

NATIONAL

Life stories

**LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY**

HELEN TAICHNER

Interviewed by Bill Williams

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1 side B

You deprive yourself. You...I've got a dictionary.

No it's OK, that's fine. You would buy from the Jews.

You pinch your pocket. You shouldn't buy from the Jews, because you deprive yourself. But some Poles were very sympathetic to the Jews, so on the quiet, when it was quiet they used to buy from the Jews, because they liked; there was a small percentage of those who really hated the Jews, a small, but they wanted to buy from the Jews because there were mostly Jewish shops. It was a Jewish shopping centre really, Nowy Dwór.

Did your father say anything about this to you at the time?

Well I was already growing up. When this happened I was in my twenties. But, I'll tell you an incident. The four metres we had entrance from the road to the passage to our house, we had it freshly cemented, and my father engaged a German, a local German person, to do the job. He didn't do a good job, he put in more sand than cement, and my father wasn't pleased with the job, so he said to him to re-do it. And Hitler is not here yet. I can't remember what happened. I remember when, later, in later years, when I was living with my mother on my own, and my father was already killed, and it was a knock at the door and this German man came to our house, and he started to...started to abuse us. That Hitler is here, he came to take revenge, and 'Where is your husband?' to my mother. And my mother was a very independent person, and proud person. If it wouldn't be me I don't know what would happen; I had to calm her down, because he was in a rage. He just...if my father would be alive he would kill him. And he said, 'Hitler is here.'

So what did your mother do?

So I had to push her on a side. I don't know how I calmed her down, but he went. Also, when I was small, I had, well my parents called her a nanny, but she was a nanny and then she was like a maid. She was a German, and she was very devoted to us. And when she married and she left our house, we had been in good terms with her. And when Hitler came, her son went to the police and she, they were such enemies to us. Unbelievable.

What did he say to the police?

Well he was a policeman, and she was very nasty to us; she changed completely.

What did she do?

Well she must have, you know...I can't...it's so many years ago, but I know that we have been very disgusted with Milka. I don't know, maybe we wanted her to help us, in saving us, to hide us, something, that she refused.

And her son joined the police?

Oh yes.

And did he do anything to you?

I can't remember who took away our grand piano. They came, and they took it, somebody took it away.

They just entered the house?

Yes.

Who were these people who were before Hitler, who were hostile?

In Nowy Dwór was flowing, he said Bug, he mentioned the river Bug, what's the name, Beale, that Mendel. Well, Nowy Dwór was...Nowy was between Narev and Bug, in that delta there. We had two rivers in Nowy Dwór. A bit further on was the Vistula, and on the other side of the Vistula a German colony lived, a lot of German people lived. Whilst it was quiet in Poland they were very good customers in my father's shop, and they were very friendly. But when Hitler came on the scene, they changed their skin completely. Who was a friend was an enemy.

Can you remember what they did?

Well they were...they were raiding houses, raiding shops, and taking away from people everything. I wouldn't say, my parents they hid all the stock from the shop in the cellar, but they took it away from us afterwards.

This was local Germans?

All sorts, yes.

This is in 1938, when you say the Polish people started to...

Started, yes.

Who was behind them?

German influence.

Were they German people on the streets, or were they ordinary Polish people?

With those placards they were Poles. They were Poles like, you know, like national...Poles, yes.

Did you know any of them? Did you recognise any of them?

Well, I was already, 1938 I was married. And it was a small place Nowy Dwór, but I didn't know, even in that small place, all the Jews. Well, I belonged to a different group of people. I was one of the first ones to start to go to a high school. So a lot of people from poorer districts and lower class people, I didn't know who they were.

And the people on the streets, were they lower class people?

In which street?

The people with the placards.

That, I wouldn't say so. They could be better, but they just didn't like the Jews.

You saw them?

Yes I saw, I could see the placards with two sticks, you know how they walk now. And so the Jews were closing the shops from fright.

I want to go back a bit now. We've spoken a lot about your father's family, perhaps you could tell me a little bit about what you recollect about your father. What sort of a person was he?

Oh, this photograph, from the photograph you can tell a bit. He was a nice man. He was a nice man, and a good man, and you could talk to him, and he was... My father's brother lived in Warsaw, the eldest brother, and they got on extremely well. He was, my uncle Simon was an intellectual from the class of the Jewish writers, like Sholda Maleyegeb[ph], Shole Ma'ash[ph], from all that time, in the same age. Because my father was born in 1875. So, my uncle lived in Warsaw, he was doing stamps, not postage stamps, stamps...

I know what you mean, rubber stamps.

Rubber stamps. He had a place, and that was his business. He had three children, they lived in Warsaw, in the Jewish district. But my aunt was a very elegant lady. She only cared about her own appearance, dressed up to kill, but in the house you didn't find anything nice, she just... And she used to spend on food, on very expensive food. She was a...what's...she was...she wasn't a proper housewife, she... A waster, extravagant. Lately I'm short of words. She was extravagant. She used to buy, I remember, I'll never forget, she used to buy cucumbers when it was two zlotys a cucumber. It's like you would pay now five pounds for a cucumber. But she had to have it. But there wasn't a proper good chair to sit down.

This was Simon's wife?

Simon's wife. So, my father could see it all, and used to invite him very often, he stayed with us, and he saw our home. So when he used to go back he must have said something that my aunt didn't like us at all. And in fact we've been very sorry for Uncle Simon, how she treated him.

But your father and Uncle Simon were close.

Oh, how close. So once my father wrote a letter to his brother, that your family is like a cart and horse, and the parents should be like the two horses and drag the family, the children. No, your wife was sitting, and you alone had to drag that horse, drag that family. How he compared it.

He was talking about Simon.

Yes. He wrote to Simon, and she got hold of that letter. Well she hated my father, she always hated us. She has never been to...we never invited her to visit us, because there was a big difference in the household. And he made a very very good living, but he could not use the money.

What did Simon do for a living?

He did the stamps.

Of course. And you said he was a writer?

He was writing articles to the papers.

In Yiddish?

Yes.

And your father too was something of a scholar.

He was a scholar. He was an avant-garde of people who were after... He wasn't a believer, but he said it's a bit too late for him to make big transitions.

He meant transitions to what?

Transitions, compromises, to make compromises. He wasn't a religious man. But I could talk for hours with him. We used to go mushrooming in the summer, we used to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and go in the forest and picking mushrooms. And my father, when I was travelling to school every day from Nowy Dwór to Warsaw, in winter, 6 o'clock it's dark, he used to take me every day to the station. And when I was eighteen I was doing my matric, A-levels. I was embarrassed, for he was to hold my hand and take me to the... I used to say, 'Go home.' When I started to go to, like here after 11-plus, well I was one of the first to go to a Gymnasium, but when I was finishing five years after, in the morning it was loads of children going to...

Why...?

Because there was no school in Nowy Dwór.

So why were you one of the first?

Because, well, there were not many people understood the meaning of the education. I mean after the First World War, when they started to build up. So they were poor. You had to be able to afford it. My parents were not wealthy, but the whole aim was to educate me. So, when other people would buy nice clothes, fur coats, they paid for my education, and when I was the last year doing the A-levels I lived all year in lodgings with a family, so that was all expensive.

Can I turn to your mother, and your mother's family.

Yes.

Now as I understand, your father's family were very religious people.

Yes.

But not your father, not so much.

No, no.

Did they quarrel about it?

No, no. No, no, no.

Your grandparents accepted your father?

Yes, yes. My grandmother didn't wear a sheitel, or anybody, no.

Not your grandmother?

No, no.

What about your mother's family?

My mother's family, my mother had a brother and a sister in Manchester. They left for England. A brother and a sister left in the early...of the century, at the beginning of the century, they came to Manchester. My uncle here was a minister.

What was his name?

Dove. His name was Spokojna, quiet. Well when they came to the customs on the border, the English couldn't say, spell it. `What's your second name? What's your name?' He said, `Yona'[ph]. And Yona[ph] I think in Hebrew is a dove. So they gave him the name Dove, and he was Abram[ph] Dove.

And he came to Manchester.

He came to Manchester. And my aunt, my mother's sister, she came to Manchester. And he was a Hazzan[??].

Abraham[ph] Dove was that?

Abram Dove was a shoet, a shoet and a minister, a learned man. And Auntie Annie, and Uncle Sussmann[ph], he was, the synagogue here, a Hazzan[??].

What was his surname?

Boyarsky[ph]. But they shortened it to Boyars[ph].

So your mother had this Manchester connection.

Right. Then she had left in Lida, where she came from, she had a brother and, well she was telling me about this brother, the eldest brother, and the youngest brother died young, and I remember her crying, but I must have been very young, I didn't understand. But those people who owned that factory, the crockery factory, they were from my mother's side, from my grandmother's side, they were called Winogradow, and they were related to my grandmother. My grandmother was a Winogradow.

Do you remember your mother's parents?

No, I never met them. They were dead when I...when I started to understand anything, no.

Were they a very religious family?

They must have been in that respect religious, keeping Shabbat, but not extreme, like some Jewish people are. Dressed European.

How did your mother and father meet?

As I said it must have been a shivach[ph], somebody must have known one another, and they got married.

When was that?

1905.

And where did they marry?

They must have married in Lida.

In your mother's home?

Yes.

And in your home, who was it that saw to the religious customs? Was it your father or your mother?

No, together, together, together. I remember we had very big sedorin[ph], Passover, all the family, whoever was from the factory they used to come. This was in those days a very affluent family, very, with the children were already university graduates. And one of the sons he was the chairman of the factory when the older generation died, and I met him in Poland, and he ran away, that's in the Second World War, he ran away as a...he ran away from the Russians, as a capitalist, with money. But Poland took him back in 1950; he came back and they gave him a professorship at the Warsaw University, and they gave him so many titles, and when I went to Poland in 1970, with my husband, we went to see him.

This is the man who owned the factory?

Yes.

What was his full name?

He was Leon Winogradow.

So your mother belonged to that family.

Yes.

And it was religious but you said that not extreme.

I would say they were Reform.

And the whole family used to come to your house for Seder?

Yes, yes.

In your home, did you celebrate all the Jewish festivals?

Yes, yes. But Shabbat, my father didn't go every Shabbat to the synagogue. But whenever he went, he was honoured with the Aliyah and everything.

What about Kashrut?

Kashrut, yes.

Precisely?

Precisely.

But you said that he worked on the Sabbath.

When her worked...when I was very young he worked at the factory, he had to work, because on Saturdays they used to pay out the workers the wages.

What about when he had his own shop?

No, it was closed Saturday and Sunday.

Did your mother work?

She helped him.

In the shop?

Yes.

But again, not on Saturdays?

Well Saturday it was closed.

Did she do something special in the shop?

No, she helped him, she just helped him. Because it was physically hard work. Plates, eating plates, 30 plates, it was very heavy to handle. Before Passover when they change all the dishes, my parents worked sometimes half the night. It was a very hard business in carrying things, heavy.

Did he have any employees at the shop?

No.

Just your mother.

Yes.

Did you help?

When we came...before, when I was school holidays, and they were very busy, I used to go and help them.

In the home, who used to...?

They had a housekeeper.

They had a housekeeper?

Yes.

But who used to manage the housekeeper, who used to see to her?

Well we used to...she was...what I remember she was 16 years, so she knew what my mother required. My mother didn't like housework.

Was this Milka?

Milka no, Milka was when I was a baby, and this was when I was growing up.

So who was this one?

Zeidlowa, she was German. She was German, and German, because in Nowy Dwór it was like I said, Milka lived in a colony, that's the word. We used to say, 'Niemiecka Kolonia'. It was a colony, it was near the Vistula, was a big big village, mostly with Germans, no Poles, Germans lived there, as farmers, they made a good living, lived there.

And your housekeeper lived there.

And Zeidlowa lived not far from us, she lived with somebody, I don't think she was ever married or anything. First she used to come... In Poland, washing was a procedure. People used to engage a washerwoman once a month, and the woman was two days washing. It was rubbing on a...

A board.

A board, rubbing on a board, and a big tub from wood, and so many times you wash, so many times you rinse. And then she was ironing and drying. There were no washing machines, nothing. All hard labour. But cooking and baking, everything at home.

So, Milka was not German?

She was German.

And was she your first housekeeper?

She was the first I can remember who did the housework when I was small. But she was when I was a baby. They call them more `nianka', nanny.

And so that was followed by this other German.

Yes, yes. My mother never was without anybody.

And who was this second German, what was her name?

Zeidlowa.

And she was German too?

Yes.

And you were saying she came in first as a washerwoman?

Yes. She used to go to houses, and was here, was there, whatever. Then my mother must have suggested to her, and she said she will come and do a day's work; she used to come every day and cook. When I used to come from school, I used to come from school about 4 o'clock by train, so she used to feed me; my mother wasn't home, she was in the shop.

You said your mother didn't enjoy housework.

No. I've never seen her dusting. She didn't do that. She used to bake, she used to bake and maybe sometimes cook, but she was a good cook that German, Zeidlowa.

Was that the one who turned against you?

No, Milka. But with Zeidlowa happened something else. Zeidlowa was a very honest woman. So one day she was going home when she finished. I was sitting in the kitchen and looking through the window, and she had to go out from the...through the veranda home. She didn't go out for a while, and I heard a knock. Anyway, I caught her pinching coal. Well when my parents came I told them about it, and they sacked

her. And she was very religious, she was a Protestant, very religious. She admitted that she was pinching the coal, and she was pinching soap, and different things from houses, where she was, and my parents forgave her. She said a devil went into her mind, that she was doing it.

And they kept her on?

They kept her on. They had been so used to her.

So she was still with you when the Germans came in?

Must have been, must have been, yes, yes.

End of 1 side B

2 side A

....was a hospital in our avenue, in that street where I lived, and they suspected that my mother had typhus, so they took her into that hospital. And she had lovely long black hair, and they cut off, like a skinhead. And my father went with me to see her, and I didn't want to go in to see her, I was afraid. And she was in a window, and it was in a building, and she was in the window and I was scared to death to see her without any hair. Maybe she had... And she had to wear a sheitel afterwards for a short time. And really, she had no typhus, they made a mistake; it was just a cold or something. It was something, an epidemic of something.

Were your parents political at all?

My mother wasn't, but my father, oh yes, he was very interested in politics of course. This is why it surprised me, afterwards when I thought, that he didn't realise and didn't believe that it's a real war broke out, the 1st of September, that 'manoeuvres'.

What sort of politics did he believe in?

Well...well I don't think he was... As I said, he was a Zionist and he would have gone to Palestine as a pioneer if he would be younger. But the Polish politics, I don't know if he was so interested really.

He wasn't a member of a party?

No, no, no.

Did he go to any meetings?

He didn't like the Bundists, he didn't like, he found them very rough. And he had to do with them, because they were porters. When my father was shopping in Warsaw for his goods, so he used to go to Warsaw every so often, and when the goods came by a big, not lorry but truck, they were very nasty. They were the socialists, the Bund, he didn't like them at all.

They brought the goods...

They had to carry the goods from the truck to the shop.

So they brought them from Warsaw?

Yes, the goods were coming from Warsaw.

So these Bundists...

These Bundists were the porters.

They were coming from Warsaw?

No, they lived in Nowy Dwór, they lived in Nowy Dwór, but it was...they were the porters.

And your father didn't like them?

No.

Do you remember him talking to you about them?

Well I could see, that he always had arguments with them, because they showed...they showed their hatred to capitalists, and my father wasn't a capitalist, because, he made a living from that shop, he didn't work physically, so they were against.

What about Zionist meetings? Did he go to any of those?

No, I can't...where did he belong? He was honorary...he was an honorary something in a bank, in a bank, not a bank as such but a bank to give loans to poorer people. And I remember once he found a discrepancy, his best friend did, and he could see that it wasn't right, but he was so straight and honest that he had to tell him, and they fell out for a bit.

This was a Jewish society?

Yes, a Jewish society, a Jewish charity society for people in need. But, as I said, in the summer he was so busy with his garden, and with his chickens hatching, and reading, he was reading all... I remember my mother was complaining, because there

wasn't the five bedrooms. You see, she wanted to sleep and he was reading away.
And he had a very nice library.

Of what kind of books?

Kind of books...

In Hebrew, or...?

In Russian, in Hebrew, yes.

What language did your parents use at home?

My parents spoke with me a lot of Polish, Polish, but between them they spoke Jewish. I could speak and understand, but somehow I was brought up more amongst Poles, that I used just Polish.

And their normal language when they spoke together, what was that?

Jewish. And as I said, in the earlier years after the Russians...after the Russians were still fresh, because afterwards Poland was established so the Russian used to disappear. If they wanted a doctor for me, they spoke Russian, and if they didn't want me to understand anything they spoke Russian. But my uncle, Simon, wrote out the Russian alphabet for me, and underneath a Polish letter, and I learned to read Russian that way.

So when was Polish used then by your parents?

From 1920 till 1939.

But you said they spoke Polish and Yiddish, both.

Yes. Yiddish they spoke with the customers, with the Jewish customers, because some Jews in Poland, if you spoke Polish they turned against you, the Jews.

So they spoke Yiddish to their Jewish customers.

Yes.

And to each other, Polish.

Polish, or Yiddish. How the situation was arrived.

A mixture.

A mixture.

Perhaps now we can go on to talking about the war years. 1938 you were telling me that there was anti-Semitism in Nowy Dwór, and then the Germans came in.

Yes.

Can you tell me your earliest recollections of the Germans arriving?

Yes. I married in '38. My husband finished medicine in Bologna, so to practise in Poland he had to take different degrees. So he was commuting between Nowy Dwór and Warsaw. Himself he was from Lemberg, Lvov. And so we lived with my parents.

Perhaps I ought to take you a little further back than that. How did you meet your husband?

Well, I met my husband, a friend of mine introduced me to him. I was...since I was 13 I always had a monthly ticket to Warsaw; first I went to school, then I went to university. I've done romanisticket[ph] in Polish. I did French and Italian. And so I used to be always on the go, Nowy Dwór-Warsaw, Nowy Dwór-Warsaw. Then it started in Poland that, in the late Thirties, it started that a Jewish student, or woman or man, there is not much future for them. It depends what he was studying. So we decided with a friend, also from the university, we will learn a trade, and we were able to earn sooner than teaching, getting a job and teaching somewhere a language. So we went to Ort, Ort is here also in England, you can learn different...

Trades.

Trades. So we started to learn corsetry. But, you had to pay for it, so I don't know, I must have managed to pay for it at first, but then we had to disclose to our parents.

And when I disclosed I'm learning a trade, well my mother nearly went berserk. Her daughter learning a trade? There were no tradesmen in the family, and so on and so forth, very snobbish. Eventually I did finish that course, and I could earn sooner some money than I would to carry on with my education.

So you finished your corsetry course.

Finished.

But your father was a trader.

He wasn't. What, a businessman is a trader? Is it? Because he was a teacher.

Your father?

Yes. He was a teacher when he was a single man, he was teaching in Bessarabka.

So your mother saw him as a teacher?

Oh yes, oh yes, yes.

Why did you begin to learn corsetry? You said that there was no future for Jewish people who were from university.

No. First of all, you couldn't do a course what you wanted to do. I wanted to do pharmacy; to get into pharmacy you had to have the parents in a profession, a doctor, a pharmacist, a dentist, or a teacher. Even to go to a high school in Warsaw, a Gymnasium, which were State schools, you didn't pay anything, but I wouldn't be able to get in; only people from professions could get in, and go to school. So I had to go private, and they had to pay for it, like you go here to different schools.

There was no discrimination because you were Jewish?

I don't think so. Maybe, to go to school, there wouldn't be. If there would be the money to pay, I could go. So I went to a private school just for Jewish girls, a girls' school. So I couldn't do a course what I wanted to do, and to get jobs was also difficult, so the only way was, or a trade or business, what you could do, that's all.

But this had nothing to do with you being Jewish?

It was, because the last years, when I was doing my course from the languages, law was, that you could get in to do law easy, and when I was already leaving university, law was forbidden for Jews. Also, you couldn't sit at the lectures on the same side, the Jews had to sit on the other side, and the non-Jews on one side. And sometimes you got a bit of a hit as well, if somebody was nasty. There were all sorts of incidents. That was slowly coming, the epidemic from Hitler was slowly reaching Polish places of learning.

So why did you decide to learn a trade?

I decided to learn a trade because it's easier to get a customer; somebody needs a corset or a bra or something, you went to his house or they came to you, and right away you had some income.

But you could have become a teacher?

But I don't know how I would get a job.

As a Jewish person do you mean?

Yes, yes.

There was discrimination was there?

Yes. It was coming slowly, slowly.

So how did you learn the corsetry?

Well it was in Warsaw was a school, and it was mostly all students, girls, all students.

Jewish girls?

Yes, Ort is Jewish, Ort is only Jewish. And there were machines and everything there, so I learned to do sewing on a machine. At first I was distressed, I couldn't...I didn't know how to use a machine, a sewing machine, but eventually I managed. So, I used to give private lessons to children from...children who were hard in learning; I

used to teach piano lessons. I played, from when I was 16 I went to the pictures, and the picture house was owned by Jewish people; there were two picture houses in Nowy Dwór. So this picture house was owned by a Junker, a family, a man and wife; when she saw me she said, 'You saved my life. My pianist didn't turn up, can you play for me the piano tonight?' Because it was still the quiet films; it only started in Warsaw when I was 16, the first film started with Al Jolson. So, I said I can't play without music. She sent a boy to our house, and he brought the music, and I played. A friend of mine, a boy, he played the violin. So anyway, she engaged us and we played for two years. I didn't want to play before I took my A-levels, I was too busy. But I was very flattered to get perhaps some spending money easy. We played only weekends. So...

This was when you were 18?

Up till 18.

Oh, so when you were 16 you did this?

16 I started.

So between 16 and 18.

Yes. Yes, I used to buy fashionable shoes. What my parents couldn't... I had spare money. But she was a nasty woman; she used to pay us in the smallest money. She used to give us a dud[??]. She never gave us a bigger coin, only the smallest. So then I used to...I was introduced to my husband, a friend, I can't exactly remember. Anyway we started to go out and it didn't take long till he wanted to marry me. And he was a very handsome young man. So, we married, in 1938 in August. So we married, but he still was doing that course of nostrification[ph] we used to call it, till he would be able to practise as a doctor in Poland. And we lived, my parents gave us a room; we didn't have any luxury apartments, but they gave us one room for us to use.

In their house?

In their house.

This was 1938. What month was this that you married?

I married in August.

What was your husband's name?

Bronislaw Guttman. Bron, Bronislaw Guttman. So, we married in Warsaw, a small wedding at a rabbi's house, that was the fashion. Small weddings without too much of upheaval, just ordinary, with the nearest family. And he had a sister in Warsaw, with a brother-in-law, they lived in Warsaw, my husband's sister and brother. And I became pregnant very early, because really we couldn't afford to have a child so quickly, we didn't...he wasn't finished and I... So we went to a doctor, a Polish doctor, Dr Chiechanowski, and we told him we would like, I would like to have an abortion, but he said, that's a child of love, and why, and he discouraged us. So I had a little girl, born the 30th of June 1939. And we wanted to call it Maria, after my grandmother, and the Poles didn't agree to it.

The Poles didn't agree?

The Polish administration you know, they didn't agree to it, only Marila[ph].

