

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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

Name of interviewee: Dynin, Boris

Date of interview: 2/27/1992

Summary: Boris Dynin was born on January 30, 1925 in Chernivtsi, Ukraine. During his childhood he remembers that some laws were passed limiting the rights of the Jewish residents. The best schools were closed to Jews. It was very hard for Jews to enter a good university since many of the universities had a policy called Numerus Clausus, which limited the number of Jewish students that were accepted. Other colleges who enforced Numerus Nullus did not accept any Jewish students. Also, Jews were not allowed to own land.

On June 28, 1940, under the Revopolmotova Pact(?), Chernivtsi, which was currently Romanian Territory, came under the Russian Rule. At this point there was great deal of unrest among the residents as everyone waited for the unknown. People who had the money or means to escape ran towards the Romanian border. Dynin's family did not try to escape because his grandmother was very ill. She later died during the war of natural causes.

In 1941, all Jewish families, and mixed couples of Jewish descent were ordered to relocate to a ghetto. A few days before the Jewish community was rounded to the ghetto, the Nazis took 20 Jewish hostages among them was Rabbi Mah. The Nazis threatened that for every Nazi killed a certain number of the hostages would be killed as well. All of these prisoners were shot on the beach. 100,000 Jewish residents moved into the ghetto. Dynin's family moved into one apartment with another 5 families. During his time in the ghettos there was a ship, Struma that would take people out of the ghetto and bring them to Palestine. Dynin's father tried to get the family on the ship in order to save their lives, however luckily, there was no space for them on the ship. When the ship set sail, it was blown up by the Germans. Almost none of the passengers survived.

A month after the formation of the ghetto there was a rumor going around that some of the people from the ghetto were to soon be relocated. Many tried to be the first to relocate in order to get housing and jobs. The people did not know that many of them would be going to their deaths. Later up to 75,000/80,000 people were relocated to concentration camps or labor camps. In a few weeks, another rumor spread that some Jews would be allowed to stay behind and work in the city. Dynin along with 25,000 other Jews was allowed to stay and returned from the ghetto. A Romanian friend who wanted to return his father a favor helped the family out of the ghetto. When the family returned home the Russian government took their house and they were forced to rent an apartment. During the 3.5 years from 1941 to 1944 his father made a living by selling jewelry. He was no longer allowed to work as a lawyer because he was Jewish. In 1942, the current governor fell ill and a new governor was appointed in his place. Unlike the old governor, this governor was very anti-Semitic. Soon after the new governor came to power 10,000-12,000 Jews were sent away. At this point, the remaining

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Jewish community realized that the governor would send away the remaining Jews if he is to stay in power. Therefore, the Jewish community collected money from the town and used it to get a new governor. The new governor soon relaxed laws limiting the rights of Jews. For example, he canceled the law requiring Jews to wear a yellow star.

After the war, within one week of Liberation, Dynin was called into the Russian army. There he was questioned as to how he survived the war if he was Jewish. The officers in the army did not believe his story and he was sent to a labor camp where he was subjected to very difficult working conditions. For a while he was not allowed to write home to his family and tell them where he was. Finally once he wrote to his family, his father was able to get him out of the labor camp. After he was released from the camp he returned home where he resumed his studies. He later graduated from a university, got married, and had children. Boris Dynin immigrated to the United States with his family in July 1991.