

RG-50.226 #0003

AYZEN, LEV GRIGOROVICH

- 1.00 Born 17 Jan. 1915. Father was blacksmith, mother housewife. Had an older brother. Went to a Ukrainian elementary school. Finished high school in Kiev. Worked as electrician. In 1933 went to Crimea with family and joined a Jewish Agricultural Commune- and then a Kolkhoz. Father died there. Older brother called into army. He and his mother returned to Kiev in 1937, after getting married.
- 1.04 In 1937 drafted into army in Kiev. Served in Kiev two years and then sent to Zhitomir to work in a military supply warehouse. Demobilized in 1940. Worked as electrician in Kiev. Later worked in army conscription army.
- 1.08 Interviewer asks about home town, its Jewish life. He says many Jews.
- 1.10 People didn't think that war would come. Even those who worked in army conscription in early 1941 had no idea of war. His family was able to evacuate to Saratov oblast [on Volga]. He stayed in Kiev. Older brother died at front - he had no details - still has no information.
- 1.12 Interviewer asks whether Lev had experienced anti-Semitism before the war. Says no.
- 1.16 Discusses Kiev after beginning of war but before arrival of German troops. Lev had been sent to another area to mobilize troops. Says he was captured by Germans in Poltavskaya oblast. Driven from one camp to another. Ended up in Kremenchug where there was big POW camp - summer of 1942
- 1.23 Germans released many Ukrainians and offered some work as police, interpreters, but warned that any Jews passing themselves off as Ukrainians would be shot. German then checked to see whether people claiming not to be Jews were circumcised.
- 1.28 Tries to escape, but fails. In Sept. 1942 when prisoners being marched from one camp to another - and citizens line route to throw them food - he escapes from column and is hidden by groups of people. Later, fed and sheltered by peasants.
- 1.35 Old Ukrainian peasant helps him; when Germans come to her house and see Lev, she says he is sick. Germans, fearing contagion, leave.

[Break]

- 2.00 He and his friend move to Priluki where they hear there are partisans in area. In Priluki, Lev meets one of a few Jewish families left in the town - most other Jews had been able to evacuate towards the east. Leaves town; few days later all Jews in Priluki are shot.
- 2.05 Meets friend again. They continue search for partisans. Friend decides to stay in area near Priluki, where he has found work. Lev decides to return to Kiev where he knows many

people.

- 2.07 Stays in village with old man who gives him shelter - then with a woman.
- 2.14 Through a villager, he learns about a partisan unit in area. He is taken to unit. Simonenko was name of partisan regiment commander.
- 2.20 Describes his functions in unit and some operations he carried out. Describes German attacks on partisan camp. Partisans escape and go to area near Chernigov.
- 2.30 Discusses large concentration of partisan units in Branskiy [or Vranskiy], forest near Chernigov - this was in the summer of 1943.

[Break]

- 3.01 Describes actions he participate in - chiefly blowing up rail lines. At one point, Hungarian troops surrounded unit where his unit was hidden. Unit able to escape.
- 3.06 Discusses approach of Red Army. Prepared landing strip. Supplies flown in prior to link up with Red Army. Began building raft bridge across Desna River.
- 3.09 Lev seriously wounded. Taken to Soviet field hospital, operated on. Spent a year recovering. Returns to liberated Kiev. Meets family - wife and son, his mother. Goes back to work in Kiev electrical enterprise. Difficult times in Kiev, which had been heavily damaged in war.
- 3.20 Describes post-war life and work. Discusses intentions to emigrate to Israel.

END OF TAPE