Plaszow, and to Auschwitz, it depends. Also from Plaszow there was a selection, and people went from Plaszow to Auschwitz or other camps, like Mauthausen and other camps--Birkenau and so on--during, they were sent during the selection in Plaszow. We didn't know about all that. We had no idea. We thought that they were all dead. We had no idea where they were being taken and so on. When the Russians came, when the front came, on the 8th of August, 1944, there was still fighting going on in our city. The Germans were in the mountains shooting, and the Russians below. I and my future wife Rita came out, and we were literally in rags. We spoke Russian, because we had Russian in school previous to that. We met the first Russian troops, one officer and two other men. And, with a big jubilation we told them that we are Jews, in Russian. So he said, "What? Still some Jews survive? What Hitler didn't finish, we will." That was my first contact again with the Russians--my great jubilation. Immediately the Russians came. They, life came to normal. I forgot to tell you that when the war started between Russia and Germany, prior to going back the Russians dynamited all oil wells, dynamited the electric station,

which was the biggest station for the whole area, because we have gas and it was gas powered--dynamited anything they could, dynamited big, huge oil tanks full with oil and petrol. Big, and, big slices of metal, which from the tanks were flying around like paper, rags of paper all over the place.

EM: That was when the Russians got to...

RH: This was the Russians in 1941. Immediately then the Germans reestablished the industry. Everything started to work about a week later. But, and this time, also in 1944, when the Russians came, they opened the schools immediately. They started...

EM: The Germans didn't have time to dynamite the...

RH: No, the Germans didn't do anything. They didn't have time. The Russians opened the schools, and everything was as normal. Of course, when the Russians came, and the conditions were different there, their army was not the army we knew before. They, they, [unclear] during 1943 and after the conference in Yalta, and Stalin canceled the International established Officers Corps, and Russian army with officers wearing their insignia. The whole Russian army and the whole attitude changed. And already then there was very strong antisemitic feeling between the Russians. The Russian Jews, officers and others, were trying to change their names, to change their nationality and their passports, because there was open antisemitism throughout the country. They, during the war, Stalin, wanting to save Russia, introduced the old cry of the old Russia, which was *Bij zydow-spasay rossiyu* "Kill the Jews, and," or, "Hit the Jews and save Russia." And, the conditions for us were normal. We went back to school. We went back to evening school, because everybody had to work during the day. So, myself and my future wife and whoever survived, some people...

EM: So how many people would you say, what percentage maybe of the Jews that...

RH: Well, out of our population, that is 14--15,000 people, 15,000 Jews approximately in our city, plus all the Jews that were brought in from other parts of Poland, which were already *judenfrei*, 220 approximately, survived. And a lot of the young boys who survived then, were taken immediately into the Russian army to the front, and a lot of them died on the front.

EM: You mean...

RH: I was lucky...

EM: They were Polish citizens?

RH: No, they were...

EM: No.

RH: They were Russian citizens. They were considered Russian citizens, because there was Russia prior between 1939 and '41. They, we had Russian passports, Russian documents, and they were considered Russian citizens. And immediately, they were simply either catching people in their work place or anywhere they could, any young

people and putting them into the army, usually in the first battalions, who were facing the first fire.

EM: Was it a, it was a Russian army.

RH: Russian.

EM: It wasn't a Polish?

RH: There was no, no. The Polish army was forming then in Russia, and was already fighting, and it was near Warsaw and so on, but that was pure Russian army. We belonged to the western part of the Ukraine, which was, there were no separate states. It was all one Soviet Union. And quite a few Jewish boys died on the front then--surviving Hitler, died on the front.

EM: Did they also take any Poles that lived there?

RH: Yes, they did, but a very small percentage, mainly Jews, and a few Ukrainians. Because my father was a doctor, and because the doctors in the military commission were my father's friends, he succeeded in my exemption from military duty. And I was just working.

EM: Where were you working?

RH: In the oil industry. And my future wife, Rita, was working as a secretary in the high school. [tape off then on]

EM: Let's continue about the life in 1944 under the Russians.

