

RG-50.120 #0267
EFRAIM SHIPER 2 Tapes

- 1.00 Efraim Wolf Shiper was born in 1916, Sept. 25, near the small town of Józefów, by the Vistula, in Poland. He was born in the midst of WWI, so that he wasn't registered as a newborn until later. Efraim was born 2-3 km. from Józefów, and there his grandparents also lived, on a small farm.
- 2.26 Education in the cheder and a little in a yeshiva in the city of Ostrowiec. Family was orthodox.
- 3.36 When Efraim was 12, in Józefów, the first youth movement was founded 'Hechalutz'. His cousin established the movement. He joined the movement in 1926.
- 4.00 Family was poor. They tried to leave Poland in search of a better life. Efraim's uncle was the first to leave for Brussels, then his father, then his older brother Joseph. They found work there in the chemical industry, which entitled them to obtain official papers as residents of Belgium. In 1930, Efraim's entire family moved there. Efraim was 15, and began to work making candies; he studied French in the evening.
- 6.23 Leaving the shtetl for Belgium, they sojourned several days in Lublin and Warsaw, which impressed them much, but arriving in Belgium by train was indescribable. They felt free, devoid of fears [of police, among others]. The income was better. Life in Western Europe was much different. They joined workers organizations in Belgium.
- 7.59 Efraim joined Hashomer Hatzair. His older brother was already active there.
- 8.00 In those years, the first illegal immigrants from Hashomer Hatzair [18 young men and women] departed for Palestine. One of those immigrants, Dov Barnea, became a member of the first Israeli parliament. Efraim credits him with stemming the tide to desert, from the Hashomer Hatzair to the Communist Party.
- 11.00 They joined forces with the Bund, and decided to join the socialist movement of Belgium, in order to obtain recognition for their activities. They were active until WWII broke out.
- 15.00 Family's occupations back in Poland.
- 18.17 There were 300-400 families in Józefów [2,000 people]. The end of the shtetl: they were all burned in the [wooden] synagogue.
- 20.00 Under the influence of the youth movement, Efraim and his brothers abandoned strict Jewish observances.
- 21.00 Composition of the Jewish community in Belgium.
- 22.00 Politics in the 1930s in Belgium. Trotsky's exhortations helped to understand Hitler's real intentions.

- 27.00 Entrance of the Germans into Belgium. Many tried to escape Brussels, but the entrance of the German army was so quick that they had to turn back [as the trains had stopped moving].
- 29.56 The strategy of the German army toward Belgium and France was to let everyone live. For a year they were very liberal.
- 30.38 Jews then were told to register with the Judenrat. Efraim and his wife did not. The Jews were in Belgium registered as 'foreign workers' and the Judenrat had to stamp their documents with a 'J'.
- 32.31 August 1942, the single men were summoned to go to work in Germany, in Malines [Mechelen] which was to become the point of departure of the transports.
- 35.57 Joseph, Efraim's older brother and his girl friend, were encouraged not to answer the summons. They managed to flee to Switzerland. They were sent to camps there. They organized themselves, together with the local Hashomer Hatzair, in the camps.
- 37.11 Another brother joined a group to immigrate to Palestine illegally. Twice they were turned away by the Swiss border police; the third time, all 59 were put on a truck and the driver [a Swiss soldier] was ordered to deliver the group to the Germans. They were close to Lucerne, on the way to the border, when the driver ran into a tree , intentionally, 500 meters before the border. The accident necessitated that the Red Cross be called, a notice went to the Jewish community, and they were all saved.
- 45.00 In praise of the Belgian people.
- 59.00 Only at the end of 1942 they found out about the ovens and the extermination camps.
- 2.02.04 When the order came out for the Jews to register with the Judenrat, many of the more active Jews did not do so. They had to go underground.
- 6.42 Efraim and his wife managed to secret away his two younger sisters to a farm where the family already had 6 children of their own.
- 7.28 Mother dies in the hospital after an operation.
- 12.00 Obtaining fake documents.
- 15.00 Encounter with refugees from Germany and Austria.
- 18.00 Efraim's lack of connection with the Judenrat.
- 20.16 Reaction of Efraim's father to his sons being in the underground.
- 25.05 Efraim's job in the underground. His wife's work.
- 31.53 About the newspaper they published.

- 35.00 The development of Efraim's Socialist ideas.
- 50.00 Efraim's wife.
- 52.33 Efraim and his wife are apprehended by the Gestapo.
- 3.01.05 Arrival in Malines a few days before the transport is scheduled to depart. They were there for about 3 months, during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.
- 10.00 Malines.
- 19.58 Mixed couples had better living conditions; they were not sent on transports. They were also given administrative roles.
- 27.44 In the camp they begin to make plans to jump off the train [which they knew would be departing at night], and began to 'practice'. They knew it would be their only chance to flee, before arriving in Auschwitz.
- 30.00 More about the preparations to jump off the train, equipment, connections, etc.
- 32.00 Jumping off the train with his wife in Tongres, near Flanders.
- 48.34 Arrival in Liège.
- 56.03 Return to Brussels and encounter with Claire's mother and brother. [Claire is Phillips wife.]
- 59.13 Philip is reunited with his younger sisters.
- 59.19 The party decided that Philip and his wife have to move from Brussels to Charleroi.
- 4.00.00 Life Charleroi. Tape 2
- 11.00 Philip weighs the possibility of undoing his circumcision. Decides against it while already in the hospital awaiting the surgery.
- 14.43 About Claire's abortion.
- 15.00 About Dr. Dimon.
- 20.00 Philip's underground work.
- 38.00 Contact with French activists.
- 48.00 Some in the pro-Trotsky group volunteered to fight in Spanish Civil War.
- 50.00 How they obtained money to carry out their activities.
- 55.00 Obtaining fake documents.

- 5.00.41 More about the printing job.
- 3.02 Claire's work as editor.
- 18.11 Liberation. Aug. 1944.
- 25.58 Family is reunited in Brussels. Political activism stopped completely.
- 27.41 Part of the family immigrates to Israel in 1948.
- 28.00 Efraim and Claire leave for Uruguay, then Brazil.
- 29.35 In 1958, the entire family reunited in Belgium, a year before Efraim's father passed away.
- 29.53 In the early 1960s, Efraim's family began to be active again in the Zionist movement in Brazil, and in 1968 they finally immigrated to Israel. Their daughters acclimation to Israel.
- 36.20 The family's life in Israel and the miracle of the survival of the entire family from the war nightmare.
- 38.52 Efraim credits their survival to right decisions made at the right time.
- 39.37 The underground newspaper and the policies of what to print. 'La Verité', 'La Voix de Lenin', and La Voix de [readers] were the 3 papers, geared mainly to the workers.
- 56.28 Visiting his sisters in the farm where they were hidden.