

RG 50.120 #154 2 Tapes
STRUMZA, Jaques

I

- 1.01 Jaques Strumza was born in 1913 in Saloniki. Father was a teacher in Jewish School. His own schooling. After high school he went to Paris and studied electrical engineering. He was oldest in family. Had 1 brother and 2 sisters.
- 1.11 Describes Jewish community in Saloniki. 10,000 Jews out of a population of 200,000. Cultural life. He was also violinist in orchestra.
- 1.15 Joined Greek army, played in army band. Describes any experience and war with Italy and Germany.
- 1.24 Relations between Jewish and nonJewish population in Saloniki. Some anti-semitism.
- 1.29 Germans conquered Saloniki but then left. No hardship to Jews until 1943. He went back to university, studied physics and math and got married. They did not know the fate of European Jewry.
- 1.45 Nurenberg laws were introduced in Saloniki in July 1942. Jews had to register to go to forced labor. He did not go. Jewish community ransomed them out. He did not join the resistance because of strong family ties and because the resistance was thought to be communist.
- 1.52 In 1943 the SS closed the Baron Hirsh quarter and made it into a ghetto. He told community Eldest of a plan to Bruner to deport all Jews. He was not believed. All 3000 Jews were deported and ghetto was filled with other Jews.
- 2.04 Talks about chief rabbi Dr. Koretz and faults him with deportation. Rabbi in Athens warned the congregation and many escaped.
- 2.12 Describes first transport of 3000. Describes transport of his family. They thought that they were going to Krakov to work.
- 2.17 He went on transport train April 1943. Describes train ride and incidents with Bruner and Visliseni.
- 2.28 Arrival at Birkenau. Initiation, showers, barracks. Many Saloniki Jews got

killed

because they did not know German and did not understand orders.

2.39 200 prisoners from Saloniki were told by barrack eldest what to expect. He was recruited as violinist and describes playing when groups went out to work and came back.

2.55 Describes appells. Mouth of quarantine because Germans were afraid of epidemics.

3.04 Talks about his music in the camp.

3.17 After 30 days he was transported to Auschwitz as an engineer.

3.18 More about his music in camp and out.

3.29 Was taken to Auschwitz as engineer. Was hospitalized for hernia operation.

3.38 His work as engineer in Union factory. His boss Bosch became his friend and he was treated well.

3.49 Antisemitism of Polish prisoners.

3.52 His sister was violinist in Birkenau, he was able to see her in camp.

3.58 He is accused of trying to escape. He is put on trial and released.

II

4.05 Repeats episode from last tape. Describes his trial.

4.12 Marco Nachon, as Greek doctor, wrote a book about music in Auschwitz and wrote about him.

4.16 His siter Julie from Birkenau visits. She worked in commando Canada and he got her into Union later.

4.27 Describes camp life. Underground in camp. The revolt and crematorium explosion. Escapes from Auschwitz.

- 4.40 Relationships between people. How he got into the Union Werke.
- 4.47 Most tragic moments.
- 4.51 January 1945. Describes the death march of 120,000.
- 5.02 Talks about Primo Levi and meeting his widow.
- 5.19 Describes the 'Bitch of Buchenwald'.
- 5.22 Arrival in Mauthausen. Initiation. Critical moment.
- 5.29 Works as engineer in Messerschmitt air plane factory for 6 months. He was in a state of shock most of the time and had hard time remembering.
- 5.43 Left Mauthausen with the advance of French army and is taken to Guzen. Describes Guzen. After 2 weeks, in May, they were liberated by American army. He contracted typhoid and was in field hospital.
- 5.57 Americans wanted to send all Greeks back to Greece. He didn't want to go. The French consul gave him a French ID and he went to Paris.
- 6.05 Describes arrival in Paris. The outstanding treatment of the survivors by the French.
- 6.15 He gives private lessons in math and then works as engineer at the Shaki factory.
- 6.27 He is sent to Nice to recuperate. He stops in Marseille and meets friends and his future wife.
- 6.52 Explains why he did not go to Palestine right away.
- 7.00 He gives talks all over the world about his experiences. He sees that as his mission.