

-TITLE- BEN KAMM  
-I\_DATE- MARCH 6, 1983  
-SOURCE- UCLA HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTATION ARCHIVES  
-RESTRICTIONS-  
-SOUND\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT  
-IMAGE\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT  
-DURATION-  
-LANGUAGES-  
-KEY\_SEGMENT-  
-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
-PERSONAL\_NAME-  
-CORPORATE\_NAME-  
-KEY\_WORDS-  
-NOTES-  
-CONTENTS-  
MINUTE BY MINUTE

1:10 - Ben Kamm was born March 21, 1921 in Warsaw. Now he is a manufacturer of ladies' garments in Los Angeles. He attended grade school and went to a Jewish gymnasium.

2:00 - of the five boys in his family, he is the only one alive today. He was the oldest of the boys. The whole family lived in one building. His father was an auto mechanic and later became involved in transportation and his mother was a butcher.

3:10 - considers his family to have been low middle class though his grandparents were wealthy. He was raised as a 'modern Jew.' Chul.

3:50 - a call for all boys to join the Polish army. He was in it for a short period of time, around four weeks or whatever, but Warsaw capitulated very soon.

4:30 - Ben's father ended up on the Russian side but Ben's mother did not want to leave; no reason to leave at that point and the man had to return alone and the family had to grow up without a father.

5:30 - the brothers became the family breadwinners. They set up little businesses - selling cards to the incoming Germans for example - but things got tougher and tougher, register to work, forced to work.

6:30 - they started to build walls in Warsaw but no one knew what

they were for.

7:00 - he was ordered to work at the airport. They took down the hangars and the steel was sent to Germany. Kamm was hit by a German very hard.

7:40 - he had an aunt who had converted years and years before the War.

8:40 - she worked for the underground, publishing false documents.

9:00 - Kamm would smuggle meat over the wall, risking his life.

9:25 - Kamm describes the conditions of the Warsaw ghetto; squeezing all the Jews together, 500,000 people in an area suited for 50,000.

10:00 - people had no idea what would happen later, the violence. Poles would murder Jews in the ghetto themselves.

10:45 - Kamm lived with his family in a one room flat where, according to him a total of 30 people lived.

11:00 - nobody thought the War would last long, everybody was in the camp.

11:40 - one day, he was out of the ghetto and he was stopped by a German who forced him to work. Kamm had to carry enormous bags of sugar (170 lbs.) for the whole day and then he finally broke a bag by accident and the German tore into him.

12:30 - he heard more about the underground from his aunt.

13:20 - he became friends with a Polish girl, his family was very well-known in the area.

13:55 - eleven of his friends decided to run away and the Polish girl he knew obtained the tickets which made it possible for them to leave.

14:30 - they took a river boat to a village, then heard that groups were forming in another village. they found a place near Lublin where he and five other friends joined on with the group, the others went their ways and eventually were killed by Poles.

15:30 - the leader was an old Polish soldier from the Spanish civil war, leftist side. Kamm describes how it was hard to obtain weapons even though 'every Pollack had a gun.'

16:20 - to accumulate arms, the group would sometimes use threats or pay money.

16:45 - June 1941, the War started and Russian POW's would run away and join up with the partisan forces - Maidanek (sp.?).

17:55 - twenty-six Jewish POW's escaped from a camp near the Lublin area and joined up; they stayed in a village. Every night they heard shots and the Jewish POW's would be gone one by one. Kamm heard that someone was poisoning them (the Polish commander?) so a group of men including Kamm decided to ambush ten of the commander's men instigating a war within the group. Kamm's side gained many Russian POW's and eventually numbered 120 total people.

20:00 - Polish police killed the last Jews except for Ben: now the matchups were 119 Russians and 1 Jew (Ben) vs. the Polish partisan group led by the commander.

20:55 - 'Ukrainian partisans according to Kamm were the greatest Jew-haters, Kamm suggests it is 'indescribable' how they would chop up Jews. Kamm talks about Ukrainians in Canada and the United States.

21:45 - Kamm's group encountered a huge Russian partisan group, they joined up. Kamm speculates that the group numbered something like 19,000 people and was 50% Jewish. the largest partisan group in the Poland/Ukraine area supplied by the Russians.

23:00 - Kamm recalls the existence of another partisan group, a Polish group funded by the british which was extremely anti-Semitic.

23:10 - Kamm's group was armed by the Russians and engaged in operations and mined roads.

23:30 - In 1943, the group demolished 541 trains going to the Eastern Front, had to give reports after each operation.

23:45 - not so much anti-Jewishness after that, but they picked out

a bunch of Polish citizens to go to Poland and arm the Polish people with Russian arms to fight the Germans.

25:00 - they established a camp for women, children, and the elderly and approximately 3,000 people were protected there.

25:20 - the group had great resources - doctors, etc.- even behind the German lines, but chased the Germans away.

26:00 - the group would march through the fields in a line. Kamm describes how 'Pollacks' would shoot at the group, usually hitting the last one in line.

26:40 - Kamm heard there was hunger in the Warsaw ghetto and he wanted to go back and see what was going on. He contacted that Polish female acquaintance of his.

