

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

JADWIGA ZOSZAK

English Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Edith Millman

Date: May 2, 1987

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Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

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JZ - Jadwiga Zoszak¹ [interviewee]

EM - Edith Millman² [interviewer]

Date: May 2, 1987

May 2009 (addendum)

Tape one, side one:

EM: This is Edith Millman interviewing Mrs. Jadwiga Zoszak. Mrs. Zoszak is my aunt; her maiden name is Greifinger. She is the sister of my father. She was born in 1906 in Sambor, Galicia, Poland. She lives in Tel Aviv, Israel. This interview will be conducted in German and Polish. Where did you live before the war?

JZ: In Katowice. My husband was a judge in Katowice.

EM: And your husband was a non-Jew?

JZ: Yes. My husband was not a Jew. This helped a lot later. He was in Katowice and I was with my sister in Iwonicz on vacation and that's when the war broke out. We went with my sister from Iwonicz to Sambor. There I had a certificate that I was the wife of a judge, which helped me to get from the mayor a certificate allowing me to go from Sambor (which was my birthplace) to Boryslaw (that's where my mother and family was). The train was bombed near Sambor and I was stuck. The conductor yelled that everybody should leave the train and I sat down under the tree. There was a group of Poles around me and they said it is all the fault of the Jews because they did not want to give money for armaments and airplanes. This is the first thing I heard. Then I met an acquaintance, a lawyer, and he said, "Oh, you know I have seen your husband." I was very happy and believed him--he was also a lawyer--but later it turned out he had seen my brother. I was very surprised because I knew that Adam [husband] was supposed to be evacuated with the whole court from Katowice. Later he said, "No, it was not your husband but your brother, Buś. Then I went on a horse drawn cart to Boryslaw. I knew that Adam's mother lived there. Then I lived in a village. It was very difficult.

EM: Did you live with your husband Adam at that time?

JZ: No, we did not live together. We saw each other every day. I lived with my sister in a small room. It used to be a laundry next to a villa; it belonged to that villa. And there was gas and water and it was warm. My sister was also a refugee.

EM: Which sister was it?

JZ: Eva. And Adam lived with his mother, but we met each day. That was

¹née Greifinger. Her nickname was Giza.

²This interview was conducted in German and Polish and later translated by the interviewer, Edith Millman.

during the time of Russian occupation. It was hard for Adam because the Soviets persecuted the intelligentsia, lawyers, judges, etc., frequently deporting them. Adam worked as a plain laborer in a forest. It was like this in the area. First came the Russians, then the Germans, then the Russians again, and they stayed. When we were under the Germans I did not wear the armband. Buś [Leo - brother] was hiding in an attic in Drohobycz. One day I got a card from him that he is in an attic and I should come for him. I asked Adam to go. First he did not want to go. He had no shoes and Drohobycz was another city--but what didn't he do for me? He went and brought Buś [Leo]. I had a room in a villa which belonged to a rich Polish family that the Russians deported to Siberia. A Polish priest helped me get the room. I made a little separation for Buś.

EM: What happened later? Did somebody denounce you?

JZ: Well, there was a director [executive manager] Robaczyn.

EM: A German?

JZ: Yes, he was a German. Some people said that he was a Pole, but he was a German. He was the chief manager of the oil well. He was a big *macher*. I have met him a few times in the street and I noticed that he always looked at me suspiciously. Once I was going up the stairs and I turned around and he was standing at the bottom and kept looking at me and looking at me. I told Adam about it and told him that I was afraid. Once he called Adam and asked him, "Tell me the truth - is your wife a Jewess?" Adam told me that he did not answer him. He did not say yes and did not say no. He did not want to admit that I was Jewish and at the same time he was afraid of being punished for a lie. The manager had a helper, a Pole, who knew I was Jewish. He called him and asked him if Adam's wife was Jewish. This Pole said, "No, absolutely not," but later he told Adam that it would best if I left town. I had no *Kennkarte* [identity card] - nothing. Do you know why? I came to Boryslaw in 1939 already after the start of the war. The Russians were there and I had to register, so I registered saying that my father was Abraham, etc. And these documents remained there in the office. When the Germans came and I was supposed to get a *Kennkarte* I could not go to the office because I was previously registered as a Jew. So I had absolutely nothing - no identification card, no documents except for a letter attesting that I was the wife of Adam. With Julia [Maja] [Leo, i.e. Buś's daughter, Jadwiga's niece] it was like this: one day I received a telegram from Buś [unclear] to come and take Julia. I went to the railroad station and wanted to buy a ticket to Sambor. The clerk told me that he has no more tickets. I knew that he was selling it on the black market. I stood in front of the window--he was opening and closing the window. Suddenly a German officer came up to me and asked me what was wrong. I told him that I wanted to go to Sambor to my mother who was very sick and I could not get a ticket. He immediately ordered the clerk to sell me a ticket. When I had the ticket I told the Polish clerk, "Shame on you. You would not give me, a Pole, a ticket but when

