

Peleg, Shlomo  
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One Video Cassette  
In Hebrew

- Abstract: Shlomo Peter Peleg was born Peter Polizter in 1925 and grew-up in Čadca. He was the second and youngest son of a Jewish doctor. Throughout the war, his situation and location were a direct result of his father's associations and position as a doctor. Shlomo discusses the youth movement and life in Čadca during the war. Shlomo manages to get non-Jew papers and joins the partisan resistance in his town. He recalls the town's liberation by the Russian army.
- 1:00:44:00 Shlomo Peter Peleg was born Peter Politzer in 1925 in Vienna.
- 1:01:53 For a while the family lived in Vienna because his father was a physician who wanted to work in a modern facility.
- 1:01:12 Then Shlomo's family lived in Čadca a small town in northwest Slovakia, near the Polish and German borders.
- 1:01:40 Both sides of Shlomo's extended family lived in the northwest corner of the Carpathian Mountains. According to a family tree that was made during WWII, the family was traced back to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, living in the region.
- 1:02:10 Shlomo's father's family came from the River Váh valley in Slovakia.
- 1:02:20 Shlomo's mother's family came from Silesia, which at various times was part of Poland, Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.
- 1:02:35 The region was an ethnic smorgasbord of Polish and German languages. Shlomo's town was Slovak and belonged to Hungary until 1918.
- 1:03:02 Shlomo's parents attended Hungarian schools.
- 1:03:08 Shlomo's father was a medical doctor who graduated from university in Budapest and served as a Hussar Cavalier doctor in WWI.
- 1:03:24 Shlomo's parents married in 1919 and then lived in Čadca.
- 1:03:30 Shlomo's family was considered well-to-do, mainly due to the status of his mother's family. His mother's father owned a hotel and a liquor factory and was also a beer brewery distributor for a German aristocrat. They lived well.

- 1:04:12 In Shlomo's family, all the children attended a Jewish school in Čadca.
- 1:04:15 Shlomo grew up in a small Jewish community of about 350-400 people. They lived a rather secular lifestyle. There wasn't a rabbi in town, just a cantor and a kosher slaughterer. Shlomo's parents did not keep kosher. However his grandparent's did keep their house kosher. They were Neologs (reform Jews), not Orthodox.
- 1:04:45 Shlomo remembers celebrating the Jewish holidays and his mother lighting candles on Friday nights.
- 1:04:55 Shlomo and his brother ,who was older by five years, were brought up culturally different from their parents. They did not speak Hungarian and attended the local Slovak school. Shlomo and his brother spoke German as well as Slovak.
- 1:06:01 After attending the local Jewish elementary school, Shlomo and his brother were sent to the only high school in the area. The high school was in Žilina and consisted of seven grades. In order to continue their studies after the matriculation exam, students had to study an additional year of classics in Latin.
- 1:07:30 Shlomo remembers these as several nice years. His family traveled a lot. His father was an honorary doctor of the railroad administration and although he didn't receive a salary, he received a complimentary traveling account in first and second class. His mother traveled to Prague often.
- 1:08:22 In October of 1938, after the Munich conference, Slovakian autonomy was announced in Žilina. At the time his brother was already in Prague for higher education and Czechoslovakia was still in existence. Things began to be unpleasant.
- 1:08:49 Shlomo describes that in remote regions, persecution began with the newspapers that weren't in-line with the new government and these newspapers were closed. Also, storefronts were vandalized and robbed. There were riots.
- 1:09:35 Shlomo describes no apparent violence in Čadca. (Though the population was anti-Semitic, it was mostly indifferent.) There was no reason for animosity except for a few with whom they were personally acquainted.
- 1:10:24 Anti-Semitism in Čadca was manifested in cursing. Shlomo describes the isolation and how interaction between Jews and gentiles was rare. However, his family was the exception to this norm because of his father's position as a government employee and a doctor. Shlomo's family actually had friends who were Christians upon whom the educated Jewish

community frowned. The local Slovaks, with their Catholic upbringing were wary of Jews and did not like them. At Easter, Jews did not go out.

