

Unauthenticated

Interview with Bernard Green
January 30, 1992
Brooklyn, NY.

Q: Okay, you can go ahead.

A: My name is Bernard Green. I was born on March 6, 1911.

Q: Where were you born?

A: Rozwadow. (Poland)

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood? And you know, your parents, what your parents did, and –

A: My father was an invalid from the army. He was 80 % an invalid. He got a nice pension.

Q: He was in World War I, right?

A: In World War 1, yes.

Q: How about, did you have any brothers and sisters?

A: Yes, I got one brother and three sisters. The oldest sister got married and she got killed by the Germans, right in the beginning in 1940.

Q: 1940?

A: 1940. And the two sisters survived. They went in false papers to Germany.

Q: How about your brother?

A: My brother survived, also on false papers. He was in Czechoslovakia.

Q: He went to Czechoslovakia.

A: Not, he went to Czechoslovakia, they took him to Czechoslovakia, the Germans!

A: Oh, really!

A: He was in Stree with me, together, I brought him over, of course, he remained in Rozwadow for a while. In '42, I went to him and brought him papers to Rozwadow and I left him the papers and he came to Stree with me, to us.

Q: So he met up with you?

- A: Yes, and he came to Stree and he was working in Stree. He worked in a bakery for six months. And the Germans came out with a law, let's say when you were born this and this way, when you are twenty years old, you have to go to war. And they put him out and he was afraid, and this was like a--they got two doctors, German doctors. It was a tremendous location. Snow, it was the winter, it was no heat at all over there. I went over there one day, I want to see how this goes on. Like in the army, they undressed and they went like a commission, from one doctor to another. You name this and that where you work. And I told to him, listen, you can go free. Don't worry about anything. Everything was shriveled. He stayed for half an hour over there, naked to wait for the doctors. Don't think they will recognize who you are. This is what it was. He went one day to this commission, or to this recruiting thing, and they took him and they let him go home. After a couple of days, come the papers and they assembled a couple of hundred and they sent them to the coal mine in Czechoslovakia.
- Q: So that's where you worked, in Czechoslovakia?
- A: This is the coalmine, and he survived over there.
- Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the town, your town? What your street was like? Where you lived?
- A: Yeah, you want the street?
- Q: Sure.
- A: Okay, Farna. F-a-r-n-a. It was Vardoof.
- Q: Okay. What was it like there? You know, when you were growing up?
- A: It was a town about 65,000 people. Jews, maybe five, six thousand, I don't know exactly.
- Q: Did you attend public schools there?
- A: Yes, I finished public school over there.
- Q: Did you get all the way through school before the Germans came, or where you...?
- A: Before the Germans came.
- Q: So you got through high school before the Germans came? Can you tell me a little bit about your schools, what were they like? Did you go to a Jewish school also, or did you go___?
- A: No, I went to a private Jewish school. But I finished public school over there and I finished three years of college. I couldn't go further and I quit.
- Q: What were you studying?
- A: Engineering.

- Q: Engineering. Why wouldn't they let you go further?
- A: Discrimination. It was in the same level like in a ghetto. The Jews were sitting on one bench and this was sitting on the other bench. This was what I know, I was studying building engineering. This is what I went and worked for the Germans in the factory
- Q: When you were growing up in the town, do you remember any overt instances of anti-Semitism?
- A: Not--you see, it was--let say--the big holidays, on Yom Kippur. We went to synagogue and there were foolish guys on bicycles who were driving on the road. The chief cantor went out, you know they got the special, special---
- A: Yeah.
- A: One guy grabbed this and run away. We were in a socka club. You know we are not too religious, we were standing outside. We saw this old_____ On Yom Kippur with the bikes, he went across. We called this_____ and they were building a road, a road from concrete bricks, like this, square bricks. Then the fighting, we killed one guy.
- Q: You killed one of the guys? Yeah.
- A: But this was outside of town. It was quiet. Nobody knows about it.
- Q: When did you get, did you get recruited into the army?
- A: I was recruited in the army.
- Q: When did this happen?
- A: In 1934. I was in the army until 1937, three years.
- Q: At that time, do you remember, did the people fear the German at that time? Were they scared that there was going to be a war?
- A: No.
- Q: Did people know what the Nazis were doing to the Jews in Germany at this time?
- A: No.
- Q: What was it like being in the army, what did you do?
- A: In the army, you see, I was in the east, in the east from Poland. I was stationed in Lvov, Lenberg. They got this people what they got a little education; like I got three years college, they put me in a school. They put me in a school and I came out with three stripes. Later, they gave me--I was running a canteen in the army for two years. You know what a canteen is.
- Q: Yes.

