

RG-50.120*053

Guinat, Eitan

Tape 1 of 3

- 1.00 He was born (original name was Otto Dniyevsky) in 1920 in Vienna to a family, which came there in 1911 from Russia. They were middle class and not religiously observant, but traditional. German was his mother tongue. He excelled in all schools but always felt different as a Jew, although there was not anti-Semitism in the progressive Social-Democratic Austria of his youth. Describes his involvement with Zionist youth movements and his interest in Jabotinsky's views. He was interested in chemistry.
- 1.19 Describes life in Vienna and the rise of Nazism. Attributes deep anti-Semitism to the Catholic tradition. Describes the Jewish prevalence in Vienna and the tradition of dueling.
- 1.45 In 1935, the family moved to Belgium where father had business connections. Describes his father's opposition to Zionism, unlike his mother and three older sisters. The difficulties of refugee life, especially the new language (which he mastered well). Describes Jewish youth organizations in Brussels and his many activities there. Socialized mostly with family and other refugees.
- 1.55 Early "Invention" attempt, and later rescuer – tells about offering a bombardment stabilization idea to the British Navy where the belated response letter helped to save him later.
- 2.02 Talks about the rounding off of French Jewry and sending them to extermination while no allies helped; political parties and fights.
- 2.10 Describes his varied activities and interests while still in Belgium, especially with Zionist organizations and preparations for immigration to Palestine.
- 2.27 On May 10th, he was taken with all refugees to St. Cyprienne near the Pyreneese border. Talks about the shameful betrayal by the French. Describes the nearby Gurs camp with its German (also Jewish) more educated refugees whom he preferred and where he enjoyed the high-level classes given by the scholar refugees at that "university." Describes life in both camps. He and his father were discharged on July 27th, thanks to the letter he received from the British.
- 2.55 Joined the rest of his family near Toulouse. Describes continuing his studies at Montpellier University, the city, the student body, and, especially, Jewish life and organizations. Discusses, in detail, the influence of young educated rabbis, the Jewish scouts movement and the separate Zionist organization, which he promoted. Lists names of many members and activists, some from Palestine. Describes the "Zionist Congress" (M.E.C.S.*), which met on May 10, 1942, and his role in it. Mentions the beginning of the French underground, the Jewish segment that started before the general one (and with considerable help from the

Spanish intellectuals and others who lived in the area as refugees of the Spanish-Republican War). The first rumors about extermination camps reached them there, but they were not believed. He and the (Zionist) Congress members also had to go underground when Jewish identification was required. Refers to the “contact” between the M.G.A. * ??? and the A.J. (Armee’ Juif??), the Jewish scouts, and names many of the people involved. Describes a training school for counselors that they established and those associated with it. It dispersed in August of 1943. He was eventually caught and sent to a labor camp (Casruhe?)

Tape 2 of 3

- 4.01 Some corrections to the previous details given. He was helped by many, which he regrets never thanking. Gives further details about his educational activities while a student; partly underground activities. France was totally occupied by Germany then. He was given the name Andre Guinot. He was helped by a Colonel to move to Grenoble, which was under Italian rule.
- 4.23 Registered and lived at the university (Grenoble). Describes extensive underground activities in nearby cities, too, involving moving and hiding Jewish families in villages, trying to get youngsters to Palestine, and obtaining and providing false identity documentation for the various rescue operations. He and his student/friend/colleagues also met on Saturdays to continue their Jewish Zionist education and to relieve the pressure of the tense and difficult daily life. He also describes friends (Simon Levitt, most notably), brother, and other family members and how he met and married his wife in Grenoble. Talks about the relationship with other underground organizations (communists, Jewish Scouts, etc.) and discusses the financial arrangements. Describes his wedding in Nice.
- 5.35 When the Gestapo came to Grenoble, he was accepted to join Colonel Nicollo?? His daughter was born en route. Talks about the high level of idealism among the young people. Describes Madam Jam???, and her help. Cites number of underground members in each of the neighboring towns. Discusses alternatives.
- 5.59 Moved to Causade?? Near Montauban with Colonel Nicollo’s help (the only one who knew he was Jewish), and worked in the Central Laboratory. Describes it as “professional paradise” by progressing in his doctorate, scientific work, developing contacts and succeeding professionally. But, he had no time for Zionist work. He was there from January 144 to May 1945 (end of the war) when he left for Paris.
- 6.17 Tells about a 1948 visit, from Israel as a military science worker, to Colonel Nicollo, who provided him with important contacts.
- 6.24 Tells about family events still in Grenoble.
- 6.29 When the war ended, he moved to Paris and completed his PhD. He also obtained a “certificate” to immigrate to Palestine. The M.G.S. *?? Meeting in Paris was

disappointing and he elaborates on why he thinks Zionism is not successful in France, and is critical of the delegates from Palestine.

- 6.49 Describes his boat trip in July 1945 and meeting “Buchenwald children.” Went to Atlit transfer camp.

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- 7.08 Describes his first months in a kibbutz; his move to Jerusalem; service in the Israeli army; various experiences during the War of Independence; working in the military science service; and various attempts (some successful, some frustrating) to apply his professional skills. After working for different organizations in his field of utilization of raw material, he opened his own plant and had many successful years of important contributions, inventions, and recognition.
- 0.34 Continued above topic, although ERROR IN TIME CODE.
- 0.45 Concludes with an extensive evaluation of the realities of life in Israel as compared to earlier expectations. Criticizes excessive politicalization, favoritism, and other shortcomings. Hopes the next generation could return the young state to the unity, idealism and the sense of mission that he experienced when he was working with young Zionists in Europe.

* (M.E.C.S. = M.G.A. = M.G.S. ??? Zionist organizations)