

RG-50.120 #0248 3 Tapes
ELIEZER SHVIMER

I

- 1.02 He was born in Bilke [Carpato Russia] in 1924. Describes the village with 300 Jewish families. There were also Hungarians and Czechs. His father was a tailor. They were an orthodox family with 6 children. He went to cheder and a Czech school.
- 1.04 Describes the life of the Jewish community, the youth movements, childhood games and the daily home routine.
- 1.12 He joined the Bnei Akiva movement. Describes their activities and functions.
- 1.20 After his Bar Mitzvah he went to a yeshiva in Selich. Describes his life and activities there.
- 1.35 Describes the difficulties of daily life, his relationship with his parents and daily life as a boy.
- 1.50 Describes the public baths and mikva, winter in the village, cheder and Czech school, 8 weddings.
- 2.15 In 1939, when the Germans went into Czechoslovakia, the Carpats were given to Hungary. Following this the Czechs left the village and the Hungarians took over, and imposed restrictions on the Jews.

A group of Jews who did not have the right papers were taken to Podolszyce and killed by the Einsatzgruppen.
- 2.23 The Hungarians took Jews to labor camps in 1941 and many were killed. His father went to a labor camp.
- 2.30 In the yeshiva in Selich, he heard from refugees for Slovakia. They thought that Horthy would not abandon the Jews. Some people went to Hungary to hide out.
- 2.37 He and a friend prepared a hideout.
- 2.39 The rabbi was taken for interrogation and returned a broken man.
- 2.41 Describes the sad last Passover. He separated from his friend and the hideout. Describes the antisemitism of Hungarians.
- 2.47 Chaim Rosenbaum, the head of the Jewish community, gave a list of the Jewish population to the authorities. There was no resistance. He stayed with his family and worked in the store.
- 2.57 They were told to assemble to be taken to a supposedly safe place. He describes the preparations and the assembly place and is taken by train to Beregszaz, which was the ghetto for all the surrounding villages.

- 3.09 Describes his transport on the train. People felt that the world had abandoned them.
- 3.29 Describes arrival in Auschwitz and selection by Mengele. He was separated from his mother and siblings and went with his father. He was told to say that he was 16 years old.
- 3.41 Describes getting a number, the showers, clothes and barracks. He was in Block 11. A friend told him about the crematorium.
- 3.52 Describes a day in Auschwitz. His father supported him and saved his life many times.

II

- 4.01 Daily routine in Auschwitz. Cruelty of kapos, even the Jewish ones. The difficult long march to work in wooden shoes.
- 4.13 He was sent by train to Buchenwald. Describes the camp in 1944.
- 4.16 Describes people in the camp. There were separate buildings for political prisoners. The mayor of Prague and his group were in tents. Different groups had different colors. Leon Blum and Peter Sinkel [?] were in a building.
- 4.18 Describes hard work carrying rocks from Weimar to Buchenwald.
- 4.28 He was taken to Gleina. They stayed in abandoned buildings and worked in Brabag refineries belonging to Krupp. There were also civilians and prisoners who worked there.
- 4.33 He was assigned to work digging and cleaning. Romanian and Serbian supervisors were more cruel than the Germans.
- 4.37 Describes how his father saved him by teaching him how to act and survive.
- 4.43 An uncle in camp worked at a tailor and shoe repair shop and got his father to join him. His father, who excelled in his work, asked to have him work with him.
- 4.54 He later worked as a private servant to kapo Egon Streble who treated him well. His father continued to support him with food and advice.
- 5.09 19th January 1945. They saw the bombardment of Dresden. They ran away to escape the flames and then returned to the camp.
- 5.17 They knew of the Allied offensive because they distributed flyers. They were told to leave when the Americans advanced.
- 5.22 Describes assignment to bring supplies from Buchenwald by truck. They found a siddur among the clothes and they all prayed from it.

- 5.30 Describes his relationship with kapo Egon Streble who was not a Nazi and treated him well.
- 5.37 Describes different people in camp and the food they ate.
- 5.43 Describes the barracks, the camp routine, the sick barrack, his work, types of punishment.
- 6.01 Describes the break-up of the camp. They were loaded on trains that were bombarded by the Americans. Many were killed. Those who were not, escaped to a nearby village - Reichsheim. They were shot by the Hitlerjugend who was there. Hundreds were killed and thrown into a large pit. He names people. The rest of them were marched. Those who couldn't walk were shot.
- 6.18 When they arrived at the Sudeten border the population threw them food and encouraged them. The march lasted weeks, describes.
- 6.28 Describes arrival in Terezin. Blames Americans for bombing their train.
- 6.32 Describes Terezin under Jewish management and talks about friends who helped him. They were liberated yth of May. He was ill with typhoid fever. Describes his physical and mental condition before liberation and the hopes that kept him alive.
- 6.44 Food supply in Terezin.
- 6.49 After liberation, many tried to go back to their place of origin, others went to America, or to camps in Germany and from there to Israel.
- 6.52 They were liberated by the Russians, got IDs. He went to Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and then his village Bilke. Describes returning to their old house. Gentiles, with whom they had left some property, did not return it to them.

III

- 7.01 Describes again his illness during the march, and his father's support. Father was 50 when he was liberated.
- 7.07 Describes again their arrival in Bilke. They knew that mother and siblings were gone. Their old neighbors were not welcoming and they decided to leave.
- 7.14 They went to Kosice, where his uncle was. The Jewish community was well organized. He joined the youth group, Bnei Akiva, and is sent to learn to make official signatures. He used this to forge illegal documents.
- 7.18 His uncle in the US sent him and his father visas and tickets to come. His father remarried and went to the U.S., but he refused because he was a Zionist.
- 7.20 He commuted daily to Bratislava to work in the Aliya department. Describes his work. He learned about Israel and Hebrew.

- 7.25 He describes Kosice as a place where many Jews from Hungary and Austria came and were absorbed. Rosenthal organized the office of Aliya in Bratislava and he was the head of the passport office. The Czech communist government did not give passports to capitalist countries. He organized group passports.
- 7.30 His work was illegal and dangerous. He names coworkers. They went to villages to encourage people to go to Israel.
- 7.37 His situation became dangerous and he went to Vienna and worked there for a while. Then to Paris and to Israel in 1950.
- 7.42 He worked in Zichron Jacob and later visited his father in the U.S. He later married and had a daughter.
- 7.48 Describes again learning to make signatures for documents for later use.
- 7.53 Describes feelings of revenge and disappointment in the Nurenberg trials.
- 7.55 He corresponded with kapo Egon Streble and went to Germany to meet him.
- 7.59 Shows photographs of his father and himself at the time of liberation.