

RG-50.120 #152  
SPIVACK, SHEMSHIHU

Born Lithuania 1920. Family moved to Palestine where father did well, but returned to Kovno when Shmoel was 9 years old, due to difficulties with law for shady deals.

1939 war broke out and Shmoel, self-educated, became an unarmed traffic guard. Heard of German activities from Polish refugees. Kovno, the first occupations, was by Russian communists who were less anti-semitic than Lithuanians. Father, brother and Shmoel ran towards Russian border. When Germans invaded, bombed by Lithuanians while fleeing. Were overtaken by Germans, returned to Kovno where all their possessions had been stolen by locals. He was consumed by fear for family and self, wishing they had remained in Israel.

Germans placed all Jews in Kovno ghetto, since family had no possessions. He went out and traded goods of other ghetto residents for food. Guards were aware of this and paid off with foodstuffs.

Reality set in for them when the ghetto Altestenrat was asked to round up 500 intelligent men. Ghetto was divided in sections 1st\_\_\_\_, then little ghetto, big ghetto. 1st section was liquidated, then old people, next children taken away in trucks. Beatings, shooting accompanied these actions, malinas [hiding places] were created in ghetto.

In big action in ghetto he lost his father. After that 12,000 people left in little ghetto started fighting among themselves for space in little ghetto.

He was taken with many others to two long ditches for outright killing, but it was late in day and he stayed alive with several people on top of him machine gunned to death. He climbed out after the Lithuanian killers left, stole some clothing and a wash line and returned to the ghetto. No one wanted to hear or believe his story.

1943 -Liquidation of ghettos in Lithuania. He was taken to Stutthof, deloused and dressed in striped uniform. After almost a year there, he became a Muselman.

In Stutthof, Lager II he worked in Yerpflegungslages which meant more food for him. Then moved to Landshut, Muhldorf, Waldlager [camp in woods].

2 weeks before arrival of Americans, taken from Waldlager by train 3500 people no food or water for 1 week. April 24, 1945 ordered off train. A German railroad inspector said 'Hitler's dead, you're all free.' SS in woods slaughtered 1/2 of this group in the field. He was saved being too weak to run, was given food in someone's house. American planes \_\_\_\_ them causing another massacre. This was 1-2 days before liberation. Back on train he managed an escape with 2 Greek Jews through small window of cattle car. Ran away to a German house commandeered their children into root cellar by threatening with kitchen knives. Liberated there by Americans, unable to walk, taken to Waldheim, then hospital in Heidelberg where he recuperated.

His comments are that self preservation effects your rational thinking. He speaks favorably of the Jewish Altestenrat in ghetto trying to save people but the Jewish police under them

said to be brutal. His greatest bitterness is towards the anti-semitic Lithuanians, as even before the war they performed terrible acts especially at Easter and Christmas time.