

Jeff and Toby Herr Collection
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TRACHIMOWICZ, Marian
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project
Polish
RG-50.488*0190

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview Marian Trachimowicz, former resident of the town of Grodno (present-day Belarus), talks about witnessing the fate of the Jews of Grodno at the time of the Soviet and German occupations. He gives details about the location of the Grodno ghettos, the numerous orders and prohibitions concerning the Jews and their mistreatment by the Germans. He provides exact dates of several events and announcements as well as names of the Jewish residents of the town and German perpetrators. He mentions two cases where Jews were hiding in Polish houses. In addition, he remembers an episode of the Grodno's defense against the Soviet invasion in 1939. He describes Soviet persecutions of the defenders.

[01:] 00:55:00 – [01:] 09:55:59

He talks about his family background; focuses on his father's profession and business relations with the Jews living in Grodno; comments on his father's good command of the Jewish language (Yiddish); mentions the Jewish merchants **Berkowicz** and **Małowicz**, as well as the nickname **Wańka Szewiec**; estimates the number of the Jews living in prewar Grodno; remembers his Jewish friends from the childhood; mentions himself being fond of the Jewish girl **Fruma Epstajn** [Epstein, Epsztajn]; talks about her and her older sister attending the same trade school as him; talks about Fruma's age and appearance at that time; mentions the case of his looking for Fruma in the ghetto area during the war; discusses the Polish attitude towards the Jews in prewar Grodno; talks about nationalists' hostility towards the Jews; supposes them being encouraged by Grodno's German residents; mentions the German family **Neumans** [Neumanns, Neimans] ; remembers one of this family's members acting in a hostile and humiliating manner towards the Grodno Jews during the war; recalls the prewar pogrom against the Jewish merchants arranged by members of a Polish nationalist party **Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny** (the National Radical Camp); describes his father being hurt while protecting one of the Jews; estimates the number of the assailants at 10 to 12.

[01:] 09:56:00 – [01:] 14:19:59

He recalls the German army's entry into Grodno in 1941; discusses the bombing of Grodno; talks about the Jewish district being the most destroyed part of the town; answers the question on his memories concerning the USSR army invasion in 1939;

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talks about his and his father's participation in the Grodno resistance to the Soviet invasion; mentions Mr. **Piotr Bogucki**, the head of the one of the Grodno schools and instructor of a scouting team engaged in fighting with the Soviets; remembers Mr. **Bogucki** telling his father to take him back home; considers that decision as saving his life; talks about his father guarding Grodno's strategic objectives in a two-person patrol with Mr. **Kozłowski**; comments on the shooting of Mr. **Kozłowski** as an act of communist sabotage; remembers the Jews being suspected of participating in the acts of sabotage; comments on the likelihood of those suppositions.

[01:] 14:20:00 – [01:] 21:29:59

He talks about the Soviet occupation of Grodno; discusses deportations of the Polish residents; remembers seeing the deportation of Mr. **Rommel**, a teacher of Polish language; comments on the Jews having friendly attitude towards the Poles; mentions one exception to that rule; talks about the Jew **Abraszkin** [**Abrashkin**] betraying the Poles fighting in the defense of Grodno; talks about people being shot by the Soviets for fighting against them; discusses Mr. **Bogucki** being shot by the Soviets; describes destroying and hiding uniforms that could implicate participation in the anti-Soviet defense; mentions names of two young boys killed during the fighting and the circumstances of their deaths; answers the question on whether there were more Jewish collaborators in Grodno; talks about the Jews protecting his father from being denounced to the Soviets.

[01:] 21:30:00 – [01:] 27:13:59

He remembers German soldiers entering the town; discusses the German attitude towards the Jews before the establishment of the Grodno ghetto; talks about the order for the Jews to wear yellow badges and Stars of David; comments on the prohibition on the Jews walking on sidewalks; remembers seeing a Jew being hit by the Gestapo agent **Wiese** because of walking on a sidewalk; describes the Gestapo agents **Wiese** and **Streblow** as the most cruel; mentions seeing many acts of cruel treatment towards the Jews after the ghetto's establishment; *[he looks up the notes rewritten from his diary; silence until the interview resumes]*; reads his notes of the issues mentioned previously; provides exact dates of the events, German issuance of decrees and names of German officials.

