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Interview With Roza Shkol'nik

01.00.30.

I was born in 1924, in Vinnitsa. My parents had 2 children. My father was a worker and my mother was a housewife. Before the war I finished Ukrainian school. After school my girlfriends and I wanted to continue our education but it was impossible because the war began.

01.04.20.

My father was taken to the war and we lived with our mom. The Germans forced us to work for them but they did not pay for our work, of course. In order to have some food we had to exchange some clothes and other stuffs.

01.06.40.

On September 19, 1941, the Germans began to kill Jews. Many Jews from the local areas were killed and some Jews including our family had to hide in a basement. Unfortunately, we could not be there for a long time and in the evening I decided to find out what happened in the town. I discovered that many Jews from Vinnitsa were taken by the Germans, and their houses were robbed. But I could not expect that Ukrainian people from Vinnitsa would show Germans who were the Jews among us. I was shoved in to the lorry like other Jews from our town.

01.09.00.

All Jews including me were taken to Maksimovicha street. There all Jews including children were beaten. I was asked by one German who I was and when I answered I was Russian, I was released. After it I ran home. That day many Jews from Vinnitsa were taken by Germans and they were killed. My family was lucky to survive.

01.14.00.

We survived but we did not know what to do. We were forced to wear special signs in order that everybody knew we were Jews. Anytime we could be taken by the police and they could kill us only because they hated us. All the time we expected death. We had no food and as we could not work for money we had to exchange stuff from our houses for food.

01.14.13.

On December 5, 1941, one man from Vinnitsa entered our home and said that the Germans were going to kill all of us the next morning. We were ready to die. The next morning we were taken to one place and we got registration stamps in our passports. After the registration was over, we were allowed to return to our places. On the route home two men approached us, and they said that we had to go from Vinnitsa because the next day the Germans planned to kill us. Those men spoke Russian but they were wearing German clothes so we did not figure out who they were. But we believed them. As we were expelled from our own home we had no place to live. One neighbour was kind and gave shelter and food for us. People from Vinnitsa also helped us with food and also I began to work for money at the village.

01.20.00.

On April 16, 1942, in the morning, all Jews from Vinnitsa were divided into two groups. My mom was taken from me and I did not see her anymore. I was taken to a prison where I lived together with other prisoners. We were taken to work every day. Our life in the prison was ugly and I decided to escape. But I was caught very soon by a policeman and he took me to the ghetto, where I lived for a month. I escaped from the ghetto too. I knew that the Germans were looking for me and even they would pay a bounty if somebody would find me.

01.32.30.

Some people helped me to reach Mogil'ov but I was not lucky because from that place I was taken by one policeman to Pechora and after that he put me in a camp together with other Jews. That camp was very ugly and many people died there. The Germans did not force us to work but we were very weak and we died because there was neither food nor water inside the camp. I was there for 10 days and I decided to escape.

02.02.30.

After spending 12 days at the camp my girlfriend and I escaped. We went from village to village and we reached Mogil'ov. Some people were kind to me and I was taken to school where I lived with Romanian Jews. I had lived there until 1944. Living there I worked for some money so I could buy a little food.

02.10.00.

When the Red Army entered the village I understood that I could not stay at school any longer. I came back to Vinnitsa. One woman gave shelter to me and I lived with her. I discovered that my brother was alive and I wrote a letter to him.

02.16.00.

After the war was over, my father returned home. Unfortunately, my father was a very sick man and he died a couple of months after the war was over. My brother returned from the war and he began to live in Vinnitsa.

After the war was over I got married and I have given birth to a son.