

RG-50.120 #0256

ZAYTSEVA, SOFYA SAMUILOVNIA [nee Gelfman]

- 1.00 Born in 1923 in city of Volchisk in what was then Kamenets-Podolsk oblast in the Ukraine. Father had studied in Paris at the Sorbonne. Father played many musical instruments. Had brother born in 1927. Father worked as head accountant in a sugar refinery.
- 1.04 Sofya finished 1-th grade in 1940 and prepared to enter Kiev State Univ.
- 1.07 When war began on June 22, 1941, family was living in town of Monastyrishche in Vinnitsa Oblast where father worked in the local sugar refinery.
- 1.07 ? At first, no one believed Germans would succeed in occupying area, so few people left. Only on July 20, when sounds of war were audible, did family try to evacuate - in wagon. But couldn't get very far. When Germans came, they were in a village about 20-30 km from Monastyrishche. Family ordered to return home.
- 1.10 Already local administration and polizei had been set up by Germans. Family moved to ghetto area on edge of town.
- 1.12 Germans seized 5 important Jews in town, including one Parkhomovskiy and one Yaroslavskiy and held them hostage, demanding large sums of money in gold and other valuables for their release. Germans killed all 5.
- 1.13 Sofya and her father sent to work on a sugar beet farm near the town.
- 1.15 Jews were made to wear no yellow stars, but a white arm band on which was a blue star.
- 1.18 In spring of 1942, family received word from friends in Kordelyovkia where they had briefly lived, that the friends would try to help them. But on May 29, 1942 Germans told people in ghetto to prepare to leave - Jews were being moved.
- 1.23 Ghetto residents were taken to the market square, which was blocked off. Area was already filled with people, including children. SS troops and polizei surrounded area. Saw head of local polizei, who used to be a driver at the sugar refinery where Sofya's father worked. At that point, one of polizei, who knew family, said to an SS officer that Sofya's mother was not Jewish, officer ordered mother, Sofya and her brother, to go back home. Father was forced into crowd on square, and Sofya never saw him again.
- 1.26 Sofya hears and sees trucks driving away with people in them screaming, Germans shouting . Then heard sound of machine guns.
- 1.28 Family returns to original home. Ukrainian family helped them.

- 1.29 Ukrainian woman - Anela Ishchenko, whose husband had worked with Sofya's father - offered to help family
- 1.30 At this point, Sofya says that she has an 'archive' of letters that her mother wrote immediately after the war in which she recounts many of the family's experiences during period of German occupation.
- 1.31 Family called to local administration to prove claim that mother not Jewish. They are shown father's internal passport, which he had had in his jacket. S says documentation about mother in in a nearby town. Is permitted to go there.
- 1.36 Helped by Ukrainian family, acquires document declaring mother, Vera Maksimovna Gorodiskaya not Jewish.
- 1.39 Family goes to live with Anela Ishchenko. S worked in a cafeteria - as a dishwasher. Lived there through summer of 1942. S goes to nearby Sarnya to work on a farm.
- 1.41 S's mother seized in 1943 to be sent to work in Germany. But local doctor able to get her released.
- 1.43 In May, 1943, S leaves mother and brother and goes to Vinnitsa to try to join partisans. Seeks friends who have contacts among underground.
- 1.45 S is designated to be taken to Germany to work. Is put in camp in Vinnitsa prior to being transported to Germany.
- 1.49 To avoid going to Germany, S drinks large quantity of tobacco boiled in water. Falls ill, is taken to hospital. Doctor she knew helped her.
- 1.51 Meets people in underground. But they are reluctant to recruit S because they are not sure of her.
- 1.55 In July 1943 partisans agree to take S into unit. Joins unit headed by Aleksandr V. Kokarev.
- 1.57 S crossed bridge over Bug ? River in Vivvitsa and meets Kokarev. They then had to pass through village of Strizhavka where Germans were building a headquarters for Hitler. Many POWs and Germans in area.
- [Break]
- 2.01 S and Kakarev enter woods [Cherniy Les] Joins unit. She had to get her own weapon.
- 2.03 At request of interviewer, S shows pictures.

- 2.06 Returns to narrative about partisans - S seeks a weapon. Also assigned to acquire type for a partisan newspaper. S gets type and other publishing materials.
- 2.12 Unit grows in size. S becomes intelligence operative. S shows book describing her operations.
- 2.15 Describes one operation in December 1943 in which there was battle with Germans. S distinguished herself - awarded pistol by her commander.
- 2.20 Describes another operation in January 1944 in which S and comrades were supposed to report on access to POW camp. Captured by German patrol. S tells Germans that she is the wife of a polizei who was just killed by partisans. She and comrades sent to gendarme post in Balta.
- 2.26 Interrogation took place. S was held in Balta from January 1944 until March '44. In March she and a group of other prisoners escaped. S goes to relatives of a person she had befriended in prison.
- 2.32 At this point, Germans retreating and Soviet troops arrive. S returns to Vinnitsa.
- 2.35 Interviewer asks about jews in partisan units.
- 2.40 S talks about post-war life. She is united with mother. Brother returns from front. Security agents want to know how she was able to survive. She comes under suspicion.
- 2.43 She goes to Moscow in 1945. Enters law school. Then transfers to Kiev University. Marries.
- 2.44 Discusses husband and husband'd relatives.
- 2.47 Works as history teacher in Vinnitsa - then as lawyer.