

RG-50.120*084

Lavie, Naftali

Tape 1 of 4

- 1.00.00 Naftali Lavie was born on June 23, 1926 in Krakow. He lived in Piotrkow Tribunalski. His father was the rabbi of the community in 1935. His original name was Lao.
- 2.43.08 Tells about his Bar Mitzvah (July 1939) back in Krakow and what he saw on the way to Krakow. The Jewish population was approximately 20,000 people. He describes life in Krakow and the Jewish life in the city: organizations, newspapers, firemen (Jewish firemen) and guards, schools and Yeshivas, and synagogues.
- 8.57.12 Going back to school, September 1939, the first siren (the war started; the city was bombed).
- 13.19.17 Describes his family and his house.
- 15.10.15 People started fleeing to Russia (Soleiov); his family did not.
- 17.35.23 A soldier came with a weapon asking for help. He was Jewish. How they helped him.
- 20.09.24 Poles shot from the air at the Jews that ran away to Soleiov.
- 21.06.19 (PROBLEM WITH SOUND; NOT ABLE TO HEAR MUCH)
- 21.56.55 They were in a shelter with other families. They saw motorcycles and soldiers and were sure they were English and French, but they were German (September 5th). The story of the entrance of the Germans to the city.
- 29.01.23 Describes the moment they went back to their house and how life changed. Police came to their house looking for his father and asked questions and left.
- 32.59.05 More policemen came; aggressive. Asked for maps, white material, blue ribbons, and, then, left. Later, they received a letter requesting that..????????????
- 36.00.00 Orders to live in the "Jewish Quarter" (October 28th) from the Germans. He describes what happened and how it happened that the ghetto was created. Orders for non-Jews to get out by January 1940. Describes life in the ghetto and violence.

- 38.48.22 Describes celebration of Jewish High Holidays, and the fines that the Germans gave the Jews and the way they paid (47.36.11) them to the Germans.
- 47.53.14 On the holiday of Sukkot, the S.S. officers came to their home looking for his father and took him to the Wermacht Officer for interrogation about the money to pay the fines. After that, his father was beaten and went home.
- 52.20.09 Fines kept growing every time from a different source. The Germans also started burning synagogues. His father found a way to avoid this. They also managed to save the Torah scrolls.
- 56.20.06 The Germans took 10 of the prominent Jews of this community to execute them because they blame the Jews of stealing wood.
- 58.22.00 People started coming to Piotrkow because the situation was better than in other places. The Germans also brought prisoners into the city. Population grew from 20,000 people to 26,000. That caused a typhus epidemic and many died.

2nd hour – tape 1

- 02.28.24 Naftali's task in that time was to write the request of young couples to get married. People wanted to get married and run away.
- 5.59.23 They didn't have a Judenrat. They had a seniors' Council. Zalman Tennenburg was the head of the Council. There was also Jacob Berliner, Shimon Warshawski, Blackman, Smoll, Samsonowitch, Zeuer Kimmelman (Altestenrad).
- 7.43.10 The Germans decided to have a Jewish police. A man named Zilberstein agreed with the idea. It was formed from the best of the youth in the ghetto (Yidische Ordnungstutz). His father didn't agree with it. The Jewish police had 12 members.
- 10.48.24 In 1940, Jews were asked for a permission to leave the ghetto. Schools were closed, but there were "under cover" teachings. One of the teachers was Cruin (???) Mayer. There were four kids in his study group.
- 14.23.07 In 1940, before Christmas, the Jews were forced to give their furs and jewels if there were any left. The shoemakers were needed for the Germans. Some of them also helped the Germans. The jewelers did as well.
- 17.54.15 The Germans also used the services of the Dental Technician in the ghetto.

- 19.57.0 Rabbi Joseph Karlibach, the rabbi of Hamburg, was his father's friend. He helped him and the community to get matzas (1940) for Passover.
- 20.21.13 The mail was sent outside the ghetto, in secret with someone, and they also arranged a way to get mail from the outside. They found a way to get matzas through a German that worked for a Belgian company (Hans Kristman). He helped them. They actually baked the matzas themselves for the entire community inside the ghetto.
- 23.30.23 Because of the epidemic, there was no food for the outsiders. They had no money, so the community arranged a kitchen for poor people. ZSS was a Jewish organization connected to the ??? that got the things they needed to ??? They helped 1,200 people everyday. He also heard of theater plays in the ghetto. The Jewish Hospital was left outside of the ghetto so they organized a new one.
- 26.53.01 In the summer of 1940, the Germans asked the coordinator of the "Jobs Office" (Poznanski) to get people to work according to everyday needs; instead of hijacking them. A man called Aratke came and asked for 700, and later 1,900, workers. Then, suddenly, Germans came and hijacked the people. They were sent to work camps supervised by a cruel German named Dolphus.
- 29.10.00 In July 1940, people escaped camps to flee to Russia and the Russians returned them.
- 29.29.11 His father organized a way to bring back the people from Piotrkow through a friend named Gomberg. He brought back 600 people (in 1940).
- 32.08.19 In 1941, the typhus stopped. Many had died. There were many military vehicles on the road to the East.
- 33.30.00 In 1941, Germany attacked Russia (June 22nd). Germans came to their home looking for his father. They took him. They went to Legionov Street where the Gestapo headquarters were and took him into the cellar of the building. He tells the story of what happened there and how they were later taken to Auschwitz.
- 40.15.01 Entrance to Auschwitz. Next day, they were divided into groups and given work. They were given postal cards. The card arrived to his house. His family managed to contact him back and take him out of Auschwitz to Sosnoweig and then to Piotrkow.
- 49.57.03 The way he became "legal" again in the ghetto and started working in Hostensia.

- 52.57.23 They started hearing rumors about the extermination of Jews. They had two people that ran away from Chemno – Yerachmiel Vidowski and Yitzhak Justman, and he heard their stories.
- 56.03.08 During 1942, they heard the news from the Ukraine about the murders of the Einsatzgruppen. They found it hard to believe.
- 58.56.02 There was not a Resistance organized yet. 1942 was an important year in the ghetto.

3rd hour – tape 1

- 04.08.02 The time in Auschwitz. He spent it with Poles that were arrested in the Gestapo Headquarters in Piotrkow. He was in Block 23. Describes the block and their daily routine. Bzezinka (Birkenau). Describes the way he got out, and the person that helped him (Myetek Czony???).
- 24.57.13 The news from Chelmno (March 1942), Yerackmiel Vidowski and Yizhak Justman. Talks about the trucks and common graves in Chelmno. The way they ran away, and how the two survived with false identities. People didn't want to believe their stories. His (Naftalie's) feelings after hearing these stories.
- 38.50.20 Intentions to contact the clandestine movements – Russian (AL) and Polish (EAX) and to resist. They heard more stories coming from Ukraine. Some of the Jews tried to hide, if they had the means.
- 40.51.08 His father, as a rabbi, was the head of the community in the war. The story of his father before the war. News about Treblinka (Malkin). His advice to the people and ways to survive.
- 54.22.14 The factories where the Jews worked and the new Dietrich and Fischer (10/13//43), and the selections in October in the factories.
- 56.43.00 The trains that they saw passing from the factories. The way people behaved in the ghetto. They way his father divided their family; his brothers, Shmuel and Yisrael.

4th hour – tape 1

- 01.01.03 Shooting started after midnight. A conversation with his father.

Tape 2 of 4

- 04.20.05 Discusses his mother, and her activities to help people. Talks about hiding and the first deportation, the way deportations were done, and the second deportation and how they survived.

- 08.57.00 Talks about the third transport. His mother and brother were captured on the 19th of October. Talks about his father's reaction.
- 14.16.19.1 October 20, 1942, the last transport to Treblinka. His father and brother were on this transport. That same day at Hortensia, the factory where Naftali worked, some (80) were sent to "selection" and then to Treblinka. The transport arrived on October 21st at 8:00 a.m.
- 17.04.10 The story of D. Levkowitz from the same city that went to Treblinka and saw the people from Piotrkow going to the gas chambers. He escaped in November from Treblinka and came to the ghetto. Later, he gave his testimony.
- 18.54.03 28,000 Jews were living in the ghetto until it was liquidated in 4 transports. There were 6,000 in every train. He describes the way this was done; the Jews that remained; the woods of Rakow; the last children.
- 23.00.21 1943, liquidation of the ghetto until November of 1944. Talks about his mother and her hiding until that moment. The way the community leaders were taken and murdered (March 1943).
- 33.30.00 Everyday life in the ghetto. How the valuables from the Jews were taken and collected in specific places. Tells the way he felt while others were sent to the camps. His work in the factory and the Polish supervisor. Talks about the punishment there. How he knew that his father went on a transport. Discusses the way he could save his mother and brother's lives.
- 51.00.10 His mother's jewels and how they saved their lives. Experiences in Auschwitz that helped later.
- 54.14.14 People that escaped. AK helped the Germans. Women in the camp.
5th hour Contact with the outside world (1944). News and newspapers (the way media worked), hopes and suicides.
- 03.17.10 Children of school age were given classes by certain people. 1943-44, everyday life and shooting of Jews. What kept people alive. Community life and help. The kind of people the guards were. The occasions when the S.S. were called.
- 19.08.00 Liquidation of the ghetto. Selection and the moment he and his brother were separated from his mother (November 1944). The way he buried his father's writings.
- 27.28.13 The transport at night, to Czenstochow, with his brother. Arrival to the barracks. ??? in the morning.

