

RG-50.120*0139 2 Tapes
SHLOMO SHEIN

TAPE I

- 1.00 Background: He was born in Krakow in May, 1920, of five children in a family running a clothes business. The family was orthodox; he went to Hebrew schools and was member of Zionist youth movements. He describes his education and his membership in Akiva Movement, which also sent him to agricultural training in Loepoldinow in '37.
- 1.05 War outbreak: Describes Germans' entry into Krakow on September 6. Most friends escaped. Beginning of restrictions. His family continued to manufacture clothes at home, while he worked in a Gestapo garden for a few months [he was classified as 'farmer'] while returning home at night.
- 1.12 Describes three-day looting of Jewish homes in December '39; family continued to work in cooperation with a Pole who supplied uniforms to the German army during Jan. and Feb. of 1940.
- 1.17 Eviction of Jews from Krakow: Jews were given two deadlines to leave. His family chose the later one. His father urged him to stay and they left without his knowing where to. He was transferred to work in a German garage [the only Jew] as a translator. The ghetto opened in March '41.
- 1.22 Descriptions and elaboration regarding the nature of Akiva youth movement> Returns to history since 1936, splits, role of religion, preparation for immigration to Palestine, his own group, their activities.
- 1.38 Left alone: Describes an earlier visit to Gestapo with father and receiving permission to work; being left alone after entire large extended family left, feeling helpless; the role of the appointed Jewish police in the eviction.
- 1.49 Working in the garage. Describes his work and role as translator between German managers/owner and Polish workers. Only officers/manager knew he was Jewish. Relatively livable place.
- 1.59 Moves to ghetto. End of '40-'January '41. Describes places he was given to live, arranged by Jewish community. Only 15,000 allowed into ghetto, having permits. Describes physical setting, friends from youth movements, social activities, food and living conditions. The Jewish police included criminals. Describes four stages of deportation, until it was completely liquidated in March '43.
- 2.20 Excursions out of ghetto. Left the ghetto in disguise to fetch friend's girlfriend but also to see parents located in Sosnowiec [?] ghetto. Found them in terrible state and left unable to help. Last time he saw his family [except oldest sister who emigrated to Palestine in '38].

- 2.38 Activities in the ghetto. Further descriptions of life in the ghetto at the end of '41. Friend Benek [Heshek?] who worked with him told him about fate of Russian Jews. More about activities of Akiva youth movement inside the ghetto.
- 2.53 Underground groups of five. They started organizing into groups of five after hearing about Auschwitz in April '42. Describes how they went about getting false papers and other documents. Moshe Zuckerman was good at faking rubber stamps. He left his garage work in May/June '42 to be more active in underground activities, although he was more involved in clerical than in physical ones. There was much they did not know or heard from others. Describes the way he went about at getting papers [work permits, Aryan documentation for those who looked Aryan, etc.], through connections in villages, including priests.
- 3.10 Akiva and others' underground activities. Describes Akiva Group meetings. Talks about Benek and Wexner [who later did not return from the forest] and Gala Mirrier [?]; describes the crowded living conditions when the ghetto shrank to 5000 people. Gala Mirrier and her connections to other Polish organizations [including Lvov and PPR] which enabled hiding. They began plotting acts within the ghetto, including acts against Jewish police. Details plans for acts during the Christmas period [Akiva joined with Hashomer Hatzair movement as well as Poles]. Speculated about the act and its risks. Describes the aftermath when only his group returned days later. December 22 Zigenaria [?] act. [Governor Frank wrote about it to Berlin.].
- 3.53 He was caught and arrested. Describes how he was caught in February '43. Awakened from sleep, with his suitcase full of false papers under his bed. All roommates arrested too. One member of his group informed on him [and later arrested too].
- 4.00 The following describes his wandering from each place to the next: Montelupich [prison]; Auschwitz; Gollenshan; Orangenburg; Flossenbürg; Ganacker.

TAPE II

- 4.02 Corrections of details reported earlier - names of comrades, informers.
- 4.05 Interrogation. Describes being interrogated by the Gestapo for six weeks [Feb. '43], the questions asked, being beaten and tortured. His daily routine. Gave names of those already arrested. Met some friends there, most were killed later.
- 4.23 Two months in Auschwitz. Removed from Krakow interrogation and sent alone to Auschwitz. Describes shower routine and sleeping arrangement, daily schedule and constant hunger. Constantly terrorized by capos [near camp of women who were experimented on].
- 4.34 Transfer to Gollenshau. Half hour away. Describes hall with 200-300 Jewish prisoners from everywhere. Quarry work. Lifting extremely heavy stones and beating with slow.

German guards, but Poles in charge of work, to whom they could talk and get some favors. He and Kuba Zimmerman and Gustav [?] stuck together. Describes relationships with capos.

Hospital stay. Dr. Rubinstein helped to treat him when he was near death. Describes hospital, living and working conditions, punishments and executions. Was in Gollenshau 1 ½ years, til Jan. '44. He still does not understand why he was allowed to live after being ` caught, or why prisoner number was only applied to him here.

- 5.00 Reflects on survival, the fate of his two friends, their state of mind during this period, encounters with death.
- 5.26 Leaving Gollenshau. Rumors regarding approaching Soviet army. In Jan '45, evacuation of entire camp and moving to Germany. Describes marching in freezing weather for several days, straglers were shot.
- 5.32 By train to Mauthausen, for one week, then to Oranjenburg and Flossenburg, til March '45. Does not remember durations or details.
- 5.35 Ganacker airport, worked under terrible conditions, through illness, but beginning of hope. Hungarian soldiers as guards. Bombarded by Allied planes. Marching again near total exhaustion.
- 5.44 Escape. Escaped from the march into forest and fields. Taken in by Bavarian farmer despite their visiting SS son. Stayed there six weeks, eating, sleeping. April '45.
- 5.59 War's end and freedom. Left when American soldiers passed by. Went through villages [near Munich: Eggenfelden----] where they were provided for by UNRA. Describes living conditions, beginning of commerce and black market.
- 6.14 Friend Max and getting married. Describes his friend Max whom he met in Ganaka, how He went to get his sister from the women's camp and married her in April '46. His plan to emigrate to Palestine where both had and his wife had sisters.
- 6.23 Travel to Palestine. Describes how they travelled, as illegal immigrants, through several countries, then 1300 people boarded Atlit, a boat intended for 100. After a three week trip they were caught by the British and sent to Cyprus. Describes the 8 months spent in detention camp there.
- 6.47 Arrival in Palestine. Describes their final arrival [through Atlit detention camp]; meeting their sisters, living four years in the Kibbutz; serving in the army during the War of Independence, at which time he 'got over the holocaust'.
- 6.59 Photographs of friends. Shows two group photographs of himself and six friends from the underground period [1942!], which he found in 1964, and wonders who photographed

them at that time!?