RH: When the Russians came in, we could not go back to our house, because high Russian officers were living there. We were allotted another living quarters, and the Russians have very strict rule regarding the space every person can occupy. So we had, all of us together had two rooms and a kitchen. In the same building were living Russian officers and their wives.

EM: Did your father work as a doctor?

RH: My father started immediately work as a doctor, and because of that, we could somehow manage, because, at that time, money was almost worthless. But patients were bringing us butter and chicken and whatever. And we could, we had com--in comparison, we had better conditions because we have something to eat. Also at the same time I decided that because we had nothing, everything was, we lost everything, to make some money so that we could survive. And the sense of business, which I perhaps inherited after my grandfather on my mother's side, enabled me to start something. I discovered that in a place not far from our city near the holiday resort of Truskawiec, were salt mines. So, I collected as many, as much clothing as I could. And I went to the salt mines. I organized a driver from the Russian army, also a Jew, and they gave me then 900 kilograms of the salt for that. And I took that on a truck and we took it to Lwow and I sold it there and I made a good profit. Since then, I started to travel between those mines and Lwow, taking salt to Lwow, and bringing other goods back to us. Little did I know, I was using the truck from border troops, and little did I know that I was being observed all the time. Later on, I started to use the trucks belonging to the unit of anti-aircraft artillery, and I had a friend

that, a man there, who I thought was a friend, but at the same time he was the spy. And at one stage they imprisoned me.

EM: The Russians?

RH: The Russians imprisoned me. They brought, they came and they took me away, and no one knew where. I was taken to a house outside the city, a special trial judge in the form of a Pulkownik [colonel], which is the Colonel, and a Mayor and another officer, which formed a trial jury or judge--because there was, there is no other system in Russia. They knew everything from the beginning what I was doing. They were bringing all drivers as witnesses, and they told me quite openly that there is no way out of here. Either I will be shot or taken to Siberia. They were the only two ways out. In the meantime, my father was making frantic efforts to establish where I was, and he couldn't, nobody could find out. Finally somebody found out that a unit which was, what was called SMERSH, which is an antispy unit, was, took me, and somehow by bribe, by bribing an officer of the secret police in our city, they brought me in the same car under my house and they released me without saying why or what. And I was released. Then, a couple of months later, they arrested a number of people in our city. One of those was a Pole by the name of Jankowski, who was the director of the oil district where I was working, where I told you before. I was listening to the radio and reading the Polish *A.K. [Armia Krajowa]* paper. He was one of those Poles who helped Jews. He was my father's friend, and he helped us, and he was the only man who was in communication with us during our hiding place under the floor. When they imprisoned him, I just came back from another trip, and...

EM: You continued with your activity with, for buying this salt, and...

RH: Yes, yes. And his daughter came running, "Please help us. They imprisoned my father." And he was helping also another family, Jewish family, by the name of Szenkler. And she told us that this man Szenkler is already there at the police, he survived and could they please do something. So, I was cold and hungry and miserable, because the travel, it was wintertime, and the travel from Lwow to Boryslaw was in an open truck. But despite that fact I just went immediately to the police, and I started literally screaming at the *Kommandant* of the police, that that was a good man and he was helping the Jews, and why do you, what do you want from him? You should release him straight away, and so on. That was a mayor also who came here specially from Lwow to arrest all the Poles or Ukrainians or Jews. Luck had it that my father was treating him a few days before for some illness, and he cured him. And then when, so, when I came screaming...

EM: A cure, eh...

RH: Well, he only had a flu...

EM: You mean this Jankowski, or this ma-...

RH: No, no, this...

EM: Major? Major?

RH: Russian officer. This Major.

EM: Oh, Major.

RH: So, when we came, and I was screaming to that Major that he should release Jankowski and he, that he is a good man and he was helping and so on, he asked this other Jew who came with me, Szenkler, "What do you say?" And he said, "I-

Tape two, side two:

RH: ...My father went to this Mayor, and...

EM: Major.

RH: Major of Soviet Secret Police. He was specially sent from Lwow for arresting all the Poles and Ukrainians and Jews at that moment. And he told them, "Look, you have imprisoned my son. Please tell me why. Tell me, help me and release my son." So...

