

RG-50.120 #145 2 Tapes
SHOMRONI, AMIEL

I

- 1.01 He was born in 1917 in Zagreb. His father, Dr. Miler was a well known doctor, studied medicine in Vienna. Talks about his extended family. Father is Croatian. Mother, nee Weinberger, was from a very well-to-do family.
- 1.13 He joined the Youth movement Noar Echudi at the age of 13. In 1933 he joined Shomer Hatzair, in 1934 Bnei Akiba, and became secretary of the Youth movement in 1935.
- 1.19 Mentions names of group leaders. Wirt, Dr. Bruno Alfonso de Mayo, R. Kaufman, Morris Levy.
- 1.27 In 1939 he went to Palestine but was sent back by the British. He went on to study veterinary medicine.
- 1.32 In 1941 the Germans entered. They were protected by General Kvatenik, who had been his father's patient. When he was dismissed they were arrested.
- 1.34 Describes his life as a student in Zagreb, and his continuing activities in Bnei Akiba.
- 1.44 Describes parties at the University: communists, fascists, peasant party. There were political fights at the university. Jewish students were accepted at the University of Zagreb but not of Belgrade.
- 1.51 Talks about Serbs selling Jews to the Germans for money and arms to fight against Tito. In 1941 he had to leave the university and became a teacher and later the first secretary of the Jewish school.
- 2.01 What they knew about the war in 1941. In the beginning of April 1941 the Germans entered Zagreb. Describes the reaction of the population. Some were happy. Talks about the fascist anti-Hungarian pro Croatia party called Ustachim [?] who had Jewish members. They became anti-Semites when the Germans came.
- 2.17 Talks about Jewish assimilation. There were 10,000 Jews in Zagreb. Many did not know that they were Jewish. He was not allowed to continue at the university and became active in the Jewish community. Talks about Stepinas, the Bishop who rescued many Jews.
- 2.22 The Catholic church hid the valuable Jewish library of Rabbi Freiburger. Artukovic gave an order to destroy the synagogue but Stepinas objected.
- 2.25 Talks about a Red Cross delegation that came. Lubovitch told Jews to go into a brick factory where they would be safe. They were all killed.

- 2.27 Tito put Stepinas on trial as a traitor because he refused to sign a document naming fascists who had committed war crimes. Stepinas helped Jews in Croatia.
- 2.32 The head of police, Markovich, ordered the listing of Jews and the professions. A group of doctors was sent to Bosnia to fight Syphilis, some of them later escaped to the partisans.
- 2.39 Describes the Jewish school in Zagreb. Names teachers. Rabbi Freiburger received from the Joint 55 certificates for children to go to Budapest and then Palestine. There was a Razzia and only 12 remained. Freiberg and Arnon wanted to substitute other children, but Kraus sold the certificates.
- 2.48 The head of police, Markovich, put a price on his head. He escaped, got forged papers, and in August 1942. He escaped to Oborovo[?]. He was saved by a Croate. He worked as a veterinarian, but when it was discovered that he was a Jew, he escaped to the border of Hungary.
- 3.00 Story of his marriages.
- 3.04 Additions and corrections: Names, Joseph Bronstein, Waxman, Morris Kaufman, Shoken, Julio Konig. 2nd of May 1943 Katenick warned him to leave and he escaped. Talks about Kwatenik who was a sadist and who saved him because he was his doctor.
- 3.10 Describes Jewish youth taken to camp Krapinow and Jakobow. Women were taken in Pag Island where they worked in the salt mines. Also talks about camps Jasenovac and stara Gradiska[?]
- 3.17 Talks about Shalom Freiburger, Rabbi of Zagreb.
- 3.18 Describes how he, his wife, daughter and father hid in a village near Hungarian border, how they crossed the border and went by train to Budapest. How they managed in Budapest and got papers to go to Sege.
- 3.30 The Kastner affair. In Budapes there was the committee for Yugoslav refugees headed by Kraus, Kastner and Brand. In March 1944, when the Germans entered, Kastner met with Miller, head of the Gestapo, and asked him how much ransom money was needed to get the Jews out. He was told \$1000 for each Jew and trucks. Kastner asked the Joint in Switzerland who relayed the news to the USA. The US refused to give the trucks. Brand went to Istanbul to ask the British for certificates and was arrested.
- 3.37 The Spanish transport. All the people in the Youth groups and the leaders, 1000 in all, were allowed to leave by train to Spain. Heinrich Muller, head of Gestapo arranged for the train to go to Bergen-Belsen instead.
- 3.41 Story of Dr. Popovitch who established contact with the partisans by was betrayed..
- 3.47 He and his family were arrested by Gestapo but escaped.

3.54 Trying to get to Romenia and arriving 21st August..

II

4.04 How he got certificates.

4.07 His opinion about the Kastner trial.

4.11 Describes German bombardment of Romania. The Jewish community helped them in Bucharest.

4.19 News about Hanna Senesh.

4.20 His travel from Bucharest to Istanbul. He was told not to tell Turkish officials about Jewish organizations.

4.30 Describes his stay in Istanbul. He was interrogated by the Americans about Budapest.

4.39 He met Francis Hofner and Maria Bauer. He told her about a plan to get 55 children, her grandson among them. One of Yugoslavia. What really happened with the children.

4.42 Talks about Israeli shaliach Meir Tuval who was sent to Budapest to help Jews to get to Istanbul.

4.46 He and family go by train from Istanbul through Syria and Beirut and arrive in Haifa October 1944. His father returned to Zagreb and came to Israel in '48.

4.52 Reflects on his experiences, how and why he survived and why others did not.

4.58 Talks about the Croats from Milika who were anti-Semites and so was a group of Jesuits. Most Croats were not.