

RG-50-120*0295

Farfel, Elka – 3 Tapes

In Hebrew

- 1:00 Elka Farfel was born in 1920 in Nyasvizh, Belarus, then Poland. She studied in Tarbut, where she met her husband at the age of 12. Her father was a tailor and had a workshop for army uniforms. They were traditional but not orthodox. Family was Zionist, and she was in Hashomer Hatzair.
- 1:10 Describes anti-Semitism in 1935 and 1936. She was not allowed to attend high school. Kosher slaughtering was not allowed. The population was half Polish and half Jewish.
- 1:14 Describes activities in Hashomer Hatzair and Jewish life in town.
- 1:21 Describes large antique palace where the rich lived. Many Jewish families made their living working there.
- 1:26 Talks about her siblings and describes institutions in town. There was little social contact between Jews and Poles.
- 2:00 She is fluent in Polish, Russian, and Yiddish. Describes Jewish life in town. Ten synagogues.
- 2:12 June 1938 they were aware of tensions between Poland and Germany. Talks about family relationships.
- 2:22 What they knew about Kristallnacht and heard on radio that war had broken out. Young people tried to escape to Russia, but the border was closed.
- 2:25 When the Russians entered, the Jews were glad. Describes the impact of communism on the population.
- 3:00 She went to a Russian school. Father lost his private business. Well-to-do Poles and Jews were sent to Siberia, Zionist Jewish organizations were disbanded. There was also food rationing.
- 3:07 Describes arrival of refugees from Poland who talked about Polish anti-Semitism.
- 3:19 Describes atmosphere under the Russians. They lived in fear for two years. There was communist indoctrination, but also encouragement to study.
- 4:00 Describes conversion of the palace into a sanatorium and park for culture activities, which the youth enjoyed.

- 4:05 When war broke out, they tried to go across border into Russia but were not allowed to. Only those who worked with the Russians were allowed to leave with them.
- 4:09 Describes arrival of the Germans in July of 1941. Margalit organized the Judenrat. They had to bury the people killed by the Germans. Special anti-Jewish orders that were enforced by the Jewish Police.
- 4:18 Jews had to harvest the summer crops and perform other jobs. Describes the killing of Jews by Germans.
- 4:23 Describes the Jewish Police who “contributions” for the Germans
- 5:00 Talks about food shortages and increased Polish anti-Semitism.
- 5:03 Rumors about “actions” and a ghetto circulated. On October 1941, they were ordered to assemble. People with special professions and skills were taken to the “Palace” to clean up and then taken back by trucks.
- 5:20 The following day they were told that all those who did not go to the "Palace:" to work had been killed. They were ordered into a ghetto.
- 5:22 Describes ghetto where she lived for nine months.
- 6:00 Describes ghetto. The food situation, the workshops.
- 6:09 Describes getting married in the ghetto to David.
- 6:22 They did not know what was going on outside the ghetto. Describes activities for children.
- 6:28 Discussions in the synagogue about a possible escape.

Tape II

- 7:00 They heard about the extermination of Jews in the surrounding villages. More discussions about escape with Margalit who told them about upcoming “action.”
- 7:09 She and husband separated from their families and ran to the gate of the ghetto. Describes scenes at the gate.
- 7:20 They went into a synagogue near the gate, where they hid in the basement for five days.
- 7:24 Describes the Jewish underground in the ghetto and how they got arms.’

