

RG-50.378 #001 Tape 1 of 2

Kantor, Girsh Mendelevich

D.O.B. 22 August 1914

- 1.01 Born in Minsk. Father worked in a shoe factory. In 1916 family moved to Moscow and a few years later back to Minsk.
- 1.06 Polish army occupied Minsk in 20's. Difficult for Jews. Aunt in the US sent financial aid. Four more sisters emigrated to US in 20's.
- 1.11 After Poles left, father and older brother began working in shoe factory in Minsk. Brother later became factory director. Another brother became engineer, third brother a teacher. Girsh went to Moscow to study until 1938. One older brother drafted in 1938 and died in Soviet-Finnish war. Another brother in army in Leningrad. Girsh worked as engineer in shoe factory.
- 1.15 Describes life in Minsk before the war. Jewish education. Rumors of war in late war.
- 2.27 Germans bombed Minsk heavily June 24, 1941. Kantor's house destroyed – family in bomb shelter.
- 3.00 Germans enter Minsk.
- 3.07 Describes establishment of ghetto in Minsk. In area of Yubilenaya Square.  
  
Incidents in which persons killed by Germans. Germans segregate engineers, intellectuals, cultural figures and shoot them.
- 3.23 Describes beating by German guard.
- 3.24 Moved to a labor camp in Minsk.
- 4.18 Camp guards were Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belorussian police. Lithuanians were the worst.
- 4.04 Group of Jewish POWs in the camp plan an escape – which failed.
- 4.11 Kantor taken to Zastonetskiy [phon.] camp, a work camp to make clothing – Polish, Russian, Czech, German, Austrian Jews.
- 4.19 Many German and Austrian Jews arriving in Minsk taken to Blagovshchino and shot – more than 200,000.

- 4.24 Kantor meets German SK officer who had also worked as engineer in shoe factory. Officer calls him colleague and provides him with sketch of camp showing where armed guard posts are.
- 4.26 1944 – hears artillery fire.
- 4.28 Kantor ordered to put all sewing machines in camp in working order.

END OF TAPE

RG-50-378 #001 Tape 2 of 2

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- 4.58 Shows pictures of brothers who died at front during war.
- 5.04 Talks with non-Jewish woman day worker in camp about possibility of escaping to nearby village Shabani and from there to forest.
- 5.06 Hides in wagon which carries human waste out of camp – aided by two wagon drivers.
- 5.08 Stumble on house where camp commandant and local police having party. Act as if they are local villagers – but forced to return to the camp.
- 5.13 Tells commandant that sewing machines can't be repaired.
- 5.14 Taken to Shirokovskiy camp.
- 5.20 Kantor and 2 others set fire to camp building. He jumps on vehicle leaving camp during confusion of fire.
- 5.23 But soldiers just on vehicle – so he can't jump off. Taken to SK headquarters. Acts as if he is sent there to clean yard.
- 5.28 Manages to walk out of HQ compound with help of Hungarian guard he had befriended earlier – returned to camp.
- 6.00 Shows pictures of father and mother, sisters. All died in ghetto.
- 6.02 Hear artillery fire. Again thought about escaping.
- 6.03 Kantor and two friends leave camp. Caught by guards.

- 6.05 Interrogated. Beaten. Told to dig. Then thrown into barn at the feet of some bulls – which didn't harm him. Then taken back to barracks.
- 6.10 Returned to work carrying sacks of bread meant for guards. Opens one, eats, and feeds other prisoners.
- 6.13 June 1944. War seems to be drawing to close for Minsk. Fears that no one in camp will survive.
- 6.14 22 June 1944 Group of Germans arrive who Kantor believes are an execution squad from Smolensk. Kanto overhears one German say they will shoot all the prisoners in the barn. He tells comrades.
- 6.15 He and a few friends leave camp through unguarded exit. Hide in nearby grove of trees. Germans follow, search woods, but don't see.
- 6.17 Group of about 17 escapees approach village of Sinyalo [phonetic] which under control of partisans.
- 6.19 Seen by German, who begins to shoot. Runs in woods and escapes.
- 6.21 Reach Mogilev highway and see Soviet troops. Seek military office to volunteer for army. Can't prove identity. But authorities doubt their word. Thrown into prison.
- 7.00 Sits in partisan prison a few days. Put in column with people captured by partisans – people who had worked for Germans.
- 7.04 Finally convinced investigator that they were not pro-German sympathizers.
- 7.06 Released from column at small town of Mir. Invited to house of Pole. Rested, washed up. Stayed a few days with Pole.
- 7.12 Return to Minsk
- 7.14 Called to KGB in 1962 and 1963. Asked to tell about himself. Told he would go to Berlin for trial of Globke, an assistant to Eichmann.
- 7.16 After return to Minsk but can't find work because has no documents.
- 7.19 Finally is given job by people who know him at the Telmam Shoe factory in Minsk. Works there from 1944-1978.
- 7.19 Married in 1945. Son born 1946. Daughter in 1950. Lived in dormitory.

- 7.21 Two children were killed in 1968 [doesn't explain how] and two years later his wife died.
- 7.25 Resumes friendship with old friend who had become widow.

END OF TAPE