

RG-50.120 #0226 3 Tapes
CHANOCH, DANIEL

TAPE I

- 1.00 He was born in Kovno in 1933. 3 children in the family. Mother and sister died in Stutthof, father in Auschwitz. He describes Kovno and the Jewish community. Describes his childhood and the Schwabe Jewish school.
- 1.24 Describes the split between the Orthodox Jewish community in Slobotka and the others in the new town.
- 1.28 His father was in the logging industry, mother worked at a newspaper. He got a Zionist education. Describes vacations in Palenkin.
- 1.40 The atmosphere before the Russians came. Going to Israel was an option but they didn't go because father was injured in an accident.
- 2.00 When the Russians came Jewish education stopped. Soviet reeducation. No antisemitism.
- 2.18 Describes German entry and Russian retreat. Brutal treatment of Jews by Lithuanians.
- 2.24 Ghetto and dehumanising treatment of Jews. He looked non-Jewish and could pass. Parents took him to ghetto and did not send him to village with maid.
- 2.31 Life in the ghetto. Adults organized in work brigades. Why people did not escape.
- 2.36 Life as a child in the ghetto.
- 2.44 Went to carpentry school outside the ghetto but stopoped when 'Actions' started.
- 2.47 Describes the big Action when 10,000 people were taken to the 9th fort and killed. When order came for the elderly and children to assemble he hid in the attic and then escaped. Describes the ghetto after the Action.

- 3.00 His duties as a child in the ghetto, how he understood life and how he survived.
- 3.15 Describes his mother, her strength and how she influenced his life. How she was taken to the 9th fort but returned.
- 3.26 He knew about the lists of the Judenrat and how to avoid being listed.
- 3.29 Describes the group of children in the ghetto.
- 3.34 The youth movement in the ghetto and the underground to which his brother belonged.
- 3.37 Rumors about the impending liquidation of the ghetto and why they did not hide out. His whole family went on the transport; describes.
- 3.49 Describes train ride. In Stutthof women and children were told to get out. He stayed with father and never saw his mother and sister again.
- 3.55 Describes his continued train ride with father and brother to camp Landsberg. A German officer took him as a servant and he also worked in the SS kitchen. He had a relatively easy time.
- 3.59 He and other children were taken away.

TAPE II

- 4.01 They were taken in trucks to Dachau. Describes showers, decontamination and treatment.
- 4.12 After some weeks, they were taken by train to Birkenau. Describes camp and crematorium.
- 4.23 He was taken to camp A. He listened to stories from Russian POWs.
- 4.29 Describes selection by Mengele, more than half were taken to die. The emotional impact. Describes specific children.
- 4.39 Another selection according to high. The impact of Birkenau on the rest of his life.
- 4.46 He was taken to camp B. Hard work unloading carriages. Unloading

- clothes from the Rampa. He got sick and got treatment.
- 4.54 Describes crematorium and activities around it.
 - 4.58 He knew about the Mengele experiments and the killing with Fenol.
 - 5.01 Describes life in the camp towards the end. Increased cruelty and suffering.
 - 5.05 15 January Auschwitz was liquidated and they were marched to trains to Tichau. The train station was bombed. They escaped to the town but people did not help them and they returned to the train.
 - 5.18 Jan. 1945. Describes ride in open train. Jupp, the Dutchman took care of them.
 - 5.21 Describes arrival in Mauthausen and initiation, the impact on him.
 - 5.34 Taken to Zeltenlager in Mauthausen. Describes Hungarian camp.
 - 5.40 Cannibalism in camp.
 - 5.47 In April they were marched to San Florian in Austria and then to camp Gunskirchen.
 - 5.55 Beginning of May he and a friend escaped to a village and saw Americans arrive. Americans took them to a hospital but they escaped. Then they were taken to camp Hirshing.
 - 6.06 Life in the camp. He and friends went to Austrian villages to get food. He did not want to return to Kovno. He organized a group to steal from American supplies and sell on black market.
 - 6.16 He describes meeting with Jewish brigade and how it affected him. [Breaks down and cries.]
He is enraged at those who use and represent the Holocaust today.
 - 6.39 Brigade took him to Salzburg and told him that his brother was alive.
 - 6.45 He goes with the Brigade to Trivisio in Italy and Erich Muller from the youth Aliya took care of him.
 - 6.53 Goes with the Brigade to Mestra then Bologna and in transit camp Caserna Rosa he meets up with brother. He felt emotionally dead.