27:30 - Kamm smuggled stuff into the ghetto, stayed for a spell and then left.

28:00 - the Polish girl had an apartment next to the ghetto. When Kamm was heading down the stairs after seeing her, an SS man was going up the stairs looking for him. They crossed halfway but neither stopped.

29:00 - mentions the operations, ambushes and mining sprees engineered by the group.

29:20 - The Germans sent 75,000 soldiers to clear out the partisan group.

30:00 - they fought for sixteen hours in one square mile after the Germans had cornered the partisan group. According to Kamm, the partisan group lost 35 men and the Germans lost 1800.

30:30 - Kamm says that a lot of Jewish boys and girls were heroes and that the War proved that Jews could fight better than anyone else and he mentions Israel.

31:40 - Kamm suggests that the anti-Semitism fed to Jews in the past made even Jews believe that the stereotypes about the weak Jewish soldier were true.

32:00 - Kamm says that without the collaboration of the Pollacks, one half the Jews in Poland would still be alive. The Germans would reward Poles - according to Kamm in the form of a pound of sugar and whiskey- for getting Jews out of the woods.

33:00 - the group helped to liberate captive areas several times and organized the police in Helm (sp.?) - the first Polish city to organize the police.

34:00 - 'pollacks' shot some of Kamm's friends in this city.

34:30 - one time he came out of a movie as a machine gun and went off.

34;55 - in the Poland of 1944, Kamm would sleep with two machine guns, grenades and a side pistol. People were out to kill Jews.

36:00 - he ran away, went to Danzig and met some girls liberated from Stutthof, among them his future wife.

37:00 - Kamm suggests he was a friend with the partisans and remarks how they stole 10,000 liters of pure alcohol from the Germans. Kamm recalls that the partisans buried everything in the forest.

37:50 - he spent time with his future wife.

38:00 - they married and it's lasted '38 years already.'

38:30 - Kamm suggests that you couldn't walk around without a gun. Russian soldiers would rob you blind, rape girls.

39:00 - Elly, Kamm's future wife was found by her brother.

39:45 - they wanted to go to Palestine. They were in Germany and then joined a kibbutz in Fraulein, Germany.

40:00 - They wanted to make Aliyah but Elly was pregnant. Elly's brother Freddy went to Israel.

41:00 - they lived in Stuttgart, then went to the United States even though Kamm did not have a trade. He knew he family in the U.S.

41:20 - Kamm tells a touching story about how a cattle ship came in 1945. Kamm told the boy on the ship about his relatives and gave an address. The boy on the ship returned to New York and told the relatives that Kamm was still alive, tears.

42:50 - Kamm met a French officer, gave an address of a uncle in Paris and the lines of communication were opened.

43:00 - his aunts brought him over to Brooklyn.

43:30 - Kamm describes coming to the United States, getting an apartment, going to the garment district, moving up the ladder as his boss Schwartz would give him a raise.

44:10 - he joined the union, \$90 a week, went to school, designing school too.

44:55 - he heard about some mafia shops, made \$140 the first week.

45:30 - he tells a story about an uncle in New York, a pocketbook man.

46:50 - Kamm's family went to Treblinka at the end of 1943 which Kamm found out in a letter from a Polish farmer. Kamm's whole family was killed in Treblinka and a lot of his relatives died of hunger in Warsaw, but he does have a relative who ran away from Treblinka.

48:00 - as a partisan they would pay the engineers for information.

48:35 - as partisans they never had an order to liberate a concentration camp.

48:50 - in 1941, 600 Jews were in a labor camp and 12 of the partisans decided to liberate it. Kamm had an 1863 gun and 3 bullets. They liberated the camp and Kamm picked up a Dr. Gross. Dr. Gross remained with the partisans for about a year then returned to Kraków and became a collaborator.

51:00 - Kamm felt helpless to help the people in the camps and saw atrocities committed by the 'Pollacks' - 40 men and women on one occasion were cut up and there were numerous single events of this nature.

52:00 - Kamm is angry at the 'Pollacks.' They did it on their own

free will. They have a fundamental hatred for Jews. Kamm remembers as a kid he had to fight everybody and university, Jews had to stand in the left corner.

53:00 - Kamm does not feel sorry for the Poles, he believes it's been coming to them.

53:25 - Kamm did see maidanek and he remembers piles of hair, piles of glasses, piles of bodies.

54:00 - Jewish girls in a place.

54:10 - when they took over Helm, they liberated 16 Jews barricaded in the cells.

55:00 - Kamm recalls how a Jewish lady opened a coffee shop in Helm and a lot of Jewish Russian soldiers wanted to go to Palestine. They would supply them with money to do this, etc.

56:00 - story about a man who claimed to have Jewish blood.

57:30 - Kamm mentions again the liberated labor camp of 600 Jews.

58:00 - strong Jewish resistance against the Poles and the Ukrainians.

58:45 - at a meeting of the 1939 Club, Kamm met a man who was in the labor camp.

59:00 - Kamm continues to stress the threat that the 'Pollacks' and the Polish police posed to Jews at that time.  
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