

Pode, Shraga (Podelsky, Feivel)  
RG.50.120\*0320  
3 Videocassettes  
In Hebrew

- 1:00:33 Shraga Pode (Feivel Podelsky) was born in Lodz in 1924. There were four children in the family. The father passed away before WWII and left the family in a precarious situation. Feivel and his brother belonged to the local branch of Hashomer Hatzair. That was the center of their lives.
- 10:20 Feivel's mother had a grocery store in a vacation place, Kolumna. When his father was alive, they had a couple of bakeries in Lodz and eventually opened one in Kolumna.
- 12:47 The oldest of the children, a girl, passed away before the war. The youngest of the children, a girl, named Tseshe, was born in 1926.
- 14:09 The family lived in the city center, in a mostly Jewish neighborhood. Few Poles lived there, except for the service people. All the children though played together.
- 15:59 Yiddish and Polish were spoken at home. Their family was traditional but not religious.
- 16:59 Feivel speaks about his schooling.
- 20:45 Extended family: his father's family came from Dobro horse traders. His mother's family lived in Lodz. Feivel's maternal family was very close.
- 22:27 Before the war began there were rumors.
- 26:52 When war breaks out there was an attempt to organize the youth.
- 2:00:34 Feivel's speaks about the German Army and discipline. He sees them parade in the streets.
- 2:07 Feivel was taken to work by force.
- 5:19 Situation of the Jews began to worsen.
- 10:00 A 5 pm curfew is established for all Jews. Jews began opening passages between apartments (even though the thickness of the walls was over one

meter thick) and this was how people would go visiting. Sometimes many blocks were connected.

- 13:17 Anti-Jewish laws
- 21:13 The ghetto was established. The Jews are slow to move. One day, the Germans “visited” the houses of the Jews in the main street and shot to death two or three in each apartment. It was the beginning of 1940. The Jews then understood that they better move to the ghetto fast.
- 28:33 Feivel and his family lived in one room when they moved into the ghetto. All together, there were ten people in the same room.
- 3:01:03 Grandfather takes ill. Feivel sat by him until he died. The rest of the family, living in such close quarters, contracted a skin rash that infected everyone. The remedy was a very smelly ointment with which they had to cover the entire body. The smell, the sight, traumatized Feivel for life. Rumkowsky offered the youth in the Zionist movements a place in Marysin, which had farms. Hashomer Hatzair is given 50 places there. (The other two youth movements were Gordonia and Mizrahi.) The group was provided with food and housing. They could work the fields (already seeded) and a group of them took care of the children – who Rumkowsky sent to settle there with supplies for every day life.
- 17:29 Feivel worked in a store that was responsible for distributing the food to the ghetto.
- 20:00 Feivel had a wonderful year there.
- 27:45 At the end of the summer of 1940, when the crops were ready for picking, groups of hungry Jews from the ghetto almost desecrated them. A confrontation ensued: another big trauma for Feivel and his friends. Jews were fighting hungry Jews.
- 4:05:55 The situation at home in the meantime was very grave.
- 10:40 Daily activities in Marashin.
- 12:00 Relationship with Rumkowsky.
- 22:29 During the summer of 1940, Rumkowsky requests 100 youth to work for the Jewish police. Feivel and his friends did not want to be the ones to carry out orders from the Germans. Also, the Judenrat decided to reorganize the Zionist movements into labor groups under the direction of a work coordinator. The groups did not accept the orders and returned home, thus finishing with that “Hashomer” way of life. In addition to the

Zionist groups, there was another similar group organized, but those youths didn't have anything political or idealistic in common, other than their young age. This group of youth accepted Rumkowski's orders.

- 5:00:36 January 1941 was a very tough winter. Feivel returned home to tough weather and living conditions. Wood for heating was attained from fences, furniture and even tree roots and access steps.
- 10:07 Feivel got a new job in a community kitchen that supplied food for people around the ghetto.
- 11:00 Feivel describes their diet and food quota.
- 15:00 He describes the food distribution to his siblings. The mood of the people was directly connected with their hunger and food distribution.
- 6:03:29 One day, in the winter of 1941, Feivel's kitchen is suddenly closed. He was transferred to work in a nursing home of people who came from Czechoslovakia, Germany and Austria.
- 6:12 In September 1941, their appearance and behavior are better at the nursing home than in the ghetto. Feivel becomes an assistant carpenter there.
- 8:05 At the nursing home, Feivel builds bathrooms.
- 11:08 Feivel is transferred to a clinic to help the nurses with the sick. There he receives good working conditions, food and warmth.
- 18:40 At the clinic Feivel speaks with the nurses about his aspirations to go to Palestine. Feivel was called to the bedside of one of the patients. He identified himself as Theodore Herzl's secretary! The patient described Herzl as a "spoiled brat" who did unexpected things and thought strange thoughts. Also his mood was always shifting. He said he did everything for Herzl but he never valued his work. But he was a genius!
- 27:35 Feivel worked there for six months until the spring of 1942 when the old people are deported. The nurses went with them. It was at this time that the deportation of the ghetto began. It was very traumatic.
- Tape 2
- 7:00:00 In September of 1941 thousands of Roma arrived into the ghetto. They are sent to a particular section that was fenced in and a moat excavated around it. They were annihilated within a few months.
- 16:00 After the clinic, Feivel worked in a kitchen that prepared the food for the workers of a straw boot factory.