Why?

I suppose maybe Marry, St Marry, you know; they thought it was too Polish. They didn't; this I remember like it would happen yesterday.

Tell me how it happened.

They didn't want to write down in the papers, Maria Guttman.

So what did you do?

Marila[ph], different spelling.

Did you argue with them?

I suppose so, but it didn't help. So she was born. So when the war broke out, this child was two months old, two months old. My father loved that child, and he used to, when he heard it crying he used to get up before my husband got up; that was a

bit...that wasn't...this is when you lived together like... So he was a bit hurt my husband, that his place is to go to the child. Anyway, but he loved that granddaughter. He was a lover of children, my father. In the shop, when he was in the shop he used to give sweets to children, when children used to come; he was a lovable person. So, when the war broke out, and we decided that Bronek and the baby, we should go to Warsaw, we should stay in Warsaw, and my parents stopped in Nowy Dwór. They were going by the First World War. During the First World War, I believe, the best place was to go to a big city, but that was the biggest mistake, because the warfare was different, it was only the ordinary using of the...

Rifles?

Yes, it was no bombs, there were no aviation, nothing, just... But we went, we hired a big lorry, we took a few bundles, and we went to Warsaw. In Warsaw we couldn't be together, because people couldn't accommodate three people, so I went to some friends, they owned a bakery, so we were in the bakery below, like in a den. And the bombs were falling, there wasn't a minute of peace; the bombardment was terrible. And Bronek went to the other end of Warsaw, to some friends. When he didn't turn up for me, he used to come and visit me every day, when he didn't turn up on a certain day, like, there was an appeal through the radio that all the men should leave Warsaw. I presumed that he went to his family in Lvov, which was in the Soviet hands, all that part of Poland was Russia, so you've got no Hitler. I used to meet people from Nowy Dwór, some said to me that my father is in hospital. Eventually, but my child got colitis. I couldn't, I had no milk in the breast to feed the baby; the water was polluted. There was no facilities for a baby, no hygiene, nothing. Eventually the baby, I gave her to a hospital, a children's hospital in Warsaw, and the child died. So I went back to Nowy Dwór, and my father was already dead. They didn't tell me that he was dead, they all were saying he was in hospital, from friends. A grenade fell into neighbours, and a piece hit my father through the window. It was motzu[ph] Yom Kippur when it happened, my mother was with my father in the hall, and the bombs were falling, and that fortress, Modlin, was not giving in to the Germans; it took a nice[??] few days longer. He went for a jacket, he felt cold, but he was not coming back, so she was a bit worried. When she went in the room, he was already dead.

So there was fighting on the street?

Well, the fighting in the air, bombing, all the time bombing and fighting, bombing, bombing and bombing.

So he was killed by a bomb.

He was killed...

By a bomb.

Yes. At least he didn't know nothing about the ferocity of Hitler. He just went. My mother even arranged a funeral for him, under all that shelling. And I believe she put up a tombstone, but I have never seen it. So we were living the two of us. From the shop we had some provisions so we could just exist. And we didn't think that the war will go on for years; we thought, spring will come and it will be finished. A friend of mine, a man, which we used to go together to the university, we went to school, we knew each other since children, he came to live with us. One day was a knock at the door, and my husband came for me. I didn't know where he was, but I presumed, I...you could...you had such an instinct in those days that you could foresee what's happening. And he came for me, he said he couldn't be on his own, and we should pack up and go to Lvov. My mother didn't want to go, she said that it won't be long, I'll survive. But the first thing in the morning I took my husband to the station, he should wait for me in Warsaw. In Nowy Dwór was too dangerous, in case somebody will find out.....

End of 2 side A

2 side B

So the Germans were already in occupation?

Oh yes.

So when was this?

1939, October.

So you went with him to the station?

I took him to the station, pushed him on the train, and told him to wait till I prepared my mother to live on her own. And so, I don't know how many days I was arranging, and I was waiting for the... When I left her, she came to the station; she wanted to see me once more, before I go. And I've never seen her again. So in Warsaw, we arranged...there were peasants who were earning a lot of money taking people across the river Bug. On one side...the Bug was in the middle, one side was Poland, on the other side was Russia. So, we went to his family.

So how did you find someone to take you?

Well I heard these...you get to know from people, talking, go to him, to go her; a lot of Poles, peasants, they made a lot of money from taking people on their small boat. They pushed in so many, and you had to pay.

How much did you pay?

I can't remember.

A lot?

Can't remember. We paid, we paid.

The Germans were already occupying Warsaw at this time.

Oh yes.

What did you feel at this time, what did you think was going to happen to you under the Germans, at that time?

Nothing, nothing. Nothing, you didn't think. You become numb. You just wanted to get out from there quick, as soon as possible. You didn't realise, for one second, the atrocities what could happen, you couldn't. You couldn't visualise at all. Being brought up as one was, how could you, how could you understand? Couldn't.

Do you remember the crossing of the river?

Yes.

Do you want to describe it to me?

I know, I've got a Polish dictionary, and the dictionary fell in the river, and we pulled it out. It was a big help that dictionary. A Polish-English dictionary. At the university, when I was at the university, I used to go separately to a course of English, so when I arrived to England I could read, write. I've got letters which I wrote to my family from those days, you had to laugh, because it was so translated, word by word from Polish, that it was absolutely... And my family here gave it to me, I didn't have, they received those letters from me, so they gave me back, so I have got those.

When did you write these letters?

Before I wanted to come here.

Oh so after the war. So why did you have a Polish-English dictionary?

Don't know, don't know. Don't know, Stanislavsky[ph], I've got it upstairs.

Were there many people in the boat?

Yes, well it was a small boat, we pushed in like cattle. And when we reached the other side, it's like you would come from...

Heaven?

Where is the Devil? From the Devil to Heaven. You thought that, just you got rid of Hitler. But under the Russians it's not so much better. In a way it was a bit better. But the Russians, when the Russians came - I'm skipping now - when the Russians were in the transit to go to the front, when they hadn't finished yet with the Germans, the fighting, and we in Lemberg were already free, and they were going, I... I'm jumping a bit.

It's OK.

Shall I say?

Fine.

When I was feed, in 1944, when the Germans left Lemberg, they retreated from Stalingrad, or from this part, and they went back to their...when the war was at the end, I was selling beer in a kind of a pub. It was a pub which was selling whisky and beer, and we were selling sandwiches illegally, under the counter. And this place was not far from the station in Lvov, it was a very busy spot. And I only wanted to...I was...when I was finished with the war, I was destitute, I didn't have nothing, so I wanted to get on a little bit, and have a watch to wear. So I went - and I wanted only to work where there is food, so I went for this job, got this job as a manageress in that pub. In Russian it's `Zakusocznia'. So I was there, and we used to go to the brewery, to order the barrels of beer, the supply, and the director, Shapiro[ph] was a Jew, so he was supporting me a bit, so I used to get more beer. As more beer we had, more profit we had. So, he gave me a Polish woman, I remember her name, Królikowa, she had a mother and a child, her husband was in the war, and we worked together. But he said, that Shapiro[ph] said, `The profit you will have left, you will share between you two fifty-fifty.' And so we worked together. Then he took away the management from me. I shouldn't have all that responsibility. So he made her manageress.

Who did?

That director from the brewery.

Shapiro[ph]?

Yes. And I shouldn't have all that responsibility, and he made her manageress. It's supporting, you know... And so when the soldiers, the officers used to come in and

drink, they were mostly drunk, a Russian major sitting and drinking said to me in Russian, 'Are you Jewish?' I don't think I answered. He said, 'I hate the Jews, and I hate Hitler. And I'll kill you.' And he started to take out, he wanted to take out a gun. So I fell down, hid myself under the counter. So I was thinking, well, is that my liberation, this is what I was waiting for, to be freed? So the Russians are not such angels, far from it.

The pub was owned, who owned the pub?

The government, it was all...

The Russians?

The Russians, it belonged to their country, you know, nothing is private in Russia. So eventually, the inspectors were coming round to those places, and they took out their measures, and they put in the measure in the glass, and if it wasn't enough beer, he fined you, he sacked you from the job, right away, or he put you to prison as well. This is why he took away the responsibility from me. So this woman who was with me, she will have to go.

To jail?

She didn't go to jail, she was lucky. She lost her job.

So Shapiro[ph] was trying to protect you?

Yes. So I went out to a market, something; when I came back she said the inspector was here. But we used to have big profit from the beer. You see, when the bill came to pay for the beer, let's say 100 roubles, but we had 200, because we used to, we never used to give them a full glass, and we used to add sometimes water to make it more, they were all drunk, and... Because we had to pay Shapiro[ph], bribe him; we had to bribe the men in the brewery who rolled out... Everybody had to...corruption, this is corruption in Russia. Nobody can live from their earnings. What I earned a month I could pay rent; there was nothing left to buy food, clothes, nothing. This is why Russia is in that state.

So you used to water the beer.

Yes. Once he came, somebody, I can't remember, he took a five-note rouble, and wanted to...he saw something cooking. So instead to take out a match to light a cigarette, he used that as paper, so I took it out of his hand, gave him a piece of paper. And this was, I was about a year in that place.

Can we go back now.

Yes, because I skipped a lot.

That's all right. You said that you came to Lvov by boat across the Bug, and you then were under the Russians.

Yes.

So, can you tell me what happened then?

So we went to live with Bronek's parents.

Bronek was Jewish?

Yes. We went to live with his parents. His father died from typhus, and his mother was something... They died more or less normal. They were young, she was 49, the mother. So we lived there.

Under the Russians?

Under the Russians. And Bronek was, don't know, he was doing different jobs, different this, that. He was a man of the air, you know, just to survive, he was... And it was a time, they wanted those people who fled, like we are, they wanted to take them to Siberia, give them passports, Russian passports, but we were hiding, we didn't want it. And afterwards we could see there was more chance of survival.

Where did you hide?

Well we didn't push ourselves when there was a lot of people. More or less you know, we didn't involve ourselves with anything, just to survive from day to day. And also, he had grandparents living outside Lvov, comfortable people, and so we

used to, it was a bit quieter there; they were elderly people. We just used to live from day to day.

How were you treated by the Russians?

Well, it was nothing there, it was no luxuries. When they came, and they saw how the West lived... They used to go to the theatre in a nightie; for them a ladies' nightie was like a gown. And they used to wash hands in a toilet, because water wasn't... I mean they were very primitive. Watches. They were like let out from the wilderness. Lvov is a very nice, lovely city.

And it was the Russian administration?

Yes, everything was...

They treated you well?

Well, yes, more less you been[??] safer than under the Nazis.

What sort of jobs was Bronek doing to survive?

I think he was selling something, and buying something. I can't remember, just...just can't...that period is a bit dim in my memory, you know, I can't just recollect exactly. But this was where we lived, in the flat, it was the flat he was brought up in, in that part of Lemberg he was.

So can you tell me what happened next? The Germans came in.

Next broke out the war in 1941, in June, July, I keep forgetting. Now, oh, I had a job; oh yes, I had a job. [PAUSE FOR THOUGHT] No, we went to...that's right, I don't know how it happened with that. Anyway, we lived in a different part of Lemberg with a lady, with an elderly lady in a flat, and her son was a director in a theatre, in a Polish theatre.

This was before the Germans came in?

Oh yes. That period, that's right, under the Russians. So, we lived there. And I was an usherette in a wardrobe in that theatre.

In wardrobe?

No, I was...I was hanging up the coats. I was hanging up, I had a job to hang up the coats when people used to come in with the tickets, going to the theatre. And the theatre was from Polish actors, Polish actors, and the orchestra was from Poland; they were all educated people, musicians, so it was a nice crowd and I had a job as a... And at the door to get the tickets was a captain, a Pole, and he was a captain in the army before the war, but he never disclosed that to anybody because he would have been arrested right away. So, he was just an ordinary, Starak, and he was getting the tickets. I was working in the wardrobe. I don't know what Broniek was doing, but he knew them, a lot of known actors were playing there.

Is there a name to this theatre?

Miniatur.

Which means?

Miniatur is small, something small. It came a time when they were giving passports to those, they called them 'biezency', people who were running away. Those runaway people from, like we did, we were runaway people, and they wanted...and the theatre was transferred to Russia, they all went to Russia. And this director wanted us to go with them, but we didn't want it.

Why did they transfer them?

Because they wanted to take all those people deep down in Russia.

For safety?

Not so much for safety, to do for them, to do for them. They don't want safety; for them, educated people, and a theatre in Russia, it's all...they wanted all the people who had no passports, they were not belonging anywhere, they wanted them on their side, they wanted Russian citizens. And we didn't want to go. Well we didn't know, people didn't know what to do, to go or not to go. Some went, some went, they did much better. Afterwards we had been thinking, if we would go, and my mother

would be with us, we would maybe all survived. It was more chance maybe to survive there.

So these were Polish actors?

Polish actors, yes. They came afterwards to London.

They survived the war, they survived?

Yes, some of them came to London. One day, it was already brewing something, that the Germans were pushing themselves again towards Russia when the war broke out, and I was walking with Bronek and that man who was taking the tickets in the Miniatur theatre, Starak, a gentleman passed, and he looked so much alike our mayor from Nowy Dwór, and this man was my teacher in the primary school when I was a young child. And then this gentleman went into administration and he was in the town hall and he was a mayor elected twice; he left teaching.

A Jewish man?

A Pole. A Pole, a Catholic. I said, 'He looks like Tan[??] Przedziecki,' and he says that, 'Yes, this is Tan[??] Przedziecki, would you like to meet him?' I said, 'Yes.' And this was a brother of our mayor. They were very brunette, black; Polish but you could distinguish them. And he asked me who am I, from home. Anyway he was older than myself, so he left for Warsaw, he worked in a Bank of Poland, so he knew, he didn't know me, remembered me. And anyway I told him who I am. So, we became friendly. He told me where he lives. He said he was transferred from Warsaw to Lvov with the job, like they send here people out from one town to the other, he got a promotion to go to Lemberg, he has got a wife and three children. And so we became friends. When the Germans came in, it wasn't long after, the Germans came in, back[??] to Lvov, and occupied Lemberg, a few days after he came to see what happened to us, that Mr Przedziecki. And we met his wife, and his daughter, and one son was in Russia, he was a spades[ph], he was a [INAUDIBLE] a sport...

A sportsman?

A sportsman in spades[??].

Oh, swords?

Swords, swords. Swords. He was a manager in swords. And he was sent down to a match in Russia, and he was there when the war broke out, couldn't come back. And the youngest one was 16, he worked for the AK, I heard him saying that, Mendel Beale; this is the army, the local army, the Polish local army, who was against the Germans. So he was hiding all the time from the limelight. Those people took interest in me, and we put all our belongings, the better things to them, they should look after them, because we were already anticipating what's going to happen when the Germans will come in. And those people, that family, were my saviours.

And what was their name?

Przedziecki. I'll write it down.

And they were not Jewish? I see. And you had been introduced to them by...?

Just by accident, because they had a lodger, a conductor, and this conductor lived with the Przedziecki, and he knew that conductor. One rides to the other. So he knew him, and I recognised the face, he looked so familiar, to that family. And this Przedziecki, his brother was my teacher.

Right, right.

So, and they were honest, straight people. They hid me, they.....[BREAK IN RECORDING] Five years. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

Helen, I would like you to tell me a bit more about your very early childhood in Nowy Dwór. What are your earliest memories?

My earliest memories were when I was six, and I've mentioned that my mother was suspected to have typhus, and she was in a hospital, a small hospital, and my father took me to see her. She was in the window upstairs, and we were outside, and I was afraid to look at her, because I heard that they took off all her hair, she was without, she was without hair, so I was afraid to look at her. To me she looked like a man. And I remember I used to go to school, had a little bag for the books, made out of material, very simple. We've been...I had a happy childhood; I was very spoilt, I never did a thing for myself, and when I was growing up, and always reprimanded that I was very untidy. I remember when my father was queueing for the ration, that

was after the First World War broke out, and the ration was half a pound of meat, and this was mostly given to me, everything was for me. I remember German soldiers, but very vaguely.

At the time of the war?

Yes. And then, I remember the Polish rejoicing that they already had a country on their own, that there was Poland created, and General Pilsudski, Josef Pilsudski, he was there, head in Poland, and he was very friendly towards the Jews.

Did your parents take part in that rejoicing?

I wouldn't know, I can't remember.

But you saw...

But they were made.....

End of 2 side B

3 side A

....in the street, what sort of games did you used to play?

As we lived very near the barracks where the soldiers were stationed, just like, I think it's a fence was dividing us, I remember just slightly that my parents became friendly with the German soldiers, and they used to give them over the wall some sugar, brown sugar, and different, maybe other provisions. But the sugar I still recollect.

This is during the First World War?

That's right, yes. In the street, we used to play...I never had in my vicinity Jewish friends, all Polish, and you jumped, you make...on the pavement you chalk, and you jump from one...from one quadruple?

Square?

Square, from one square to the other; I don't know how you call that in England, I've never seen it. Very primitive games, and using yourself, with nothing...or jumping over a skip, skipping, and chasing.

Did you play mostly with Jewish children?

No, no, when I was very young not, because even in that primary school were just very few Jewish, because we lived, as I mentioned, in not a Jewish district at all, and the school was more near to our district than the city. So, but I was...I didn't feel any different, if I am Jewish or not Jewish, because my parents were respected. So there was no...no anti-Semitism or anything like that. But when I finished that school when I was 13, usually you were 14 but I went a near earlier so I finished 13, I only wished to go to a high school, a Jewish high school.

When you were young, you told me you used to go on holidays to your grandparents.

That's right.

To their inn, to their pub.

Yes.

Can you describe the pub that they had?

Well, it was...the little building was wood, from wood, wooden building, just like bungalow, one level, but far from it. It was a big room, and steps leading to the room. The room was used a few times a week as that pub, when the peasants came to sell their goods, mostly milk, cheese, butter, live chickens, eggs, and after they sold all what they brought from the country they went for a treat to that pub, and they had some nice buns. I think that my grandma and her daughter they were baking that themselves, and herrings, the Polish peasants love herrings, salty herrings. And a [INAUDIBLE] drink, whisky or beer. And this, from those few days of trade my grandparents made a living. My grandfather was always engrossed in books, learning. Also people used to come to him for advice, writing a letter, reading a letter when they received from somebody. It was like a created...solicitor, you can't compare it of course, but he gave them all sorts of advice.

This was to Jewish people?

No, any, any. So the living, he didn't participate in any businesses, just books, reading, translating, that was his life.

So who served in the pub?

My grandmother and her daughter.

Did they have any servants?

No servants. no. No servants. And Friday night and Saturday, this room was used as a synagogue, prayer place, like they have, even in Manchester the very orthodox Jews, it's called a stiebel[ph], a little room where they go for their prayers; they don't go to a big synagogue, only they go there.

Was there a synagogue in Zelva[ph]?

Must have been, must have been, there was, but my grandparents lived a little bit on the outskirts from Zelva[ph], nearer the station. I remember my father saying, when the first train started to be used, that the Devil is in it.

Who said this?

My father. My father was born in 1875, this I remember, and when the train came to be heard and seen, that's the Devil. It was the beginning of civilisation.

You said your father used to teach in Bessarabka.

That's right, when he was a single man.

Right. You didn't hear him talk about this at all?

Yes, he used to talk, that he was teaching there. And the food was mamaliga, that's maize, and potatoes, bulbes, and there was even a song, that it's Monday bulbes, and Sunday bulbes, and Tuesday bulbes. The whole song was, it was very very simple food.

You don't remember the song?

[singing] Bulbes, Sunday, Monday bulbes. It rings in my head.

So he was in Romania some of this time?

Mm.

Right. You went to elementary school when you were six. Perhaps you could describe the school you went to. It was an ordinary Polish school?

Yes, but what I remember, even in that elementary school, they were teaching us German, we had a German lesson, and the German which I know up to now is from those days. They even taught us Gothic letters. But when I finished that school and I went to high school, I didn't want to know about German, so I took French. We only did in high school French and Latin and Polish.

Was German taught in all the elementary schools?

I wouldn't know, but I know I took, I was... And the teacher was called Rudolf Krause.

Do you remember him, anything about him?

Yes, a big man.

Was he a part of the Volksdeutschen?

No, that was not, that was...I'm talking about after the First World War, there was no... But I suppose I already felt that the Germans were enemies, because the war was between Russia and Germany, the First World War, so I already felt this is an enemy and I didn't want to learn later on the German.

But the teacher was a local German, living in Nowy Dwór.

Yes.

Was it a strict school, this elementary school?

In what respect?

Did you get punished?

Well I don't think...I don't think I got punished, I don't think so, because I was keen on school, now then. When I was three and a half years old I believe - this is what my parents were saying - I knew the Polish alphabet, and the, maybe the Jewish alphabet, so... Very near us, I think I mentioned, that this was an estate which was divided, the houses sold, so lived a rabbi, our Nowy Dwór rabbi lived there, Rabbi Neufeld[ph]. And my parents were friendly with them. And [INAUDIBLE], at this rabbi's house where he lived, one room he had boys learning the Talmud, and preparing them for Bar Mitzvah, and they kept talking, that Rosenberg[ph] has got a little daughter, and he has got, she's three and a half years old, and she shows with her finger, when they asked her the alphabet. So they came to our house and they took me, carried me, to that rabbi's place, and they were examining me, what is this and what is this, and I got some money afterwards, because they had been very pleased with my exam. But when I was older I forgot completely. When I was six I had to start to learn anew. It was something... But at school, I liked school.

Did you enjoy any particular part of the school life?

There was not much. There was just school and you came home. I really can't remember.

Were there very big classes can you remember?

Well it was 10,000 people in Nowy Dwór, and there was I think just two schools, so there must have been not a crowded class.

At the same time as going to school, you started your Hebrew lessons.

Oh yes, well now, private.

Private lessons, but...

There was a teacher, Rosenzaft.

Mr Rosenzaft. Can you remember the way he used to teach you?

I know he taught me more than Hebrew, not the religion, more than Hebrew, and I used to get `Metsuyan'[ph], that means the best mark, I used to get.

He taught other children as well?

I can't remember if I was private on my own, or in a group, really, I can't remember.

If we move on, when you were 13 you went to the Gymnasium in Warsaw, and you said you stayed in Warsaw at first.

Yes.

Where did you stay?

I stayed in the Jewish district of Warsaw. In Nowy Dwór, in that school, was teaching a Jewish teacher, Spielman, his second name, I can't remember his name, can't remember. And my parents came to arrangements, he lodged with my parents and I lodged with his mother and sister, he never had a father. But it was a very busy household, because his mother was a very good dressmaker, and there were always ladies coming, trying on, and he was extremely busy; and after some weeks I said to

my parents, I don't want to be there. Because at home I had a lovely home, considering it was in Poland and the beginning of Poland, we lived in a very nice house, a detached house, nice rooms, with a veranda outside. So, I didn't want to be in Warsaw with those Spielmans, because I didn't have a corner for myself. And I decided to go every morning to Warsaw. My train from Nowy Dwór was 6.42, and I was arriving in Warsaw about half-past 7. School started 8 o'clock, so I was all right. My father used to take me every single day to the station, because it was a lonely way to walk.

And when did school finish?