TAPE III

- 7.01 Describes transit camp in Bologna, then to a transit camp in Bologna, then to a transit camp in Modena. He became sick and was treated in a hospital in Milan. He was scared and escaped and was then sent to a sanatorium near Stressa. Describes his isolation and suffering.
- 7.22 He was sent to Genoa and then Florence to villa Behista. Describes life with the children's group. He recuperated and felt secure.
- 7.30 He went to a camp near Milan to prepare for aliya to Israel. Describes life there.
- 7.37 Describes truck ride to boat that took them to Israel in May or July 1946.
- 7.44 Arrival in Haifa. They were taken by the British to Atlit and after 2 months to kibbutz Alonim. He felt that he was not treated well.
- 7.55 He went to Tel Aviv and then to Beer Putuvia [?] He joined the group of Aliyat Noar. Describes his life and the family he stayed with, his social adjustment and medical care.
- 8.07 Describes site seeing tour of the country.
- 8.12 Meets his brother who joined the Palmach. During the war of independence the women and children in Beer Tuvia were evacuated but he stayed.
- 8.14 In 1948 he went to Mikve Israel, joined the Gadna [ROTC]. Describes his adjustment difficulties.
- 8.22 He moved to Tel Aviv and lived a marginal life. He felt unwanted, misunderstood, isolated.
- 8.28 He enlisted in the Nachal and then went to Kibbutz Neve Eitan. He had major administrative duties in the kibbutz. He was told that he treated people like an SS officer.
- 8.32 He asked the kibbutz for leave and with restitution money went in 1957 to Europe and then to family in the U.S.
- 8.39 Describes visit with family in NY. Then went to Chicago and

California. He studied at the University of California and then worked there.

- 8.45 After 3 years of travel he returned to Israel.
- 8.53 His life in Israel. His feelings of being a second class citizen, of not belonging. He got married and had a son.
- 9.06 Describes his difficulties in adjusting to work and life in general. He started a company.
- 9.14 The impact of the Holocaust on him and his family. Describes his mental state. He and his family receive psychiatric care.
- 9.26 Lessons he learned in life.

Time-Coded Notes Version 2

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DANIEL CHANOCH 3 Tapes

I

- 1.01 Daniel Chanoch was born in 1936 or 1937 in Kovno, Lithuania. He was the youngest of 3 children. His sister Miriam died in the Stuthoff camp apparently. His brother Uri lives in Israel. His mother was also killed in Stuthoff, and his father was sent to Auschwitz from a labor camp in Lansberg. According to some documents, Daniel's father was killed in Auschwitz at the time that he, Daniel, was in Beirkenau.
- 2.36 Kovno.
- 3.18 Daniel's father's family had lived for many generations in Sesvoliai, near Vilna. The Germans murdered everyone there, in 1941, when they came in. The murder occurred in Vevia, neighboring Sisvoliai.
- 8.00 More about Kovno. The family lived in City Hall Square.
- 10.47 The family went to the synagogue for holidays only.
- 17.46 The Jewish educational system in Kovno.
- 23.11 The family associated with the 'mitnagdim', the religious group opposed to Chasidism.
- 28.17 Daniel's father was in the lumber business. Daniel loved the stories from Eretz Israel, which his father used to tell him.
- 28.56 Daniel's mother worked in the town's newspaper 'Yiddishe Shhtime'.
- 33.17 The image of Daniel's mother as a true 'princess'.
- 34.00 Daniel's upbringing.
- 37.26 The Jewish community.
- 40.00 Kovno's Jews before the war.
- 43.51 Russians enter Lithuania in 1940.
- 56.57 Father was hit by a car on the eve of Passover. He was hospitalized. He never fully recovered. Mother took over the lumber business.