- 21:43 Feivel describes his family during the winter of 1942.
- 24:25 Feivel describes the importance of potato peels during a time of hunger.
- 26:07 During September of 1942 the hospital is emptied and evacuates all of its patients.
- 28:00 Rumkowsky makes a speech to the residents with the request of sacrificing the children so that the rest could survive.
- 29:27 Feivel's mother is taken and deported.
- 8:00:00 Description of how Feivel's mother is taken.
- 6:47 Other Jews began arriving at the ghetto, coming from places where their ghetto had already been closed. Many members of the Hashomer Hatzair arrived then. The youth movement resurfaces with much enthusiasm and activities.
- 10:00 Interesting story about one of the children in the group that Feivel lead. The boy, Zenek, was the nephew of the (Jewish) Sonderkommando head, Kligier. As such, the latter had access to special foods and medications, which he distributed to those privileged Jews under his protection. Zenek would steal from these special packages and provide the poor and the sick with food or drugs as needed.
- 9:03:19 Around the beginning of 1944, evacuations start up again after a long quiet period. The request was for healthy young people to work. About 1,600 were sent, including most of the Hashomer Hatzair leaders. After an emergency meeting they decided that not a single one of them would show up to be deported. That meant that immediately their families would have their food supply cut off. It was delegated to Feivel to arrange to provide food to the affected families. This meant 24 people, which included the young leaders needed to be fed. The enterprise worked and after two and a half weeks, people could come out of their hiding.
- 12:58 In the summer of 1943, every Jew could get a parcel of land. The majority of the Jews were in no shape to work the land, but Feivel's group of 14 year-olds did. They received seeds from the Judenrat and were able to reap some vegetables which were a welcome addition to their meager rations.
- 18:00 The fate of one of the leaders of another group, Yehuda Erster. Feivel speaks about correspondence with many other activists all over the world.

- 26:00 In 1946, Feivel rebuilt the Hashomer Hatzair branch in Lodz.
- 10:00:00 During the first half of 1944, the Russian front is advancing.
- 4:09 About mid-June 1944, the police came to Feivel's residence and took him to the police station. (His name was on their list.) He was taken to jail, with others.
- 15:59 Feivel was called to work in the jail's kitchen. Many clues indicated that the end of the ghetto was approaching. His work at the jail meant he was not to be among the first ones deported.
- 16:55 Evacuation of the ghetto began the next day.
- 18:00 Feivel worked at the jail kitchen for two weeks.
- 20:00 Then after two weeks Rumkowsky showed up. He asked everyone to leave their cells and said "You are free to go home." Then, he left. Everyone received a document stating their time had been served. Once Feivel leaves the jail there is an encounter with the young people working the parcel of land. Feivel receives news that Russians are already in the Western part of the Visla River and they feel that liberation is near. It was July. The Germans were nervous. Liberation had not yet taken place.
- 24:00 August 2: notices were hung about the transfer of the ghetto westward in order to ensure work continues at the workshops in a safer place. The first to be transferred were the tailor workshops, with machinery, workers and families. No one obeyed, not even when threatened with the punishment of death. They are transferred by force in the direction of Radegast (Radogoszcz) Each section was evacuated in a certain order. Feivel was not among the first ones. The population was ready to ignore the orders, but they eventually moved under many threats of death.
- 11:00:00 Despite all plans to hide in the ghetto the evacuation order arrives. At the time Feivel (who had found refuge in Marysin, with the other "elders" of the youth movement) – is in a meeting deciding that they will not evacuate. They are forced to the nearby train station where the last transport had already left for the day. The entire group is forced to spend the night by the station. Feivel decides he will not board the train. (Notes had been found in the cars warning the Jews not to go to Auschwitz) Along the tracks, walking and planning, Feivel sees among many other personal belongings strewn about, a policeman's hat. Without thinking much, he puts it on and leaves the area. He goes back to the empty ghetto, to his friend Zenek's house and together, they decide to hide in the ghetto. They spend thus the entire month of September in hiding.

- 12:00:00 They decided to join the camp of another section of the ghetto, on 16 Yakuba Street, where Zenek's mother was located. (There were workshops there) In order to have the account match the number of people during roll-call, the Jewish head of the camp, Bruder, tells them he has to alert the German commander, Biebow, of their presence. He does that.
- 13:02:21 He was sent to work emptying the improvised "savers" and then was transferred to a different shop, as a locksmith. They were relatively free after the work hours. Roll calls, hiding, close calls.
- 26:44 At the beginning of January 1945, The Jewish group working in the cemetery was ordered to dig eight large, mass graves.
- 14:00:23 January 15, 1945 explosions are heard but no sirens follow. People are in a nervous state. Speculations abounded, but the Germans continued with the roll call the next day as though nothing had occurred. The next day more bombardments, again no sirens and also no Germans to be found. The Jews returned from work before the normal time.
- 15:00:00 The next day, there was an earlier than normal special roll call. Feivel, Zenek, Zenek's mother, together with another young woman from Hashomer Hatzair and her parents decided to hide instead of attending the roll-call. The Germans looked for the hiding Jews as only 40 some Jews presented themselves, rather than the 850 in that camp. Hours later, they saw the local Poles coming and going from the ghetto camps houses in a stealing rampage. No Germans were seen. The Russians had arrived in Lodz and Feivel and the others left their hiding place. It was January 17, 1945, two days after the bombing of Lodz.
- 13:24 Feivel returns to his house and finds his home available and functioning, but with much of the furniture missing.
- 22:45 Feivel is chosen as the delegate of his youth movement to the Jewish committee.