About 2 o'clock, and then I used to take a train. My school wasn't very far from the station; that station has still got the same name now, Dworzec Gdanski, because you went to Danzig from that station, to Warsaw; Nowy Dwór was on the way. And people were used to walk; a car was a novelty, and trams as well, so you walked.

Did you enjoy the Gymnasium?

Yes.

Were you good at any particular subjects?

Mostly languages. Maths was my...didn't understand maths very well, it was my weakness. But I was very good in languages, and they called me, when we were growing up, I'm a Minister from Words. It's like a Minister from the Interior, Home, Home Secretary, they called me, I'm a Minister from Words. Because learning Latin it was easy to understand different words, because I think that Latin is the mother of languages. And when I came to England, now, after the war, in 1946, I stayed in my cousin's house in Stretford, and they had a locum; he was a doctor my cousin, and they went away, my cousin and her husband, they went, and they had a locum from Liverpool, Dr Boyas[ph], he was in the family. And he was astonished how I knew highfalutin words; I couldn't speak English properly, the everyday words, but the difficult words I could understand. So I suppose I had this from childhood that I was, I could master languages. My uncle, Simon, wrote out for me Polish letters, and underneath he wrote out the Russian letters, which are quite different completely, and I learned from that alphabet, I learned to read Russian.

When you said that you were called Minister of Words, what is that in Polish?

Minister Spraw Stówkowych.

And that's what they used to call you?

Yes. Joking.

Do you remember any incidents or people or teachers at the Gymnasium?

Yes. Yes, I remember that teacher from Latin, Mr Pekelis, yes. And...I wasn't good in art. Centnerszwerowa, she was the teacher of art; she was a lady with her hair very straight with a parting in the middle. And I was very poor in art, I couldn't draw a line straight. But, when I came to England in 1946, after some years I joined a pottery painting class, and I quite excelled myself painting. Why did I go for pottery painting class? Because, being brought up at this factory, where I watched making the product from clay to the object, and watching them painting, and liking nice china, to this day I don't like to drink from a cup which is a thick cup, I like very fine china. And when I remarried, and after the war the shops had nothing painted, mostly white china, I used to shop in Haywoods[ph], and became friendly with a lady there, an assistant, she was very nice to me, so I used to buy china there. I used to go to market, to this very day, I've got nearly 99 per cent of my crockery is painted by me. So, if you put your mind to it, you can master it, because at school I was very poor in art.

What were your ambitions when you were at school?

Well I was thinking I wanted to study pharmacy, but it was not obtainable for me. You had to be a daughter, or a son, of a professional person, or you could...you had to bribe different channels, to pay at least a thousand dollars, which was a fortune in Poland before the war, and those could get in to study in Poland. This is why my contemporaries were all, who wanted to do medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, they all studied in France, Italy, but the parents were comfortable, they could afford to keep them abroad.

Was this because they were Jewish?

Yes, because they...it was `numerus clausus' in subjects, it was certain subjects that you could...only certain people could study. Law was open, but when I was in the Thirties, it started already to be forbidden to take law as well, and it started to come

from Germany that hatred to Jews, that the students, the Polish student didn't want to sit together with the Jews, so it was in one side the Poles, on the other side the Jews.

During this time when you were in the Gymnasium, you were saying that your parents had lodgers, tenants, in their house.

Yes, because they had a...the house we changed, from that house where we lived, till a certain time the man who bought that house wanted to live by himself in the house, occupy the house, so my parents bought the next house from that estate, and this house was bigger, that it had two little flats, two flats, so we had tenants. It was like three flats in that, three apartments in that house; one had a separate entrance and one, we had an entrance with a tenant.

And who were the tenants?

In one was, opposite us, joined the hall, they were Jewish people. It was, I remember, a Jewish baker's daughter got married and she lived with her husband there, and on the outside apartment lived a mother with a daughter.

I remember you saying, when you bought that house, was that the time when the people who owned that estate were beginning to sell it?

Yes.

That was the time, then?

Yes.

So why couldn't you buy the house you had been living in before? Did somebody else buy it?

Maybe my parents didn't know that it was for sale. It was some kind of a trick. It was something that they were very upset when it happened, but of course, I was still young, and never interested in domestic matters. I couldn't cook. When I first got married in 1938, I practically didn't know how to, when water was boiling, I was very ignorant. The attitude of my mother was, you've got plenty time for cooking and baking and doing. In Poland there was no domestic science in the high schools, only we used to learn crafts. So, I was far away. And when I got married as I said, and I

went to Lemberg, after the outbreak of the war, my husband took ill, and I wanted to make him some porridge, and I didn't know how to do it and I had to ask my mother-in-law.

If we could move on in your life, you went to university. How old were you then?

I went when I was 18.

And at university you did romance languages, you told me.

Yes.

How did you spend your spare time when you were at university?

Well, spare time. I used to travel to university as well, every day. Sometimes I used to go, travel again. I came home, I had my meal, had a wash, and I went back to Warsaw, and I had friends where I could stay the night. So we used to go to the pictures, to the theatre. In Poland there were always a musical competition. Once it was a Chopin competition, and once was Wieniawski violin competition. Well when this came in season.....

End of 3 side A

3 side B

And the music came first. And I stayed all day there, because every penny counted, every zloty counted. Instead to pay for the...for the...leaving your clothes in the cloakroom. So I stayed on in the building, till the second part started in the afternoon. I heard David Oistrakh winning his prize. There were a lot of young musicians from Russia; Russia was really always in the foreground winning. But I never heard of some of them afterwards. There was one, Unyinsky[ph], he was French, he came from France. Ida...she's still playing, she still comes to London now, but I've forgotten her second name, she's a violinist, Ida... She must be now about 70, but she lives abroad, she lives in America. Shimon Goldberg[ph]. There were a lot of, there were youngsters, it was only a young age when they could play in those competitions. And when I came to England I was even friendly with Goldberg[ph], and I met him through, he lectures in the Northern School of Music, [INAUDIBLE], and I became friendly.

Did you used to join these competitions? Did you enter these competitions in Warsaw?

No, no. It was a time that I was going to stop school, having only O-levels, at 16, and concentrate on music, and go to the school of music in Warsaw, because I used to take lessons from a professor from that school. Whilst I was playing piano at the pictures I had spare money, and I could afford to pay, so I used to go to this professor which was very expensive. But I must say, maybe I had the abilities, but I wasn't the studious type really.

So what made you decide not to go?

So I continued with the education.

And then you went on to university?

Yes.

At the university, you spent time going to these musical competitions?

That's right. This came to me first. Anyway, I used to go to the theatre, the pictures, dances. In Poland they used to have dances with boys' schools; a boys' class and a girls' class had a dance together.

This is while you were at university, or at school?

At school.

And do you remember these dances?

Yes.

Where did they used to have them?

Used to happen in a school, in one of the schools.

All Jewish?

All Jewish.

At university, did you belong to any society?

No. No, no. There was a society which was very anti-Semitic, and they used to wear four...with special caps, the students, and those were really anti-Semites, those who belonged to that club.

Do you remember what it was called?

What, the cap?

No, the club.

No. But on the way to, travelling every single day on the train, there was many many of us, all sorts of religious, Jewish or non-Jewish. I was very friendly with non-Jewish boys, and one boy fancied me and I fancied him back. I had that feeling in me that I would never upset my parents to marry out. They were already beginning to be mixed marriages, very seldom but they were, but I would never upset... Like now,

children have not no consideration what their parents think, they do what they want. But I would never upset them.

So what did you tell the boy?

Well after I thought, he thought the same with his family. We stopped seeing each other. You couldn't help it, because in the same compartment we used to meet and talk, on the way to Warsaw.

Well I think now we can go forward a bit to the war years. You did say that you said goodbye to your mother in Nowy Dwór and you never saw her again. Do you know what happened to your mother?

When we came to Lemberg we lived with Broniek's parents, and he wanted to make some money. Somebody offered him some money if he will go back again to Poland, to the Germans, and bring some jewellery back. So he saw my mother once more, and she was still managing. Broniek, going back, he was caught with it, he had it in his 'mankiet'.

Sleeve.

In his sleeve. And a German said to another one, said, 'Herman, es knakt'. He must have some money. And he was lucky that they took it away but they let him go. Very few people used to still cross the border, and some knew me, knew my mother, so they told me that she went to live with my family, those Winogradow, in Warsaw, they took care of her. And then I was told that she died a normal death in 1941. And she was buried on her own, because it was a time they were already burying ten, twenty in one grave. But I myself was in such despair, it's '41, when the war broke out, and the Germans, I couldn't mourn her; I was so full of myself that I couldn't mourn. I remember I was walking in the street and crying, but that's all what I could do. When I was in Poland recently, I've been twice to the cemetery in Warsaw, and I just couldn't make any findings.

Can we come now to you. In Lvov you were working at this theatre, and then you said that the theatre people went to Russia.

That's right.

What did you do then, when they had left?

When they left it was already getting dangerous, and you couldn't... I must say, I didn't give the Germans one day's work, because they were catching people in the streets.

So then you met Mr Przedziecki.

Yes.

And can you tell me then how you went into hiding?

I said how he came to see us?

Yes. You met him on the street.

Yes. But...we met him on the street.....[BREAK IN RECORDING] We met him, I suppose very close to the outbreak of the war, because when they marched into Lemberg they didn't have too much fight, it was just, they've gone in. So he came to see us; we lived very near each other as it happens. He came to see us, what happened to us. And we gave him what we had left, the few possessions, because from those possessions we lived on that, we were selling it. There was a shoemaker nearby, a Pole, and he was our shoemaker whilst we were under the Russians; he was an honest man, so we used to take to him, and he used to sell for us, and give us the money. So we gave to the Przedzieckis table-cloths I had hand-embroidered, and different things. Jewellery just went. Because when the Germans occupied Lemberg, they put out posters, big posters in the street, and they put on the Jews...the Jews had to pay, two million zlotys I think, to pay in. They were using all sorts of tricks. And I became obsessed if the Jews will pay. I thought, we will pay the dues, and it will be all right. But that was just the beginning. So whatever I had, I just gave, donated to it, to that fund. As long, the two million zlotys will be paid in. Then started something else. So this is how we were in contact all the time with them, we got to know the wife and the daughter and a young boy, the youngest boy was 16 at the time.

You used the shoemaker for selling some of your goods.

Yes.

All sorts of goods.

Yes.

Anything that could be sold.

That's right. Because he had people coming. And everything was like that, second-hand buying and selling, and they opened shops where you took your coat, you left there, you came a few days after, they gave you the money. It's like now they've got those agencies with selling clothes.

And was this Jewish people selling the clothes?

Yes, Jewish people were selling, to buy a piece of bread.

And who had the shops?

Non-Jews, non-Jews.

So did they give fair prices?

I wouldn't say so. Because if you are in need, they use you.

So how did it go on with this family? You got to know them better?

Yes.

And then what happened?

And then happened... I can't remember, that they changed their apartment; they went to live in a different apartment. During that time, when we were still living in our flat, when you went out, you had to go out to do a bit of shopping or something, you never knew which way to turn, to go to the left or go to the right; the instinct was telling you, if you left to the left you managed to escape. A word, 'Lapanka', it means they were catching you. The Germans used to go out in patrols, walking in the street. They saw a Jew, 'Come in.' And they formed a row of Jews. So one day I went out to look for Bronek; he went out for something and he didn't come back, so I went out

in the streets looking for him. They caught me, and I found myself in a big...in a playground, in a school playground. Thousands and thousands of Jews, men, children, girls, boys, old people. So I met a woman, also a doctor's wife from a clinic, and we were together, just keeping ourselves together. A German soldier started a conversation with her, and I said...she said he wants to help her to get out from there on a motorbike. So I said, well he won't want to do that for nothing. So what? She was ready to go to bed with him right away, no hesitation, as long as she will get out from there. But I lost...she wanted to get rid of me, I was interfering like. Towards the late afternoon they let us, 'Go, out!' 'Raus!'

Had the woman gone by then?

I don't know what happened to her. But I think that children and old people were left. Those were the first victims; the first victims to be persecuted and killed were babies, children, which are of no use, just to feed them, and old people. And the flower of the young people like I was at the time aged, maybe already getting a bit older, and Broniek, those they needed; men like him they were used to the last minute, because the soldiers were on the front, and the factories and the places needed workers, so those who were healthy and in good shape, those were taken to work for the ammunition and all sorts of things for them.

So what happened after that incident?

After that incident I came home, started again. We were...we... We lived... [PAUSE]
I went blank.

It's OK, we can come back to it later.

[PAUSE] Where we still lived, and I can't remember, it was a little flat, and in the night police came, German, the Nazis came to fetch us. They were looking for Broniek's sister. Broniek had only one sister. Did I tell you how her husband disappeared? No. Broniek had a sister with a husband, and we were at the time at his grandparents who lived outside Lvov, mentioned that. And he was standing, and the Germans were passing, they...

Beckoned?

Beckoned to him, and we never saw him again. He was the first victim in the family. Just disappeared. So, when the police came to take us, to look for his sister, and we didn't know where his sister was. But there was a major, not a Nazi but in the army, regular army, a major, who fell in love with her, he liked her, and he wanted to save her. So he took her in to the barracks where they stayed: they weren't barracks, it was a big building which they occupied, and he dressed her up in a uniform, and got her out from there in disguise, and he took her on the customs, on a border, where...it's the customs...granyitza[ph]...

Customs post.

Post, that's right. To cook for the soldiers as a non-Jewess. We didn't know, or we did know, anyway... They took us, they told us to come with them; they took us as...

Hostages.

Hostages, on a big lorry, and on the lorry were all Jews with beards, with their little caps, the very orthodox Jews. And they took us to the Janowska camp, were interrogating us. And then they told us to stay on the grounds, the grounds, and on the grounds I remember people dying, swollen, lying. I could see [INAUDIBLE] in a big, big piece of land. They kept us a few days. Broniek found a friend who was, I should say he was a kapo; a kapo was who worked for the Germans. So he said to him, 'Why didn't you tell me you are here, I would help you to get out?' Anyway, they let us out after a few days.

The kapo was not Jewish?

Yes.

Was Jewish?

Yes.

So Janowska, what sort of camp was Janowska?

A camp. He was like Treblinka, a miniature camp, but no gas ovens, I don't think there were ovens there in Janowska.

So where did you stay in Janowska?

Lying on the ground.

No blocks?

No, we weren't put to any blocks. Sadism. They caught us once, they used to catch people fifty times like that. You didn't die so easy. This was everybody's prayer, to die, but you had to go through hell to die. So how they took us there, they let us out. And I arranged that I will go to Zenya[ph], Ella, I will go to Ella, maybe I will work also there, in the kitchen.

Ella?

Ella, that was his sister-in-law...his sister, my sister-in-law.

Right, the one who was working for the Germans.

That's right. So I took the train. In the train... Broniek was still working properly, because they needed him; that was only '41, or '42, they needed him.

What was he doing?

A doctor. But I was hiding first, because the women, I was in the biggest danger right away, after the children and the old people. And those old people on that lorry, they didn't realise they are going to die, they were so stupid in thinking. And they were killed right away, because as I said, they had no interest to save such a generation; they only were concentrating on keeping people from about 18 till about 30, 35, who give them...they need them.

So was Broniek...which hospital was Broniek working in?

It was in the Wehrmacht, somewhere in the Wehrmacht what, they used to create little, not proper hospitals but you know, aid for the soldiers.

So you went to Ella. Where was Ella?

Ella was...can't remember that place, but I went on a train, I went on a train. And in the train a man asked me for my papers. Anyway, my papers were without any value whatsoever; I had some money on me, and I think a ring or so, I gave it to him, and he let me off. He was, not a spy, he was a...a detective, catching people.

A German?

No, he was a Volksdeutsch. He was a German living in...living there, but not from German blood right through. He was not a Reichsdeutsch, a Volksdeutsch.

So you were on the train, and you went to Ella.

So I went to Ella.

Was this the border between...where was Ella?

Ella was on the border, I suppose between Russia.

And...?

Russia and occupied territories by the Germans. And when she saw me, it's like she would see a ghost, she was petrified. And she said to me, here is a Ukrainian who suspects that she is Jewish.

End of 3 side B

4 side A

She gave me something to eat, and I've never had such a taste, good taste in my mouth till today. Food was...really food didn't bother me, it's that danger, that was the most thing what I, right through the war, it mattered. Not the food, to have some bread or this, like some dreamed, a chocolate or... Only the fear, what's going to happen to you.

So what happened then?

So decided that I've got to go home, back.

She did, or you did?

The two of us. It was no point. And I've never heard from her since. And I came to Lvov back. And I went to those Przedzieckis, for a night's sleep, and I stayed with them months. When I stayed with them, we decided...Broniek used to come and see me, we decided that we will go into hiding on our own, and that was the 3rd of June.

The 3rd of June?

Yes. 1943. And we went out together, and we were hiding in bushes, and slopes, and we were two days together till the 5th, and we decided we've got to come back and go our own way. There was no prospect for us to survive together.

Why was that?

Nothing to eat, nowhere to be, we didn't know anybody.

So you split up.

Split up. I've never seen him again. I heard of him. The 13th of June, the 13th, Przedziecka, I met her in church, and she said that Broniek called to her house, he wanted a shirt, because she kept a few things, and she gave him a shirt and we never heard from him. And that month of June I was living rough all month.

Whereabouts?

In Lemberg

In the countryside?

No, in the middle of Lemberg, in the centre of Lemberg, in a nice district. I slept a few nights under a tree from a church. I used to be in church from first thing in the morning till about 1 o'clock in the Catholic church. I felt the safest there. And 1 o'clock I used to go to a cathedral, because in that church, St Nicholas, it's finished all the praying, so I went there. And then I had...I used to buy myself only some bread and eat in the underground toilets.

In the cathedral?

Yes. And there were...no, there were...I think it was a building, or a town hall, I don't know; they've got, like here they've got those toilets. So this was underneath like it was in [INAUDIBLE] square, and there I felt safe as well you know, and there I had some things to eat. I think that the woman who was sitting there in charge, she had a suspicion that I am Jewish, to look at me you could see, but she didn't bother. There were a lot of Catholics, Christians, they were very helpful, but a lot were not, it was mixed.

In the Catholic church, did people know you were there? Did anybody know you were there?

Nobody bothered me.

You were still in touch with the Przedzieckis?

Yes, because the Przedzieckis lived extremely near that church, that was their church.

That was St Nicholas's church.

Yes. And I was there. Then I had a feeling, you know, the instinct is so developed that you could judge what one thinks of you. I had the feeling that there are mingling detectives there, to fish out the Jews. To that extent I slept a few nights under the tree near that church, and one night I saw a silhouette of a man walking in the dark; the streets were dark, it was the war time. And I had the feeling he came to see who is

sleeping under the tree, and I put my things together and I went away, never came back to that spot.

Did you know the Catholic priest?

No, but I knew the prayers.

How did you know the prayers?

Well Przedziecka taught me. And I had the rose...

Rosary.

Rosary.

So they had instructed you how to act?

Yes. After I was freed, when the Russians came, I went to that church, to the priest, with a paper, I wanted to convert, because I believed that the Virgin Mary saved me, because...and she came to my dream in the night, I had to watch out. But then, he found different discrepancies, is that what you say? You know, I didn't feel out...so...right, he corrected, so I started to realise, what am I doing? I want to go to England, and my family is a reverend dog[??], so how will I fit in?

Let's go back to the war years, when you are hiding in the church. Does that mean then, in St Nicholas's church in the mornings, you are attending services...

Every service, it was from starting 8 o'clock till 12, and a mass.

One after another?

One after the other.

Did nobody suspect, nobody looked strangely at you?

Don't know. I wasn't caught. Then, in that month I was sleeping at the disused cemetery for nights. A month, 30 days is a long time.

In the cemetery?

In the cemetery. And once a German, it was Whitsuntide, June, so a German came with his son to get some green branches to trim the house; this is a habit in Poland that flowers and arrangements for Whitsuntide. And he nearly stepped on me, because I was lying in the bushes, but he didn't.

He was a German?

A German. I could hear him talking German to his boy. And I survived that incident. Once I thought somebody is coming, I flew out, and I was running, and a mother was walking with a boy, and the boy started, 'Mum, Mum, it's a Jewess'. And she started, 'Be quiet.' I escaped again death.

They were Polish?

Polish.

So, let me get the timing right. How long were you in the church? How many days did you spend in the church?

A month, I was on the go.

Sometimes the church, and then the cemetery.

Wherever it was possible. At the very beginning of that time, I ran in a building where we lived with Broniek and that lady whose son was a director in Miniatur, we lived during the Russians occupation, they had a flat there. I ran in that building, and there was a caretaker, Michalowa; she lived downstairs, she had that flat, because it was a building with so many flights of stairs and she was in charge, and she had to lock up because it was curfew power. I ran in, knocked to her, she recognised me, I said to her, 'Can I sleep on the stairs?' She didn't say anything, she went back to the flat; in the flat she lived with an old husband, and a lover. And a spy lived with her, a detective. She went in there, and I was waiting. When I came in, I had a bag with my few possessions, and a hat on, and a coat, because in the night it's cold in June, I thought it's no good here, something. Well I walked out from the building, and walked very graciously, and slowly. And this detective ran out like mad from the building to catch me. He was expected to see a woman with a hat, and my hat was in

the bag, and running away, a fugitive. But I just walked, and he didn't recognise me, because he hardly saw me in the dark. Again, escaped death. This I will never forget.

That detective lived with the caretaker?

Yes, he must have lodged with her or something. But she went in for a consultation and what to do with me. And this woman, Bronek used to pay her 20 something, rouble maybe, a week, because he was very keen I should have nice nails, and nicely dressed; this was under the Russians, we were then not so badly off. But he put a bit of attention, and she was doing it and getting paid, and she paid me back like this. I met her when I was freed, but I didn't, I left. What, I thought, I'll take her to the police? What will I gain on it? So I just left. During that month, wandering about all day, all night, I was caught by a Ukrainian. He wasn't a professional detective, he just went on his own account to catch Jews. To that extent, he took that bag off me, he took the coat off me, and he wanted me to take the dress off. So I shouted to him, 'What are you doing?' and he ran away. So, I used to go to church in the morning, and Przedziecka used to come often there to meet me, and she looked at me, that I've got nothing on really. So she winked, and I went to her flat, and she gave me a jacket, I still had things with her. But she didn't take me to stay with her, because they were awfully afraid to have me as a Jewess in their flat. There was an incident. Her husband worked at the time for the Germans where they were dealing with paraffin, a depot. Paraffin was very short, short of paraffin, so he stole a container with paraffin for the house, and he was caught going out, so they arrested him. He could have got a big sentence of, prison sentence, but she went and begged them, and she was a good-looking young woman, she begged them, and they let him out. So he was so scared after that to have me. I was caught, the same period what, the month, I was caught by two or three detectives; they said come in the...in the hall, in the building...I must take the dictionary. So they said, 'Documents.' My documents were worthless, so I didn't want to show them. I said, 'I'll give you what I've got,' and I had 300 roubles or marks, I can't remember. They let me off. One day I was sitting on the slopes of the Carmelite church. A man came towards me. Documents. So I had a false document, but I showed him. It seemed that I came from a different city and so on. He said, 'What are you doing here, now? They are clearing Lemberg completely from the Jews. You found the wrong spot.'