- 50.00 Comparison between Vilna's and Israeli cultures.
- 2.01.00 Winds of war.
- 2.16 Mobilization begins.
- 7.20 Daniel has to transfer to a different school, where only Yiddish was spoken. Russian propaganda. Many people were transferred to Russia. Daniel's family did not on account of his sick father, who spent much time in hospitals.
- 20.00 Germans entered Kovno. Family finances depleted, had to move in with an aunt.
- 20.48 The German soldiers and their discipline, in the eyes of a child [Daniel].
- 21.28 Lithuanians' cruelty toward the Jews. Daniel was a beautiful, blond child. This fact allowed him to walk around town without the yellow patch.
- 28.13 Reflections of a child confronting his enemies.
- 30.00 While the ghetto was being organized, Daniel's parents struggled with the decision whether to take him with them, or send him with their gentile housekeeper to her village. It was decided to take him to the ghetto.
- 37.10 Daniel's activities in the ghetto, as he was the only one not sent to the work detail, because of his age.
- 43.32 Mother was caught engaging in black market and was taken to the infamous 9th Fort. Daniel's brother pleaded and begged so that the mother was released. It was a unique case!
- 44.50 Daniel was 9 years old. He managed to enter a carpentry school that had opened outside the ghetto.
- 46.04 One day the ghetto was surrounded, as was the carpentry school. The objective was to round up all the children. [The children ended up not being sent.]
- 47.38 The Actions began, as well as the deportations of members of Daniel's family. The large Action in which 10,000 Jews are taken. Daniel's family was spared. The 10,000 were taken to the 9th Fort. After that, the ghetto was renamed a concentration camp. Only those able to work could stay.
- 50.00 Daniel managed to escape the Action in which all the children and the old people were rounded up. He became a non-entity. No food rations were assigned to him, and he couldn't be seen.

- 3.00.00 Daniel scavenged for food and fire wood. He also tended a tiny parcel of land where he grew vegetables.
- 10.00 In memory of his mother.
- 23.00 A critique of the ghetto secretary Avraham Tory and how the deportation lists were composed.
- 38.08 Preparations while facing the liquidation of the ghetto. Daneil's family did not prepare a hiding place ['maline'].
- 40.39 Daniel and his family were deported in one of the last evacuations. It was the first time since he got in that Daniel was outside the ghetto!
- 50.36 They were put on the cargo train in the Alexot station, and after 6 hours they arrived in Danzig, to a place called Stuthoff. There, women and children were taken out of the train. The family decided that Daniel would stay on the train. It was the last time he saw his mother and sister. Later, Daniel found out that his mother died on the day of liberation, and his sister - of a broken heart- 10 days later.
- 54.00 Memories of his mother.
- 56.00 The males continued on the train to Lansberg, to camp 1.
- 58.00 Daniel became the private servant of an SS officer and also worked in the SS kitchen. His father and brother were sent to work.
- 4.00.00 Daniel was rounded out with all the other children even though he had a work uniform, which allowed him to stay.

II

- 5.44 Arrival in Dachau. Life in camp was not consequential. The only thing the children took part in were the reports to duty.
- 15.00 Arrival in Birkenau.
- 21.41 Encounter with the tortured and broken Jews of the Lodz ghetto.
- 25.11 Daniel received the tattoo number.
- 27.05 It was near the Jewish fall holidays. The Selections began.
- 30.00 The first Selection by Mengele, on Rosh Hashona. Most of the children were taken then.

- 32.00 The Selection. Daniel's survivor's guilt.
- 39.30 New Selection, this time by height. Reaction to the death factory, with all the 'trimmings' [the red sky and the smoke from the chimneys].
- 41.00 Birkenau's survivors are different, and the effect on their families. No spokesmen from Birkenau; there are no words to describe the horror.
- 43.00 The routine. The rations.
- 46.11 Transfer to work in camp B. The job was pushing wagons. They collected the clothes discarded by the new arrivals in transports. Daniel had a technique: he would concentrate on the outer coats and by searching through the pockets, he would always find a fresh, half eaten sandwich. Those were the discards of very wealthy individuals arriving in passenger 'pullman' train cars. Mengele was very much aware of Daniel's food thievery. He followed Daniel, asking about the 'blond boy'. When Daniel took ill with chicken-pox and was hospitalized briefly, someone came for him with medicine. Daniel thinks that Mengele sent it.
- 53.26 In the autumn, it was hard to move the wagons in the mud. Daniel was the tragic conditions of the prisoners; he would collect clothing from the crematoria. He became, in essence, a cog in the death machine.
- 55.05 The pain of the winter cold.
- 58.04 As the Allies made inroads in their advance on the Germans, the latter became more and more cruel. Daniel would see more Jews electrocuted against the electric fence. Towards the end [November-December 1944] when the crematoria had already been partially destroyed, the Nazis began injecting phosgene straight into the heart of Jews.
- 5.01.06 The winter was very harsh. New transports almost didn't come [therefore there were no more sandwiches]. Food was less reliable. Daniel's group became very small. All people who were able-bodied were taken to forced labor.
- 5.22 January 18, 1945. Liquidation of Auschwitz is announced.
- 6.55 Organization to march leaving Birkenau.
- 14.05 In upper Silesia, they were put on a train that hardly moved. Arrival in Tichau. He fled from the train when it was bombed. No one among the Tichau population helped Daniel, a small boy. Daniel decided to return to the train. They were all put on an open train, under snow storms and