EM: Oh, you mean, he imprisoned you after you yelled at him?

RH: After I yelled, he imprisoned me with all the other people that were already there in the cell, and that was at the premises of the old, of the old Russian Secret Police, and then the German *Reiterzugpolizei*. They all used the same building. So, he said, "But he tells me that I am wrong, that I don't know what I am doing." So my father said, "What?" So he said, "Just wait a moment, you'll see." So he hid my father behind the door. They called me again, and he said, "So what do you say?" I said, "I say that you don't know what you are doing. And you are releasing a good man, you are accusing a good man of, a man who helped the Jews, and, you know." So he said, "See? I told you." He said to my father, "See? I told you. See what he says." So anyway, they, he started to smile, and then he released me in the hands of my father.

EM: How about this Jankowski? Did...

RH: Yeah, the Jankowski was sent away to a prison in Lwow, and then a couple of months later, there was very poor communication, and I was walking from the city, from Drohobycz, which was situated not far from our city. And suddenly a cart pulled by horses passes me, and a voice says, "You don't recognize me?" And I really didn't recognize him. His face was, he was very, he lost a lot of weight. He was unshaven. But, they released him. Whether they released him because of my testimony or my screaming, whether they just released him, I don't know. But the fact is that he was free again.

EM: But it was after a couple of weeks.

RH: After a couple of months.

EM: Months.

RH: Anyway, at that time, the agreement was signed between Poles and Russians, and all the Poles and Jews who wanted to leave and go to Poland were exchanged for Ukrainians who were living in Poland, in the Polish part. And, of course, 99% of Jews registered, and he was one of the first Poles, Jankowski was the, one of the first Poles to leave. And we were only waiting to finish, to have a leaving certificate, to have the *Matura* [certificate of completing secondary education], from our high school, to leave, too. But, about a week before we had the *Matura*, because we had our results, the constitu-...

EM: *Matura* is that exam that...

RH: *Matura* is the leaving, the last exam finishing the high school. And, the prosecutor of the Secret Police met me in the street, and he said, "Oh. I want to see you.

Come and see me tomorrow, in such and such a time, in Drohobycz," which was the next city. And I knew that the invitation spelled...

EM: Trouble?

RH: Jail, at worst. So I said, "Look. Please do me a favor. We are having now our last exams. How about if I see you immediately after we pass the exams?" So he said, "Yes, but remember, come and see me. Otherwise I'll find you." But, after we finished our exams and got our certificates, the following day we were on the train to Poland, and I escaped by, by, by a thread. So that was my experience in...

EM: So who left?

RH: We left first, that is my future wife, Rita, and myself. My parents stayed behind. They left later on, also in the same way. And we went to Poland. I went to Wroclaw, where, first of all to Gliwice, where relatives, my relatives were, then to Wroclaw where my father and my mother came. My, we got housing through the city authorities. My father opened a practice and was working for the local polyclinic. The life came more or less to normal. I started to study medicine in the Wroclaw University. But then again something happened.

EM: That was in what year?

RH: 1945. Then in 1946, or perhaps in still '45 that I can't be very exact, I think in 1946, there was a pogrom in Kielce. About 40-odd Jews were killed there. A number of Jews were wounded, and it was done only by the Polish population. And my mother said, "There is nothing, we have nothing to look for here. We have to leave Poland immediately. It doesn't matter where." We were making efforts prior to that, also, to go either to America and to Australia. The Australian papers arrived first. We were very, very lucky to get our passports then. And we got the visa to go to Australia. In the meantime, because I wanted my future wife and her father--who survived Mauthausen--also to come with us, I could go to Australia and bring her as a wife. She was already in Austria because she wanted to see her father who survived the camp, Mauthausen camp, and was in a hospital. So I went to Austria. I married my wife, and I had the legal documents to bring her to Australia. In the meantime I had to go back to Poland illegally, because my French visas, it was no longer valid. I had to get another one in Poland. And then I left Poland with my parents to, for Paris, where we waited seven-and-a-half months for a ship to go to Australia.

