

## **RG-50.156.0028**

### **Summary**

#### HINDA KIBORT

Born 4/4/21 in Kovno, Lithuania. Lived in Sialiliai, Lithuania. Maternal grandparents Leib and Rachel Danzig. Father, Charles, a shoe designer and mother, Ganya Berman Danzig. Yiddish, Russian and Polish spoken at home. Went to public school until Hebrew HS in 1933. Course, including Jewish history and Torah, taught in Hebrew. There was a Yiddish theater group as well as leftist Zionist and rightist Jabotinsky groups. A friend of hers at school was a refugee from Germany where her father's business was taken by Nazis and he disappeared.

June, 1940, Russians took over Lithuania, its government and schools. Jewish Communists released from jail. Many Jews in government which offended non-Jewish Lithuanians. Germans arrived in 6/41 after some Jews shipped to Siberia by Russians. SS arrested many Jews in 7/41, including her father. Jews assaulted in the street and required to wear yellow stars. Kibort tried to get her father released and was told "Jews are not human beings." Later, she went to Commandant Krause at Gestapo headquarters, and because she spoke perfect German her father was released. Other Jewish men subsequently were killed, up to 30,000, including nearly all of her family members. September 1941, Jews put in ghetto. Lived two families to a room. Very few escapes from ghetto. By 1943, ghetto very tense. Commissar(?) Gewecke of the ghetto made life/death decisions re: Jews. In 1969 he was tried in Lubeck for his crimes and Kibort testified at the trial. He was found guilty and sentenced to 4 years hard labor. November 5, 1943 the ghetto was sealed off by Polish and Ukrainian SS guards. All children not working were taken along with the elderly to Auschwitz. July 16, 1944 Kibort and her parents, sister and brother put on a train and sent to Stutthof where father and brother separated out and taken away (along with future husband) to Dachau. Women stripped, searched and showered ("schauerbad") and given numbers to be sewed on sleeves (54,000's). Camp near Gdansk and contained Jews from all over Europe. Sent out to work camps to dig antitank ditches with 1100 women. Later 400 taken out and sent to Germany where they lived in tents. January 20, 1945, camp closed. Three hundred marched away and 96, including Kibort, her mother and sister stayed behind. Another friend, Thea Schmidt and her mother, who was a chemist and taught people how to survive on roots and grasses, also stayed. January 21, 1945 women marched in snow to a nearby town where all 96 placed in a single jail cell. Next day they were marched out again guarded by Poles. At noon, the Poles left and prisoners told to run into the woods. Other guards were shooting and Kibort's mother was shot as she tried to protect Kibort and sister who kept running. They joined up with 9 others and came to a village a mile away where Poles denied them entry and threw things at them. Village priest told them to go to an abandoned barn. The next day after a fire, Russians arrived. Russians put them on trucks and sent them to Ostrovienko where they slipped away from the truck and jumped on a train to the border. They were taken off and grilled by the NKVD about collaboration. Finally released and

given ID's to travel to Vilna. They wanted to go back to Siauliai but were told they would be killed if they did so. In October 1945, they learned that father and brother had survived.

Zionist Jewish underground, Brichah, gave them documents to go through Poland in 1946. They crossed the Carpathian Mountains on foot into Czechoslovakia, through Austria and on into Germany where Kibort worked for the Central Committee of Liberated Jews helping administer Jewish DP camps. Sister married in 1947 and headed to the US. Kibort and father went to Minneapolis (brother in law's family there) in 1951 and married husband. Feels she is a witness and spends some time speaking about her experiences. She is glad to be part of a Jewish community.