cold. Many died, their bodies dried up and consumed. The live people used the bodies as protection from the cold.

- 19.55 Train stopped in Prague for several days. The Czeck people tried to help.
- 21.51 ARrival to the train station in Mauthausen, at the end of January. Arrival in the camp after a steep ascent.
- 28.41 Some men worked as prostitutes in order to get better food and living conditions.
- 40.10 The matter of cannibalism in the camp.
- 46.01 Daniel doesn't know if he ate human flesh or not. It is against his values. But, on the other hand, he wonders what he ate during that month in Mauthausen.
- 47.36 After a month, there was another death march to a different camp. It was spring, end of March, beginning of April, via St. Floren, Velz [in Austria], on to Gunskirchen camp. Hungarians managed the camp, practically a swamp. The announcements everyday began thus: 'kapos, bring a blanket and you will receive bread'. But, one day, the announcement was 'Hitler is no more!'
- 56.09 The Red Cross began distributing parcels, but they were guarded by Doberman dogs, and very had to obtain one. Daviel managed. The date was beginning of May.
- 56.43 Diarrhea hit the camp. Daniel and a friend found refuge in the forest nearby.
- 58.00 They decided to flee. The Front was advancing. They entered an Austrian home where a woman fed them. DAviel was very careful not to overeat.

III

- 7.02.19 Time in Bologne, Italy.
- 2.54 Metting with his older brother.
- 3.59 Transfer to Modena.
- 5.14 Hunger prevailed.
- 6.43 Moving to Milano, where preparations for the illegal immigration had begun. Daniel was ill but feared doctors.

- 10.00 He was sent to a sanitarium to get well. He refused to participate in group activities. The sanitarium was in Stressa, near Lago Maggiore. He befriended a fisherman, who used to go fist at night, and who did not ask questions.
- 12.18 Daviel couldn't sleep. He suffered much because he was bald. A combination of faith [lighting a candle to San Carolino] and a barber, managed to heal Daniel from his baldness. He still refused to see his friends or talk much.
- 23.07 After many months, the group was moved to Firenzd, to castello San Michele, in Fiesoli. There, a more orderly time began. Daniel was in Florence for a year, and he absorbed as much culture as he could. Ari Avissar, and Israeli, tended to the group.
- 30.38 In Magento, the organization to emigrate to Israel was in full force. Daniel had permission to go to Israel, but nothis brother [who was older]. Although Daniel and his brother possessed affidavits with which they could choose whether to live in _____ or South Africa. Their decision to go to Israel never wavered.
- 41.02 Sailing to Israel. The suffering aboard.
- 45.23 Arrival in Haifa. Daniel knew that it was the end of his wandering.
- 46.49 They were intercepted by the British. They wre taken to the DP camp of Atlit.
- 49.27 Black Shabbat, in Atlit, in July-August. A month or two after that, they received certificates to Be'er Tuviah.
- 55.47 Arrival in tel Aviv, to a relative.
- 8.01.00 His adaptation to the new routine.
- 14.13 Israel's Independence War.
- 16.10 Studying in Mikveh-Israel, an agricultural school.
- 19.15 Gadna period. Daniel's inner conflict.
- 21.34 Daniel's anxiety expresses itself in physical symptoms, ulcers.
- 24.02 Daniel suffered being an orphan.

36.23 An European vacation. Daniel felt that his mores are more European than the Levantinism he suffers from in Israel.

39.17 ARrival in the U.S. to be with his relatives.

45.00 Daniel's sojourn of 3 years in the U.S., and of one year in Europe before his return to Israel, in 1961. He was 28 years old.

9.14.00 His lack of adaptation to the Israeli behaviour. His professional choices. [This testimony was remarkable because of Daniel's gift of introspection!]