a German gives you an order you listen.” I took the train to Sambor and arrived in the evening. Buś said to me, “I’ll ask Maja if she want to go with you. If she says yes, she will go, if no, I’ll not force her.” The child was all excited and replied, “Yes, yes, I want to go with Auntie.” I was told that there are two trains leaving for Boryslaw in the morning: one at 4:00 AM and the next at 8:00 AM. So I said we’ll take the 8:00 AM train, but Adam said, no, we’ll take the train at 4:00 AM.

EM: Adam? How come - was he there?

JZ: Yes, of course, he came with me. He got a ticket too. [Unclear] Well, you can imagine--the mother started to cry but later got a suitcase and packed a few things for the child and she also gave me a small piece of meat and a little bit of honey. I took the child by the hand and proceeded towards the station. It was still dark, and while walking I noticed a few people jumping out of the windows. I thought they were thieves and said, “Look - in such terrible times there are still thieves.” I did not know that it was the beginning of an *Aktion*.

EM: Was there a ghetto?

JZ: No, at that time there was no ghetto, but the Germans were usually shooting during an *Aktion* [unclear]. Adam did not tell me that it was an *Aktion*, he only kept telling me, “Quick, quick, hurry.” It was pretty far to the station and I was pulling the child and he was pulling me, saying “Quick, quick.” Only when we got on the train, the conductor was saying, “My God, my God, how terrible what they are doing during this *Aktion* [unclear]. That when they took Rajska. Aha, when I came to Sambor, there was Rajska.

EM: Rajska was Maja’s mother.

JZ: There lived Rajska, Maja, Rajska’s married sister with her three children [unclear]. Half an hour after I left with the child, the Germans came in. Buś [Leo] was hiding in the garden, Rajska also, but separately. They found Rajska [unclear]. They also took her sister and the children. Half an hour later the house was all empty. There was nobody left.³ I did not know about it. I only found out in the train that there was an *Aktion*. It was not thieves who were jumping from the windows, it was the Jews who were trying to escape. When we came to Drohobycz, the child said she was hungry. I got out of the train and was able to get a carrot for her [unclear] and we continued to Boryslaw. When we got out of the train in Boryslaw we were all surrounded by Germans who took everything away from the peasants who disembarked. There were peasants who were trading merchandise, mostly foodstuff. One German caught me and asked, “What do you have here?” I had the small piece of meat and container of honey - I kept it under my jacket. I was afraid to admit that I had some food, but I was also afraid to say that I have nothing with me, so I said, “Please look for yourself.” The German said

³EM: They did not find Buś, Maja’s father - he survived.

again, "I asked, what do you have?" And I replied, "Please see for yourself." He got angry and again asked what I had and again I answered "Look for yourself, and then you will know." He opened the suitcase, looked inside and seeing only child's neatly packed clothing told me angrily to go. I was so happy that I succeeded and that he did not find the meat or honey. When I finally left the station with the suitcase in one hand and Majula at the other, I encountered a Polish woman from Sambor, the wife of a Polish policeman, who knew that I was Jewish. And she started to follow me, yelling all the time, "*Zydówka, Zydówka*" [Jewess, Jewess]. She followed us almost the whole way yelling and yelling Jewess, Jewess. Luckily there was no German in sight. I ran as fast as I could and when I finally got back I swore that if I ever meet this woman I'll choke her to death myself. Soon afterwards Buś came. I think Adam brought him. I don't remember exactly.