- 01:12:43 Shlomo's parents' generation identified with the Hungarians and learned the language mostly from their maids, butlers, or merchants. Shlomo's peers sympathized with the Czechoslovaks and were pro Slovak.
- 1:12:03 Shlomo describes common social functions that were held between the secular New Year and the beginning of the Advent fast. At the beginning of the year they had many balls. These events were often sponsored and attended by Jews.
- 1:12:58 Shlomo states that since many of the Jews in his community were involved in business, the Jewish community of Čadca was financially far better-off than the others in town.
- 1:15:06 Shlomo states that common occupations of Jewish people included merchants of textiles, timber, and groceries. Typically Jews were not laborers nor did they serve as government officers, secretaries, soldiers or judges. However, out of eight lawyers in town, seven of them were Jewish.
- 1:16:54 Shlomo states that the best jobs in town were held by Jews. The social and economic structure contributed and fed the locals' antagonism and anti-Semitism.
- 01:17:25 Shlomo describes his village as a typical village setting.
- 1:17:32 As a youth, Shlomo did sense the alienation but more from "dares" between the local Jewish and the non-Jewish youth. He describes these exchanges as non-violent.
- 1:18:05 Shlomo states that he was a minority among the Czech Scouts.
- 1:18:28 He participated in a Maccabi a youth sports movement that was active in Žilina when he was in high school.
- 1:18:39 Finally, in January of 1939, after years of attempts the Jewish youth movement called Young Maccabi was founded which was associated with Gordonya and was part of Mapai.
- 1:19:08 Shlomo describes very limited Zionist activities and involvement with the Zionist trade unions and the Jewish National Fund. On holidays contributions were made.

- 1:20:00 Shlomo states that until 1938, the Jewish population felt secure. In November-December of 1938, there were at least 20 individuals who wanted to move to Palestine illegally.
- 1:20:40 Shlomo states that news from Germany arrived with refugees from Berlin and Breslau until Kristalnacht. Then conditions were unpleasant but still economically sound. Some relations came and they told them about it. Still, there were very few certificates for Aliya.
- 1:21:25 Only a few pioneers moved from Slovakia to Palestine, but not enough certificates/visas were granted. He had no desire to make Aliya from Slovakia.
- 1:22:00 Shlomo describes how the National Slovakian Hlinka Party made threats on the Jewish population after the Sudetenland crisis. He describes these threats as non-physical and unfelt by his family or household. His father's clients were 90 percent non-Jewish.
- 1:24:00 On March 14, 1939, Slovakia declared its independence.
- 1:24:01 Shlomo's brother came back from Prague with a student certificate/visa to go as a student to Italy. He went to Palestine in September 1939.
- 1:24:01 In Shlomo's family, a real estate offer in Nahariya was turned down for lack of money. There were never serious discussions about immigration to Palestine.
- 1:27:10 In the summer of 1939 there was an action in Young Maccabi and many were assigned to immigrate to Palestine. The youth movement became independent from the youth movement in Prague when Slovakia became independent and capitalized on the growing insecurity of the Jews. Some were looking to emigrate from Europe.
- 1:29:56 At this time, Shlomo's brother was studying at the Technion in Haifa. He too was meant to make Aliya.
- 1:30:15 By February 1940, Shlomo was in high school and supposed to go to Palestine. He was the only one who inquired and obtained a legal student visa. Then Shlomo's mother had second thoughts. However, aside from sporadic incidents, all was normal in his home town.
- 1:31:09 Shlomo decided to stay. He postponed his trip, despite his own desires, in order to please his family.
- 1:31:50 In the summer of 1940 Sholomo was a counselor in a Young Maccabi Camp called **Cherno Horski Kupe**.