EM: That was in what year?

RH: That was in 1947. Again, about March, 1947. And at that time already the relatives from Australia paid for our trip through HIAS, and through our, and we were supposed to be taken care by HIAS in Paris. But our first experience after arrival in Paris was quite unpleasant. A certain Romanian Jew working for HIAS, a Mr. Kataziner, when we arrived there with my father to report that we have arrived, his words in Ger--in Yiddish were, "*Wer hat ach geschickt*? Who sent for you?" That was the greeting we received from them. Anyway, they placed us in a hotel at the cost of HIAS. We received food

coupons, where we could go and eat in the common kitchen in Paris. And we were waiting for the ship. There were, at that time, there was no [unclear] communication. There was very poor shipping. No ships were available. So we missed the first ship and we got the second ship, which was, the name of the ship was *Tiger Water* [possibly Tidal Water]. And in that ship we arrived through Marseilles to Sydney in November, 1947.

EM: And your wife Rita was still in Austria?

RH: My wife Rita was still in Austria. Immediately after arrival in Sydney I started to take steps to bring her in. I was very successful, because at that time the waiting period was very, very long, but I had some friends and connections, and with the help of the, of a man, a Mr. Kraus, who was a, in the local central synagogue, he helped me to organize the papers. And within two weeks I had the papers for my wife and her father. Then I had to organize the loan to bring them in. It was a long story. Anyway, it took them about a year-and-a-half, and they arrived in Australia in January, 1949.

EM: Now, briefly, a little bit about your life in Australia. What did you do, and what did your father do?

RH: My ri--our beginnings in Australia were extremely, extremely hard. Prior to coming to Australia our family, or my mother's family, a distant family, wrote to us when we sent the papers, that they are very rich and they own a lot of properties and they own a lot of businesses, and we should come as soon as possible, that my father as a doctor will be able to practice, and I will be able to study medicine, and all we have to do is come. When we came, the whole story somehow disappeared into thin air. There was no room for us to live, my father couldn't practice, I couldn't study, we didn't know the language, and we were completely hopeless. Later on, we were, I was living with my, with those relatives. My parents got a room in another place. They were living there, and we were desperate, because we didn't know the language. We didn't have any money. My relative asked me how much money I have, and I said, "Are you joking? I have no money. We are after the war." So he said, "If you have no money, you are nothing." So that was the comment. And, the only thing I told him I knew was how to drive a car, because I went through a driving school in Poland prior to leaving, that I am a medical student, and that I know a little bit of photography, which I used to do in the bathroom at home. So, he placed me, he found me a job at the photographer's place. And after two weeks he asked me how much do I get. And I said, "Well, what do you mean? I am not there yet a month." The payments in Poland were monthly. So he said, "No, here are weekly." So I said, "I didn't get a penny." So he went to this guy, and this guy said, "Well, if he wants money I won't have him." So that was, that was my initiation. The wife of my relative, who was also my distant relative, gave me good advice. She said, "If anybody wants to work in Australia, he can break stones and work on the roads." So I said, "Well, that was not exactly my idea of coming to Australia." And so, our beginnings were very, very bad. I found a job later on, but the job was paying six pounds, two and six, out of, and after the national tax, it was about five-and-a-half pounds, which was not sufficient for us to live, and to pay rent. By

