

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Berg, Marita

Date of interview: 7/1/1998

Summary: (Deceased) Marita was born in 1941 in Leipzig, Germany. Her mother was Jewish, her father was a German gentile who was a Communist in the resistance. Relatives killed: Grandmother and aunt (mother's mother and sister, respectively) deported to Auschwitz and murdered there -- she brought documents verifying their deaths, and we filed photocopies of these documents. Marita survived the war with her mother because a German soldier who was involved in the deportation of her grandmother and aunt agreed not to deport them if her mother would have sexual relations with him. She described this man as having brandished a gun in making this threat and demanding sex. At some point, her mother and father split up, and Marita was not living with her mother anymore. Marita lived in East Germany after the war with her father, and also was taken in at one point by a family friend. She was in an orphanage for a short time, and ultimately moved to West Germany to live with her mother. She lived in West Germany until the mid-1980s, after which she married a Jewish American. She tells many stories about ambivalence or denial by Jews of their Jewish identity, although she identifies herself as a Jew. She also gives accounts of anti-Semitism in post-war Germany. Documents and photos are presented at the end of the interview.