- 1:32:27 After the German victory in France, Shlomo noticed signs of change.
- 1:32:32 Although it was not known publicly at the time, Shlomo states that Yurschentzky, the moderate foreign minister then in power, was removed from office after he tried to block German totalitarianism.
- 1:33:33 The German influence was not felt in the streets of Žilina. However, Shlomo states that the war was wearing down the government.
- 1:34:01 Until the end of 1941 the Slovak S.A. were not leading sweeping assaults on the Jewish population but did make sporadic and individual attacks. More attacks were felt in Bratislava among students. There they started to take Jewish property.
- 1:34:55 In 1940, the pro-Nazi Slovak government led by Tukka established the Central Office for Economics with its sole purpose to reassign Jewish businesses to Aryan hands (virtually leaving the professional Jews to run it and pay the Aryan's and Tukka's salaries.) Between 1940-1941 all Jewish businesses were transferred to non-Jews.
- 1:37:00 In 1940, Shlomo was not allowed to attend high school when a new law was adopted. Shlomo was asked to perform secretarial work for Jewish timber merchants who were appointed managers by the state.
- 1:38:44 Beginning in 1941 allowances were instituted and with them came true hardship and hunger amongst the Jews. Throughout 1941, gradually new restrictions for Jews were being adopted.
- 1:40:53 Shlomo's father could not work and was required to close his practice.
- 1:45:00 Shlomo describes his life in those years and the youth movement.
- 1:46:20 Shlomo describes his life among his peers and this relationship.
- 2:00:46 Shlomo states that the last legal immigration to Israel, via Turkey, left in the spring of 1941.
- 2:50:00 Shlomo states that in February 1942, the first transport departed for Poland and the first station was Žilina.
- 2:06:42 Shlomo's father was in the first transport because doctors were needed. Shlomo was supposed to be on it as well. Shlomo's father arranged for Shlomo to go to the hospital in Turciansky Martin and have a Jewish radiologist there named Dr. Bloom, find some kind of condition for Shlomo. Dr. Bloom diagnosed Shlomo with an ulcer and had him

hospitalized for two days. Dr. Bloom was well known because of his good looking assistant who was a nun.

- 2:08:39 Upon his return home, Shlomo found that all of his age group had already been sent away except for a few who hadn't been home at the time.
- 2:09:17 Shlomo's father managed to leave the concentration point in Žilina with the help of a priest, who in 1912 was supervisor of Monsignor Tiso. In 1942, a request from a priest was still useful.
- 2:10:30 After a month, entire families were evacuated. Some were sent to Lublin and some to Auschwitz.
- 2:12:00 In the meantime, every family prepared for evacuation.
- 2:17:05 Only a few of the older members of the youth movement fled to Hungary.
- 2:23:16 In the summer of 1942, the Slovaks discovered that they needed doctors and demanded that the Jewish doctors stay. Shlomo's father was included among these doctors. Again the same priest helped Shlomo's father to be sent to a safe place. The priest was Lanomicus Vicarious Archbishop (an honorary title that allowed him to become a dioceses' Archbishop in case of the latter's death.) The priest had been a friend of Shlomo's father and a card playing buddy.
- 2:26:00 Shlomo was too old to be included in his father's posting. He managed to get papers as a non-Jew and found work 20 kilometers away in a division of public works
- 2:29:44 In 1942, 60,000 Jews were banished. There were few remaining Jews. Of those that were left many were former soldiers whom the Slovaks, being anti-German, protected.
- 2:40:12: Shlomo's fake name in his visa was Stephan Markuliak.
- 2:43:24 After a few months, thanks to well placed acquaintances, Shlomo was transferred to his parent's jurisdiction under his real name: Peter Politzer. There he did the same work as before. He stayed there until August 1944.
- 2:44:24 Shlomo describes how the Allied front was approaching.
- 2:47:00 One day when Shlomo's father and the priest were playing cards, Shlomo himself was asked to play with them.
- 3:08:37 In 1944, the underground began getting organized. The contact with Shlomo's brother in Palestine continued.

- 3:17:30 Shlomo describes the organization of bunkers, etc. in preparation for a revolt. Hiding places were found in houses of non-Jews. A very short time after the rebellion was declared, a German unit took command of the village and occupied it.
- 3:23:51 Shlomo describes hiding in the woods for a few weeks and then his life in the bunker until April of 1944. Shlomo attempts to describe his hunger.
- 3:35:14 In March 1944, Shlomo states that the Hungarian Army showed up to build bunkers for the approaching German Army.
- 3:37:52 The Germans, old soldiers for the most part, stayed there a short while and then retreated. Then the Russians arrived. Shlomo's family stayed in the bunker an extra day.
- 3:40:00 Then the war was over and they were all liberated.