that time we had a flat for each, the family lent us the money, so-called "key" money, and because at that time there was no accommodation whatsoever. And, [tape off then on] at that time I asked my relatives perhaps to help us, because we literally we didn't know where to turn and what to do. And I asked my, well, I called him uncle, he was my cou-- my mother's distant cousin, to either find me better job, where I can earn a bit more money so that we can survive. And his wife was against it, so he refused. And then I asked him, there was a business for sale in the center of the city. I already by then knew enough photography to be able to do something. He again asked his wife and his wife refused to, the loan, so again I didn't know what to do. And I was going through the city and I saw notices in pharmacy shops and photographic shops that they were doing seven days developing and printing of films. And I thought that perhaps if I could give a 24-hour service I could get some work. So, I printed cards and went with my broken English to pharmacies, and the first one was a lady, a Polish Jew, who gave me my first work, a dozen films. And I remember doing that all night, because I didn't know how to do it. I didn't know how to do it commercially. And, but they had to be ready for next day. Then I bought some books about developing and printing, and again, with the dictionary I was reading and finding out more about commercial part of it. I didn't have any equipment. So, I had to have 150 pounds for the equipment, apart from the enlarger, which I brought from France. And they, my relatives would not give me a guarantee or loan me any money. The Jewish Welfare Society, which was there for their own good, because later on we found out that they were profiting from being the Welfare Society, wouldn't lend me any money either, unless I had two guarantors. So I found finally two guarantors. They lent me the 150 pounds, and I started to do all the work in one of my parents' rooms, which I converted into a dark room. And I was doing the work during the day and developing films at night, and it was a vicious circle after that.

EM: Was that when your wife was there already...

RH: No. That was prior to my wife coming. Later, when my wife came, the business was already developed, and then she helped me a lot in the business, by working with me. And it was a hectic five years' time, during which my father started to study medicine, because he had to qualify after having already two medical degrees, to work in Australia. But the conditions were such that only four doctors per year, four foreign doctors, even if they pass the exams, would be admitted in the whole of Australia--which means, that perhaps in the year 2,000 my father could start practicing. Despite that fact, he was still studying, and finished the studies, and in the meantime the law changed, and he was permitted to have a practice.

EM: So you never went back to medical school?

RH: I went, after he finished his practice, I went back to medical school. I sold my photographic business. I went back to medical school. But in the meantime, my father was sick in bed with the heart trouble for one year. In the meantime also, my, we had the first baby. And after a year of medical school in Sydney I had to stop and find work,

because, to earn living. Well, I think, we'll finish here, and the other part of my life in Sydney, Australia, was very hard, and still because we had to struggle and we were lucky enough to bring our children--later on we had our second son--in a free country, a country full of food, sunshine, and freedom, and have the children educated and...

EM: Tell me, what's your, what are your sons doing? I know you have two sons.

RH: Yes, well, the older son is a doctor. He is a specialist--endocrinologist. He has a few degrees. He started first to study mathematics, and he has a degree of mathe--higher mathematics. Then he did the diploma of Education. Then he has a diploma of Medicine and Surgery. And later on he specialized as an endocrinologist. He is a specialist and consultant in two hospitals, as well as having his own private practice.

EM: And your other son?

RH: My other son, Martin, is, also has two degrees, and, the first degree is in Computer Science. The second degree is the Master's Degree of Economics. And he is presently working and being a partner in a computer company, where they design software for big companies. He is also an economic consultant to big companies in Sydney, and he is very highly regarded by all the people he works for.

EM: Okay. Now, just very briefly, the, you don't have any grandchildren yet, I understand.

RH: No, no.

EM: And whom did they marry?

RH: My older son married a New Zealand girl, who was a sister here. Later on she did, a hospital sister.

EM: A nurse.

RH: Nur--yeah, a sister. Yes, a hospital sister. It's a higher degree from a nurse, you know, sort of...

EM: All right, I see.

RH: Yes, and then she did a degree in occupational science and health therapy. She is working, she is helping my son in his surgery by being the manager of the surgery, because he is very busy. He has two girls, typists in the surgery.

EM: She is not Jewish?

RH: She is not Jewish, and she's a Christian, a Presbyterian, from New Zealand. And...

EM: Your other son?

RH: My other son...

EM: Married...

RH: Married a Japanese girl who came here, who came to Sydney on a contract because he was a, she was a musical teacher in a Japanese school. They met through our distant cousin, also half Japanese and half Jewish. And later on they married. They went together to Solomon Islands for a two-year's contract, and they came back to Sydney.

EM: So both your children, do they feel Jewish?

RH: Both feel Jewish. And, the Japanese wife does not know any religion. She is a Buddhist, I mean her parents are perhaps, but she is not religious at all. She is very curious about Jewish religion. She comes to *seders* and so on. And...