- 33.06.05 The responsibility for his younger brother. Group behavior and protection of the children. The way they had to buy the children's lives. The work he did in the camp, and his brother's life.
- 45.07.03 A new S.S. officer in the camp, Kiezling. The way he wanted to kill the children that were in the camp. They had to pay for the children's lives more than before.
- 47.53.00 Describes his relationship with his brother.
- 50.00.00 Evacuation – Russians were coming closer (December 15th) and they had to walk. There was bombing and shooting. There were trains waiting for them. Talks about the S.S. soldiers. He was separated from his brother – talks about the way he tried to get back to him.

6th hour – tape 2

- 00.17.06 He got out of his wagon and went to the woman's wagon where his brother was. Discusses the way to Buchenwald.
- 03.04.00 The way to Buchenwald (January 18th). His books (the ones he carried with him), other things he carried in his bag, and his efforts to hide his brother.
- 19.24.20 Disinfection and shaving. Clothing that they got; shots; and they were given numbers.
- 29.53.06 Block 52 – Judinlager; first night in Buchenwald. Talks about his brother in the block. There was a list of the Jewish Policemen. Talks about the torture with water. Discusses bread and hiding of food; exercises that they had; and the beatings of some Jews.
- 51.31.04 They were transferred to Block 8 – a special kind of block; left his brother.
- 53.50.19 Worked in taking bodies to burial or burning. He managed to visit his brother.

7th hour – tape 2

- 02.30.00 Working in the snow (cleaning).

Tape 3 of 4

- 05.00 Worked for an S.S. officer in his home – humane conditions for 4 days.
- 14.00 Work in another camp two hours away in Mittlebaw – Dora in the vicinity of Nordhausen. The work consisted of cleaning debris from the entrance to one of the tunnels that had been bombed the night before (this was the narrow railroad that served the missile factory).

- 17.51 Managed to escape back to Buchenwald. Many died of exhaustion. Naftali was given the job to carry the bodies to the crematorium.
- 18.52 Managed to find a place to live in Block 62.
- 19.00 Bartering of bread for potatoes in preparation for Passover.
- 20.00 Two days before the holiday, the factory (Gustof Werke) was heavily bombed. It was involved in the production of missiles V-2. The factory was near Buchenwald. Inmates were taken there for clean-up work for two days.
- 21.00 On the second day of Passover Nazi officers appeared and called all of the Jews to roll-call. They were led to the train platform and from there to the train. Naftali was among the last ones in a group that was not put on a train. They were taken to the factory DAW, a wood processing plant near the camp. The group (numbering a few hundreds) was locked up there. The building bordered the camp – one section was inside the camp, the other was outside. In the middle was a structure like an auditorium and in the “gallery” there were different carpentry workshops.
- 24.00 Naftali was on the 3rd or 4th floor. He tried to return to the camp by jumping from a window. It was too high. The stairs to the lower floors were blocked. He slid one floor down on a column. On that floor, he found Jews saying Hallel (in the Hungarian style). Naftali jingled a window until it opened and managed to jump back into the camp. He went to block 67 where some Jews had remained by hiding under the floor.
- 26.20 The next morning, Nazi officers unleashed their dogs to find those in hiding. They were lead to the square to be evacuated. Escaped the train.
- 39.37 Arrival in Jena. Walked back toward the west. It was April 8th.
- 43.55 Approached Weimar, across from Buchenwald.
- 45.00 Entered the camp together with a returning work detail.
- 46.10 Returned to Block 62.
- 47.00 Returned to Block 8, for a short visit with his brother.
- 49.00 Next day, the German communist, who had succeeded in hiding weapons, took over the camp. The allies were also approaching.
- 49.43 Americans entered the camp in a couple of hours.
- 50.00 Naftali fell ill with typhoid fever on the day of his liberation.

- 52.44 April 11th, became the birthday of the liberated Jews at Buchenwald.
- 57.59 In June, Naftali went to recuperate in a sanitarium in France, near Normandy.
- 58.23 Naftali and his group turned away invitations to settle in France or the U.S.
- 59.16 Went to Paris, to find connections with activists from Palestine. They found Ruth Kluger (Eliav) who did not know about his group of 500 survivors.
- 8.00.00 360 of them registered for immediate immigration to Israel. The first 150 (among them Naftali and his brother) received permission to go through Marseille via Genoa. Once in Palestine, the British took them to the detention camp of Atlit for two weeks.

Tape 4 of 4

- 7.11 More about Auschwitz, corrections and additions. Naftali was there for 40 days.
- 12.00 The story of Naftali's arrival to Auschwitz, via Radom.
- 37.00 Introduction of gas to exterminate people.
- 38.20 The political groups in the camp.
- 40.10 Witness to a hanging of 5 prisoners.
- 51.40 Return home.