- 7:26 Describes the five days in the basement
- 8:00 Describes again the separation from their families.
- 8:07 Describes escaping through ghetto with people getting shot at and killed.
- 8:12 She saw the ghetto burning. The Jews had set the fires in order to escape. She did not want to talk about the terrible things she saw. Her husband wrote a book about it.
- 8:18 Describes again the five days hiding out in the basement of the synagogue
- 8:23 Describes their escape into the nearby forest and the help given by a non-Jew.
- 9:00 Describe meeting friends in the forest and joining the partisans in another forest.
- 9:07 Machwinsky from Lodz was their commander. Describes life with the partisans.
- 9:13 Describes their attack on a German position in a village. Their commander was shot and they withdrew.
- 9:18 The partisan group left, and she, husband, and father-in-law remained in the forest.
- 9:23 Talks about massacre in Minsk. Three hundred escaped to the forest where they were.
- 10: 00 They were a small group up of 15 in the forest. They built bunkers in preparation for the winter.
- 10:11 Describes more people joining them who had escaped Polish and Byelorussian partisans, who were killing Jews.
- 10:15 Describes life in the bunker and joy when they heard about Stalingrad.
- 10:20 Describes actions against Germans.
- 10:22 They left the bunker in March and joined other partisans. Describes strong anti-Semitism of Polish partisans and Byelorussians, who came to the forest and attacked them.
- 11:00 Describes arrival of two parachutists from Moscow who organized them like an army. They brought newspapers and medicines and evacuated sick and wounded.
- 11:04 In the spring, the Germans surrounded the forest but did not find them.

- 11:10 Zorin, a Jew from Minsk, became their commander and they joined his group.
- 11:14 Describes arriving in Zorin's camp. Families from Minsk joined them daily a group of 500-800. Describes life in Zorin's camp, accommodations, food supplies, and people. He was in contact with Moscow.
- 11:23 Describes siege of the forest by Germans. They escaped to the surrounding swamps. Husband became gravely ill.
- 11:28 Describes husband's functions in the partisans.
- 12:03 Love life and married life in the camp. Lipshitz, a gynecologist from Minsk, performed abortions in a small field hospital in the forest. She also delivered babies.
- 12:11 Describes how children were taken care of.
- 12:15 She became pregnant in camp.
- 12:25 Spring 1943 describes her work in the camp.
- 12:27 Describes again the big siege of the forest.
- 13:00 Tells the story of the Neufeld family who brought five children to the partisans.
- 13:05 Describes Zorin from Minsk and his partisans.
- 13:10 Describes children 14 years and older who led people from the ghetto to the forest. Describes the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto.
- 13:14 In 1944, when the second front opened, their contact with Moscow increased and they received supplies.
- 13:25 Describes partisan activities in May 1943. Zorin told them that he wanted to go to Palestine, which he ultimately did.
- 14:00 Smoler, a communist from Minsk, joined them. Describes him and Zorin.
- 14:05 July 1944, the Russian army liberated them. She and husband left the forest and met a group from Bielsk and then went to Navahrudak.
- 14:21 They went home to Nyasvizh. Describes going back to their home. Husband was given work in the army prison.
- 15:00 Describes husband's work. He was witness in all the trials of collaborators.

- 15:04 Describe the fate of the many visitors who came or stayed in their house.
- 15:12 In November her son was born.
Old family friends joined them and told them about the fate of others.
- 15:28 Russians gave permission to leave to people who had lived in Poland until 1939.
Many registered and left. She became very sick and was hospitalized.
- 16:00 Describes her stay in the hospital. Husband was arrested because people had
escaped the jail.
- 16:08 He was later released but was fired. They decided to escape. In April 1945 they
escaped to Lodz.
- 16:19 In Lodz, Yakuba, the Jewish community helped them and found an apartment, but
they were afraid of anti-Semitism.
- 16:23 They escaped the Russian zone by train and truck.
- 16:29 They got to Germany and were taken to the French zone.
- 17:00 Describes circumcision of son.
- 17:08 Describes day the war ended.
- 17:11 They were taken from the French zone to Berlin to an American camp. Fishbein
from UNRRA was in charge. They got DP, ID cards.
- 17:15 Describes life in DP camp Tempelhof. She had a second son in May 1948.
- 17:19 They went to Israel in 1949 through Italy.
- 17:25 Her husband died in 1995. He has written a book about their experiences.