What were these false documents?

I think I've got some. You know, like a passport.

And who did you get them from?

Bronek did it. This is why I am Helena, because my name is Rachel. My name is Rachel, so he made me papers as Helena. My maiden name was Rosenberg, so he made me Rawska, and that I was born in Lublin; different, you know, all false.

But still Jewish?

No.

Polish?

Yes. But, if they would take that document and check in Lublin, no sign of me. You see some were pinching birth certificates off the dead people, so some documents were very good.

So why did the person who approached you and look at your documents, how did he know you were Jewish?

Oh you could read from the face. You could read, the face was just lifeless. How could I read people who want to do me harm? How did I know that that Michalowa is going for a consultation to give me away? You learn that in trouble. So...

He was a Polish man, the man who came to look at your documents?

Yes. But he was a decent man. Because, I said to him, whatever...I always had some money on me, because after it happened I went, I sold something to have some money on me, to have something to get off with. He said, he talked to me, sensed, he said, 'You are in the wrong place.' So he said, 'Let's go down,' and we went in a building, and I took out the money I had, to give him. He didn't do it for nothing. Then I was left penniless, and I said to him, 'I've got nothing left.' So he gave me a hundred back.

But how much did you give him in all?

Not a lot; some said, aren't we stupid, for so little we let you go. But I never argued, I was always nice, and begged. Because if you raise your voice, right away they got

worse. I think it will soon finish. But after a month, I just couldn't go on any longer. I reminded myself that I knew Barbara; she was a maid to a judge. Didn't I tell you?

No. [BREAK IN RECORDING] Perhaps you could tell me about Barbara.

I was walking home during the...during the Nazis stay in Lvov. The situation was very bad, but one could escape being caught, and manage to come home when he[??] left home. I was looking at a shop where they were selling clothes and different things, second-hand. In Poland they were called Kommiss[ph] shops. Kommiss[ph], you bring and they give you, when they sell it they give you the money back, money for it. A little woman next to me was also looking in the window, and she said, 'Nice things are here'. I said, 'Yes.' Then we started a conversation, and we were walking home together, in the same direction, and she said that she is a maid, a servant, with a Ukrainian judge, Mr Liczkowski. He was an known figure, because before the war there was a girl killed outside Lemberg, and it was a case, a detective story, and Mr Liczkowski was the judge. So I knew of Mr Liczkowski from pre-war papers, because I used to like to read the detectives...

Reports.

Reports, from the weekly, the weekly magazines. So we walked together, and she recognised, I must have told her that I am Jewish. So I said, 'Have you got everything?' She was a Reichsdeutsch; she was German born, all her family was German, and all her family left Lemberg to go to Germany, and she was the only one who left in the service. So her rations were very good rations, they gave her much more than ordinary citizens used to receive. And I told her that I am short of bread, but I could spare some soap powder. Anyway she told me where she lives, and we exchanged a few times our goods. And she disappeared from my scene. Events were happening with me. But when I lived rough, all that month of June, and I was really desperate where to sleep the next night, I reminded myself of Barbara, and I went to the building where she lived. This was a professional, beautiful building in a nice part of Lemberg, Ulica Zielona, Green Street. And I went up the stairs. There were two entrances, one the front door, and one the back door for the servants. In that household there were two servants, and the third one was an older one, 78 at the time, Yawdwigia[??], and she was there, not working and not paying...they took her in, sorry for her, an old woman, nowhere to go. I knocked at the window, because there was a passage. Barbara opened the door, she recognised me, and she started to shout, 'The Doctor is next-door, not here'. And I was already inside. And she took me in. She

was a dedicated Christian; she never married for the love of Jesus. She used to go to Communion every single day, not having to go to Confession, because she was so pure. And Yadvigia[??] was the same. She thought to keep me, it's a white lie, she's saving a life. On the other hand, she didn't want to be caught. She was 17 years in service with them, they trusted her, and to keep me in that building would cause the whole building hanging in the street, because they would show the population that to keep Jews, this is what happens, the punishment, they hang them in a row in the middle of the street. Even people not connected with it. She was with Yadvigia[??]; the third maid was Ukrainian, but she was away in their estate in the country. The lady was a painter. I was located in a toilet; the toilet was quite size, because it was holding a cupboard, a box cupboard where they stored coal in the winter, but as it was summer it was empty. So I sat all day inside the box, and at night I used to go out and sleep on the box. She did that arrangement, because if somebody used to come unexpectedly or what, not to catch me there. They had two toilets, the other toilet was adjacent with that one, but only for the Mr and the Mrs. I felt quite safe there. When the master used to go away for weekends to his wife, I used to go out, have a wash, eat better, sleep better, and this was going on all through the summer. One day she said to me that her lady is coming back, and she allocated me, located me in the cellar. Every tenant had a cellar with a padlock, and they kept the coal there. I was...I didn't go directly from the toilet to the cellar.....

End of 4 side A

4 side B

The Przedziecki family, he cooled off a bit after that period with that paraffin, that they took me in again. And it was going to be...it was already October, the 20th of October, St Irene's Day, and the daughter was Irene, and we were preparing for her a little birthday, names day party, because the Catholics they have names days instead of birthdays. So we were getting ready, nice food, the daughter came in from work and said, 'Helen, you have got to go out immediately. I met Barbara in the street, and we have been talking, and I think somebody was listening what we were talking, and we might have in a few minutes somebody searching and looking for you'. So I didn't even manage to finish buttering whatever I did; I went out and went back to Barbara, and she put me in the cellar, she put me in the cellar, and I was in her cellar for five months and twenty days. In the cellar I could hear all the political news when all the servants met each other. Because the Russians were already approaching towards Lemberg, the Germans were in defeat. But they were a long time near a place called Brody, which is quite known, and very near Lemberg, but they were there, and not moving an inch forward. In the cellar, I wore the same clothes for months and months. How many...whatever I possessed I wore, to keep me warm, because it was winter time. Once a week I used to go out for the day, taking a bucket out, and buying some bread, because she couldn't feed me on bread, it was rationed, so I had to find money for the bread. Sometimes I used to buy a quarter of marmalade made of beetroot and with saccharine, but even then I was choosy, I couldn't eat it, I had to give it away. I couldn't taste it with saccharine. So I just lived on water and bread. Sometimes Barbara used to bring me a drop of hot soup. But she had to be very careful not to, to avoid suspicion from the concierge who lived at the door of the cellar, and he watched every person who went in the building. They arranged, both those women, Yadwigia[??] who made me the dress, and Barbara, when it was starting to get dark, to be on vigil outside, because I had to sneak in very quickly from the street to the cellar, and I managed to do it, not to be caught even once.

Where did you spend your days?

The days I spent in churches, going to all the masses in all the churches, and the underground toilets. How I wasn't caught, the way I looked, I will never know. Because I was dressed in patches, patched skirt; I was very poorly dressed. I had lice in my socks, big lice, everywhere, so Przedziecka gave me a little paraffin lamp, a small size, and I used to light it in the middle of the night and having a killing session with the lice, burning them on the hot glass from the lamp.

What time in the morning did you go out?

I went out about 9, 10, when it started to come to life the city.

And you came back?

When it was dusk, because it was... I went in the cellar the 20th of October, and came out at the end of March, so I was all the winter there.

How did you keep warm?

I had how many nightwear, I had...whatever I possessed, regarding clothes, I had it on. And I had a sheet made out of paper, slept, and covered myself whatever I've got. And I never sneezed and I never coughed, and I was never caught with anything.

You said you used to go out sometimes buying.

Just once a week, I used to go out. Let's be...I had to throw out excreta in the bucket. I couldn't afford to spend money on a new bucket every week. Also, to discard it was a problem, because the Germans were looking for signs where Jews are hiding, and when they noticed different suspicious things, like a lot of something in the streets or in the wastelands, they knew that nearby are hiding Jews, and they were coming in the nights and searching.

So you didn't go out each day with the bucket?

No, a week.

But you did go out of the cellar each day?

I had to. I had to face it. Because couldn't ask her to do it. And once I remember that bucket fell over on me.

So you only went out of the cellar one day a week. All the other time, throughout the day you stayed in the cellar otherwise. Did you have any money to spend?

Well the money, I had only what this man, this shoemaker, I knew his name and I've forgotten already, this shoemaker knew of me, so he always had something from my possessions to sell. So...Pionskowski I think, I used to pop into him and he used to give me the money.

Even when you were in the cellar?

Yes.

And what sort of things were you selling to him?

Well, what I had, I had quite nice table-clothes, or I had...this I remember distinctly, and I think some underwear, good ones which I never wore, but it was those things. It was no jewellery for sale, I didn't have any. But from household things, he had it; he was an honest man, and he knew me from the times, from the Russians, and I was his customer and he knew my husband, because the clinic was in the same building, he knew us and he was treating us very nicely, and he was treating me nicely. She sometimes treated me, Basha, because she was a very good natured, she was distributing the rations. Even her bosses didn't have such rations, so when she got a little bit more butter or something, she was sharing with them.

Where was the judge all this time?

He worked in the courts.

But he was living in the apartment?

He was living in the apartment. So when, one day she came and she said to me I've got to clear out, when the Bolsheviks, the Soviets, started to move towards Lemberg, her lady came, said to Barbara, we've got to clear the cellar out, because there might be bombardment, you might have to hide in the cellar, so I had to...both...I had to liquidate in no time, not to leave any traces that somebody was here for six months. All the papers, the sheets, the papers, thick sheets were my papers, everything had to be discarded, and I had to think where to go next. Anyway the Przedzieckis took me.

Can I, just before you go on to that, Barbara was a Reich German.

Yes.

The other maid...

Was Polish.

And the judge and his wife never knew anything...

Never knew. They knew after, when I was free.

How did they know?

When I was...when I was freed, when the Russians came in, occupied Lemberg back, and we came out, I'll go back, when I went back to Przedziecki, after the cellar. After the cellar I explained to him, to Tadeusz, I said look, they are coming now back, the Russians, and don't be so scared, it won't be long, and I'll stay a bit with you, and he agreed to it. And one day, they came, his wife and him, to an arrangement, that they want to leave Lemberg, go back to Warsaw, because they had been afraid for the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians hated the Poles; it was always a big antagonism between them. So they were expecting a slaughter.

After the Russian victory.

Yes. So they arranged between them that they're leaving Warsaw - they're leaving Lemberg, going to Warsaw, to their old roots. Really, they have been connected only with Warsaw, but because his job with the Bank of Poland gave him promotion, sent him to Lemberg, he found himself in Lemberg. Otherwise life and soul they were with Warsaw. I said, what are you going to do about me? In the same apartment lived an old lady, Joszt; her husband was a judge but he was dead. And another room was occupied by a young woman with a daughter, and her husband was a Polish officer who also disappeared, and the daughter was a bit of...very poor morals, so she was doing I don't know what. The Przedzieckis asked those two people, are they agreeing that Helen should stay with you, and they did agree. This Polish woman, her father was killed in the First War, I believe because he took...he was on the side of a Jew; somebody wanted to kill him, and he saved him, as a Jew. And his daughter risked again to hide a Jewish woman, she wasn't afraid, I should stop.

What was her name?

Forgotten. I wasn't as comfortable to stay with the women than with the Przedzieckis; they used me more to do things. But, I managed. It wasn't very long, and the Russians occupied Lemberg. The whole building was moved in the cellar, hiding from the bombs, from the... The first Russians came in, the Kalmucks they call them, from the very far east, those very cruel people, and they asked in Russian if a lot of Jews are left in Lemberg. And one young man, a dentist, answered, 'There are no Jews left in Lemberg, Hitler killed them.' And he said, 'Oh I hate Hitler, but I hate the Jews.' So that wasn't a nice experience for me. I thought, did I have to persevere all those years to expect this answer? Anyway, they saw me those people; I bet they recognised I'm Jewish but they didn't bother doing anything.

You were in the cellar with them?

Because I was afraid to...bombs. Then I came out of the hiding, and I lived with them, with those women. And then there was a committee arranged that the survivors were running to a spot where it was posters handed out, and everybody signed a name who survived, then I found out that my husband didn't survive, there was no signature of his, only a family Reichman, who survived, three of them, and we joined life together after.

Can I just come back a bit. Did you know what happened to Barbara? Did you see Barbara again?

Well, then I decided, I am going to pay back Barbara. Because that judge, with his wife, were in bad financial circumstances, and they couldn't afford to keep her. So I went to introduce myself to her - to them. They must have been wondering how do I come to know Barbara. It was a big gap in age, she was then 56 and I was in my late twenties, and the language and everything, but they didn't say anything, and I said to them that I am taking care of Barbara. And I can't remember what happened to that Yadwigia[??], I can't, but to Barbara I am taking her back to where I lived, and she will be with me. And we arranged that such and such a day, I will come and fetch her. And when I came to fetch her, they told me that in one of the nights they took her away.

The Russians?

They found in all the papers left, the lists of the Reichsdeutsch people, and they fetched her, never saw her again.

Did you talk to the judge? Did you explain to the judge what happened?

No.

Never?

I'll never never never pretend that I was...I just came on the scene.

What about the Przedzieckis? Did you see them then?

Przedzieckis, I've got somewhere a postcard. They went to Warsaw, and they just got...when the Warsaw uprising was, the Warsaw uprising, nothing to do with the Jews, he wrote me a card, and he was sorry that they left Lvov. So, the next thing I heard, the Przedzieckis were taken to a place called Pruszkow, not far from Warsaw; they guarded all those Poles and took them to concentration camps.

The Russians did? The Germans? It would be the Germans...

The Germans.

This is just after the Warsaw rising.

That's right, the Germans, the Germans. And he was taken to Oranienburg, and he never came back. She was taken with her daughter to Ravensbrück. She came back with swollen knees. I saw her when I survived, and I was in Breslau, and we decided that we are going to leave Poland and go our ways in different countries. I went to Warsaw, first to Katowice and then to Warsaw, about a visa about going to England. And I went to the street where they lived in Warsaw, and I knocked at the door and she opened the door, Helena, she's Helena Przedziecka; she thought somebody from the other world arrived. Well she was in a concentration camp with her daughter, with swollen knees, and Irene had TB.

She survived?

She survived. And they lived in a flat in Warsaw, which belonged to another sister, Ada[ph]. This Ada[ph] worked before the war for the Ministry of War, she had a good job, and she had a lovely flat in Warsaw, she was single, and she took in those

from Lemberg when they all came, and they lived together. Ada[ph] died not long ago, she was 93.

That's[??] Helena?

So, when I saw them, then I started to help. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

Is it OK if we go back just a little bit over one or two things you've spoken about. For instance you said that in 1938 you came to visit your family.

'7.

1937. I wonder could you tell me about the visit, why you made it, and anything you can remember.

Yes. My cousin in Manchester, called Lionel Boyas[ph], his mother was my mother's sister, she was alive. And a brother, Uncle Abram[ph] was alive. So she wanted my mother to come for a visit to England to see them, and they sent, I can't remember exactly but I think it was a few hundred pounds, to pay for the tickets, expenses, because we wouldn't be able to afford at the time in Poland to spend on it. And the Poles didn't give my mother a passport, just refused. So, we didn't know what to do with that money. This must have been in 1935. In 1937 it was the Coronation of King George VI, and a lot of excursions were organised from all over the world. I suggested to my parents, maybe they will let me go, and they did, and in the travel office, Orbis[ph], which exist to this day in Poland, the main travel agent, Orbis[ph], they arranged an excursion for two weeks to come to visit my family. I travelled by train through Berlin, Ostend, nearly two days travelling, and standing all the time in the window and looking at the scenery. I've never been out of a country, out of my country. My cousins waited for me in Dover, and I stayed with them in Manchester, they lived in George Street, off Cheetham Road. My uncle was a minister, a clergyman, but my aunt wasn't alive any more, she died in the meantime. Two weeks elapsed very quickly, but my family had acquaintances, and he was I think in the government, Simon, I can't remember their name, but through him, and he was a relation of theirs, Weitzman...

Leon Simon?

Years ago, years and years ago. Was it Leon Simon?

It could have been.

And David Weitzman was an MP, a Labour MP, and they were related to my auntie from Scotland, through Glasgow, my aunt was from Glasgow. So I got my visa extended and I stayed at the time in England three months. It was already, the war time was in view, and I believe that my parents, in spite that I was the only child, they wrote to the family they should try to keep me here. But I didn't want to entertain that suggestion; I was the only one for my parents, and I didn't want to stop in England, and I refused. I suppose I didn't realise also the consequences of the war. Who did? Maybe I would go...stop, but I went back, and one of my cousins, Uncle David...Uncle Abram's[ph], a daughter, Esther, she went with me for two weeks to Poland. Here my family was taking me around, but not far out. Because one cousin had a baby, and the other one was expecting a baby, and the baby was born before I went home, and this was a little girl, and I was the first one to see her in hospital. And this lady is now 53 years old, and she is the.....

End of 4 side B

5 side A

Now this young lady, she is a personality in her own right. She qualified as a barrister, then she qualified as a solicitor, and was a partner in a London firm. But her husband was offered a job as a chief rabbi and they left London, they left, and in South Africa she really does only some tutoring now, especially, she's now...the blacks, she is teaching them.

Was she Abraham Dove's daughter?

No, she was my mother's sister's granddaughter.

So what was that name?

Her name now is Anne Harris[ph], but her father was Boyas[ph], Lionel Boyas[ph], I mentioned.

He was a minister?

No, he was...he ruined his life. He was one of the cleverest boys at the time in Manchester, went to Manchester Grammar School, and six months before qualifying as a doctor he said to his mother, I'm going to business, and he was a businessman, but he was an intellectual. And it just ruined his life. So he was married, and had this girl, Anne[??], but he died, sort of ten years ago.

You said that when you first tried to get from Poland, that you had a problem getting a passport.

I personally, going for this excursion, didn't have a problem.

But before that.

But my mother had, and they didn't let her have a passport. The Polish government didn't let her out, they didn't let her out; they didn't give her a passport. I don't know, maybe because we were Jewish, she was Jewish, or maybe they didn't want her to take the money out of the country. I don't know the reason. They didn't know that that money was sent from England. She never obtained a passport to go abroad, so I replaced her. The money which was sent, I used it for me coming. I must say, when I

arrived to London, my family waited in Dover, when we went through London, I felt, going through Oxford Street, what a wealthy, what a...what a...it was, everywhere were decorations, on account of the Coronation, streets; the atmosphere was...it was something I couldn't grasp after coming from little Poland. I'm not a person to be easily attracted to something, or admiring... It was...I could feel it, it's an empire. Well, it was a time England had so many colonies. The strength, it was one...something one can't imagine. When I came back home after that visit, and some people who knew I was in England, were looking at me with different eyes, and I felt embarrassed for the first few weeks. I have been to England, it was something that few could reach, to go abroad. They were poking with their fingers, showing, oh she has been to England.

This is your Jewish friends?

Yes, of course, it was written on me that I was in England, but the Jewish friends knew that I went for so many months to England, that it was something, I had a special privilege.

When you were in Manchester, how did you find the Jewish community? Did you find any differences between the Jewish community that you had left in Poland?

Yes, well freedom; freedom, and you could say things, you didn't have to hide. And I mixed with a lot of nice people, and they used to take me about. I didn't travel a lot, as I said; Blackpool, I couldn't get over Blackpool, with the sea, because in Poland, I've never been near a sea, we only had a river. Everything was so much different, and you could see the wealth.

Were you introduced to any Jewish families in Manchester?

Yes, oh yes, I was introduced. A family Schlossberg[ph], and this lady, she only died a few months ago, she was a doctor's wife, known in the district. And I was introduced to quite a lot of very important people. And my uncle was a very learned man in Hebrew, and he had a Talmud class of grown-up people; amongst them was my cousin, who was already, this cousin who left university, he was amongst that group of people.

This was Abraham Dove, who had the...?

Who had the class. I don't know, maybe in that class was...I don't want to mention names, maybe I'm mistaken, but it was one gentleman, Mr Borin, and he was in my uncle's class, this I know distinctly; he was an industrial chemist, and his wife is still alive in Manchester. I used to venture out to town on my own, because my cousin who left medicine, he had an agency for clothes in Lever Street, Fommer[ph] Street, from London, a friend, and wholesale. So I wanted to go and visit them. And I took the bus, the tram, to Manchester, on my own, because Uncle Abram's[ph] daughter Esther, she was also in the gown business. So I asked, where is Lever Street?
(laughs) Well I saw the joke afterwards, when I knew English better. But I managed to find it.

When you went back, how did you feel, going back to Nowy Dwór?

Well I wanted to go back, I loved my parents. It's not like it is now. I loved my parents, I wanted. And Esther, that cousin, she went with me back for two weeks, and she met my family, my father and mother. But when they were checking the passports, the Poles were checking the passports in the train, when we showed...I showed my passport, well, but when she showed her passport, he went...

He saluted her.

He saluted her. I'll never forget that, that moment, how he saluted. The respect he had, a British passport.

You didn't have any sinking feeling, going back to Poland?

No. I didn't realise. Didn't realise what clouds are coming on the sky. I couldn't, I couldn't. I had a lovely time for three months, I had an experience of my life, and I came back.

Your parents didn't attempt to persuade you to stay?

No. I got to know afterwards that my family mentioned that my parents were asking them if they could stop me, and leave me here, but I don't know.

They didn't talk to you about it?

No. Well, in a year's time I married, in 1938 I married. In 1939 I already had a baby, a little girl. So, events were going quickly. And I married a doctor, a young doctor who finished in Italy, and he was going to take a degree to be able to practise in Poland, and we all loved each other. It was a bright future, and not for long.

You never considered after that going West?

Oh, then it was out of the question. It wasn't easy, they didn't let out. It wasn't, it was a closed frontier.

Can I move on to something else that, you know when, after the baby's death, you returned to Nowy Dwór, and you said that returning with you there was a man from, a boyhood friend.

Yes.

Could you tell me a bit more about him?

He was a boy who grew up in Nowy Dwór, his name was Abram Nowodworsky[ph]. And he was a student, and we knew each other from school days. And...he knew that my father was dead when I was going back to Nowy Dwór, after my baby died. My baby died in a children's hospital in Warsaw, my baby died from colitis; that was 99 per cent of children were dying of colitis, from the conditions we lived in. There was no bottles at the time to feed babies, very little, and the beginning of it mostly breast-feeding. And there was no milk to give that child, and the water wasn't pure, and the hygiene was terrible. So when I brought the child to the hospital, the first thing was that they pulled the skin on the hand, and the skin was standing like an old person, till it dissolved[??]. So, that was the check. And they were heartbroken, the doctors, because every child had the same trouble.

So how did your friend come into the picture?

So, I had been in contact with him, and when we came, when I came to Nowy Dwór, I don't know what happened to his family, he was a poor boy, and I said, you know, we would feel safer if you could stay with us two women, and he stayed with us. He was a teacher. He had a girlfriend in Warsaw. I think, I've got letters, in my bundle of letters is a few letters, because he was corresponding...he got to know, when my cousin was here, Esther, was with us, he got to know her, and they became friends -

well no, nothing serious, it was a platonic friendship, because he was a very intelligent boy and his English was very good, so he wrote letters in English; he just wanted experience. So he agreed, and he stayed with us. I just can't remember. He must have gone to Warsaw, to this girl, I don't know what happened to him. I know he's not alive.

