

**DAVID ELENTUKH MEMOIR, undated**  
**1997.A.0304**

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**Summary**

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The summary of the David Elentukh memoir is housed within the supplementary materials of the David Elentukh memoir.

David Elentukh was born in Minsk in 1914. Before the war he worked in a construction enterprise. In 1936 he married Fayna Mirskaya and had two children, Semen born in 1937 and Mark born in 1939. His own parents died before the war, and his wife and two children, as well as two sisters, perished in the Minsk ghetto in 1942.

A few days after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Elentukh was drafted into the military. On his way to his unit, which was retreating eastward, he was captured by the Germans. He later escaped and returned to his family in Minsk. They were soon moved into the newly organized Minsk ghetto, whose "chairman" was one Mishkin.

One day all men from the ghetto aged 16-65 were assembled and marched to the Drozdy neighborhood, where specialists, such as lawyers and doctors, were separated out and immediately shot. The remaining men were put in the Minsk prison and held as "hostages" who would be ransomed in return for gold and other valuables provided by Jews in the ghetto.

Younger Jews, including Elentukh, were transferred from the prison to a camp near Minsk, the commander of which was a former Soviet officer who was a cruel and strident anti-semitic. Elentukh soon escaped from the camp and returned to the ghetto. Prior to a rumored "pogrom" Elentukh and 12 other persons, including a woman with an infant child, crowded into a secret sub-cellar. With marauding Germans overhead, the woman's brother, with her assent, smothered the child to stop it from crying and revealing their presence.

Elentukh and his brother-in-law were later assigned to work in the boiler room of the Gebietskommandatura, located in Minsk's Lenin Library. Their supervisor was one Yanson who had worked in the German embassy before the war. While in the building, Elentukh and his relative stole pistols and grenades from a weapons storeroom and hid them.

One night, Elentukh and his family were rounded up with ghetto neighbors and marched in the direction of a ditch used for dead bodies 8-10 km outside Minsk. On their way to the ditch, able-bodied men were struck by clubs in the back of the neck to suppress any resistance, although Elentukh avoided being hit. Local peasants stood along the route and watched. Before reaching the ditch, Elentukh gave the child he was carrying to his wife and ran from the column. Zig-zagging, he managed to avoid being hit by the German soldier firing at him with a rifle. [Elentukh's narrative makes no further reference to the fate of his family or of the other people in the column]

To avoid capture, Elentukh hid in a nearby outhouse, immersing himself in its pit full of sewage. After dark, Elentukh emerged from the pit, cleaned himself off and returned to the ghetto. He and his brother-in-law retrieved their hidden weapons and went to join the partisans.

After being interrogated by partisans in the village of Pesochnoe, they were given rifles and sent to a partisan unit. Elentukh helped save his unit when it was surrounded by Germans near the village of Lavaya, Kopel'skiy rayon. In recognition of this and other exploits, he was recommended for an award and made a member of the Communist Party. Elentukh was also named head of a 12-man machine-gun unit and later head of an intelligence section.

His unit was joined by an escapee from the Warsaw ghetto named Tunik and his two daughters. On two occasions his unit foiled attempts by spies to infiltrate their ranks.

Toward the end of 1944 units of the Red Army were approaching and Elentukh was assigned to Lyakhovicheskiy rayon, Baranovichskaya oblast where joined the ranks of the regular army. He was subsequently appointed head of the trade department of the Lyakhovicheskiy rayon government.

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An addendum to the narrative says Elentukh has appended copies of documents attesting to his membership in the partisan movement and to his confinement in the Minsk ghetto from July 1941 to November 1942.