

**RG – 50.120\* 133**

**SCHWARTZ, LEON**

**TAPE 1 OF 1**

01:00:50 My name is Schwartz Leon. At home I was called Liebek. I was born in 1923 in Chesanov (Cieszanov). We were 3 sons and 3 daughters. I studied in the “Cheder” and in a gentile elementary school. My father was a barber. From age ten I helped my father in his business.

01:05:08 Many orthodox Jews lived in our town. We had youth movements of: “Gordonia”, “Mizrachi” and “Benei Akiva”. I went to “Gordonia”. We had many Zionist Jews. Every Sunday we collected money for the “Keren Hakayemet”.

In the mornings I put Tefillin and in the evening we went to pray in the synagogue: Mincha and Ma’ariv. On Friday evenings the Jews went to the Mikve and on Saturday the city was like on strike. All the shops and the businesses were closed.

01:10:00 When Hitler came to power in Germany he sent all the Jews from Poland who lived in Germany back to their original places. Many refugees came back to our town. We had to take a family to live with us.

01:12:50 Chebinya (Trezebinia) a town nearby, was bombed, so my father decided to leave the town. We started to walk and we saw German soldiers, so we went into a house in Mechov. A nice woman let us to stay overnight. Then we moved to Ulkosh, where we rented a wagon and came back home, where we heard that the men were taken and killed by the Germans.

01:17:30 The head of our community was sent to Auschwitz. His family got his ashes in a box. The men who remained in town had to work for the Germans. One day I replaced my father, and went to work instead of him. On that day we were bitten to death. When I arrived at home, covered by blood my father was shocked.

01:27:23 In Sosnowitz the head of the Jewish community was Monik Merin. I heard that he gathered all the young Jews and told them to go to work in a Labor camp, where they will get bread and butter. I worked in Gogolin. We built the highway between Berlin and Moscow.

01:33:20 One day a German soldier told my friend and me that we can go for a vacation to our home. We came home after a year of absence and it was a great joy.

01:36:30 On one Shabbat in 1941 the Germans closed the town and gathered all the Jews in a school. My sister was sent to a camp. I stayed with my parents and my sisters and brothers. They went to Auschwitz by foot. It was about 15 Km. I was taken to another labor camp – to Marshdatt. I worked there in a big company of builders.

01:43:00 Then I was moved to another camp in Finftiechen. It was a concentration camp and it was worst. I had to shave and to cut the hair of the people in the camp on top of my regular slave work. We were 24 people in a barrack and we didn't have any information about our families. When we went out to work in the morning and when we came back the Orchestra played music. May died from exhaustion.

01:57:30 One day I had to move to another barrack with Czech, Polish and German prisoners. We worked in the Krup plant with huge ovens to burn wood for coal. In 1943 or 1944 we walked to Grossgeruzen camp and from there to Flossenburg. We were many people in the barrack and we worked very hard in the snow.

02:08:10 Then we moved to Regensburg, where we stayed in a big hall. We worked in the railway trail. The railway station was bombed. We had to leave and we went on the "Death March". We marched during the days and in the night we were in the barn.

02:23:30 I was called to shave the officer of our group. His deputy came in and told him that Himmler sent an order to kill all the Jews. I told the people what I heard and encouraged them to run away. We escaped and went to look for food. After three days we heard sound of tanks. It was The American army. We joined them and came to their base.

02:30:30 I moved to Germany and from there to Ulm in France. I came to Palestine on the “Haportzim” ship. We arrived to Tel-Aviv where we were divided to families. I came to a nice woman. Later I learned that it was Golda Meir. Then I went to Hadera where I met my sister Gusta.

02:55:40 I told my story to my children and grandchildren.