If we can move forward a bit. When you were...in Lvov now, when you were...the Germans were looking for Broniek's sister.

Yes.

Could you say a little more about that. What was her name, and her husband's name?

her name was Ella Balaban, by marriage.

And her husband?

Zenek. He was the first one to disappear, and we never saw him, never traced him. This was, outside Lvov was a place called Kulparkov[ph], and it was known, it was a mental hospital, like Prestwich Hospital is known, so this hospital, Kulparkov[ph], was known. And my husband's grandparents had an estate there, a small estate, I think they had a shop, and they lived there, they were quite comfortable people. So we went to stay with them, the family; we thought safer there than in Lvov. And this Zenek went outside the house, just looked, and a few Germans passed, and they called him, and that's it, we never saw him again. This was the beginning of the beginning; we didn't realise what could happen. We thought maybe they want to know the way or something. But events were happening so fast, day after day, that we didn't have the time to be in sorrow, to moan. I myself when I got to know, through a message, that my mother was dead in Wawsaw in 1941, I was so full of fear over myself that I just didn't react to it. It's hard to understand.

When you were in Lvov, there was a long period between June 1941 when the Germans came in, and June 1943 when you went into hiding. I would just like to ask you a little more about that. Where were you staying during this two-year period, where were you staying?

In 1941 the war broke out. Well, the first few months there were happenings, happenings, but you still could go by, and we still had that flat with an old lady, and

her son was that director in that Miniatur theatre. So he looked after his mother, and I had that job in the theatre, and we lived from day to day.

The theatre was still going under the Germans?

Yes. No, no. I don't think it went under the Germans, no. No, it wasn't under the Germans. It was before 1941. Because they were asking who wants to go with them, they were all going to Russia, they were all flying to Russia.

So were you working when the Germans were there?

I never worked for the Germans. A day I didn't work for them. I went to the Przedziecki family, I went to them. I just went for a few days, we didn't realise, and I stayed eight months, at one go, in one go.

Yes. What about, the lady who owned the flat, was that Michalowa?

Michalowa was...Michalowa was...

Caretaker?

Concierge, yes. The caretaker. Michalowa was a caretaker in a building. In Aleja Paderewski 15 where we lived. She was locking up the gate for the night, she was opening in the morning; anything one of the tenants required, she was attending to it.

And I think you said you had treated her well.

That's right, we treated her well, and she did some housework for us, washing up. Very light work, not cleaning. I think I mentioned my husband, he liked when I was nicely groomed, and dressed, and the nails in order, so he didn't want me to do any washing up, and he could afford because he was doing business here, there. Nothing was stable, but we managed to live from day to day, and he used to pay her, I think 20 zlotys, something, a month, and she used to come. So really we were in good terms. And what she wanted to do to me afterwards, to give me away to a detective, that was terrible. So I stayed with the Przedzieckis. When...I went into hiding really quite early, very early, and before that, my sister-in-law, Ella, she worked for the Germans, was cooking for them, and I went to see her in that train, and in the train I was caught, asking for my papers, and I managed to get out of it. And I went to see her, and she

was terribly worried to see me. One Jewess is enough, but two was a bit much. And she told me that a Ukrainian fellow keeps an eye on her, he thinks that she is Jewish, so I didn't stay.

Do you know where that was?

No. Maybe if I could see a map I could just point it out. It was on a border between two countries, like Russia and annexed Russia. And I've never heard of... When I came back to Lemberg, to Lvov, I went back to the Przedziecki family. I stayed a few nights at this station, where I boarded a train. Brody, maybe it was Brody. And I went in at the station, to a flat... This man worked on the railways. I don't know if they didn't realise who I was, maybe they pretended, but they kept me a few days, and I did some sewing for her. But this woman became very jealous, and really she had no cause to be jealous. She was jealous that maybe I had some connections with her husband. And one day she went in a little room, closed the door, and she was listening, what will happen. And I could feel that it's something going on, so I didn't want to be for one second in the same room with her husband, and I didn't know where to put myself, because it was only a poor little abode. And then I said to her, I can't remember the name, 'Don't worry, I'll leave you tomorrow morning; I can see you are worried, and I'll leave you in the morning and I'll go back to Lemberg,' and this is what I did.

Their flat was in the station?

Yes, it was...it was a part of the station. He had a job there, signalman or something, so he was in and out. It was like next to the station.

How did you meet him?

Oh I didn't meet him, I just went in, I knocked at the door and I went in, to this house, and I said could I have a rest or something, could I stay the night with you. And they let me. I never could understand, if they were nice, decent people, not to do me any harm. But they didn't show that fear. But she became jealous. Well then I thought, that's dangerous. And I took the train back, and I managed to come to the Przedzieckis, and I stayed with Przedziecki again, with the family. And I was quite comfortable. I was always next to the back door, because in case somebody rings, I can slip out right away. And this was the time when I mentioned, about, the lady

Przedziecka, Helena, her sister's boyfriend who was working at the airport, they were putting...

Tarmac?

Tarmac, the tarmac. So the bosses, his bosses were Reichsdeutsch, so they had good rations, so she was cooking for all the people who came from Warsaw, all that staff from that firm who do the tarmac, they ate very well, she cooked for them. They knew that I am Jewish.

This was in the flat?

This was in the flat. They knew I am Jewish, but they didn't interfere at all. So I was... But that Vladik[ph], that boyfriend, he was very uneasy with me being also Jewish under the same roof.

And he, Vladik[ph], was Jewish?

Yes. And they did their job, and they went back to Warsaw. Vladik's[ph] death was also something one cannot forget. He stayed with his brother in Warsaw, in a flat, and they were all on Aryans papers. Aryans papers, it means they had passports as Poles, but they were, the passports were quite legitimate, and they lived openly, they didn't look Jewish. And this Vladik[ph] lived with his brother and sister...his wife, and one day was a knock at the door, they opened the door, and informers came, detectives. They asked him for some names. And they saw a jacket hanging on the...in the clo...hanging, a jacket hanging on the, like in a hall, and they put their hands in and they took out some papers, passports. And they mentioned Vladik's wife[??], and his name, I can't remember, a Polish name. He was in the other room. When he heard his name mentioned, he opened the door and he threw himself out, and he died instantly. A priest was passing the street and he found him dead. And those informers didn't come to look for him, they came just to look for somebody. I got to know that afterwards, after the war.

So they found his Jewish papers, or they found the Aryan papers?

The Aryan papers, Aryan, but you never knew, nobody was walking with Jewish papers. But some papers were more valid than the others. My papers were just.....

End of 5 side A

5 side B

A lot of birth certificates were stolen from the archives, from different offices, with people dead; and those were taken, and a lot of people made a lot of money producing those passports. But when a person was caught with a passport like that, they could have found out from, let's say Blackpool that this...oh yes, that we've got a birth certificate of that person, it means it's valid. It wasn't written she's dead or not, but yes, she was born, was registered. And this passport, they couldn't...and mostly with a woman, couldn't produce that evidence what a man, so she could get by, if she could...she knew the prayers and she knew how to...

Do the sign of the cross.

The sign of the cross, and so she could get away. A man was harder, because they wanted to see if he was circumcised or not. Sometimes they were puzzled in that case as well, but this was evidence; a man with false papers was much harder to survive.

You said yours were very good papers.

Mine weren't good.

They weren't?

No. Mine weren't good, mine were just fictitious, fictitious. They only had that special...

Stamp?

Not stamp, the folder itself, they had those folders, passport written, printed, what you could buy, and inside, my name was, my first name was Rachel so we made me Helena, Rosenberg[ph] maiden name, they made me Rawska, and I was born in Lublin, I've never been in Lublin; with a year, with a date, everything, with a false stamp. Everything was false, nothing had any background. This is why, when I was being...they caught me so many times and asked me for my papers, I didn't want to give them, because I knew right away they will take me to the police. And I didn't want to go to the police, because I knew that was death, and I always said to them...I've got a little razor blade, and I'll cut my veins myself.

You said this to yourself?

Yes.

But this never happened?

No. Because for a few hundred pounds they let me go.

Was there a ghetto in Lvov?

Yes.

They created a ghetto?

Oh yes. I've never been to that ghetto. I've always been on the Aryan side, always Aryan. I've been... A Ukrainian woman who was delivering some groceries for that Przedziecka, whilst I was with Przedziecka. She was a young woman, Maria, she had a flat in a very nice part of Lemberg, where this house was requisitioned by the Germans, they lived there. But she managed to get a little flat. The little flat contained, you walked in, it was a hall and two rooms, and a toilet, and in the hall was a little ring to cook something, that was the flat. But in a very good district. When something happened that I had to go out from Przedzieckis' flat, some danger, there was danger, every day was some other danger, she said she will take me in for a few days. She lived in one room; in the other room, the front room, lived a Ukrainian informer. She was travelling once a week to the country and buying groceries, vegetables, and bringing to the city, and selling, this is how she made a living. Once I knocked at the door and this informer opened the door for me, and he asked me in. I don't know, to this day I will never know, how I managed, because he surely recognised I am Jewish. I asked for Maria, but he said she is not in. So he said, 'Wait here.' And I was drinking with him, don't know, whisky, or... He was drinking and I was drinking. I just...I just risked. And he let me go, he didn't bother. Another time I came to her, and she put me in her room, and one night she got a lot of friends, friends, [INAUDIBLE], men, women, and they were drinking, and they couldn't go home because it was curfew hour, they have to wait till first thing in the morning. And I was under the bed, lying all night, and they didn't know that there was somebody under the bed.

And the party was going on around you?

I could hear them, and the Poles when they drink, they get jolly, and... I don't know what was going on there, how do I know? But the fact is, I never sneezed, I never coughed, I never breathed. It was something, they didn't hear, and it was only a small room. And in the morning they went, so I went out.

Did you have any contact with the ghetto at all?

No.

You had no friends there?

No. No. Because I didn't know Lemberg before the war; I got to know Lemberg in the war, and with the family of my first husband, it was a family of 37 people, and none of them survived. So I only knew them, they were uncles and aunts and cousins, and those grandparents. With them disappearing, I didn't know anybody.

In staying with the Przedzieckis, and also with Barbara, did you give any rent, or any other money?

No. They kept me for nothing. They gave me, not I gave them, and I never promised anything. What could I promise? No, my survival is a real miracle, because a lot of people survived paying, paying, and denounce to the Germans, that was a lot of Poles and a lot of Ukrainians. I was more afraid for Poles and Ukrainians than for Germans, because a German, if you had been dressed properly, European dressed, he didn't recognise if you are Jewish or not, not a [INAUDIBLE]. But the Poles, they had that instinct right away, they knew, because the Jews in Germany lived very well. And a lot of Jews in Germany didn't feel Jewish at all, they were so Germanized, and they didn't think ever that it will happen to them. Maybe that part of Jewish people, the Orthodox Jews, different, but those European who, they didn't realise that they will start to look up in the generations, who was Jewish.

Can we move on to the cellar, a little more about that. You said there was one day a week you had to go out, and I understand why. What day of the week was that?

They had to find...I don't know, it wasn't regular, that I suppose... Those two women, Yadvigia[ph] who made a dress, and Barbara, they had to see what's happening on the stairs, passage, because it was a busy house, a busy house, it was like...compare it

to like...it was a nice district but it was a house of professional people, so people went to a dentist, a doctor, and to a solicitor, and in and out, but there were flats where they were living. So they had to find when it was quiet, and nobody looking. And it was just the next-door; I had to pass the door of the caretaker. The caretaker didn't know, all that time I was there he didn't know that there was a Jewess in the cellar or in the flat. So one was standing near one door, one was standing with the open door to the street, and I had to dash out in a second. And I was mostly coming dusk, because I was in the cellar all winter; as I mentioned I went in the cellar the 20th of October, so the day was getting very short, so we arranged that I will come when it was... So they were already waiting downstairs on guard, and I used to sneak in in a second.

So the entrance to the cellar was in the hallway of the house.

Right away, like you walk into my hall, and the first door was... He had a flat there, I don't know if it was eye[??] to see also if somebody... He was, this caretaker was just locking up and seeing that the block is free from anybody. I used to sit...it was a time I used to sneak in, and sit on the top floor, on the stairs all night, and I remember people were opening, on the top flat, they were opening the door, and they used to say in Polish, `sherdji'[ph], she's sitting. But they were decent people; they pretended they don't know. There was a lot of categories in the people. Some people didn't bother, some people right away give you away; when they notice somebody sitting, they knew you're not sitting, somebody who's got where to sleep; it's a vagabond, so, who could they be? Jewish. I was...when I saw beggars in Poland, there was a lot of beggars begging, mostly near churches, with a stretched hand, to get something, I was jealous of them, because they were free, they could beg, but I couldn't.

So all the people in the flat who saw you, in the building who saw you, they didn't give you away.

Nobody saw me. Just one flat, one entrance, one...

But when they saw you sitting on the stair.

Well, on the top floor were so many flats. The other ones didn't know of me at all, but there was one flat they must have noticed that there is somebody every night coming to sleep on the steps. So this is why they said one word, `Sitting'. Not she or he, but `Sitting'.

Why did you come out onto the stair?

I had nowhere to sleep. It was a month of me living rough. After that indent Przedziecki had with the paraffin, he was afraid.

But you stayed on in the flat didn't you, when you were in the cellar. You went on the steps...

No no, this is how I got to the cellar. After Przedziecki was caught... I was staying with the Przedzieckis eight months, that's a long time. Then, he was afraid to have me, so one month I was living rough. I mentioned.

Yes.

I won't mention again. No, I mentioned where I was... So, then I thought, I will have to change my place, and one day I reminded myself about Basha, Barbara's existence, because after a month I had enough in the street.

I understand. And so, but when you slept on the steps...

Yes, stairs.

On the stairs, was that when you were in the cellar?

No.

That was before?

This was a month, one month, I lived rough. I lived rough. I slept on a disused cemetery, on the stairs, under a church, maybe in some other places for a day or two. But this was more or less a month. And eventually I reminded myself about this Barbara, and I knocked to her and she let me in, and I was with her in the toilet for a few months, and six months in the cellar, and it makes up to a few years.

So if we can come back to the day when you left the cellar, you went out into the town didn't you, one day a week.

Yes.

How did you know which day to go out? Did you go out the same day of the week?
When you left the cellar, to empty the bucket, and to do some shopping.

I left the cellar, I left the cellar... When I was in the cellar I was going out every week.

Which day of the week was that?

During the week, maybe was a Tuesday. I suppose they arranged that, when it's the slackest day for people coming in the building. But when I left the cellar, it was already...it was already spring, and the Russians were getting the Germans out, and they were already running back, the Germans, from Stalingrad slowly. And they were under a place called Brody, and I was still in the cellar when they were in Brody, because from the woman talking between them, that they are...stand there waiting a long time, to start the...push the Germans back to Germany. So she came, Barbara, and said that her lady wants to make a shelter in the cellar, because the Russians are coming, and it will be bombardment, and they want to settle in the cellar, so I had to come out. So I went back to Przedziecki.

In the cellar, how did you spend your days, what did you do, how did you keep yourself occupied?

Lying still, and lying still, because nobody knew during the day, who is in the cellar. Sometimes Barbara used to come and bring me a drop of soup, or a hot drink, but she never spoke to me, just sign. At night I was given a little lamp, paraffin lamp, and I was killing my lice.

Yes, you told me. But during the rest of the time you were just...

I was still lying. I daren't cause any movements because somebody would walk in in the cellar, and...`Oh, I can hear something, I can hear what...who is there?' And this is how it started. This was...one cannot believe it, that a person can go through such a state of keeping your body working.

You had a little prayer book.

Yes.

What did you use that for?

Well this I used mostly when Przedziecka, when I slept with her, and I took it in the cellar to make signs, to know which day more or less it is, so I marked it. Because the cellar had, it was like a den, the cellar. Well the cellar had a little window, that a bit of light used to come into the cellar during the day. The cellar was only for coal.

So you knew when the day was ending.

Oh yes, I knew when. Well in the morning they used to come, the maids, it was a household with maids, they used to come, and have a chat; one maid met another one, and I could get to know some news from them.

Right. I think now perhaps we could move on to the time at the liberation. [BREAK IN RECORDING] You were just talking about when you came as a visitor here.

When I was a visitor, staying with them in George Street, I was on my own in the house, somebody knocked at the door, and asked about, if Uncle is in. I said he's not in. Anyway, he went. This gentleman said to my uncle, a girl, a young lady, opened the door for me, I didn't know if she is Jewish or not. So when Uncle came, he took my head in his hands and looked. 'My family doesn't look non-Jewish.' You know, he was a bit upset that they suspected, he suspected I could have looked not Jewish.

You were telling me now about your father, just as we were drinking some coffee, that he was in the Misrahi[ph] movement.

Yes, he belonged to the Misrahi[ph], but he wasn't Orthodox; he was learned, but not Orthodox. He used to go only a few times a year to Shul. But they respected him, and whenever he came to Shul he got Aliya, and they...they didn't take any notice. The same Uncle Dove. It's the worst, when some people... I knew some very religious...I knew a religious girl, after the war, she survived the war and she really, as a non-Jewish, and she married an Orthodox man, they invited me to come on Sabbath in the afternoon. So he said to her, 'Oh I'm sure she will bring a bag with her, she will carry a bag in her hand.' And Tesha[ph] said, 'No, she won't.' I didn't. I went to Broughton Park where they lived, Hannover[??] Gardens, I just walked, nothing in my hand, even not a handkerchief, because I respected his religion and I wouldn't be any different. When I came to England, my cousin Elsie, she's Orthodox, I walked

from Cheetham Road to Sedgley[ph] Park Road, I walked; she wouldn't know if I take a bus or not, but I wouldn't cheat her. And when we got married with Henry, what we went through, both, in the war, we didn't...we couldn't live on Kashrut because we wouldn't be alive. But we decided we are having a kosher home, we want our relatives to come and visit us and eat with us, and I wouldn't take on my conscience that something is wrong.

Your father in Nowy Dwór, you said that he knew the Rabbi. Wasn't the Rabbi a bit worried that your father worked on the Sabbath, and wasn't too observant?

I can't remember really how this...I was a baby, I was a baby carried on a hand; I don't think I could... I was young. No I wasn't a baby because I must have been about three, but still three years old is small. I know the young men who were learning with the Rabbi the Torah and everything, the Talmud, so they came to our house, took me, and I was showing them the alphabet. But, well the job, it was a job, it was a factory which, Shabbat was the most important day, they paid out the wages to the workers, and if he took on a job he had to agree to it.

Can we move now to the liberation, and really I would just like you to tell me what happened, from the liberation onwards.

Yes. Well, it wasn't long after I had to... I had to leave the cellar, because they were preparing it as a shelter. I went back to the Przedzieckis. I said, you can see the situation; the Russians are coming nearer and nearer, and things are not as severe, and they are running away all the time, pushing towards Germany. And Przedziecki gave in, and he said all right, come here. So I went back to the flat where I stayed with them. And Ulica, that's a hard word, Zyblikiewicza, not far from Zielona where Barbara lived: as it happened they lived very near, walking distance, a few minutes. So I was there. And life was going on, more or less, mostly, it wasn't... But, they got scared, that when the Russians will come in, and the Ukrainians, they will really have a pogrom on the Poles, because they hate each other; the Ukrainians and the Poles hate each other, and it will be a bloodshed. And they decided to leave Lemberg and go back to Warsaw. I asked them, what will happen to me? They said, we will go and ask those two women if they agree, and they agreed. And they went to Warsaw. He was supposed to come to visit, he had something here, but he wrote a card, that Przedziecki, but he never came, because happenings...not long after the Warsaw uprising started, which was mostly towards the Poles, and then they took them, they

had to leave Warsaw, and they were taken to different camps in the last weeks before they capitulated.

The two women who took you in, you said one of them...

Was a...she was a widow of a judge, Joszt.

And was she the one whose father...?

No. The other one, was a younger woman, a young woman with a daughter, 18, 19.

What was her name?

I've forgotten.

And it was her father that had helped.

Her father helped the Jews in the First World War. He took sides, and he was shot. And she agreed for me to stay, as a Jewess. It was a nice gesture. But they were, the girl, I don't.....

End of 5 side B

6 side A

You said that the younger woman was of low morals.

Of low moral.

In what way?

Well, she didn't come nights, and she was...you could...she worked, and they had some money, but... At the time life is so worthless that... I wasn't that comfortable with them too, I had to do more housework, and...it wasn't the same what I was with the Przedzieckis, but I was under a roof, and slept in a bed, and it was easier. Eventually the Russians overtook Lemberg, and I went down in the cellar as a shelter from the bombs, and there were people from the whole building accumulated. I wasn't afraid at the time, because we were all in danger, as a Jew or not Jew, from the bomb, and the taking over the different soldiers. So when some Kalmucks we used to call them, those are the Russians with those eyes, maybe near the China border, the...they used to send them always in the first...the less civilised Russians. They came down in the cellar, and they asked the people there, are there many Jews here in Lvov, and the Poles answered, 'You know they are killed all the Jews, there are none left'. So he said, 'I hate the Jews and I hate the Germans.' And it depressed me, this statement, I thought, what am I fighting for? Anyway they left the cellar, and gradually life was coming out a bit, to be freer, and then we all who came out from hiding, somehow ran to one spot, and there were put out placards on the walls and everybody signed their name who survived, and looked for people, they might find relatives, friends. And I only found a family from Nowy Dwór, a man, wife and a girl, Reichman, and they suggested I should join with them, not to be alone. What I did.

Where was that?

In Lvov. In Zyblikiewicza 20, in the flat where the Przedzieckis lived. And what I did, I lived there with those two women. And they left very nice furniture, the Przedzieckis, a very nicely furnished flat. And I went to, I got a job. I only wanted to go to have a job where I can have food, so somehow I went to some kind of a pub, and I was in that pub, and I got to know the brewery director where I could collect the barrels of beer; they were selling beer and whisky. It was still very hectic, because the Germans were running away fast towards Germany, and the Russians were

pushing them, and this place where I was working was very near the main station in Lemberg, so it was the traffic, and it was very hectic. But this director from the brewery changed my status from the manageress to an ordinary help, there were only two of us, and he made the Polish woman, Krulikova[ph], he made her the manageress. Well, he thought, let her have the responsibility, not me, as a Jewess. Well he was Jewish, so he supported me.

Why didn't he want you to have the responsibility?

Because responsibility was a dangerous job. We were selling the beer, we had to cheat; we wouldn't be able to survive not cheating. Because when we collected money for a barrel of beer, we had the surplus of the money left after paying the brewery, we had to give to that director Shapiro[ph], to the people who rolled out the barrel to the lorry, the lorry driver: we had to share out the money between a lot of people, to keep us floating. And we wanted some for us extra, because the wages what they paid, the government paid, the wages, we only had to pay the rent where we lived, and for food there was nothing left. So you couldn't be honest, and this is how life is in Russia. So, it was a dangerous job, because they were sending out inspectors to check if we give the proper glass of beer. And in the end, when I was...I was one day out to do a bit of shopping, and when I came back, this Krulikova[ph] said an inspector came, sat down at a table, took out a measure, put in the glass, and it was mixing a lot of beer. So, she was very lucky, they just sacked her, because she could have been imprisoned.

Did Shapiro[ph] help you?

In what?

