

RG-50.120 #094

- 1.00 to 1.09 He starts by declaring that his sole purpose is to tell about the Lachva ghetto revolt, the first to occur in Europe, almost a year before the Warsaw revolt. Background: He was born in 1923 in Lachva, a small Polish town near Pinsk, 20 Km from the Russian border. Describes the modest old-fashioned town, a typical 'shtetl', its mostly observant Jewish population of 2000, his upbringing in religious schools and Zionist youth movement.
- 1.09 to The Interim Period, 1939-1941. Refugees in town, mostly from Russia, living even in his house. Soviets rule, though created hardship, was preferred over Nazis, but no converts to communism. Less Jewish life, and Soviet culture in schools replaced Zionism. Local gentiles rioted against the Jews.
- 1.23 to 1.31 Germans Entry. Wehrmacht entered June 8<sup>th</sup> '41. Took all men 14 years and older to work. Established a [Zionist] Judenrat and police [Rabbi's name]. Describes his own work and Judenrat's schedule. Relates what happened to the family. Daily life and trading items for food.
- 1.32 to 1.43 Killing at the ditches. The German pattern was to order all young men to dig ditches, then gather all Jewish men at that spot and shoot them. This was apparently done in each of many small towns like his, who were isolated and had no contact with each other or knowledge what happened elsewhere. In his town, Judenrat Rabbi managed to bribe the SS major to release them. More about this special Rabbi. Tells the story of a visitor falsely reporting about Jews in the neighboring towns – apparently working for the Germans.
- 1.44 to 2.00 The ghetto in his town was created on Passover eve 1942. Forty houses [including his] were inside. Describes the difficult life and work in the ghetto, but without partisan conflicts and all people helpful to each other. There were no deaths [except five girls killed by Ukrainian police]. Although there was always hope, they knew escaping would be futile. They were fenced in, inactive, indifferent, and isolated like all other towns around. No food. All in it equally together.
- 2.02 to 2.09 Liquidation of ghettos and issue of Survivors. Show list of those who perished. But does not show how people lived. He sees his role to publicize Lachva Ghetto, as without some survivors to tell it no one would know about it. Example: his wife who at age 10 was the sole survivor of her small town and too young to remember much herself.
- 2.10 to 2.24 Revolt and escape. Describes what happened Sept 2-3, 1942, as some of the younger leaders [Izick Reizich?] planned to flee if being called to dig ditches. Describes the preparations of the resistance and escape routes [names]. Describes how he evolved as the Germans entered the area, the resistance, burning the building, shooting Germans; the killing and escaping that ensued. Still

contradictory reports of how many Jews were gathered and how many killed. Describes his own escapes in various direction and encounters with partisans who were not willing to accept them and even shot some escapees. [Sept. 30, '42]

2.25 to 2.41 German diary exists to prove that killing was planned in all details and was systematically organized. Yad Va'shem files describe the murder at Lachva [reads from it]. He also testified at the trials there. The Germans who had carried out these plans were all in West Germany's police in 1973. Only 6 of the 15 Germans responsible were convicted.

2.42 to 2.54 Summing up: He himself escaped into the wood, not accepted by the partisans, until liberation. His family was killed in the ghetto; brother, a partisan, killed in Japan. Himself joined Red Army, moved through several countries after the war, to Cyprus and finally to Palestine in 1947. No one left from the original resistance group.

His main point: there is no awareness of resistance in small places like Lachva – population 2000 [compared to Warsaw's 50,000]. Therefore his testimony. Sees his mission to talk and publicize the story of Lachva, not himself.