

07/10/1999

Halina Błaszczyk
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project
Polish
RG-50.488.0086

SUMMARY

[Approximately 130 min]

Halina Błaszczyk was born in Izbica near the Wieprz (River) on April 8, 1929. Her father was a local miller. Halina remembers that the town of Izbica was populated mainly by Jews, whereas the Poles lived in the nearby village of Izbica. Halina's family lived in town and had many Jewish neighbors. Ms. Błaszczyk remembers the arrival of Germans to Izbica and their negative attitudes towards the Jews; when Izbica changed hands and became a part of the Russian occupation zone, the Jews welcomed the Red Army with flowers and cheers. Halina recalls that within a short time the Germans returned to Izbica and then established the Judenrat which, among other duties, supplied the Germans with food provisions; a local Jewish Police force was also established; policemen were recruited from among the young foreign Jews from France, Austria and Germany; most of the Jewish policemen died during one of the shooting sprees of the infamous local commander Kurt Engels; she recalls that Engels took pleasure in performing all executions—both of the Jews and the Poles. Ms. Błaszczyk talks about Engels' second in command—a former Polish officer named **Klim** (he later assumed the German name Klemm), known for his bribery. Halina talks about the ghetto in Izbica; she describes its location and the hard living conditions in the ghetto; she talks about the transports of foreign Jews to Izbica and recalls that many of them didn't want to believe in the existence of the death camps and voluntarily signed up for deportations, while the local Jews remained in hiding. Halina recalls that the luggage of the foreign Jews was confiscated and stored in the Synagogue as well as in the local church. She talks about the Ukrainians conducting round ups of Jews with the help of the local fire fighters and the blue policemen. She talks in detail about the final dramatic round up in 1942 and the bestial treatment of the Jews by the Germans and the Ukrainians; she talks about some Poles looting the massacre field while others, herself included, tried to offer help; she describes the mass grave of the Jews who were killed or injured during the deportation. Ms. Błaszczyk remembers her neighbor **Hannan Lipszyc** escaping the deportation and finding shelter in her family's home; he was then denounced to the Germans by an unknown local but managed to escape; **Hannan** joined the local partisans—Bataliony Chłopskie in Ostrzyca; she talks about a Jewish woman **Pelcówna [Petlc, Peltz]**, whom her family supplied with food. She remembers a Jewish dentist from France, who tried to save her little daughter from deportation; she offered payment to the neighbors of in Ms. Błaszczyk; however the girl was later denounced by one of the locals. Halina talks about the firefighters and policemen taking bribes from the Jews and comments on other locals who looted abandoned Jewish houses; she recalls “stójka”

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duty—when the farmers who owned a horse and a cart were required to assist the Germans. Ms. Błaszczyk talks about local families, including her own family, who after the war bought the former Jewish houses from their original owners.

[Prepared by Agnieszka McClure on 11/17/2010]