In making enough money.

Shapiro[ph] helped me, because every place of that zakuzochina[ph] they called it, he was allocated so much barrels of beer, but he used to give us extra. There was no shortage of customers to drink, because they were always drunk. They were going to the station and they were going towards, like to Germany, drunk. They were only drinking. And one day, a Russian major came in, sat down at the table, drinking, and he said to me, in Russian, 'Are you Jewish?' I don't think I answered. But he said, 'I hate the Jews, and I'll kill you.' So I just hid myself under the counter, because maybe, it could have been a joke, it could have been true, I didn't want to risk it, and

they were drunk. So, I had those two incidents in a very short time, where I could see that the Jews are not very welcome.

How had you got this job in the first place?

Well you see, I suppose we were applying somewhere for jobs. There were no men around to do jobs, mostly women; all the men were at the front, fighting, or helping, or, so it was mostly women. So I got a job. And I was starting, I bought a watch, I never had a watch for years. I started to build myself up, because I was very poor, destitute. I didn't have any clothes, I was very poor, so I wanted a job where I could have some money left. And I think I was in that...so gradually, gradually, it was occupied completely by the Russians, and they are starting to supply the jobs to invalids, invalidated from the war the Russians, got jobs like we had. So, a Russian came, he made him the manager, a Russian, and I learned him[??] a bit of tricks. Because he wanted to have something, because he was poor. So I learned him[??] the tricks, and we were sharing whatever it was; I knew all the ropes, so we were sharing 50-50 whatever it was over. After a year, we, the Reichmans and me, we decided, we've got to get out from Lemberg, because in the end they will close the borders, and they will make Lvov, they will integrate, they will annexe completely that part of Poland, what they did till today, and they won't let us out. So we started to apply, you could do it voluntarily, repatriation, to go towards Poland, to the side which was Poland. So we liquidated whatever we've got, we went on a lorry to Poland, and we went to Krakow, and this Reichman, he knew Krakow, and he had some friends. But when we arrived there we just couldn't settle, so we went to Breslau, and everything was afresh, just after the fighting. Breslau before the war I believe was a gorgeous city, but it was just demolished completely. And there was a committee formed, that they were supplying people with flats, apartments, where to live; there was all a new population, because Germans ran away, they were mostly Poles, and Jews, and people who came from the East. And we had supplied a beautiful flat. The flat was occupied by a German architect, and very nice furniture, a grand piano, and nice crockery, beautiful pictures, a beautiful established flat. And we started to think what we can do here.

He had left all this?

He left, he just ran away. He went on the front, he was fighting, but the family I suppose was... I only was reading his letters which they left there, and had an idea

who they were; they were very affluent during the Germans, but they left with nothing, and they ran away, so we had it all.

Did you find any interesting documents or photographs?

Yes I did. This is what I said, I found photographs, and I can't trace them, maybe I have got them somewhere, amongst my books, and I will have to look for it. There was a lot of photographs and a lot of letters, and books, and I started to learn the piano gradually, I took a professor, teacher, came. Because I had time to do it, and I even brought music, I've got music which I brought with me when I came here.

From that flat?

From the flat.

What was in the photographs you saw?

The photographs were pictures I think from Warsawvarshav[ph], I remember poor Jews queueing and standing, and you see all the building broken, demolished, destroyed, then pictures from different synagogues. There were nothing drastic, like dead people or something, no, but destroyed parts.

And he had taken these photographs?

He left it, he left it, and I had them here. And I'm sure, I don't think I could have lent to somebody, and they didn't give me back. I think...when I get time I'll start to look thoroughly amongst my papers I've got, I've got a lot of books and papers upstairs.

Did you work at all when you were in that flat, you or the Reichmans?

So, what we will do, well, whenever you went out walking you find, you met people you knew in Lvov. So I met my dentist in Lvov, two brothers. And anyway, six people, five men, and I was the sixth, we opened three shops, we opened three shops. One shop was just...the Germans were in the situation as the Jews were, not with such danger in life but making ends meet. They had to sell their possessions to live on. So we opened a shop who was buying jewellery, gold, and all those metals.

Hardware?

No, how do you...in Polish, [POLISH WORD], the good metals, the gold, silver, platinum, we used to buy. Reichman was a jeweller by profession, and another fellow, I've forgotten his name, he was a jeweller. Test gold with the acid. Oh, I could do those things, and we were buying bargains from them.

From the Germans?

Yes.

How did you manage to get together the money to open these shops?

Well there were...the shops were closed down shops, broken in shops, left without proprietors; the Germans ran away. So there was an office where you could go and ask, you want so and so shop, so we managed to get those shops. As I say, I already made a bit of money in Lemberg, and the same, all of them, a dentist...

They were all Jewish?

They were all Jewish, five Jewish men, and I was the only woman. And three shops; one shop we used to buy everything what they brought, clothes, china, crockery, bedding, whatever they could lay their hands on, and we were buying, offering them a low price, and gradually we made the money, and we managed very well. And one shop was with jewellery where they were there, the jewellers, they understood better the stones and the gold. So really we made a life; there was no life, we worked all day, we were dressed every day the same, and we came home, and we just, we didn't go anywhere, we never had any social life. Just, we knew that it's all temporary, because we won't stop even there; we started to think about...I think we only had that shop a year, we were thinking to leave there, and go into the world. So I started to go to Katowice and to Warsaw to the consul, and I started to contact my family that I want to come to England. The other ones went to Paris, and went to Argentine, and a few went to America, and I met other friends from Nowy Dwór who lived not far from Breslau. We were finding each other, was a period, we were finding, discovering, who survived, who didn't.

The Reichmans were with you?

Yes. But the Reichmans went to Paris, and they lived in Argentine; they came twice to see me here.

Why did you choose England to come to?

Because I've been in England before, I knew my family from before, so they suggested a lot of them come to Palestine, go here, go there, but I just wanted to come here because I knew the Doves and the Boyas[ph]. So the only way to bring me over was by, as a domestic.

To come back to Breslau for a minute, how did you feel about the Germans at this time?

There were no Germans there. All the Germans ran away, there were no Germans left in Breslau, there were no Germans. Well, we still lived like in a turmoil, hoping maybe somebody will turn up. There was...it was just existence.

How did you feel towards the Poles?

Well the Poles, I...when I was in Lemberg, I started...the Poles, on the whole I didn't like the Poles, but those Poles who saved me, I, when I went to Warsaw, to the consul, my first aim was to find them in Warsaw. I had the address, I knew where they lived in Warsaw, and I went where they lived, and the lady, Helena, and Irene, lived with their aunt Ada[ph] in a flat in Warsaw. And then I found out that they were in concentration camps, and when they saw me they couldn't believe their own eyes. But from the day I came to them, I started to help them. What I never promised them, because I couldn't, I helped them with everything. They came slowly, they had two sons so one came from Russia and the other one was there; anyway they came to...when we left, when I left...when I left Wroclaw, Breslau, they came, and took all the things what they could manage to take they took to Warsaw, everything of the household, things of the crockery, because when I came to England I didn't bring anything of that sort. And she was a very proud woman, Przedziecka, so money I used to put in a wardrobe, under the soft things, under the linen, I pushed it. I didn't give it direct in her hand because she wouldn't take it, but I used to leave it in places that I knew she will find it. And I helped them till two years ago; 40 years I used to send parcels to them. And one son came to see us here. And medicine, I kept her alive for years with medicine she couldn't get in Poland. I must say, I paid them back as much I could.

This furniture that they took, was that the furniture from their old flat in Lvov?

The furniture, they left the furniture in Lemberg, so when I was leaving for Krakow, like to go to Poland, I wanted to sell the furniture. And there was a Pole which they knew. Anyway I trusted him; he said he will pay me when we reach the other side like, Krakow, and he paid me, so the money I gave them for the furniture, when I saw them afterwards in Warsaw.

So the furniture that they took from Breslau...

In Breslau, I don't think they took furniture because it was...it was too hard to bring; it's a big distance from Breslau to Warsaw. They took what they could handle in a train.

These were their possessions?

My possessions.

You gave these things to them?

Yes, yes. Because the Reichmans didn't take...we left the flat with furniture, with the grand piano, we couldn't take it. There was one beautiful picture standing in hiding, so I gave it to them; I was afraid to bring it to England, because on the border, on you know, the customs, they wouldn't have let me bring, so I left it with them.

So did you get your visa?

Yes, eventually my family was able to get me a visa as a domestic.

So can you tell me about coming to England?

Well when I came to England, I was already, had a nice coat, I came in winter and I had a nice coat, with fur underneath, warm, and I was dressed very decent. And I brought a few things, what I could. I brought a bit of jewellery, I brought jewellery, because with the jewellery, we used to share the jewellery when we had a shop, so I brought some jewellery, and I managed to bring it, they didn't catch me on the...the Poles.

Customs.

The customs, the Polish customs, to take out from Poland. I had a Pole, the Pole who got the furniture and paid me back, he was a very clever man, and he used to come every evening, and he used to put in the suitcases...take out some from the suitcases...

The lining?

Not lining, he used to dig out the bits of metal, or the wood, I don't know, from the suitcases. I had a trunk, which is quite different than now suitcases, and he pushed in some, whatever I had, rings, and we had a bit of gold which we made as a piece, like jewellers use, it was melted. So this gold when I came to England, and money I had none, not a penny. What's Polish zlotys? Nothing. So, I had that gold, so when I met Henry, and we got married, we sold it to get established, because we had nothing, absolutely nothing.

How did you carry the gold, was it built into the case?

It was built in. You couldn't find it.

In the case. Tell me about your first arrival in England, and your feelings.

My two cousins waited for me. I came by ship from Gdynia, near Gdansk, by boat I came, by boat, ship. And my cousins were waiting in Dover. Well, they thought, I'll have one brown shoe, one black shoe, I will be just like a tramp. They couldn't believe it, I was all dressed up, because I was already established. I didn't have many clothes, but whatever I had, it was all right.

How did they greet you?

Well, you know, very very well.

End of 6 side A

6 side B

Perhaps you could say a little more about this word, 'Lapanka'.

Well 'Lapanka', from my younger days, in Poland, meant to catch dogs, stray dogs. The promoter of it was called Hitchel[ph], and he, in some market days when there was a lot of people and animals around, he was catching them, catching the dogs, to clear the streets. When I was caught in the war and I was in Lemberg, and the days of the Nazi rules started to be enforced, we started to hear the word 'Lapanka' concerning catching Jews walking in the streets, and calling on them, to catch them; and when they formed about 50 or so, made a little crowd, and this action was called 'Lapanka'. And we all had been dreading every day, when we wanted to go out, we were dreading if there is today a Lapanka, and we were considering which way to go, to the left or to the right. And when we decided to go to the left, we managed to escape the Lapanka, which was on the right, but I was caught in such a Lapanka.

So do you think the Germans used the word from before the war?

This was a Polish word, and used by the Poles, by Polish Jews, by us. I don't know how, I think the Germans called it 'Ein Aktion'. Action.

Right. I would like to know a little more about your time in hiding. During that time, did you meet any other Jewish people who were in hiding in Lvov?

No, nobody, and nobody wanted to see each other. I think I mentioned to you that when I was hiding with the Przedziecki family, a sister of the lady was a lady friend of an architect from Warsaw, they lived in Warsaw, and she met him there, and he came with a group of architects when they were tarmacking the Lemberg airport. The boss of the firm was a German. I don't know if he knew that this Vladik[ph] was a Jew or a Christian, but he didn't look Jewish at all, he was blonde. So he was one of those, his staff, and they were having their meals in Mrs Przedziecka's house. They didn't stay there, but they had meals; when they finished work, they had their evening meal there. And the other ones, they all gathered that I am Jewish, but they didn't bother disclosing, and they treated me very gentle and very nice. But this Vladik[ph] felt uneasy, because he didn't like to be under one roof with a Jewish person, in case something happened.

So the Germans came to the Przedzieckis' flat?

There were not army Germans, they were civil, in civil life, but they were Germans.

And they didn't give you away?

No. On the contrary, they were...they had a German ration book which the rations were very generous. The Poles didn't get those rations. All the population was on rations, like it was here, the rations after the war, or during the war. When I came after the war I had a ration book. So the products were very limited, but the Germans had very good rations, they had more of everything, and luxuries. And this Barbara, who was the maid with that judge, and who kept me in the cellar, in the toilet, and she looked after me for a long time, she was a Reichsdeutsch, a German. All her family left Poland for Germany, she was the only one to stop in Poland.

What about the Germans who were with Vladik[ph], were they Reichsdeutsch?

I don't...I know that the boss, the man who took them on, on the job, he was a Reichsdeutsch.

And he also came to the Przedzieckis?

Yes, and she cooked gorgeous meals for them, and I had no trouble from them, they just didn't bother.

You sat down with them to eat?

I can't recollect; I was always near the back door, in case something happens, I can slip out, because I would have...with catching me, the whole building would go, be executed.

But they saw you?

They saw me, they definitely saw me. When the contract was finished and they did their job, they went back to Warsaw.

The Przedzieckis were the people who taught you how to behave in a church?

Well she gave me instructions, the woman.

Can you remember how she did that?

Well she gave me a prayer book, and she knelt, we were kneeling, and praying, and I learned the basic prayers. I can't remember now. In the morning was a different prayer, the words, and at night a different prayer. So she taught me those words in case I was caught, I could pass my exam that I know how to pray and how to, how do you say [POLISH].

The sign of the cross.

The sign of the cross, she taught me, and I had a rose...

Rosary.

Rosary. And I could pray and count it.

How did she see you through a mass in a church?

Well, when they were kneeling I was kneeling. I was following whatever the people did.

Was she there with you?

Well she used to go to church.

She didn't want to convert you to Christianity?

No, no, definitely not. I don't know if Barbara didn't want to, because Barbara was very religious. To that extent that she never wanted to marry or anything when she was younger, because she was `terchiarca[??]', must check in the book what meaning that is. She was in love with Jesus.

There was another person you mentioned called Maria.

Yes.

And you told me the story of hiding under the bed.

That's right, she was Ukrainian.

She was Ukrainian? What was her full name, Maria...?

I don't remember.

And how did you contact Maria?

Maria knew Przedziecka; I don't know how she got to know her. And Maria used to go into the country and bring products and sell them, and this was her job. She made profit. She went into the country, bought the cheese, all the milky products, meat, and she used to bring it to the city and distribute about her clients, she had regulars who bought off her.

Were the Przedzieckis amongst them?

Yes. And when it was a time that I really had nowhere to go, it was dangerous for all of them who helped me, Przedziecka asked her if she will have me, so she did have me. There was also a woman, and I've forgotten what was her name, she came from the country, and she used to bring milk to Przedziecka. I can't remember the name. She used to bring milk, and butter, and she took me to the village, to the country where she lived, because I felt also a spell of danger, and she agreed to have me. I walked with her, but in a distance, but I just looked where she was going. And when she brought me to her place where they lived in the village, I remember she had a daughter and a son, this I remember, and the son was furious that she brought a Jewess into their house, that they are in very big danger having a Jewess. Because their building wasn't on the outskirts of the village, in the middle, and in that village the neighbour, they just popped into each other's houses without any warning or anything. So I was in bed, in a made bed, I was in a made-up bed in the middle; I was day and night I should say, but in the night wasn't so bad, I could crawl out, but in the day I was there, all the time.

Under the bedclothes?

You know, like on a sheet, and on top was the bedding. And I remember he was swearing, the son, and he was going crazy, she should get rid of me. Not to give me away to the Germans, but take me away from them, because he was really scared.

There was nothing else but scared. I must have been there a week or two, and I had to come back to Lemberg, to the city.

Why did you come back?

Because he just went berserk, that she should get rid of me. See I've forgotten all about it, it just came back to me. She was a little woman, and very nice, they were all nice, but they were afraid.

She was a friend of the Przedzieckis?

Yes. She was delivering, bringing... You see in Poland, everybody had somebody they knew from the countryside; like my mother used to, you didn't go in Poland where I lived and buy butter in a shop, you had from the country, who made the butter, in the old-fashioned way, beating the cream to make butter. So my mother had a woman what she could trust, she knew that it was fresh and clean and everything, and the same with cheese, white cheese, cottage cheese. So, this woman, I've forgotten the name, she used to come to Przedziecka.

What was the village?

It was near Lemberg, I don't know, can't remember. Near, outside...so many kilometres from Lemberg. Lemberg was a big city.

So there was Maria, and there was this other person who occasionally took you in. Was there anybody else who...?

Well Barbara.

Yes.

Nobody else.

If we can move on to the cellar, where you spent most of your time in hiding. Can you describe it to me like, what it looked like and how big it was, the cellar that you were in?

Well the cellar was...this was...the cellar, when you went down the stairs, steps, there were, for every tenant in the building there was so many square yards, a little, like a... You know...

Space?

Quite a space, because they used to buy a lot of coal for the winter. And there was a little window, a low window, through that window there was the delivery of the coal; they used to throw out the coal through that, they used to take away the window and throw in the coal, and when it was finished they used to put it back.

So how big was this space?

Like a fourth of my room, or more, or a half of my room.

And your room is about 12 foot wide.

It was quite, you know... And every tenant had a key, a lock and key, and nearly everybody had a servant, so it was so many...

Compartments?

So many compartments.

So you were just...when you went down the steps there were a number of compartments, were there?

Yes. And I knew which was Basha's, you know, theirs.

Could you stand up in it?

Oh yes. And it was made...the bed, it wasn't a bed, there was thick paper put on the floor, it was put a lot of paper, and I was lying, maybe was...I don't think it was a board. And I was wearing everything what I possessed. So many nightclothes and so many day-wear; everything, I was...and stockings, and socks. Because it was right through the winter; I went in that cellar the 20th of October, and I was five months and twenty days in that cellar.

How did you keep your body active?

I had to lie still as a mouse all day, because the servants were coming nearly every day to get some buckets of coal. And in that... And when they used to come, I used to get to know all the political news what was going on, because they were talking about the Russians approaching Lvov, and the Germans running back home. I didn't read any papers or anything, so I got to know from them. And there was one town, Brody, where they were for a long time there, not doing any actions.

You know the dress and the sock that you loaned to the museum, when did you use those?

I used at this time. The socks I used in the cellar, and the socks, and in the socks were lice, I don't know, a quarter of an inch big; they lived on sucking my blood, they lived on the warm body. I had lice from top to bottom. And Przedziecka or, I think Przedziecka, lent Barbara a little paraffin lamp, the smallest little lamp, and in the night I used to light that little lamp; it gave a bit of warmth, and I used to put the sock to the glass of the lamp - it's an old-fashioned paraffin lamp - and the head should kill those lice.

After you had come out of the cellar, you got this job in the pub.

Oh well this is when I was already free.

When you were free, that's right. Who was it that was in charge of the pub, and who gave you the job?

Well you got to know. You see I was free, free movements; I was already free, under the Russians. So, first we survivors who survived ran to a spot, like a piazza, and there there were written out big sheets of paper with the names of who survived. And this is why I came across that family with whom I shared afterwards the flat, the Reichman family. There was a man, wife, and a girl, she must be about five years old.

What were their names?

Reichman.

Their first names?

She was Rózia, and he was David, and the little girl was Lilka.

And did you get the job in the pub through them?

No. No. So when we got to, started to meet, maybe some other people I met, started talking, back from different places, I only wanted to go and be occupied where is some food. So I got to know about somebody to go to a brewery, and in the brewery the manager, to supply the jobs was Mr Shapiro[ph].

So he was the one who gave you the job?

He gave me the job. And he gave me the job as a manageress.

Yes, you told me that. What about the Reichmans, when they were in Lvov, how did they survive?

They survived, she didn't look Jewish, and the girl didn't look Jewish, so she went out and worked openly, and nobody suspected that she is Jewish or she had a job. Can't remember where was that job. And she had a little tenement flat, a tiny little one in a building. She paid rent. And he was in bed day and night, the husband. So she went out in the morning and left him in that bed, and it was locked up, so I suppose he had something to eat in there, but he had to do it very quiet, and she went to work with the girl, and when she came back at night she cooked something to eat. And there was on the top floor it was a man, a single man, and he fancied her, so he used to bring her some fuel to make a fire. And he used to sit on that bed where that husband was, in bed inside, and he never found out. So, they survived the three of them.

What did they do straight after the war, while they were in Lvov?

He was a jeweller by profession, and he started to do some business. The instinct tells you, the Germans were at the time...there was no Germans of course, they ran, they all left Lemberg. But he managed to get some contacts. So he used to buy and sell, and this is how he lived from day to day. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

We were just talking about the Reichmans, and you went with them to Breslau.

Can I go back to Lemberg for a minute.

Yes.

When I found out that they found out that we are the only survivors of Nowy Dwór, they suggested to me, come and join, be with us like a part of the family. So we were together, we left Lvov to go to Krakow, and he, David Reichman, he had connections in Krakow, so he thought we will be able to start to do something in Krakow to make a living. But it was full of people, everybody was Krakow, so we found, it will take a long time to establish ourselves. So we went to Breslau, Polish, Wrocklaw. And this city was completely destroyed; there were only peripheries of the city; there were some buildings standing but the centre was all demolished. Anyway we managed to be allocated with a very nice flat, Fischeral[??] 12, if I can remember, in a nice building, beautiful furniture. And the house was, the flat was left like we used to leave our possessions and properties in Poland when we started to run away. This German architect left everything, and we occupied this place.

Who were you with then?

With the Reichmans, all the time with the Reichmans.

Weren't there other people as well?

No. It was only us, four of us. And we were thinking what we can start to do. So we met, walking about in the streets, we met from Lemberg, I met two brothers, one was a dentist, my dentist, and the other was a teacher, their name was Steinburtzel[ph]. Then Reichman, David, he managed to find two friends; one was a jeweller, Tzimand, and the other, and the last one, I've forgotten his name. But anyway, we formed like a little partnership, six of us. I was the only woman and there were five men. As everything was in a turmoil, we found easy shops. So we found three shops; two shops were buying, in Poland it was called Kommissovi[ph], Kommissovisklep[ph]. Sklep[ph] is a shop, and Kommissovi[ph] where you leave your goods, and the people sell it for you, take a percentage, and then you are paid. Like now the agents, the shops, second-hand clothes agents.

End of 6 side B

7 side A

But at this time, how were you feeling? I mean you had been in hiding, you had just come out, and now you were meeting people who had survived.

Well this was already some time, it was months being freed; more than months, because I was a year in that, selling beer, so I was free. This was 1945, and I went out from hiding '44. So, it was just exist...nobody cared how you were dressed; I think I was wearing a ski suit, day in day out. And only, my life was consisting of going in the morning in the shop, to that shop, and dealing with people, and then we went home. So Reichman's wife, Rózia, she made a meal ready, and we didn't go out anywhere. There was no life in the city, it was still very very, in a bad state; everything started to build itself up; there was no transport, no trams, no buses. You had to walk. It was just existence. On the other hand, you would be afraid to get dressed, because it would...people are still being under the Communist influence, so they would be wondering, where have you got it from. So it was a different life: it was no life, it was an existence, and hope, and hope and thought, how long we will be living like that, what's the next step for us. Because we didn't want to stop there.

There was no entertainment?

No. No entertainment at all.

Did you form any close friendships there?