EM: So, do you continue with your Jewish religion?

RH: I continue being, I'm, I am not very religious myself, but I am a national Jew. I have very strong national Jewish feeling. And, of course, 100% behind Israel in whatever Israel does. My other daughter-in-law is a Christian, and, but again, neither of them observe any religion at home, and only when they come to our place, either my son explains some points of the Jewish religion to her, or she is being very curious and asks us about it.

EM: Okay. That's, I think that's it for today. Is there anything that you want to add, as far as your experiences go, or...

RH: It's very difficult to...

EM: Any comment that you have.

RH: To comprise all the feelings and what I went through, right through the occupation or to, through the Russian period, or before, prior to that, through the Polish period. For that, I would need quite a few hours to describe it in detail. I gave you only the overall situation, and the dates, as far as I could remember. But, but, the precise information I would need quite, quite a few hours to do.

EM: So, right now, you, could you tell me in general, you had some help from non-Jews, and some denunciation.

RH: That's correct, yes.

EM: Do you have any feeling about the Ukrainians as opposed to the Poles, as far as their attitude was?

RH: Right. Well, I may say perhaps that this is an individual story. We had help both from Ukrainians and Poles. As I said before, the Ukrainian hid us under the floor--for money, but he was risking his life. And a few Poles also helped us, like Mr. Jankowski, about whom you know, and so it's difficult to distinguish. But overall, the Ukrainians behaved better than the Poles during the war. The Poles were doing everything behind our backs, and they were strongly antisemitic. They were perfidious in their behavior. And generally, I would consider Poles much worse even than the Germans.

EM: And you, you, so your impression is that the Ukrainians, besides the ones that were in the police, were…

RH: No, a lot of them were against the Jews...

EM: Yeah...

RH: I mean, there were a lot of...

EM: But there were some that were better...

RH: But, but...

EM: Than the Poles?

RH: Ukrainians generally were much better behaving much better toward Jews than the Poles. They may have been brutal, and when beating the Jews they were, a lot of them were helping the Germans and the Ukrainians to kill the Jews, but generally they behaved much better than the Poles.

EM: Okay, all right, now, you still live in Sydney, and your address is...

RH: My, I live in Sydney, in a suburb named Botany, B-O-T-A-N-Y. The post code is 2019 in Australia, and this is one of the suburbs in Sydney. And my telephone number there is [omitted].

EM: Well, is there anything else that you would like to add to this interview?

RH: Yes, it's impossible to describe all the trauma and fright and screams and killings that we went through--before the actions, during the actions, and throughout the German occupation. It is also impossible for me to tell it all in just one session. It would take perhaps weeks or months to tell you in detail. Unfortunately, I remember only too well every little bit of detail of the story. [tape off then on] I would like now to give you perhaps a short history of families on both on my mother's and father's side. My older uncle, my mother's brother, Maurycy, died in Mauthausen two weeks before liberation. My, the younger brother, my mother's, my uncle, my mother's brother, died of hunger in a hospital in Lwow, about 115 km north of Boryslaw. On my father's side, the whole family was wiped out. My father had two brothers, with wife, with wives and children. And his parents [tape off then on]. Well, this happened in the city of Brody where my father was born, and traces of, or members of the family are now one in Israel, and members, other members in the United States. Luckily, some of them survived, because they left Poland before the war. The relative who is in Israel was in the Russian army and survived the war there. He is in Israel now. He is over 70 years old, and I don't know if he's still alive.

EM: He was a first cousin of yours?

RH: He was a first cousin of my father's, not mine, but my father's.

EM: Your father's. Do you have any first cousins that survived?

RH: No, only second cousins. They are all in United States.

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

RH: No, this is the whole story, perhaps not, some of the, some of the, eh, items I have omitted or forgotten to add, because, when I give testimony like that, I get very nervous and very upset, and then, of course, I forget some of the small bits and pieces.

EM: Well, thank you very much for your willingness to be interviewed. I want to assure you that this interview is, as all our interviews, are going to be put to good use. And we thank you again.

RH: Thank you.