EM: You told me at one time a Polish priest helped.

JZ: Yes, he helped Buś and also started to work on documents for Maja but they took him away to a camp because he helped Jews.

EM: Let me get this straight. This is important about the priest. I want to have this information.

JZ: Well, this was a Polish priest who knew that I was Jewish and he also knew who Adam was. When there was nothing in the house, I went to him and he gave me food. Adam went to this priest and told him that he knows a Polish Army officer who is in Sambor, afraid and in hiding, and would like to come to Boryslaw. Adam asked if the priest could help. He did not tell him that Buś was a Jew and my brother-- only that he was a former army officer. Forgot to tell you-- when Buś came out of hiding in the garden and found out that they had taken Rajska, he ran to the place to where the deportees were taken, wanting to join her, but the train had already left. When Adam arrived with Buś, the priest recognized that he was a Jew, and said, "Now I know what kind of officer he is." But he still helped him.

EM: Did this priest help other Jews?

JZ: Yes. I know some hungry Jews went to him and he frequently gave them a few potatoes. Later the Germans sent this priest to a camp, to Majdanek, and I heard he perished there. When they took him away, I went to another priest. I needed some documents for Maja, but he told me, "I don't give any documents to Jews. I don't want to die like Father [unclear] died." Yes, he was a wonderful man. Later I got a room for Majula. Once there was also Lusia, the daughter of Kasiel [JZ's brother]. I don't know if you remember him. There was another little girl and a little boy, the son of David [another brother]. In any case, there were two little girls, a boy, and also Maja in this room. Well, they were in this room and played, but could not talk, had to be very quiet. Upstairs lived a maid, a servant who worked in a Jewish home for many years, and a little Jewish boy, a sweet little boy, you can't imagine how sweet. The mother was somewhere in hiding and left the boy with the maid [unclear]. One day the Gestapo came

[unclear] and said to me, "There are Jews hiding here." I said, "Jews? There are no Jews here." But they insisted and said they have information that Jews are hiding here. I answered, "Maybe at one time there were Jews here but now there are none." They kept standing in front of me staring at me and staring at me, but suddenly I hear one saying to another in Polish, "*Ah to nie jest Żydowka*" [this is not a Jewess]. They still stared at me, but I immediately said in Polish, "You speak Polish? Oh, how wonderful it is to hear one's mother tongue." Through all that time the children were so quiet, you did not hear a sound and this was my good fortune. Then he asked who lived in the house and I told him that this is my room, the other room belongs to a teacher and an old widow lives in yet another room. I was so lucky that the little boy upstairs was so quiet, usually he was very active. After the Gestapo left the maid came down with the little boy and said that the child did not make any noise because he was eating and his mouth was stuffed with food the whole time. [Unclear, laughing] Anyway, we were so lucky because if they had discovered us, especially with two boys, we would have been lost. They would have taken us, all of us. I told the maid about the Gestapo who came looking for Jews and suggested that she should look for another, safer place. [unclear]

EM: And how did the children perish?

JZ: They were all taken. How should I know? Once a little boy came, David's [brother] little son. It was raining terrible at that time, it was pouring, and he said the Gestapo was there. What could I do? I could not take him in my room, I was not alone. I lived with non-Jews. One was a teacher, she was very decent. She once said to me, "I know you are a Jewess. I pretend not to know. You must behave in such a way that I don't see anything. I am a coward. If someone would only slap me I would talk, say everything. Do what you want, just don't let me see it." So when the boy came to me it was raining terribly and he was scared and did not know where to hide. There was a big doghouse from a big dog and I put the boy inside. There was thunder and lightening and rain.

EM: How old was he?