No friendships, I can't remember about any friendships; only the families of those partners. But there was no thought of entertaining. There was a grand piano in that flat what we occupied, so I started to take lessons, because there was a lot of music; I've still got some music, I brought some pieces which I liked, so when I came to England I brought with me. So, and that was our only occupation. It was nothing, nothing, to talk about. But after a few months, I started to think that I want to find those Przedzieckis in Warsaw. Also I was trying to contact my family in England of course. So I wanted to go to the consul, and see if I would be able to have a permit to leave Poland.

You spoke about a Pole who bought the Przedzieckis'...

Furniture.

Furniture, and who also hid the...

That's right.

Who was he, what was his name?

I forgot. I've forgotten.

What else did he do? Do you remember anything else about him?

I remember that he was a trustworthy man, because if you put things in, to hide some jewellery, it's easy to take away a piece or something. But the Przedzieckis knew him and they trusted him, this is why I trusted him with the payment. And he did pay.

When you left Breslau, when we spoke earlier you spoke about leaving a picture in hiding behind you.

Yes.

What was that?

Because I found that picture in the flat, hidden somewhere, behind some furniture, so I came to the conclusion that it must have been something precious. This little picture, those two women on the wall, this was left by a Polish architect. He gave that to the Przedzieckis before he went into hiding, he left that little picture for them to take care of, and six little knives and forks of the best make in Poland, Gerlach[ph], very nice ones which I've still got.

This wasn't Vladik[ph], not Vladik[ph]?

No, no. No, it was a friend of the Przedzieckis, and he asked them...like I had all my, the last few bits of my possessions, they were with them, and selling gradually those pieces, I could supplement the bread. Because bread was the biggest expense. I wasn't entitled for any rations, being in hiding, so I had to buy bread on black market, and that was quite expensive, to keep myself alive. So this gentleman who left with them those few pieces, I suppose he thought he will come back and he will get it back, but he never came back.

So how did you get the bread?

The bread, when I used to go out, when I was with that Barbara and I was hiding in the cellar, as I mentioned, every week I used to go out, so the aim was to buy the bread, a supply of bread for the seven days. So they were women sitting in the streets with their little table, and bread, and selling bread, like a stall. So I used to buy from them.

This was more expensive, was it?

Oh yes, yes. I couldn't afford to buy anything to go with it. But I think I said that I once was tempted about marmalade, and I bought myself 100 grams of marmalade. The marmalade was made from beetroot; instead of sugar it was saccharine. And it looked gorgeous, but when I started to eat I couldn't, so I gave it to Barbara. I didn't like saccharine, I don't like saccharine up to now, I can feel the taste. But in those days I had that taste for something better, that I rather had plain bread than bread... The bread, I don't know if it had ten per cent pure flour; it was a concoction of all sorts.

About this picture in hiding.

So this picture in hiding, when I was leaving for England Przedziecki's son, I remember, which was Bignyavo[ph] Andrew, came to Breslau, and all my possessions what belonged to me he took it to Warsaw, to his parents, to his mother. And the picture, I didn't want to risk it, because it was forbidden to take out pictures from the country, so I left it with them. And there was Meissens, porcelain china, in this flat, there were gorgeous things. But, I brought one plate, a cobalt plate I brought, and I've got it in my cupboard.

When you talked about the Przedzieckis, you talked about one son being in the home army.

Yes.

That was the resistance?

Yes, AK. Kraiova Armia. Armia is army, Kraiova is the country. So, a lot of Poles were against the Russians, and they were illegally in hiding.

So what did the...what happened to the Przedzieckis' son, do you know what happened to him?

Yes. He lives in Warsaw, and he rang me a few months ago.

So what happened to him during the war?

He was 16 at the time, when he was hiding, he didn't sleep a lot. His sister, that Irene, worked in a shop in Lemberg, I think it was a shop of haberdashery, textiles. It was a general shop. And there was a cellar, and in this cellar very often I slept sometimes. She locked me up when she closed the shop to go home, she locked me in the cellar and I slept the night there.

When was that?

That was during the German occupation, before they left Lemberg to go back to Warsaw. That was 19...late '43, 4 more or less. And Andrew, he was also in hiding, because he was illegally in the AK, so he used to sleep there, not to sleep in the house in case they have police in the night to come to search, we didn't want to be there, me as a Jewess and him as against the Russians - the Germans.

So this was the time when you were sleeping rough, and you were moving about [INAUDIBLE].

More or less this time.

And did he have to hide right through the war?

Well he hid until Poland...up till the Germans were beaten, so he came out.

You didn't have any other links with the Polish resistance underground?

No.

Just Andrew.

Just Andrew. When I came to Manchester, and we became friendly with the Polish woman dentist, she lived off Cheetham Road, and her husband, he was in the AK, he was in hiding a long time. And they met, that married couple met by accident. She was practising as long as she could in Warsaw, and he was already working politically, so he wasn't home. And eventually they found themselves in Liverpool.

I want to move on now to England, and to the story. You came to England from Breslau.

Yes.

And I would like you to say something about your first impressions of England.

Well my first impressions for England. I was in England before the war, for three months. I came to the Coronation of King George VI, and I came, I arrived, the day was the Coronation, and my two cousins from Manchester waited for me in Dover. When I...well I was still a single girl, and I had parents in Poland. But when I walked Oxford Street, and the posters were hanging, you could feel you are in a powerful country. It wasn't little Poland, it was, it made a colossal impression on me, really.

What about...?

Yes? Go on.

No, go ahead.

I'm not a person to get fascinated by everything, but I just...I could feel that I am in a country of big power. When my cousin went back with me to Poland, after my three months finished she went back with me to Poland, she stayed with us two weeks. In the train, we went back by train all the way from London, through Germany...through Belgium, Germany, to Warsaw. When the Poles were checking our passports in the trains, well when I showed my passport it was nothing, but when he saw the British passport, he stood up. It was something to admire, the respect for the foreign passport.

So when you arrived in 1945...

Yes. I already knew... But my family thought that I will be dressed in one black shoe, one navy shoe; I'll be poverty stricken, after what I survived. But this was, I came in 1946 at the end of November, it was a very severe winter at the time, and I had a nice coat, lined with fur; I was dressed very respectable. They didn't expect that, they thought I would be very poorly dressed. But afterwards they realised, during that year, that I was a partner in those shops, we made money all of us; we dressed ourselves, we had a bit of jewellery. But of course I couldn't take, our Polish zlotys are worthless, so we had to exchange everything to hard currency. So we lost on it, so in Poland we were very wealthy, but leaving Poland we were just poor. I had this coat, and I think I had one or two dresses; I didn't have many things at all, but whatever I had was decent, was nice.

And what was your impression of England this time?

I was delighted to be out of a regime where I will be locked up and I will never be able to go out. The freedom. I was afraid for policeman, at least for a year; I was dreading when I saw a policeman, because a policeman in eastern countries is a menace. So I was always scared. But gradually I got used to it, and I appreciated every minute of freedom.

Where did you live when you first arrived?

Where I lived, it was a problem with me, because I was too old to be brought over as an under-age, the limit was 18, so they had to bring me as a domestic. All my family here, they were all quite well off, so they all had domestic help. So my cousin's in-laws, they...and the in-laws, they were in their fifties at the time, and the lady was after an operation, so she got a permit easy, because she applied that she needs help. So I lived with them, 312 Waterloo Road.

What was their name?

Levin[ph].

And what did he do?

He was a traveller. He was an Irishman, and he travelled to Ireland with textiles, a traveller. And when gradually the airlines started to operate, he flew to Dublin, and he used to travel, he used to...before he used to go to Birkenhead and take a boat, but

when the flights became popular he used to fly to Dublin. He used to stay in Dublin, in Jury's Hotel.

What was his first name?

Harry.

Harry Levin[ph]. And how did you find that, working there?

Their daughter, Louie[ph], was my cousin's wife. And she was...when I was in 1937 here, this Louie[ph] was married to my cousin Lionel, and their daughter was born a few days before I was leaving for home in 1937. And I was the first one to go to Hope[??] hospital to see the baby, and this baby now is 53 years old, and she is the wife of the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, in Johannesburg. And she was a very clever girl; she went to Thomas[??] Street Primary School, then she went to Manchester High School, then she went to London and did Law, and qualified as a barrister, and when she was married she did another exam and she is a solicitor.

And she was there when you were working as a domestic?

No, they lived separate. Louie[ph] and Lionel, and the baby, Anne[ph], they lived in Granville[ph] Avenue off Leicester Road.

Right. So what was it like in 312 Waterloo Road, to work there?

I didn't work there, they treated me as family. Mrs Levin[ph] was so particular in cleanliness, a fanatic. She used to play whist very often, and she used to go out at night in the streets during the blitz here, before I came, and after I came as well, it was still, I don't think it was lit up properly, the streets weren't lit up in 1946, so she used to use a torch. But if she left the house... He was a traveller, so he was all week away. So that was her entertainment. And when I was telling her a bit of my own survival, she said to me, 'We went through a lot. I had to take down the bed, and we slept downstairs.' When I received the letter from a friend of mine, from Australia, and she described to me that she was in the partisans, 37 of them, and she had to give morphia to a little boy, because the people were insisting she could get rid of him, he'll give them away, hiding, crying, so they will find traces of Jews hiding. Eventually she did that. Well, I was distraught when I read that letter. I said, 'Lily[ph], Sonya had to kill...' 'She shouldn't have done that!' Well, the actions from

her were so narrow-minded, I was very unhappy, very very unhappy I was. But I couldn't help it, because she did me a good turn, she applied for the permit and I had to be two years, I wasn't allowed to do anything. I used to, I had to be dependent, I was depending on spending money which my cousin Lionel used to push in my hand, five pounds. For a person my age it was awfully...I felt, I needed the money because I didn't have, I didn't earn, I didn't get anything.

You didn't work for them though?

No, no, they didn't pay me. No. But first...secondly... She was so particular. Whatever I did was wrong. If I helped her with something it was no good, if I didn't help it was no good. And the house was bitterly cold. Downstairs was that big fire, in the fireplace; upstairs there was no heating in 1946/7. It was perishably cold. And in Poland, how poor that country was, we all had heating in every room. So it was hard to stand. And the mentality, he was much more broad-minded, Mr Levin[ph], but she was...it was hard. So I often stayed with my cousin in Stretford.

Which cousin was that?

This was my uncle's daughter. I knew my uncle when I was here in '37.

This is Abraham[ph] Dove?

That's right. And Auntie Annie. But Uncle Dove was killed by a car in 1943, in Cheetham Road, just by here, accident, so only Auntie Annie was alive, his wife. And their daughter Esther was married to a doctor, Dr Seagal[ph], and he had a practice in Chester Road, Gorse Hill[ph].

Did you find at this time that people were interested in your experiences?

No, no they weren't, they weren't. If you got a reaction like that, that we had to take the bed down, and I had to walk with a torch in the street, so what can you compare? So you didn't say anything. Because people were thinking, it's imagination.

Why were people so uninterested?

They didn't believe it. They thought, they thought that you were imagining, that it couldn't be possible to go through such a bad time with the... If we've got now

sections of people who insist that it never took place, so what about 40 years ago, when there were so few survivors?

You think the Jewish people were also sceptical?

Yes, well they were Jewish people. They were only... My life in Manchester changed after eight months, being with the Levins[ph], and not speaking one word of Polish, not meeting anybody from Poland, and one day, on a Saturday, I was going back from my other cousin, Elsie. My cousin Elsie lived in Bury New Road. That was my cousin Lionel's sister, who was married to Louie[ph]. And she lived in Bury New Road, and she is still...she was and is very orthodox; she's the only member of the family who keeps a hundred per cent orthodoxy.

This is..?

Elsie.

Elsie.

Elsie Harris. She now lives very near me, she lives near, at the end of the road, and she's very orthodox. So she invited me for tea on Saturday afternoon. I lived in Waterloo Road, with the Levins[ph]. I respected her wish, and I walked, I didn't take the bus but I walked, from Waterloo Road through Cheetham Road, to her house in Bury New Road. And when I was going back from her house, going home already, after the tea, I was going through Scalls Lane[ph], and all of a sudden I heard three women.....

End of 7 side A

7 side B

So you met three women who were speaking Polish.

I said, 'Who are you?' So, I told who... It seemed one of them was not married, in her thirties; she lived in King's Road, 38 King's Road. She came from Poland before the war, to an uncle. To get out from Poland you had to find excuses. Well this old uncle was supposed to marry her, so she got permission and she left Poland, came to this uncle, but when she saw this uncle, an old man, she didn't want to marry him.

Anyway she stopped here, she lived here. The other one was from a place called Radom in Poland, but she and her parents emigrated to Palestine in the early Thirties; they were Zionists, and they lived in Palestine. And there she met a boy also who came on Aliya at the time. She married him. And he finished polytechnic in Warsaw, then he did a degree in Jerusalem. Eventually he got here a lectureship to Manchester. So they came to live in Manchester, and they lived in a rented flat in King's Road, 33 King's Road, opposite Rena. And he was lecturing chemistry at the university; his name is now Dr Prof Michael Schwartz. They had two children, Rafi and Meira; the girl was at the time about five, and the boy was older. The third woman married also a cousin from Poland, so she got out from Poland here, and she lived in Kelvin Grove, off Haywood Street. Those two from King's Road were walking with her, but they were going back home, and we arranged, we exchanged addresses, telephones, whatever, and to be in contact. And I was walking with Fami[ph], who lived in Kelvin Grove, which is on the same way, to go to Waterloo Road, so we could have a chat. And Inka[ph] made chat, and she said...she found out that I am here on my own, that I lost my husband during the Nazis. And she told me that she goes to markets, to different places, with her husband, and this is where they made their living from. And at the markets a lot of Polish soldiers come, and she knows some Jewish men who lost their wives in the war, and she will introduce me. Well really I wasn't interested, because I could have remarried before I came to England; I lost my husband, whom I loved, and I wasn't feeling about anybody else. But because my life here in Waterloo Road was very unsatisfactory, with the mentality of the Tilly Levin[ph], so taking account on little...with the cleanliness she was driving me mad. If she left, going back to her, going out to play cards, when she left the object, and she noticed that while she was, the few hours away it was moved in a different direction, she started an argument about it. So this was really depressing me completely. She was a fanatic. So we said farewell with Famy[ph], and she rang me to come round to her house, and she introduced me to a gentleman who lost a wife and child, daughter, his name was Layburg, he was an accountant. But, I didn't like.

Anyway, she said there's a lot of...come and talk to her, and there is one she invites in for Jewish holidays, a very nice man, dentist; he was stationed in Ormskirk, and she used to go to the market in Ormskirk. And going to Southport on the way through Ormskirk is a grammar school, I remember on the right-hand side, and there was the Polish hospital at the time. So she invited me for dinner, and she invited that gentleman. And he made a different impression on me, only his age was much, was a big gap in age. My cousin Esther was, they went away to a wedding in Hull, so they wanted me to sleep in Stretford, in their house. So I knew a Polish girl, a Jewish Polish girl, Lili[ph], she was younger than myself, and she had survived the war, so I became... What I didn't mention, that when I was with Mrs Levin[ph] I joined in Heath Street an evening class for adult education for English, I used to go to the classes, and I made friends there, and one of those friends was that Lili[ph]. So she stayed with me in the house whilst my cousins are away in [INAUDIBLE]. When I met Henry, that dentist, and he came to stay with Fami[ph], he came to visit me in Stretford, and I could see that he fancied me, and he didn't want to lose contact with me, so I had a watch needed repairing, so he took the watch to be repaired. He worked in the dental department in the army, so he had a lot of connections; in all the departments people needed him. So he knew a lot of, so he took that watch. Eventually he said to Fami[ph]... After some time we used to meet, and he came to see me in Waterloo Road, and Mr Levin[ph] liked him very much. His English was extremely poor, because he only spoke Polish; he was in the army with the Poles, only spoke Polish, so his English was poor. But Mr Levin[ph] could speak Yiddish, so he spoke Yiddish with him, and I spoke Polish. But he made a very good impression on all the people who met him, a respectable man. So, he said to Fami[ph] that he would like to marry me, but I couldn't make up my mind through that gap in age for some time. Eventually he said to her that I've got to make up my mind one way or the other, because he's not a little boy, he was already 50, he was not a little boy to be messed about. And I decided, and I got married, and I never regretted.

So this was Henry Taichner?

Yes. And he was an exceptionally nice man. So those friends, going back to those friends, with Rena, that single girl, we became very good friends. She came to the wedding. She felt a bit out, because she was in the country already a few, a nice few years, and she was still single, and older than me. So she met a Polish fellow, Stanley Goldstein[ph]. He lost a wife and daughter, and he found the army. Eventually they married, but this marriage didn't last long, because she didn't realise how you've got to...marriage you've got to work at it, and she thought it will be just, carrying on her

hands[?]; she was living in a dream. And he was [INAUDIBLE], very quickly he was in a temper, but she couldn't handle it. So they divorced, eventually they divorced. Now she lives in, she was in South Africa staying with a cousin, now she lives in America, in Minneapolis. She married the second time an uncle, and much older. Anyway she lives in Minneapolis and I went to visit her, and we are friends still today, just like sisters.

When all this was happening, did you get any support from the organised Jewish community in Manchester?

No, I never, no.

Did you look for support from them?

No. No. This cousin of mine, Lionel, he worked for the Board of Guardians which was there; he worked... And [INAUDIBLE], there were presidents. They were very highly respected in England. No, I wouldn't look for any help, because they were both prominent members of the Jewish community. Lionel, he made a mess of his life. He was one of the brainiest boys at the time, at his age, but he was... Six months before his finals, to qualify as a doctor, he said to his mother he wants to go to business, and he left. He was a womaniser, he was a gambler. He messed up his life, and he had all the brains to... This is that aunt's father. He was very generous.

What was his second name, Lionel...?

Boyars[ph].

Boyars[ph], of course. But at this time, there was no, no one was offering you any support as a survivor, as a refugee, a survivor?

No, because really I didn't need it. I didn't need it, because when we got married, with Henry...when he met me, when he met me after some time, he started to save up. At first he was going through money like water, he had no purpose in life. He loved his first wife, and he came to England from Palestine because he thought that maybe being in England he will have more contact to find out if his wife survived the war or she didn't. Whilst if he would stop in Palestine he would be like a deserter, and he didn't want to do that.

Did he find out what happened to her?

No. Because when they were running away from their place of birth, where they lived, they were running towards Russia, and at the border between German-occupied Poland and Russia they were caught, and the guards said, 'Where are you going?' So his wife decided that she wants to go back to her parents, she wants to go back to Poland where they lived. And so first of all they...they always separated, women, wives from husbands, so when he was left alone the soldier said to him, 'Where are you going back? If you go back there, you will find death. And if you go on the side of the Soviets, you will have lice, you will have hunger, but you will survive.' Anyway, they put him into prison in that place called Grodno, and he was in prison 13 months. They qualified him as a capitalist. And they used to interrogate them very often in the nights, and making photographs of them. So Henry pulled the horrible face on the photograph, like an idiot, so he wasn't interrogated. Because when they took out the photographs to prepare whom they will interrogate, and they saw a face like this, they thought, he's mentally disturbed, so they didn't take him.

What was his business, Henry?

He was a dentist.

Even then.

Yes.

And they classified him as a capitalist.

This is why they...they thought he is a capitalist, a dentist, and this is why they put them to the prison.

Where were they from, which town?

He was from near Lodz; he was, Jawasn, a village. Iensno[ph] and Jawasn, he was from one village where it was...Gidle, he was born in Gidle, I had never heard of it. And then he had this practice in Jawasn, and he was a very wealthy man in Poland. He was in his forties, and he was going to retire, and do only charity work. Because his father and all his family were quack doctors. Years ago in Poland, it was a doctor, a lower grade of a doctor, called a 'Felcher', Felcher. A Felcher, he had a lot of

practice. He didn't go to the university, but he had a lot of practice. And his father and his uncles and his grandfather, and Henry, being brought up with such a household, he I believe, he was a very good diagnostic. And he could prescribe prescriptions, and he knew, he was very clever. And even in the dentistry, he had permission to practise in all respect, but he didn't have a university degree. So he wanted to do charity work, and he used to support a lot of poor people with money for prescriptions, because he was financially all right. So then the war broke out. And when we got married he was 50.

So what happened to him after he was imprisoned, and how did he get away?

He was in prison, he got ten years' hard labour, and to be taken to Siberia. So when he found himself in Siberia, when they brought them down in the forest, they said to them, to that contingent, `stroisja'[ph], build yourself where to live. Cut down the trees and build yourself accommodation to live. Just left him there. He was not as badly off as some were, because knowing medicine, knowing different things, so they needed him, so he was, he was always better off than the others. He created a little hospital for children there, and I've still got a lot of papers of his, you know, signed by people with authorities. And then Sikorski started to form an army, a Polish army, affiliated to the British, but they were not eager to take on Jews. So luckily there was a Polish sergeant, and he noticed Henry, and he just pushed him out and put him on the boat to leave Russia. Otherwise they were not taking on Jews, only Poles.

Why was that?

Anti-Semitism. It was always anti-Semitism. So he had a good name, and he spotted that, and he threw him on the boat. And Henry found himself in the Middle East, in Teheran. He was in Egypt, in Teheran, and eventually they went to Palestine, and he was six months in Palestine, and then by boat they came, ships, they came from Palestine to England. That was in 1943. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

If we can just go back a little bit, before your marriage, before you met Henry. You needed to adjust in this country, and you said that you went to Heath Street.

Yes, I went to Heath Street, to night school, and I wanted to was to learn the English, because I could write, I could read, but I couldn't speak, converse; I needed conversation. And I made friends there, I made friends with a woman, her father, she lost her husband in Holland, and she is from the very orthodox Jews from Broughton

Park. She was the Chief Rabbi of Vienna's daughter, and she lived with her old mother, and she wears a wig, she's very orthodox. And last week, on Wednesday I went to see her, she still lives in the same house in Wellington Street 66. And she is very tolerant, and she knows that I am not so religious like she is but she accepts that. And she remarried a Polish fellow from Warsaw, named Vlodaver[ph], a very charming man.

Did you have difficulty at Heath Street, learning English?

No.

Who was taking the classes, do you remember?

[INAUDIBLE].

But was it an education department?

Yes, yes. Like classes for foreigners.

Did you decide yourself to go, or did...?

Oh yes, I asked Tilly[ph], and...oh yes.

Did you have any other problems adjusting at that time, after everything that had happened to you during the war?

I met a German family, Schrann, they lived in Singleton Road. And, I can't remember how I met them, but they had in Germany a corsetry factory. I think I mentioned to you that I left university and I went to do a course in Ort. So I had an idea. So they employed me. I used to go to them, and they used to pay me 2s.6d. an hour, and I used to sew on the machine, whilst I was with Levin[ph]. So I found it so rewarding that I could earn my own few pounds; I haven't got to depend on the fiver Lionel stuffed in my hand. And they were an elderly couple, and it was very nice with them; they came to my wedding, and...I adjusted quite easy. The freedom, the freedom of speech, the freedom of movement. I used to go out, and I used to walk, I remember 11 o'clock at night I didn't realise, the bus went to Frederick[ph] Road depot at the time, and I had to walk all the way, Broughton Lane to Waterloo Road. I wasn't

afraid at all. And they were shouting at me I shouldn't walk about in the dark on my own. But I felt safe, a hundred per cent safe.

