

RG-50.120*0045

Fuchs, Moshe

Tape 1 of 3

- 1.00 Born in 1923 in a small town, but lived in Lodz almost from the start. He had 3 brothers and 3 sisters. His father started in textiles then moved to the food business. They had a modest and quiet life. He describes his home as traditional, but enlightened, learning Hebrew as well as the Talmud. Describes it also as a harmonious home although there was some disagreement between their religious mother and the secular sons. Describes, in detail, his membership in the Zionist-secular-labor youth movement called "Hashomer-Hatzair" and their activities – the variety of learning, socializing, the importance of leaders. It was the "center of his life" and he gave up high school.
- 1.18 In August of 1939, the difficult return from summer camp with crowded trains and rumors of Germans' intentions foresaw the beginning of the war.
- 1.21 Outbreak of war – describes Germany's entry into Lodz on the first day of war. Youth movement members organized to keep in touch in small groups and undercover. Thousands in the town were killed by German bombardment. He escaped, with his brother, to Warsaw. Describes the burning of synagogue, bombardment, and hunger. Brother got typhoid. After a few weeks (???) they managed to return to Lodz to his parents' surprise. Father urged him to leave the ghetto and go to his uncle's in the mountains. He left and did not see his parents or siblings ever again.
- 1.39 He spent two years with his uncles in Stashow, Topiyanova and Klimontov. They were relatively peaceful years with his uncle in this isolated Jewish town (near Phandomiye??). He helped his uncle and he was active in the youth movement (17 years old at this time); slowly, there were restrictions placed on them, which limited their livelihood. Trained by youth movement leaders to live and hide in mountains and forests, thus, pretending to be gentiles. Traded in yeast. Taught children (the schools had closed). Moved to his second uncle's home and worked for a German prison guard. He went to his third uncle's home near their original hometown and found out that the family home was given to Volksdeutsche. Parents barely worked and there was hunger in Lodz; he heard indirectly from his brothers that the younger disappeared.
- 2.05 Returned to Stashow on freezing road and worked road construction for the Germans, for which he got food and money. He wrote a letter (in German) to General Frank, the commander of Poland, asking to transfer money he earned through his work for the German company to his parents. After a month, he was called to the commander and three deliveries of his money to the ghetto were approved. But his mother died a week earlier of starvation and it was too late for his father who died with his postcard on his chest. The younger sister was adopted by Volksdeutsche neighbors, but was killed later when she was caught throwing food packages over the fence.

- 2.24 Bribed Germans to take them to a labor camp (Skarzysko). He had to give his valuables, but he managed to hide saved money in bread. Describes work with arms and munitions and with poisonous explosive (Trotil??), which caused death to workers. Very hard work and terrible food. He constructed rails from which trial mortars were to be fired. Describes cruelty of “Greener”, killing of friend, getting typhoid, but going to Red Cross would be the end. How they tried to help each other with work to survive. Decided to escape.
- 2.42 Women were contacts and supplied food. Were also helped by Leftist Poles; also by a German engineer named Schmidt. Discusses the various methods and times of escaping. Describes the actual escape. Only three more escaped between October and December. Hardly any of his group survived. Found no Jews left in Stashow (aside from the road workers). Simcha Rotenberg was a contact.
- 2.56 Describes the life in the forest (which was completely unfamiliar for Jews), size and composition of groups and the connections among them; methods of obtaining tools, food and water (all extremely scarce); how they built bunkers to hide in in the winter; how they dealt with freezing weather. The relationship with peasants and other “goyim” from which they obtained food willingly or under threat; how some Jews were hiding among the peasants, usually for money; how they were constantly on the run; their members changing with many perishing; haunted by Germans (who generally avoided the forest) and often informed on by the Poles.
- 3.03 Tells about what they heard regarding annihilation of Jews in the surrounding areas from those who joined their forest groups or via the youth movement leaders or those who escaped the camp.
- 3.22 Describes (again?) the labor camp Skarzysko Kamienna; physical conditions; poisonous material Trote and its effects on those who worked with it; the Kapo who were worse than the Germans; one especially mean individual was Stella Markovitch; dealings with food and money; danger of being informed on (was in the camp in 1942).
- 3.44 Describes the plan and actual escape into the woods; experiences with villagers, partisans and Polish AKA (“Army Kariova”) – winter 1943.

Tape 2 of 3

- 4.08 Tells stories about brother and others’ survival.
- 4.19 Describes struggle for survival in the forests, some contacts; difficulties with clothes and medicine; composition of the group, orientation in the forest, and weather; food and water problems; daily patterns; bunkers; fate of some individuals and many stories regarding what happened to them (also after the war). There were some good “goyim;” obtained help for money and at other times used force, threats or stole as needed. Began to hear (via radio) about the

- approaching allies. Reflects on differences among people and Jews of different backgrounds and how some survived and some did not.
- 6.33 In March of 1944, signs of German retreat. Liberated by unbelieving Russians. Worked in a hospital. Moved to Lublin. He was treated well by the Russians. May 1945, celebrated the end of the war.
- 6.51 Describes organizing in groups (by age, not political) in preparation for immigration to Palestine; confusions; crossing borders into the American zone; false papers. He went from Romania to Italy (first encounter with the Jewish Brigade), then on a boat to Egypt, evading British restrictions to enter Palestine. Arrived, illegally, in Tel Aviv.

Tape 3 of 3

- 7.12** Describes initial experiences in Tel Aviv, being among the first of Polish post-war immigrants; compares with Hungarian Jews. He had a difficult adjustment to the kibbutz, where his experiences (in the Holocaust) were not initially believed. He did not talk about the Holocaust until many years later. Very modest life, to start.
- 7.26** War of Independence and army service – describes his life at the formation of the State of Israel and his recruitment and war service. Participated in some of the battles and was wounded. Eventually, he joined the regular army and was promoted and acquired a munitions expert profession. Married a survivor who was adopted by survivor parents and established a family. Older and younger brothers followed to Israel and his sisters perished. Talked with his wife about the Holocaust, but not with others (children and brothers) until recently.

- ** Indicates an error in time code. On the written document, it says 5.12 and 5.26