JZ: I don't know, eight, maybe eight years old. I went to my room but I knew he was scared. I sat in the room, it was pouring outside. I could not stand it anymore so I went out. It was dark already. I sat down on the ground, next to the doghouse, and tried to reassure him, saying, "*Mundzui, nie boj się* [Mundzui, don't be afraid], it will stop soon, it will stop raining." But I could not stand it anymore. It was quiet, so I told him to come out and I took him in my room, dried him off, and put him on the floor [unclear]. In the morning when it was still a little dark I told him to go home, because I knew that later, when it was light, he could not even leave the room. Later he came back and told me that the father is still there. They did not take anybody. I learned later that he [David] hanged himself when they took his children. [Crying]

EM: He hanged himself?

JZ: Yes, that's what I was told. They took away his children, he could not

take it, and hanged himself.

EM: And what happened to his wife?

JZ: The same, they took her away, they took her away. [Crying] The Germans sent them away. [Unclear, crying] Once Dudziu [David, brother] came to me, all came to me. [Unclear], he pulled his pants up and I looked at his legs. There was one hole next to another, all from hunger. What did I do? He was still working at that time. I told him to come to the garden [unclear]. I was stealing soup from the kitchen. I lived with some non-Jewish women and everybody cooked some soup for herself. They all had more than I. From every pot I took off a few spoons of soup, put in a special little bowl and had it ready for him. He would come very early - at 4:00 in the morning-- to the garden and I would give him the soup. That's all he had to eat. Maybe he also had a small piece of bread. He told me then, "You and Osi [another brother, my father -- meaning Edith Millman's father] are true people [unclear]. These were the last words I heard from him. Later I stood by the window in my room and saw a whole column of Jews being led to their death. And I saw my brother among them. He shook his head towards me [crying, unclear]. No, it is not good to remember all these incidents. Later I had the episode with the Ukrainians. I was in the village, in a Polish village, and all around were Ukrainian villages. The Ukrainians would catch Poles, pour oil over them and burn them, burn them alive.

EM: Where was that?

JZ: In Stara Sól.

EM: Stara Sól?

JZ: Yes, Stara Sól, a small village. I lived there alone with Jula. I had a small room. Not once did I go to bed without an axe next to me.

EM: You were afraid?

JZ: Yes, I lived in constant fear that they will come. So I made up my mind that at least I would kill one of them. So I never went to sleep without an axe. In this house lived a man, a Pole. His wife was Ukrainian, but she was very decent. This man gave me the axe to defend myself. Once a whole delegation of Poles came to me and said I should move to where they all lived together, for safety in a bigger house, not a hut, a house.

EM: A big house?

JZ: Bigger, and also built better. All the Poles lived there together. When they saw Ukrainians coming from the forest they would give a warning with a gong so everybody could hide. When they heard the gong, everybody ran. I did not. I stayed with Maja. It was like this - the place was not far from Sambor and I was afraid that someone would recognize me, someone who knew that I was Jewish, so I did not go. What's the difference - a Jew or a Pole [unclear]. Before I went to this village, Adam's mother, she was a lovely lady and we liked each other very much, gave me a "holy picture" of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the black Madonna of Czestochowa, and she said to

me, "Hang it up on a wall over your bed and in difficult time pray to her, she will help you."

Tape one, side two:

JZ: I did hang this picture over my bed. When the delegation of Poles came to me, they asked, "What are you doing here? Why don't you go where all the Poles are - it is too dangerous to be alone when the Ukrainians come." Well, what could I have told them? That I am a Jew and that someone could recognize me since the place is so close to Sambor? So I said to them, "Look, I am a very religious person and believe that the Blessed Virgin will help me. I am not going anywhere." And I stayed. And then there was the sound of the gong. Maja and two other children were hidden in the attic. I was below. Every so often Maja would yell from above, "Mommy, are you still alive? Mommy, are you still alive?" Soon afterwards we knew already that it was not going well for the Germans. They started to withdraw. I had befriended a *Volksdeutsche* [ethnic German] woman. I did this on purpose, so as to avoid any possible suspicion of being Jewish. I would visit her, we would gossip, mend clothing and such. The Germans started to requisition rooms for their sick and wounded soldiers. They put a sick soldier in her apartment. Once, while I was there, a German officer came to visit the soldier. I felt a little uneasy so I got up, took Majula by the hand, and said I have to leave now. He asked me if he could accompany me. I said, "No, thank you very much, I live not far from here." He replied, "I know exactly where you live and I also know what you do. In the morning you go for some coal, then you split some wood and so on." I had no idea I was being observed. Then he came to visit me several times. Once he saw that I put artificial sweetener into my coffee and asked, "What is this?" And I replied that it was a sweetener instead of sugar. Later he brought me sugar but I refused to accept it. I did not want to accept anything from a German. He insisted, "It is not for you, it is for Juleczka," that's what he called Maja. I told him that Julia will eat what I eat. Every time he came he brought something and I always refused. Then once he came and said, "I tell you something. I fell in love with you and want to marry you. I am the son of a wealthy wholesaler in Berlin." (He knew of Adam; Adam used to come and visit with me from time to time.) I interrupted him, saying that I already have a man, but he said, "That's not important. I already wrote him and received an answer. My mother wrote that she would be happy when I come back with you." So I said, "Well, but not yet." I already heard the Russians are approaching. And he said, "Now I have to leave, the Russians are coming, you have no idea how awful they are." Little did he know how I waited for them, but I replied, "Yes, I heard about them and I am afraid of them." He asked me not to go anywhere, to wait for him, he will return to fetch me. I promised I would stay. Later when Adam came I told him about it and Adam arranged for me to leave with Julia on a wagon [cart] that transported potatoes. We went back to Boryslaw. Later, I asked Adam to go back to the village and bring to me the few things that I had left there. These things were given to me by different people since I had nothing. I was a refugee - someone gave me a pot, someone a towel, etc. When he returned from this village he told me that this German officer came back for me, and not finding me, went

into a rage, throwing and breaking furniture and made a terrible mess. He thought that the owner was hiding me. In Boryslaw, I found shelter through a Polish teacher from Warsaw. She worked in the kitchen at the same place where Adam worked. She knew that he had a Jewish wife, but she was extremely decent and sent with him bread and soup for me and Maja. Once when I carried water in a bucket, the bucket was too heavy and fell on my foot. It was badly injured, very painful, got infected and there was a purulent discharge. There was no doctor, no medication. Finally it got so bad that I broke down, decided to risk it and asked Adam to bring a Polish doctor when it got dark. He came and performed minor surgery, removing my nail, etc. It was bandaged and I could not walk much. A few days later I heard the janitor of the building talking to a German under the window, saying that he would very much like to catch a Jew and bring him to the authorities so he would be rewarded with a few *Zloty* - it would help with the expenses at Christmas. The same janitor had asked Jula a day earlier, "Where is your mother? Doesn't she come out at all?" So I got worried that he is getting suspicious. Well, what should I do? I wrapped my foot with two towels, took a cane, and hobbled out. I walked over to the janitor and said to him, "Oh, Mr. Kwiatkowski, is it nice - I was so sick and you did not even come to see what's wrong with me?" Then he replied, "Oh, you were sick? I already wondered why I don't see you." Well, I thought, at least I cheated him out of a couple of *Zlotys* that he would have gotten for denouncing me. Now this little story might sound funny, but it was not so funny at the time. In the courtyard of the same house, I saw with my own eyes when they shot two young boys. They came there, it was after a [unclear]. Maybe they had a mother hidden somewhere [unclear]. They were caught and shot. There was a small latrine in the courtyard. Someone wanted to bury them in the yard, but the janitor Kwiatkowski said, "What? You want to bury Jews here? No way, just throw them into the latrine." That's where they threw them. Later, when the Russians came, a young girl, the sister of these boys, sat near the latrine and cried and cried. She did not want to leave. When one remembers these stories they just turn and turn in your head. No wonder one can't sleep and is so nervous and depressed. [Crying, unclear]

EM: I know how difficult it is to talk about the past, but do you know how the others in the family perished?