Had your Jewishness changed, had your religious views changed at all, as a result of the war?

Well you see I was always brought up traditionally. It was a kosher home and everything. But my father had to work on Shabbat when he was a young man, when I was, before I was born, as I mentioned, because it was a factory which...my family was even then quite assimilated. And Shabbat was the payment day to the workers, so my father had to work. So I was used to ride, ride on Shabbat. When I finished, like to hide, and I started to cook my own, I bought a quarter of a pound of kosher meat, then I could buy a kilo of non-kosher. I had my rules, I kept the tradition. About religion, it's very problematic my state of mind.

But at that time, when you were with the Levins[ph]?

Well, I respected as I said, I knew that Elsie never rode on Shabbat, she kept it, so I wouldn't take a bus to go to her. She wouldn't even know, but I didn't, I walked. Mr Levin[ph] was a very religious man; his father was a minister, but he backed the horses.....

End of 7 side B

8 side A

.....went, you didn't still have traditional views about Judaism?

I've got my personal views, like I am very pleased that my daughter married a Jewish man; it's...somehow you can communicate better than... Look, when they are atheist, complete, that they have got no religion, faith, anything, they just live without, in atheism... But I still, I light candles every Friday, and I keep it as much as we had it at home. But what I can't believe, after what happened, I cannot believe. But when we got married, with Henry, he also said we've got to have a kosher home, on account of, you've got family here, and you want them to eat in your house, and it's got to be just like they would wish to have it. Because otherwise it's not...you're cheating. So we had it, and to this very day I have.

But did you still believe in God after all this?

It's not...the problem is not solved with me.

Should we talk a bit more about your marriage. You married Henry, when was that Helen?

1948. I came the last month of '46, I met him in '47. I've forgotten. No, Judith is 41 so she was born '49. Must be '47. You know you get mixed up.

Don't worry. So anyway, at the time, were you still working at that time, when you were married?

No, I wasn't working. Working what, the sewing?

Yes.

The sewing was just occasional, to help them out, it wasn't a job. Because you know, I wasn't permitted to work.

So, after marriage, where did you go to live?

So, when we got married, and... Well Henry, until he met me as I said, he used to go out with those Poles, and Poles like to drink, so he used to pay for them. And then he

became friendly with a young Pole, and he got married with a Scots girl, so she had twins, he bought the pram. He didn't...he didn't think about anything about himself. But when he met me, and the position with us started to be serious, he started to save up. In the army, when he worked in the surgery, a lot of patients wanted him. There was a woman doctor, dentist, so they wanted him, so they used to pay him. So in no time he saved £500, which was a lot of money. And I had no money at all, so when he met me after a few months, when we became serious, he gave me I remember £70 to keep it, and we used to laugh afterwards that he trusted me already. Because I was really always without money. I remember, I wanted a summer dress, I just had one dress, so Mr Levin[ph] lent me £3.50 and I paid him off. I was too proud to ask for things. And they couldn't understand me, they couldn't... Even the family, they couldn't understand... Who doesn't go through what we went through, they can't understand. So anyway... So we had the reception, and he paid for the reception, and my family gathered, I think we had 70 or 80 people, of their friends, my family's friends, and for the first time a lot of people, they ate cakes which they never ate before for a long time, because they were talking about it. There was established at the time a catering, the homes, [INAUDIBLE].

In Sedgley[ph] Park?

In Sedgley[ph] Park. So we were one of the first that they had a...

A reception?

A reception. You see, I was very friendly with Rejika's parents, I became friends with them, that's right, they lived in Haywood Street, and I became very friendly with them. And they had a niece, Reji[ph] Srikamann, so we had friends.

These were the Fruhmans[ph]?

Fruhmans[ph]. Well I'm talking about her first husband. Her first husband, he was a very enterprising man, and, shouldn't say that, he had a good catering business, but greed I suppose made him go for fruit[??] to Spain, and he was killed in a train accident. And Steven[??], the solicitor, that's her son from the first marriage.

Which synagogue did you marry in?

It's a synagogue which was in Elizabeth Street, called Hevra Kadisha[ph]. Because Mr Levin[ph] was one of the elders there, he was a very respectable man, he was a nice man. Mr Levin[ph], when I was staying with them, he made a reception for the men, and he said to me, 'Helen,' - I was already married - 'will you make the fish?' So, it was a big honour for me, because his wife, Tilly[ph], Mrs Levin[ph], she thought that there is no better cook than her. And it was really a big honour, and I made all the fish and they liked it, the gefilter fish, the chopped fish. So he introduced us to the rabbi. And we married in the homes, we married in the homes, and the reception was there. So the people...so, that's right, so Rejka's[ph] husband, he employed a lot of Polish people in cooking, in baking, and really the pastries and the cakes were gorgeous. Because Poles are very good cooks. And she still employs, they still employ to the very end Poles. First of all Poles didn't know English so they liked to work with people they could converse. The same, Henry had patients coming from all over, when we got married, because they wanted to speak Polish.

So the Fruhmans[ph] employed lots of Poles?

A lot of Poles. And the Schwartzes were at my wedding, Rena was at the wedding. A big list. And a lot of friends of my family, the closest friends, but it was a nice wedding. And my cousins, Lionel, and Esther my cousin, who was married to the doctor, and Elsie's husband Ivor[ph]. The most influential, and the most caring, was Ivor Harris[ph], Elsie's husband, a cousin by marriage; when he...they were comfortable, but he could see that to find a place to live in, a house, was a very difficult problem. I was a domestic, no status, no money; Henry was just out of the army, no status either. So who will give a mortgage? So he said, 'I will go out with you, in the car, and we will see, where do you want to live?' Well, Henry was afraid to go somewhere to live where he didn't know English so well, so he just wanted in the Jewish district, this is why we picked Waterloo Road. It wasn't so low like it is now; it was quite, you know, habitable, and... But so, Ivor[??] said, 'Let's go out on a Sunday for a drive.' And those five houses near St Abraham's[??] Garage there, were building finishing, 'Would you like it here?' And before that, some other relatives took me out to see some houses as well. They were just right for a dog, they weren't...not for a human being to go and live in. So, I was afraid to say I like it, the house, finishing in building. Anyway in two days' time he gave me the keys. They gave £200 deposit between them, and we had the house, a lovely house. And the National Health started, so there was work, for dentists, for doctors; it was all for nothing. So it was work for a year ahead.

When was your daughter born?

Where?

When.

She was born the 10th of July 1949, and Prestbury. After the war they had, or during the war, during the war, they had hospitals out of the cities. So the Royal Infirmary had hard cases of birth giving, and in Prestbury they had two places, two little villas, where easier cases were transferred. I used to go to a doctor in the Royal Infirmary. It was ten years since I had my first child. Well I was in my thirties. Now women have children quite late, and successful, but 40 years ago 30 was already an age you were getting old to have a child. But they transferred me to Prestbury. So an ambulance took...I went to... Mrs Levin[ph] took care, that lady I lived with, she was very helpful when I stopped living with her. So she was grandma[??]. And Judith was born there, on a very hot day on the 10th of July: last week was her birthday. But after a month we noticed she had infantile eczema, very dry skin, so it was hard to diagnose what. Anyway, I went private in St John's Street, with Mrs Levin[ph], to a specialist, and he said, I'll take her to the skin hospital round the corner there. And I decided on my own, we had no telephone in the house, I decided that I will take the responsibility, if the doctor says, a specialist, she needs hospital treatment, and I left her there, and came home with the clothes. And they were shocked. Anyway, she was three weeks in hospital, and when I think about it, it was [INAUDIBLE], when I think about it, it was touch and go. I think the treatment didn't agree with her. Eventually she came out much better.

What were your feelings here? Because you had lost a child.

First of all, to be honest I didn't want children. After the war I was demoralised. Who wants to start now, with nappies, again, and sleepless nights? After...you don't want any worries. But Henry was a sensible man, and he used to say we didn't marry for love, but we love each other gradually, and it tie us together, it's a different feeling. And then we regretted we didn't have another child, because Judith was a lonely child, she used to say why haven't I got a brother or sister? But then was already maybe too late. And we were afraid, we were poor; we had to start from the beginning, to establish a home. But in the family, when I said, not mentioning names, we'll have a phone, we waited five years for a telephone, and a shared line, because after the war it was very difficult with everything. So when I mentioned we are going to have a

phone, so this member of the family said, 'Oh, a telephone costs money.' And I said, 'I know. How can he be a dentist without a telephone?' Anyway, it's hard...to this very day it's hard; maybe now, I'm not that poor relation. It's hard, the mentality of a lot of people. You haven't been used to anything, when I think about it, with the food and everything. In Poland we knew before they know here. Cottage cheese for us was everyday food, in Poland, we used to make our own, so when I moved to this house and the milkman had a lot of sour milk, went sour, they didn't have enough fridges, I said, 'I'll pay you'. And he said, 'I'll give you, I'm throwing it out.' And I used to make cheeses, all sorts of cheeses. And now it's an industry, a million million industry, all sorts of cheeses, all sorts of yoghurts. We used to have that, kefir[ph], we used to have that.

Can I just ask you a number of general questions about the impact of the war years really on your life, as you were settling down in England, married and having a child. How do you feel that the war-time experiences have affected you?

Well, I don't...I think I took it quite well. You see Henry, if he read something, or he saw a film, he couldn't sleep all night. And I adapted myself somehow. But I don't want to forget. Because some people they don't want to know, and I don't want to forget, I want to remember, to appreciate what I am having now.

You've not had any health problems, or sleepless nights as a result of the war?

No. I don't think so. I think I took it quite...quite easy.

And from that, from having had that experience, and looking at the Jewish community now in this country, how do you see the future for Jewish people in England?

Well it's so, with all the happenings in the world nowadays, with such a speed, it's so hard to categorise, it's so hard. I myself keep thinking how bad it is, and dangerous, to live in Israel, but I think Jews should go there, because there is...there will be no statement, Jews to Palestine, like I used to hear in Poland. 'Zijida Palestini[ph]' They go there, and at least they build their own country.

Do you feel anything about the problems that are in Israel at the moment?

The trouble is, that they have got no decent people to talk with on the other side. Arafat to me is nothing, he's nothing Arafat, he's a nobody. Not even one member of all those millions of Arabs, you can't trust them, you can't.

What would you like to see happen?

I didn't like them building... In my opinion, how can countries reject and object to Jews wanting to take those parts they want in the war? They never started the war, even once; all the time they were cause...the other ones were causing the war, and they lost. And blood and sweat and people, to get it. So, to give it back I think it's terrible, because they earned it. But on the other hand, I don't like them to build, to put millions in the buildings on the sides which maybe they will have to be negotiable. But I still see it so far away.

A settlement?

Because there is none of them you could talk to.

Have you spoken to your daughter about your experiences?

Oh yes, they know, they know, and they are delighted now that I will have a tape.

Did you tell your daughter straight away about your experiences in Poland?

She used to say, Daddy never liked to talk about it. She says that often. But she has seen it. She has been to Theresienstadt, she has seen the ovens; she was a young girl but she has seen them. And she knows a lot, and Leslie[ph] knows a lot, and he wants to know more and more.

That's her husband?

Yes. And Richard, my eldest grandson, he was in Holland two years ago with the Habonim[ph], and they had the Holocaust, all about the Holocaust. That for a young boy, he knows a lot.

Your daughter was never upset by your experiences?

Well she said...she won't show maybe. She won't show. But...she does show, she... You know, who didn't go through it, it's hard to understand. However you know and everything, you're still... When you think about it now, I sometimes think, is it possible, that I could be in the cellar, not cough and not sneeze, and no tummyache, and no this ache, nothing, for months, not a day. It's hard to believe it. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

I think what I would like just to say a little about is, there was a period after you returned from the German camp, when you went to see Ella, and it was decided that it would be unsafe to stay there; you came back to Lvov, and you said that you stayed the night at the Przedzieckis, and that night turned out to be a very long period. I would like to know a little more about that long period, which would be roughly 1942, before you and Broniek decided to leave the Przedzieckis and go your separate ways. So what were you doing in that year, that year with the Przedzieckis?

Well I helped them with the housework, and really nothing else. I helped her with the housework, because she had to look after the family, and then he was... You see I can't work it out, if that was also the period that she had those from the staff, which they were working at the tarmac. So she had to cook meals for a lot of men.

They came every day?

Yes, they came every day, and they didn't live there, but there were a few of them, and she cooked very well, because they had a different ration. So, and it was a big flat, so it was plenty to do. And this is how life went on. I didn't go out, I didn't need to, and it was too dangerous for me to go out. When I was staying with Barbara, I had to go out once a week, to buy bread and to get rid of that bucket. So I had to spend the day out, so mostly I was in church, and I was attending all the masses.

But in the Przedzieckis, you mean you stayed in the flat the whole year?

Yes, I stayed in the flat all year, but I....

End of 8 side A

8 side B

So all that year you stayed in the flat.

At the beginning Bronek used to come, and we used to...he used to see me, and we used to give him a meal, and I think we did some washing for him. But when, after the...eventually I didn't see him any more.

Where was he living?

He was living in the Wehrmacht quarters, with the army, he was living with them, and he used to come and see me. They tried to help him as well, but a man was much more difficult, because once he was walking to see me, and he was caught by the Gestapo, and they put him in the...they took him to the entrance of a house, and he had to show them that he is not circumcised, that he is not a Jew. And he managed to fool them, but it was a terrible experience. And I suspect that eventually he was caught, this is what I think myself.

What about, he was working for the Wehrmacht as a doctor.

Yes.

Did they know he was Jewish, the Wehrmacht?

Yes of course, but he was a very handsome young man in his twenties, and a doctor, and they were keeping all those healthy young men which had professions, which helped them in the factories, because they had different factories, ammunition factories, and sewing the uniforms, because the rest was in...they were soldiers. And also the same applied to young women. When I was caught at the time, in that school yard, they asked women up to 18 to get out from the...to show themselves. And then, I was older than 18 but I thought I will risk it, and we were in a row, and they picked out so many, then they said, 'Halt', and the rest went with them, and I don't know what happened to them, and we were freed. And incidents like that were happening every day, every day, every hour of the day, because selection, that was their motto. Selection. You know you won't die today, you will die in a week's time. But you've got to be...anniled?

Annihilated.

Annihilated.

Yes. Let's go back to that time. So Bronek used to come occasionally to the Przedziecki's flat, for meals, or for...

Yes.

And there was no danger to you when he did that?

Danger was every second of our lives, day and night. He just managed to slip in in the building, knock at the door, let in. There was once... The Przedziecki, they had two beds together, one bed I slept in one bed, they slept both of them in the next bed. One night was a knock at the door in the middle of the night, but I was already ready, near the back door, and he was scared to go open the door, so she went. When she opened the door it was a man who came to the dentist, which was on the second floor, and he came to be on time when the dentist will start to take the patients. So she told him to sleep on the stairs, and she went back to bed. And some time later, I don't know, and again a knock at the door. So he was [INAUDIBLE], put on the dressing gown, he went to the door, because they suspected it could be this...and it was the same man. But I mean, they gave me marvellous respect, and I wasn't worth anything. And they could have been killed the whole lot of them, the whole building.

And you were all squeezed into one room, it was a small flat. You say you slept in the same room as they did?

Yes, because the daughter, they had a daughter, she slept in the dining room, and the other two rooms were occupied by two women; one was a judge's wife, and the other one was a woman with a daughter. People had been not allocated big flats to live, but as long as they managed to live in their flat, which was their flat from before the war.

And these two women were living there with their daughters.

Yes.

What were they doing, the...?

Just living.

They were Polish people, Polish Christian people?

Polish people. One was an old woman, Mrs Joszt, and her husband was a judge but he was gone.

So you stayed with them towards the end of the war.

Then the Przedzieckis decided...

Yes, oh I see, so you stayed on with the older women.

They agreed that I can stop.

Right. And they also knew you were Jewish.

Yes.

And all those people never ever gave you away, or hinted that they were giving you away, all those people.

No, no. They were good people.

Yes.

There were good and bad.

And in the flat...

It was a time also, that it was a bit dangerous, so Mrs Przedziecka talked to her milkwoman; the milk was delivered by a woman from a village outside Lvov, Michalowa, and she said to her, maybe I will go and stay with her for a bit.

And this was in that same year.

Yes, it was in the same period. So she agreed, and we walked to where she lived, not together but like two strangers, and I came to the village, but unfortunately her house was in the middle of the village.

And there was also a flat of somebody living...

And when we came there, she had a son, and he was against it, that his mother is going to keep a Jewess. Not because he didn't want it, but he was afraid. Because people from the villages, they are short of salt, so they just pop in, 'Have you got some salt?'

But I thought that Michalowa was the one with the flat in Lvov.

That was Michalowa, she was the concierge, who wanted to give me away. And she was also Michalowa. Yes, but a different...

But also there was somebody's flat that you stayed in occasionally, when things got too hard. What was her name?

I'll tell you. But shall I not finish with the flat?

Yes please.

And so all day I was in bed, the bed was made.

Yes. This was in the village?

In the village, where people were popping in, there was...everything looked normal. But at night I used to go out of bed and sleep somewhere there. And her son was pestering her so long, that eventually she said I've got to go, and I went back to Przedziecka.

So that was also in this year, that was that time.

Yes. Then it was this girl, Maria I think was her name...

Was that also in this same period, beginning...?

Yes. She lived in a beautiful block, very near Przedziecka's flat, and she occupied the little flat together with a detective.

A Ukrainian?

He, I don't know who he was, she was Ukrainian. And he had that little hall, that it was a little hall with a little...with a ring, gas ring, to cook something, and it must have been a toilet there. And then there were two separate rooms; one room she occupied, the other room he occupied, that man. And she made a living from going to the county and buying products in the village.

You told me.

And selling them. And he was in that... One day I knocked there, and he opened the door, and he said, 'Come in'. And I went in. And he started to feed me with whisky, and I drank, and this man didn't do anything wrong. Then I said I'm going, he let me go. That was just a miracle.

Yes. And all this was all happening during the beginning of your time at the Przedzieckis' flat, [INAUDIBLE].

In and out. Because once I had to leave Przedziecki, the 20th of October I had to leave Przedziecki's flat at, just unexpectedly.

Why on the 20th?

Because this daughter Przedziecki, Irene...

Ah, yes, you told me about that story. But that was I thought a later period, when you were back at the Przedzieckis' flat again.

Yes, eventually I went back. I was going and coming.

Yes, yes. The Przedzieckis' flat was a kind of base for you, until they left.

Yes, because they had the few possessions I had, they kept it. Well it was a month that I was living rough.

Yes of course. But it's the Przedziecki period that I'm really interested in. So really that was a very quiet phase for you during the war, when you were at the

Przedzieckis', quite safe in a way, except - well, not safe, anything could have happened. The tarmac workers, they knew you were Jewish, or not?

I think they did.

They didn't say so.

No. There was no discussion on that.

And they were Reichsdeutsch?

They were all sorts. I think, not Reichsdeutsch.

Volksdeutsch?

Volksdeutsch. Volksdeutsch was the engineer who took on, the contractor, he was. And the rest were engineers. All academically, academics.

German, or...?

Polish. In Poland...in Poland...

They were qualified.

They were qualified, from a polytechnic.

Yes. So how did it come about that the Przedzieckis were looking after them?

Because in that group of architects was Vladik[ph], I've forgotten his name, he was Jewish, and he was a boyfriend of Przedziecki's sister, Maria, and she lived in Warsaw. And they were very friendly, they stayed there...I don't know, they weren't married, but they were very friendly, very close. So, when he came to Lemberg, Maria gave him the address of her sister Helena. And this is why they all arrived, and she looked after the cooking. But this Vladik[??] was very unhappy, because he didn't...he felt that two Jews in a small flat is a bit risky.

Yes.

So, we had been talking to each other, but I felt that he would like to get rid of me. He had more chance, because he was like, friendly with her sister. Anyway, they finished that contract and they went. But he had a tragic death.

You told me about that, you have told me about him, jumping out of the window.

That's right.

Fine, OK. So how did you spend your time in the Przedzieckis' flat? What did you do during that period?

How did I do eight months in a cellar? In a dark cellar.

Sure.

Where you couldn't read, it was too dark.

But did you stay near the door of the flat? I mean how did you...how did you...?

Mostly I was in the kitchen, and the kitchen had a back door. So, the worst was when somebody rang the bell, so I had to be ready to go out.

There's just one other part of your memories that we've talked about, but I've never quite asked you this question. We've talked about the cellar, we've talked about you living in it, I have a very clear idea of that. But the actual physical lay-out of the cellar, how big was it? I mean we're in a kitchen now.

The cellar was, oh, not much smaller, maybe lower; it was lower. The cellar had a door, and it had...as this was winter time there was a lot of fuel, a lot of coal, and the cellar had a little window to get the light in with...

I know what you mean, yes, I can't think of the word either. The lattice, latticework.

My dictionary is...a [POLISH WORD], you know, from iron.

Yes. Grilles.

Grilles. Had grilles. So you could see a little bit of light. And when I established myself in that cellar, well, I remember she put some boards, and I remember my bedding was very thick paper, put on that board, and all the clothes I possessed, I wore it.

What about size? I mean I don't know how big this kitchen is, is this kitchen about 15 feet?

Tape measure in my drawer. [BREAK IN RECORDING]

So this kitchen that we're in now is about 15 foot by 12 foot, 10 or 12 foot.

10 by 12.

10 by 12?

Because it was wide.

So, was it this big, the cellar?

It was underneath the building, everybody, every tenant, every who lived in the flat had a cellar.

And was it as big as this kitchen?

No, not as big as...it was like three-quarters of that kitchen.

About three-quarters of this.

But much lower.

Lower ceilings.

Yes, much lower.

There was no lighting of any sort?

The lighting was from the grille.

Where did the coal come in, how did the coal come into the cellar?

This little window, something was opened, and they were throwing it in from the street, the lorries.

Right.

But I can't remember them doing that. Because I used to leave every week for a day.

Right, and was that the day when they delivered?

Could be.

Yes. So what else was in the cellar? There was the boards, there was your paper...

And a bucket.

Right. Nothing else, no table, nothing.

No.

Chair.

Nothing, nothing. She used to bring me occasionally a bowl of hot soup, when she came down to the cellar. There was no conversation in the cellar.

And the cellars were in a row?

Yes, one next to the other.

Underneath the building? In the basement.

Every occupier of a flat had a cellar, because that was the heating.

Right. And who came down to the cellars?

Oh, Barbara, or the other one, Yadvigia[??].

And were there other people who went down to the cellars?

Oh yes, maids, maids from the other... Because it was a professional house, with doctors and dentists, and all people in the professions. [BREAK IN RECORDING] When I used to leave for the day, I had to go up steps, to come out in the hall, the entrance of the building, like flats. And the caretaker lived facing those stairs, like just right near the front door. And this caretaker didn't spot me, even once in all those months. Miracle. But they were on guard in the street; I had to sneak out quick from the building, with the bucket. And all day I was wandering about; not so much wandering, when all the masses in the churches finished I went to an underground toilet, and there I had a bite of something, food, and I used to buy the bread. And when it was getting already dusk they were on guard again, to let me in, and I sneaked in quick.

End of 8 side B

End of Interview