

## **RG-50.146.0015**

### **Oral history interview with Cypora Gutnic**

#### **Summary**

Born in Poland, Cypora Gutnic decided to leave Poland because of the antisemitism; in 1930, she immigrated to Palestine where she lived on a kibbutz (Avoda) with 100 other people; she describes her life and time in Palestine; Cypora was expelled from Palestine for her Communist activities and left for France to help provide aid for the Spanish Civil War; by the time she arrived in France, however, the war in Spain was over; she stayed in Paris illegally with a friend; Cypora decided to inscribe in a course for the Red Cross which gave her ID to stay in the country; in 1939 came the declaration of war; Cypora received a card to work and help make uniforms for the army; when the Germans invaded, she did not leave Paris in the big exodus because she was pregnant; her husband was a Romanian refugee and he had already been arrested in 1940; Cypora fell sick during this period and had nowhere to go during the winter of 1941; she describes her efforts to survive with her infant; she wore the yellow star of David; Cypora witnessed the first round-ups of the foreign Jews and waited for the big round-up to come; on July 7th, 1943, she was stopped; she describes establishing contacts and arrangements for her infant before she was sent to Drancy; she was then deported to Auschwitz; at her arrival in Auschwitz, she was selected and taken to a Block 10 (block "des lapines") where human experiments took place; she learned that she would be a guinea pig for the Germans; she describes in detail the experiments that took place on her and others that were in this block; on Cypora and a friend, German doctors researched cancer; she was saved by a doctor in the block who operated on her and gave her medicine; Cypora recounts in detail the horrors and the experiments that took place on this Block 10; she continues to explain the anxiety of daily life in Auschwitz under the constant threat of death and waiting for the arrival for the Russians; in one instance, they were planning for a death march and Cypora was asked if she wanted to conduct a sabotage but refused for fear of leaving behind the weak and sickly; Cypora continues to describe the daily struggles of trying to survive in the Auschwitz; on January 18th, the Germans left and the electricity in the camp stopped; Cypora cut through the barbed wires that separated the men's and women's camp to find supplies; she describes finding supplies but also many prisoners who were gravely sick; the Germans had fled the camp, leaving behind prisoners; Cypora tried to help re-establish order with others; the following week, on January 27th, the Red Army arrived and liberated Auschwitz; Cypora was taken to Odessa in Ukraine before making her way back to Marseille on May 11th; she eventually embarked on a train to Paris where she was reunited with her friends and her son.

**English summary provided by Ethan T. Ashley**