JZ: I know that Genia, Rita's mother, perished in Auschwitz. That I know for certain. Rajska, the wife of Buś, in Sobibor, I think. I know I still saw my mother. That was also a story. I told you already about the little building next to the villa where I lived first with my sister, later with Mother. She was lying there, you know she had an amputated leg. We lived there - it was a former laundry. It had water and gas and was warm. She was lying there and once a German walks in. I don't know if he was an officer or not - he had all these gold epaulets [unclear]. The devil only knows what he was. He entered the room with his revolver in hand. I was sitting next to Mother and he starts yelling, "*Raus, raus, schnell, schnell!*" [Out, out, quick, quick] Mother did not

answer and stayed in bed. He kept yelling and asked me who I was. I told him I was her daughter and Mother removed her blanket and showed him that her leg was amputated. He put the revolver to her head but then he looked at me and said, "Oh, it is a pity to waste a bullet on her." He turned around and left [unclear]. Well, how can one describe what we went through, how we suffered.

EM: And how about Kasiel [brother]?

JZ: He died of typhus. He was the first. He was the first to die of typhus in Boryslaw.

EM: And what happened to his wife?

JZ: She was taken away. They took them all. And I saw Mother after her death. It was like this - Adam entered the ghetto every day, although he was not supposed to do that. It was forbidden for Gentiles to enter the ghetto. Mother always said "Don't come, don't come, it is forbidden." He did not listen. And whatever I could I would send for him for Mother. Once I was not there for a few days and when I got up in the morning I had a strange feeling of foreboding and I said to Adam, "Today I have to go there." He had already been there early in the morning-- I don't know why-- and already knew that Mother was dead but she was still in bed. When I told him that I am going he replied that he'll go with me. On the way he told me that she was dead. I entered - there was nobody there. The door was wide open, there had been an *Aktion*. She lived with Genia, but there was nobody there, she was alone in bed. On a little table next to her bed were two potatoes - that was probably supposed to be her supper. So I saw her [crying, unclear]. Then they took her in a wagon [a plain cart]. Finished. No more Mamma [crying]. Eva [sister] was shot in Boryslaw, together with a son of Kasiel. He was 12 years old. They had to dig their own grave. I was told that when the boy entered--the place where they were gathered--he noticed Eva and said "Auntie, you are also here?" They had to dig the grave and they shot them. Later I saw the trucks carrying the clothing of all those people who were shot after digging their grave [crying]. That was the end of the boy and my sister. One in Auschwitz and one in this mass grave.

EM: And Mojsie [Moses, brother].

JZ: That I don't know. Somebody told me that he was shot. Somebody told me that he was shot in the street, but Buś later told me that this is not true, that he was in the ghetto. I don't know. I had to go to this village and was not in contact with anybody. I did not know anything. Oh, yes, once I call - Boryslaw was burning, I could see it from the village. I knew Buś was there and Adam was there. I don't know if Mamma was still there - no, she was not alive at that time anymore. I was worried and sitting pensively at the window, and the German, the one who was in love with me, he wanted to marry me - I needed that like [unclear].

EM: Well, because you were so beautiful.

JZ: Yes, yes. Well, he asked, "Why do you sit like this?" and I answered, "I am worried because of all these fires. I have relatives in Boryslaw and don't know what

is happening to them. I would love to call and find out. [Unclear] He asked whom I would call and I told him that I would call the firm where they worked. There was an engineer there who helped Buś-- he was a half-Jew but he never admitted he was Jewish. He also had helped me; he knew about me. I thought that if I could reach him by telephone he could tell me what is happening. I had gone away so nobody would know where I was. So the German said, "Come with me" and he took me to [unclear]. I called the firm and asked to let me speak with engineer--I don't remember his name anymore. When he came to the phone I asked him what was happening and he told, "All is okay. Buś and Adam are all right." That's the only time I knew that they are still there.

EM: So Buś worked there, on false papers?

JZ: Yes, he worked. He was a night watchman.

EM: A night watchman?

JZ: Yes, Adam arranged it. So he could walk around during the night and sleep during the day. So when the Germans came and asked why he is sleeping he could say that he was a night watchman and works during the night [unclear]. He walked around all night.

EM: So he could sleep during the day and this was much safer, because he was not seen during the day.