- A: It was the chief of the outfit was a Jewish major. He was the mayor from the city and he was major, from captain is the major, you know. They got two stripes with a star. Myer Schrogga was his name. I don't know what happened during the war with him.
- Q: What rank were you when you came out of the army?
- A: I got three stripes.
- Q: So what is that?
- A: How you call this, over here in the army? I don't know.
- Q: Sorry.
- A: Not an officer, like a sergeant.
- Q: Sergeant or something. Non-commissioned? Something like that.. What was Lvov like at that time, when you were there?
- A: It was a nice town. Nice, beautiful town. Before the center, the business center from the old Polish eastern parts.
- Q: Of the Pale, the settlement there?
- A: They used to say it was a Jewish millionaire, Sprechel was his name. When you were fighting for 10 cents, he says if you have the 10 cents, you go to Sprechel ,you buy a house.
- Q: So what did you do after you got out of the army in 1937? Did you go back to Rozwadow?
- A: I went back to Rozwadow.
- Q: Did you work there or what did you do there?
- A: We got a little farm outside the city.
- Q: Your family does?
- A: Yeah.
- Q: So you went to work there?
- A: I was working over there and the war broke out.
- Q: Can you tell me about when the Germans came?
- A: When the Germans came? You See from the beginning, let's say for a week, it was quiet. The Poles robbed all the stores.

Q: The Jewish stores?

A: The Jewish stores. The Germans were looking, were making pictures, were making films of this, when the Poles robbed. After when they were over there, maybe about three months, the Germans, all the Jews they throw out on the other side of the river. The San was the border. They throw them out, they don't care. Some of them went to Ulanov in the little towns, wherever they could.

Q: When they first came, they came to your town, they came to Rozwadow a week after the war started? About, or maybe later?

A: No, when the war started, they came later. The war started in '39 and they came in the beginning of '40'

Q: The Germans did?

A: The Germans.

Q: The Germans, oh okay. So, who –were the Russians there first?

A: No, Rozwadow was warned of the Russians. The Russians were Luland (ph), from Lulandoof (ph) to Rozwadow, it was about 15 kilometers. Eight, ten miles.

Q: So, the war started, let's see, the war started on September 1st of '39.

A: Yes.

Q: And the Germans didn't come to town until '40?

A: Forty.

Q: Okay. What did they do when they first got to town?

A: Not too much. Not too much harm at the beginning. Of course, they send in the regular army. Later when they came in, to start with organization. You know, like the mayor, they took the Volksdeutsch (ph). They gave him a job. The mayor, the Volksdeutsch, the chief of police was a Volksdeutsch. All the top government was occupied by their people.

Q: Were there a lot of Volksdeutsch people in the town?

A: No. They came from Pozran. You know Pozran? You heard from Pozran. This was in the border from Germany. And from over there, they came.

Q: Were the Poles glad to see the Germans? Not the Jews, but the Poles? Some of them?

A: Some of them, some of them not. But the majority, yes. You see, in Poland during the war is big poverty.

Q: Did the Germans enact any special laws against the Jews when they first came?

- A: When they first came, the first few days not, but later they came down the laws that the Jews can't go out and they have to have the special armbands.
- Q: Were there any other restrictions?
- A: No, but between Rozwadow and Ulanov was a little village, a big village, Pisznicza, and they make a camp over there from the Jews what they came from Austria. This Deutsch was looking like they came from Austria with everything, engineers, lawyers, high educated people.
- Q: Right, the intellectuals.
- A: Intellectuals. They make a camp from over there and they were free. They were some of them, what they were in the army, in the German army, Austrian officers, Jews. They took them over there, they got horses to ride. They got freedom. But in the end, they liquidated them.
- Q: Did they have a special name for this camp?
- A: No, I don't know. No, it was a big camp but they were free, they could walk around. It wasn't a closed camp. Do you remember the camp at Pisznicza, it was a name for them? No, it was no name. {Female voice: "It was from Vienna"} From Vienna, no name. Zarzecze was a name. {"No, but the camp was in Zarzecze."}
- Q: Okay. We already talked about the Germans coming to Rozwadow. What happens after that?
- A: After that, they throw out all the Jews.
- Q: They threw them across the river?
- A: Across the river.