

RG50.120* 0324
Galperin, Ze'ev
Two Videocassettes
In Hebrew

Abstract:

Ze'ev Galperin was born in Kovno in 1927 to a traditional middle class family. During the war he and his father worked as painters in the in Slobodka Ghetto. When they were deported to Dachau and then to Auschwitz, he joined the children's group to stay with his brother. Eventually he was separated from the group of children that he had been taking care of and was sent to a labor camp in Sachsenhausen. For survival he took a Christian political prisoner's name. After the war he was able to find his mother, father, sister and his two brothers. He emigrated to Israel in 1956.

- 1:00 Ze'ev was born in Kovno in 1927. His family was traditional. He was the oldest of five; three brothers and two sisters. His father was a contractor. They lived a middle class life.
- 1:12 He talks about the schools he went to, his teachers and friends.
- 1:21 He describes the entry of the Russians when money and property were confiscated. His father started to work for the Russian Army as a painter. Polish refugees arrived and they heard about the fate of the Jews under the Germans. The Russians closed Jewish schools and he then went to a regular school.
- 1:26 The Germans bombarded Kovno and they tried to escape to Russia. After losing their way, they returned to Kovno. Then the Lithuanians began killing Jews.
- 2:00 Ze'ev's mother spoke perfect German, so she talked to some German soldiers who were tolerant. The soldiers gave them food and let them return to their house but it was already occupied by some Lithuanians. Instead they went to his recently murdered grandfather's house.
- 2:10 Jews were made to clean the streets and remove the bodies of the dead Russian soldiers. A Lithuanian neighbor saved their lives by telling them to stay in the house so they would not be killed. He brought them supplies.
- 2:13 They were ordered to move to the ghetto in Slobodka. They lived in constant fear and hunger. They were guarded by Lithuanians who were murderers. People were taken out to work in the fields.

- 2:20 Ze'ev describes bartering for food and other things. His father went to work for the Germans as a painter. He was an artist and painted pictures for them which they sent back to their own homes.
- 2:25 Ze'ev describes an "action" and how people were taken to Fort Nine.
- 2:28 He started going to work with his father and he describes their work.
- 3:00 His sister, who was in the Vilnius (Vilna) Ghetto, searched for them and found them with the help of a German.
- 3:08 He describes working with his father, who also painted beautiful large scarves which he sold.
- 3:15 He describes smuggling food into the ghetto with the help of some Ukrainians.
- 3:19 He tells about a German who saved him from punishment.
- 3:26 Ze'ev tells the story of his cousin who worked at the air field and died saving the lives of women.
- 4:00 He describes the conditions in the ghetto. The small hospital was burned with the patients inside. He goes into detail about the severe food shortages.
- 4:03 He talks about the children in the ghetto and how he started working at the age of fourteen.
- 4:08 He talks about the Jewish police in Kovno and how they protected the population. They were tortured by the Germans to give away hiding places but they did not do that.
- 4:18 He sings songs from the ghetto and tells some of the jokes that circulated.
- 4:24 He and his father were taken to a work camp outside the ghetto. His father was protected by the SS because he painted signs and pictures for them.
- 5:00 He describes how his younger brother was saved from the Kinderaktion by working with their father. His mother and sister worked in the kitchen.
- 5:09 Ze'ev's family was taken on a transport in a cattle train. In Stutthof the women and children were ordered out. Ze'ev, his father and two brothers remained in the train.
- 5:16 He talks about their arrival in Dachau and describes how people threw their valuables into the latrines and then the Germans would throw children in to

- retrieve them. Later the children were taken out to be killed. Ze'ev's brother and a group of 30 children were taken.
- 5:21 Children ages seven to twelve were taken to a special camp. They knew they would be killed. Ze'ev was seventeen at the time and he decided not to leave his younger brother. He joined the children and calmed them down. They were taken by trucks to the showers, but knew they would be gassed and they refused to go. The Germans relented and took them to a barrack.
- 6:00 The children were divided into two groups. The younger ones and the older group. He organized them and told them how to act in different situations. Ze'ev talks again about his decision to join the children.
- 6:10 Then they were sent to Auschwitz. He trained them how to walk in line and salute. The Germans were impressed and did not send them to be gassed. He took care of the group of 130 children, giving them hope and calming them.
- 6:16 Ze'ev describes his illness and the outbreak of scarlet fever. He organized the food distribution for the children.
- 6:21 Then Ze'ev was separated from the children and he was sent to a labor camp in Sachsenhausen. He describes his arrival in the severe winter. One of the German prisoners, who liked him, took him to a non-Jewish group to save his life.
- Tape 2
- 7:00 Ze'ev describes in greater detail his time with the children's group in Birkenau. He was held responsible for them and was punished when they misbehaved.
- 7:10 Ze'ev describes his work in Sachsenhausen. He then details the American bombardment and the destruction of the camp. The camp population went from 4,000 to only 2,000 live prisoners.
- 7:14 He called himself Vitas Chemalsky so that people would not think he was a Jew. He then joined a camp for Lithuanian prisoners and they did not know that he was Jewish.
- 7:16 In April they were taken on a death march in the direction of Hamburg. They walked 50 kilometers a day without food. They were rescued by the Red Army in a forest near Schwerin. The Russians gave them food and many died from eating too fast.
- 7:21 From Schwerin he tried to return home. He found out that his family was in Vilnius and tried to get there.
- 7:28 Ze'ev describes meeting his family in Vilnius. There he met his mother, father, sister and one brother.

- 8:00 He describes looking for his other brother and getting a letter from him in Israel. Ze'ev then studied at the University of Minsk and then Kovno where he graduated as an architect. He worked in Kovno as a construction architect.
- 8:12 Ze'ev got married in 1955 and had two children. He did not tell his children about his experiences during the Holocaust. In 1956, the family moved to Israel. One brother remained in Vilnius.