

**Drori, Ze'ev**  
**RG-50.120\*0350**  
**Two Videotapes**

**Abstract**

Ze'ev Drori was born on July 17, 1924 in Warsaw. When he was 10 years old, his father became ill, and Ze'ev was sent to the Korżak children's home. He was there from 1934-1936, and describes the home and meeting Korżak.

Ze'ev talks of general panic and anti-Semitism in 1939 when the Germans came. He describes difficult, deteriorating conditions in the ghetto. His mother told him that their neighbor had eaten her dead child. He lived and worked as a counselor in a home for 150 abandoned children. It was run by a Dr. Berman and his wife.

The head of the Jewish community was ordered to make a list of all the Jews. Instead, he committed suicide. Ze'ev described "Actions", including one that took his brother, and another that took his parents. He never again saw his family. After helping children prepare for an Action, Ze'ev hid, but was eventually deported to Majdanek in April 1943.

He describes the torturous, filthy conditions, sadistic kapos, suicides, deaths, selections, and his forced labor as a locksmith at an arms factory in Skaryszew. He was in poor physical and emotion shape, feeling total hopelessness and resignation. But he was treated well at work, where the Polish head of the factory gave him leftover food. Also, the Polish underground provided money for food.

As the Russians approached, the Germans left, and Ze'ev and others escaped. He traveled three to four weeks to Warsaw, where he found the Jewish community in chaos.

He went to Palenice and organized a shelter for abandoned Jewish children. The Polish government provided a large budget and Ze'ev created excellent conditions. He attended teachers' college, but departed for Israel, due to Poles' anti-Semitism. The British diverted his ship to Cyprus, where he remained for a year and worked in an infirmary.

After he finally arrived in Israel, he lived on Kibbutz Givat Shlosa. He fought in the War of Independence, and remained in the army for a time. Afterward, he opened a store, married, and had children.

## Interview

- 1:00:00 Ze'ev Drori's family was lower middle class. His father worked as a land dealer. The home was not religious and he went to a Polish school. He describes his younger brother, his parents and friends. When he was 10 years old, his father became ill and Ze'ev was sent to the Korżak children's home from 1934-1936. He describes the home and meeting Korżak.
- 1:12:00 In 1939, he was in a Boy Scout summer camp. The camp closed and he returned home. He describes panic among the population, although some thought that the Germans would treat them better than the Russians had. He talks about his experiences and Polish anti-Semitism.
- 1:16:00 When war broke out, schools closed. A home for 150 children was owned by Dr. Berman and his wife. There were two buildings: Gensha 6 for young children and Gensha 9 for older children. Ze'ev worked and lived with the younger children.
- 1:23:00 He describes his work at the puppet theatre.
- 1:30:00 He repeats that two separate buildings housed the children, one for older children and another for younger ones including his brother. Ze'ev worked as a counselor with the younger group.
- 2:00:00 He continues describing Gensha 6 and his work there. Teachers, doctors, and nurses attended to the children. He describes the children's problems.
- 2:08:00 He describes the difficult, deteriorating conditions in the ghetto and his state of mind. His mother said their neighbor had eaten her dead child.
- 2:13:00 He describes "Actions". He hid out and the Germans took all the children, including his brother.
- 2:20:00 He went to Fort Vola to work in the BN factory, and describes his work.
- 2:28:00 He describes another "Action," and says it was known that people were taken to forced labor or killed. His parents were taken in the "Action" and nobody knew where they were sent.
- 2:33:00 The head of the Jewish community was ordered to give a list of Jews. He committed suicide instead. People were angry that he did not stay with them and prepare them for what was to come.

- 2:34:00 On Passover, the Jews saw the ghetto burning. They were told to stay in their bunkers at the factory and after a few days, they were taken to the ghetto.
- 3:00:00 He worked in the Fort Vola factory, but he went back to the ghetto to look for his family. He did not find them. He did not return to the factory, and instead joined Dr. Berman's children's home and worked with abandoned children. He describes the children and his work.
- 3:09:00 Describes "Action". He prepared the children and gathered them in a room and kept them quiet. He describes how the Germans came and took the children. He remained behind, hiding. Four adults and two children remained.
- 3:23:00 He describes the hideout. After two days he went back to the Fort Vola factory to work.
- 3:29:00 He describes an "Action" in the ghetto. He was taken by train to Majdanek. He describes his arrival, initiation, accommodations, and the sadistic kapo.
- 4:00:00 He describes his reactions today to his past experiences.
- 4:05:00 Ze'ev describes his bunk in the camp and the tortuous conditions. He arrived in April 1943 and worked as forced labor. He describes the female inmates.
- 4:09:00 He describes suicides and deaths in the camp.
- 4:10:00 He discusses his work in the field and the cruel punishment for stealing lettuce. He also talks about the poor sanitary conditions and the kapos' verbal abuse.
- 4:15:00 He describes the selections in the camp. He was taken to work outside the camp in an arms factory in Skaryszew half a year after his arrival in Majdanek. He worked as a locksmith in the factory.
- 4:22:00 When he arrived at the factory, he was in such poor physical condition that the administrator pitied him and did not make him work immediately.
- 4:25:00 Ze'ev describes the camp and the inmates' poor condition.
- 4:34:00 He relates stories about Kapo Mann.

- 5:00:00 Ze'ev talks about his poor physical condition. The Polish underground was able to smuggle in money with which they bought food. When he felt stronger, he started to work in the factory and was treated well.
- 5:07:00 He describes his daily routine and a German couple in the camp who were sadists.
- 5:09:00 Ze'ev talks about the approach of the Russian Army and the Poles who were happy about the approaching end of the war. He heard later that the Poles held pogroms after liberation.
- 5:13:00 He talks about his feeling of total hopelessness and resignation. He was treated fine at work and the Polish head of the factory (Polish or German, see 5:22:00) gave him left-over food.
- 5:19:00 The factory was transferred to Stzenstochof, (? Found nothing similar in *Where Once We Walked* or on the Web) where conditions were worse, but the German director of the factory (German or Polish? see 5:13:00) treated them well.
- 5:22:00 One day, the Germans left. Ze'ev and his fellow workers broke out and looked for food. He and his friend decided to go to Warsaw. He talks about his three to four week journey to Warsaw.
- 5:27:00 He describes his poor condition when he arrived in Warsaw and the chaos and disorganization of its Jewish community. A friend helped him find a place to stay and treatment.
- 5:32:00 He went to Palenice and organized a shelter for abandoned Jewish children. The Polish government gave them a large budget and they were able to create excellent conditions for the children.
- 6:00:00 He describes the children and the services they received. He also tells stories about individual children, their fates, and how he helped them.
- 6:12:00 Ze'ev attended a teachers college. But he decided to go to Israel because of increased anti-Semitism among the Poles.
- 6:16:00 He was sent with a group of children to France and left on boat for Israel. But the British diverted it to Cyprus. He stayed there for a year, and worked in the infirmary. Then, he went to Israel to Kibbutz Givat Shlosha. He joined the army and fought in the War of Independence.
- 6:19:00 After the war, he continued serving in the army. Later, he worked, and eventually opened a store. He married and had children. He talks about his family.