JZ: [Unclear] Look, I could talk day and night about all these episodes. I was never in a camp but many times I begged I want to go into the ghetto, I want to go into the ghetto. I was alone. I could not stand it anymore. I wanted to be together with them. Whatever happens to them will happen to me. [Unclear] So much fear and hunger. I prayed, "My God, my God, in my lifetime I would like to see the day when someone will put a bread before me and say you can eat as much as you want." This was my deepest prayer. I was so hungry. If I were at home I could barter, exchange something for food. But I was a refugee. I had nothing. Kasiel was not alive anymore. My sister Eva lived in Jaroslaw; she was also a refugee, and Genia was never rich and had Mother with her. We were all hungry, all were hungry.

EM: And Eva was . . .

JZ: Yes, shot.

EM: And her husband? Also shot?

JZ: Certainly. I don't know where - if in camp or-- he left a letter. He owned a small house in Boryslaw. I read the letter but later I tore it up. He wrote that he hoped that I'll survive and that the house will belong to me. [Crying, unclear] Go away, go away, you are still young, you can live [unclear]. Leave mother behind [crying, unclear]-when I came she was already dead, in bed [unclear].

EM: Did Herman help with the funeral?

JZ: No, all was arranged by Adam. David was still alive. He was the one who said *Kaddish*. And he went to the Jewish community [*Kehillah*] they should record the place and number of the plot where she was buried so later one should know. But

naturally this was in vain because later they destroyed the cemetery. Cows graze there now.

EM: I thought-- my father said that Herman helped.

JZ: Maybe. Maybe he was that time in Boryslaw. If he heard about it, I am sure he helped. There was so much to arrange.

EM: Genia and Herman were taken together?

JZ: I don't know, that I don't know. I only know that they were in Auschwitz. Herman belonged to the orchestra. He played in the band. He had to play in the orchestra, in the band.

EM: In Auschwitz?

JZ: Yes, in Auschwitz.

EM: This saved his life.

JZ: I don't know [unclear]. Later Rita came. She was also with me. She had been hidden together with Rolek. She could not walk; she was sitting all the time while in hiding. She had *such* legs, she could not walk. She stayed with me, but later Rolek's mother, the wife of Dr. Harmelin--he was a physician-- came to me and asked me to give Rita to her because she had more food as the wife of a physician. This was already under the Russian [occupation]. I said, "This is my niece. Why should she be with you? She should be with me." But she did go to her and stayed in [unclear]. At least there she ate.

EM: Yes.

JZ: Then she was with me in Gleiwitz. Later she went to Wroclaw and from there they went to Australia.

EM: Now please tell me about your second husband, whom you married in Israel, Dr. Sternberg.

JZ: He lived in Auschwitz before the war; he was a physician. At the start of the war all the Jews from that area went to Bedzin - there was a big camp. He was with his mother, sister, her husband and child. His mother, sister with husband and child perished. His wife also perished. And his son, he had a boy [unclear].

EM: He was a physician and he studied in Freidburg.

JZ: Yes [unclear]. He first practiced in Krakow, at a big hospital. Later he opened his own office in Auschwitz. That was before the war. And then they took him to camp in Bedzin. I think it was Bedzin. Yes. And there was his mother, sister with husband and child, his wife. His son had been given to the nanny; she had been with them for about six years. They gave her jewelry and money and she took the child with her. So they were separated from the child. And they took his mother, wife, sister with husband and child to this camp. He always thought that his son was still alive. He told me that this belief was what kept him alive. He wanted to live, no matter how difficult it was because he wanted to be reunited with his son. When he came out of the camp he was told that somebody had denounced the nanny-- that she was hiding a Jewish child. The child was taken away and I think the woman was also taken to a camp-- I don't

remember anymore. When he learned that the child was dead he also did not want to live anymore and thought of suicide. Well, when he was in camp at first he worked as a plain laborer. He worked for the Krupp Company. After the war he even received a letter of indemnity from the Krupp Company. A lawyer came to interview him here. He had the testimony to that fact and as a result he received a certain amount of money. Later, in Auschwitz, he worked as a medic in the hospital. He told me that when the German officers or soldiers had syphilis they were immediately shot.

EM: The German officers were shot?

