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**Gurevich, Zhenya**

**Tape 1 of 3**

- 1:00:24 Zhenya (née Zaretzka) was born in Svencionys in 1927. She studied in the Tarbut School. In addition to her father and mother she had three brothers. Her mother's name was Miriam nee Kovner. Her oldest brother Shlomo was born in 1925; Zhenya was next, born in 1927; Boris (Borke) was born in 1930, and Chaim in 1935.
- 1:02:27 Zhenya's extended family included grandparents, uncles and aunts, all of whom lived near each other. Her Grandmother had a small business manufacturing seltzer and ice cream, and Zhenya's father worked there until he immigrated to Palestine in 1939, a month before the war broke out. There was no possibility for the family to reunite again, so they spent the war years separated.
- 1:10:37 Zhenya's family was traditional. Her mother worked in a prescription drug manufacturing plant.
- 1:11:51 The family spoke Yiddish at home.
- 1:18:55 After the Russians invaded Svencionys, they closed the Tarbut School and Zhenya went to a Yiddish school.
- 1:24:14 Describes the arrival of the Germans in Svencionys.
- 1:29:36 All the town Jews were moved to a former Polish military camp in Poligon.
- 2:05:12 Zhenya's mother manages to remove Zhenya and her younger brother from the camp by including them as members of the family of a second cousin. The second cousin was a skilled worker who was needed back in Svencionys and was thus entitled to bring along his family.
- 2:06:33 Describes how a ghetto is formed in Svencionys.
- 2:06:42 Zhenya worked the land of a farmer. She worked long hours in Stanislawow (Ivano-Frankivsk).
- 2:14:49 Zhenya's mother and two brothers had been killed in an abandoned Polish army camp.
- 2:18:15 Zhenya is sent to work on the railroad that was being built in Nova Svencionys.

- 2:25:00 A decision was reached to unify all the small ghettos into one. The plan was to move the Jews of Svencionys to Vilna.
- 3:00:56 Describes laying the railroad tracks and living in a work camp. Zhenya stayed in the ghetto but she was sick.
- 3:19:43 Talks about the beginnings of the underground organization in the ghetto.
- 4:13:20 Markov, a folk-shule teacher was there. He published an appeal to those who could use a weapon to leave the ghetto. Zhenya's cousin was a friend of Markov from the Zionist group. Markov ends up being the partisans' commander in the forests.
- 5:06:26 Liquidation of the ghetto. Some were sent to Vilna; the majority to Kovno. The train stopped in Ponar. One of the Jews alerted the rest to flee in all directions, because they were about to be killed. As they were being led to their deaths, they scattered in all directions in the forest. Zhenya ends up alone in the forest, where she had been followed by two children. Talks about hiding in the forest.
- 6:00:00 Described work in Vilna ghetto
- 6:28:06 Rebellion in the ghetto. The failed attempt was used as an excuse to liquidate the ghetto.

### **Tape 2 of 3**

- 7:06:02 Liquidation of the ghetto.
- 7:13:17 Arrival in Kaiserwald.
- 7:14:36 Work destination near Riga (Strazde). Zhenya worked moving construction materials.
- 7:22:00 A small commerce develops.
- 7:32:00 Talks about food smuggling.
- 8:00:00 Talks about sex favors.
- 8:24:02 Talks about roll calls.
- 10:08:06 Zhenya talks about her illness.
- 10:10:18 The Russian army was getting close.

- 10:11:15 Was transferred to Kaiserwald and then returned to Strazde for a few more months.
- 10:17:53 Brought by boats to Stutthof. Describes the discipline there.
- 10:22:20 Tactics for living. Work in the crematorium.
- 10:29:50 They were there about six months, barely surviving.
- 11:10:01 Evenings in the barracks.
- 11:12:23 Describes a birth in the barracks.
- 11:25:05 Women in Stutthof.
- 11:28:02 Hygiene and clean linens in Stutthof.
- 12:00:00 Evacuation of Stutthof. March. Zhenya marched with four other friends. The march took three months. They arrived at a huge stable a few kilometers from Danzig in Khinow. After a couple of days, it turned out that the entire group was not being watched any longer. Zhenya was sick, and had no willpower to check if the Germans were playing a trick on them. But indeed they had fled.
- 12:15:00 Zhenya and her friend contracted typhoid fever. After liberation they were taken to a hospital in Lwówek Slaski, where they were getting better. She stayed there for a month.
- 12:23:00 The friends who were well and transported the ill ones were adopted by a Russian army hospital, where they worked and lived.

### **Tape 3 of 3**

- 13:00:00 There was an attempt to take Zhenya and her friend to a Kolhoz (collective settlement) in Russia. Describes fleeing from the meeting point and going to work in the field army hospital where the other friends were.
- 13:20:00 The field hospital had to move on and Zhenya and the others moved with them.
- 13:26:13 On May 5, the liberation again from the Russians and thus comes the end of the war.
- 14:01:02 Zhenya is headed back to Vilna, via Kovno.
- 14:05:07 There was no food or work.

- 14:06:13 She describes meeting a surviving cousin.
- 14:11:04 Back in Svencionys she found a way to get a certificate to Palestine. She went from Lodz to France where the Bricha movement was taking care of immigration to Palestine.
- 14:18:36 Describes meeting her husband.
- 14:23:30 Zhenya gets married in 1947.
- 14:27:10 They arrived in Israel after the declaration of independence.
- 14:28:40 Talks about the encounter with her father.
- 15:00:00 Describes life in Israel.
- 15:10:21 Jealousy between new immigrants and veteran Israelis caused Zhenya not to share her war experiences with anyone. She had many nightmares.
- 15:15:00 Returns with her daughter, Miriam, to Svencionys on the 50th anniversary of liberation. Her daughter who was 41 complained that she had never told her about all that she went through. Everything seemed very small to her.

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Translated by Marta Wassertzug