[01:] 27:14:00 – [01:] 35:36:00

He reads his notes on the sealing of two ghettos in Grodno; provides exact location of the ghettos and the date of their establishment; explains that one of the ghettos was designed for skilled workers; talks about confiscation of the Jews' belongings; describes brutal behavior of the German military police during the Jews' relocation to the ghetto; recounts a Jewish woman being killed then; discusses his watching those events in hiding; remembers seeing three persons killed; reads and talks about the confiscation of the inmates' belongings; reads and comments on the search of the ghetto for a supposed illegal radio station and mint; discusses the look and behavior of the Jewish police; comments on the reasons for the Jews to join the Jewish police

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forces; reads and talks about himself working with the Jews in a loot depot Beutelager “B”; explains the difference between things stored in Beutelager “A” and “B”; remembers the Jewish laborers talking about the living conditions in the ghetto; talks about the Jews working in the Beutelager mostly as porters and tailors; mentions his fruitless seeking for **Fruma Epstajn**.

Box 1, Tape 2

[02:] 01:40:00 – [02:] 04:39:59

He discusses his dash into the ghetto to look for **Fruma Epstajn**; mentions the way people were getting through the ghetto’s fence; talks about himself being noticed and hit by the German military policeman; talks about **Fruma** and her sister once again; describes the misery seen in the ghetto; comments on the possible fate of **Fruma** and her family.

[02:] 04:40:00 – [02:] 14:20:59

[He looks into his notes; silence until the interview resumes]; he reads and talks about seeing the Jew shot and killed for an alleged theft in the Beutelager; remembers one of the German supervisors of the Beutelager assigned as a paymaster (Zahlmeister); describes the Zahlmeister as the most cruel German working in the Beutelager; mentions another one called “**the Black German**”; reads and talks about the round-up of the Jewish laborers; remembers them being badly beaten by the Germans; supposes some of the Jews being beaten to death then; recalls the behavior of the Gestapo agents outside the ghetto; talks about the order to take off hats while passing by Germans; remembers himself being hit once by the Gestapo agent **Wiese** for not following that order; reads about a Jew being shot down while trying to flee; *[he reads his notes]*; comments on being told about a few Jews killed by the Germans for the reason of trading with local farmers; reads and talks about killing Mr. **Olehno** [**Olehno**], a barber married to a Jewish woman; estimates the number of the Jews living in Grodno at the beginning of the year 1943; mentions getting to know about a Jew shot down in Batory Square after the liquidation of the ghetto.

[02:] 14:21:00 – [02:] 21:07:59

He remembers several names of the Jews living in prewar Grodno; mentions two Jewish confectioners **Bau** [**Baum, Baul**] and **Czernichowska**; *[he looks up his notes]*; talks about his mother giving shelter to the Jews **Malowicz** and **Malachowicz** [**Malachowicz, Malochowicz**]; describes their hiding place; discusses them being later relocated and hidden in the housing of Ms. and Mr. **Suchanek**; focuses on the location Ms. and Mr. **Suchanek**’s housing and restaurant; describes the exact place where the Jews were hidden; comments on those two Jews probably having survived the war; mentions seeing Mr. **Malachowicz** after the war; talks about his escape from Grodno in 1944 and joining the Polish army in **Bialystok**; remembers his Jewish commander **Holenberg** [**Hollenberg, Wollenberg**] and the circumstances of their

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meeting in Sweden after the war; answers the question on whether he remembers other cases of Jews living in hiding in Grodno.

[02:] 21:08:00 – [02:] 28:13:00

[He looks up his notes; silence until the interview resumes]; he focuses on the sequence of the liquidation of the two ghettos; talks about the skilled workers being temporarily relocated to the camp in **Kielbasin**; remembers the deportation of the inmates of the ghetto; describes the Jews being mistreated and crammed into wagons; remembers seeing one Jew being killed during the deportation; answers the question on whether he witnessed other mistreatments of Jews; answers the question on whether he knows any other war survivors among the Grodno Jews; talks about his fate in the military after the escape from Grodno.