JZ: Yes, the Germans were shot. When they were sick, when they had venereal disease, they were shot. At that time they already had penicillin. In Germany, they had penicillin. So a few of these German officers, two, three, or who the devil knows how many of them, came to him with the drug and asked him to give them the injections.

EM: Because they knew he was a physician? Is that why they brought the penicillin to him, so that he could treat them?

JZ: Yes, and this saved him. Sometimes they gave him bread.

EM: You mean they gave him more food, more to eat?

JZ: No, not food, just bread. Food was distributed. A piece of bread was everything-- it was happiness. Later when the Russian were approaching they took all those who were still alive and evacuated them [death march]. He could not walk anymore; he did not care anymore and sat down. During this march whoever could not keep up and sat down was shot. You must know about this-- it is a well known fact. While he was sitting there on the road, a German officer jumped from a truck. He recognized him and took him on the vehicle. They were going to Mauthausen. I am not quite sure anymore, but I believe it was Mauthausen. Then the Americans came. There was an American general there and my husband asked him for a certificate, a verification that he was in this camp. And he received confirmation from him. Why is this important? Well, later he asked for compensation, *Wiedergutmachung* and he sent this certificate as proof. I don't know if he sent the original or a copy, but anyway, he was one of the first to receive compensation money. You understand?

EM: Yes.

JZ: This was important. He had this certificate and did not need to submit any other documents, all because it was issued by an American or British authority. I don't know if it was American or British. Once I asked him why he received this money so fast-- when I met him, he already had this money. It was a substantial amount, and for that money he bought this apartment.

EM: I would like to know something more about the penicillin injections which he gave to the German officers in the camp.

JZ: Every German officer was liquidated when it was known that he had venereal disease. And they knew about it. They also knew that he was a physician so

they brought their own penicillin and asked him to give them the injections without anybody knowing about it or seeing it.

EM: Secretly?

JZ: Naturally, secretly, and how secretly! So he gave them the injections.

EM: And for giving them these injections they gave him bread?

JZ: Yes. Sometimes he even had too much bread and was able to give some to other inmates. One of them in return helped him clean off his lice.

EM: And later when they were on the death march out of Auschwitz and he could not walk anymore and sat down and would have been shot, one of these Germans jumped from a truck.

JZ: I don't know if it was a truck or a wagon, but surely not a regular car. At that time the Germans were leaving in all kinds of vehicles. One of these officers recognized him, jumped off, and pulled him up into the vehicle. That saved him. They went to Mauthausen. I don't know if the Americans or British liberated the camp. You surely must know.

EM: So this German officer saved his life.

JZ: Of course, otherwise he would have been shot on the way.

EM: Well, this is extremely interesting.

JZ: Yes, helped, he took him with him.

EM: Now, something else. He was an invalid, wasn't he?

JZ: Yes, one leg shorter than the other. He had many operations. He wore a special kind of shoe.

EM: That probably also made it more difficult for him to walk during the march.

JZ: Yes. And when he sat down, he knew what awaited him. He was extremely lucky that he was picked up. It saved his life.

EM: Thank you very much. This concludes the interview with Mrs. Zoszak.

JZ: Don't show it to Julia. I don't want her to know about these things. She has enough . . .

EM: Mrs. Zoszak is my aunt, my father's sister. Her maiden name is Jadwiga Greifinger. Today is May 2, 1987. I would like to add that out of my father's eight siblings, only three survived and out of all my cousins, only two survived.

Addendum to Interview:

Written by Edith (Greifinger) Millman in May 2009.

The following is additional information about my aunt Giza (Greifinger) Zoszak which was not given during the interview.

Because of marital problems she divorced her husband Adam Zoszak in 1954 and

moved with Maja (Jula) to Israel in 1957. There she met Dr. Sternberg (mentioned in the interview) and married him in 1960. Due to the fact that he was a Cohen and she a divorced woman they could not have an official wedding but only a certificate of marriage from a judge. Dr. Sternberg died in 1970 and she in 1996.

[Please see attached reprints and information about my uncle Adam Zoszak, about his help and induction as a Righteous Among the Nations into Yad Vashem. I learned about it in August 2008.]

Edith Millman