

Eberhard Helmrich (1899-1961)



Profession: Graduate farmer, agricultural management consultant

1933: Marriage with Donata, who brings three children into the marriage. 1934: Birth of their daughter Cornelia

1938: The Helmrichs help Jewish friends, especially after Kristallnacht

1941: Eberhard Helmrich is appointed as head of agriculture of the Drohobycz, Stryj and Sambor counties

1941-44: Under the guise of supplying the German occupying forces, Helmrich sets up the Hyrawka agricultural farm with around 130 Jews at times. He helps Jews with food, forged documents, illegal transfers, and hides Jews in his apartment. Young Jewish women from Drohobycz are rescued by his wife Donata in Berlin as household help under false identities.

After 1945: Eberhard and Donata separate. Eberhard emigrates to the USA.

1965: Yad Vashem honours him as "Righteous Among the Nations"

„I have never talked about what I did because I never had the feeling of a real achievement . On the contrary, I am still haunted by the nightmares of utter failure. This has nothing to do with modesty. The terrible facts are, that when I came to Galizia in Poland, there were in the three counties of the Oblast Drohobycz about 85000 Jewish souls. When the Red Army came, there were – as a guess – 1000 survivors...

It is relatively easy to rebel against an alien invader, when all sympathies of your people are with you. To stand up for nearly 13 years against the mainstream of thinking, attitudes and beliefs of one's own nation is something else. The price to pay is utter loneliness.“

Eberhard Helmrich, speech, New York 1949

Quellen: Yad Vashem, rescue story 4015241; Sandkühler, „Endlösung“ in Galizien; Yad Vashem, File No. M.31.2/154; Schmalz-Jacobsen, Two Trees; Helmrich speech NYC 1949 (Thanks to Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen)