

RG 50-378 #028

Kugel, Grigoriy Issakovich [Note: at various times during the discussion, Kugel says that his memory is faulty, that he is often confused and has difficulty in focusing his thoughts.]

- 1.00 Born August 21, 1912 in Minsk oblast. Went to a Yiddish language school for four years. In 1926 became smith's apprentice. In 1930 went to city of Minsk. Was called into army in 1931. Served 4 years.
- 1.04 Men demobilized. Goes to Tula. Later moved to Leningrad. Begins to work in a military factory as a lathe operator.
- 1.13 Returns to Minsk. Gets married. Worked in a factory that made children's carriages, then in a workshop that made mirrors.
- 1.23 Interviewer asks to return to early life. Discusses family, education in the cheder – Yiddish school.

[Break]

- 2.03 Interviewer asks about life in his native village of Pleshnitsy [phonetic], about Jews.
- 2.08 Discusses pogrom in village in 1923 or 1924.
- 2.14 Interviewer asks about Kugel's experiences in 1940. Kugel says he was in Minsk at the time.
- 2.15 He was working as lathe operator in a collective. He had a fairly good income.
- 2.16 But had poor living quarters, in a basement one-room apartment. Remembers announcement by Molotov that Germans had attacked – June 22, 1941. Within a few days, he says Germans arrived in Minsk. Describes two beatings that he suffered at hands of Germans.
- 2.23 Interviewer asks for details of German arrival in Minsk. Kugel says they arrived on motorcycles and tanks. They put up big signs that all men had to register and gather on a certain square. Heard anti-Semitic speeches. Square was turned into an outdoor concentration camp, surrounded by ropes. Somewhat later, Jews separated out and marched out on a road.

[Break]

- 3.01 Marched to a prison in Minsk. Told they would be taken to a ghetto and would be assigned to work. Describes outlines of ghetto territory. There were frequent shootings of Jews. He worked in a scrap metal warehouse.

3.15 Kugel taken with a group of Jews by train to Lublin, Poland. Crowded into a large building where there were many Polish and German Jews.

3.20 Later taken to Auschwitz. Then taken to Polish town of Budin [phonetic] where he worked for 2 years.

[Break]

4.00 There were a number of Jewish kapos in his barracks. A few treated ordinary prisoners cruelly; some were benign. He did metal work for parts that he heard were intended for airplanes.

4.12 Interviewer asks about killing of prisoners. Kugel says he heard shots occasionally, but never saw anyone killed. Saw no instances of hanging; not aware of any suicides.

[Break]

5.00 Discusses approach of Soviet troops. Prisoners driven on to trains. Taken to another camp. – Velichkiy where he remained about 2 weeks. Describes two beatings which he received in this camp.

5.12 Taken to Dachau. Describes beatings there. Says that prisoners were told to wash with a soap solution that contained a poison to kill lice. But those that did so, died because the substance was dangerous also for human lungs. Kugel was among those who did not wash themselves.

5.21 Didn't work in Dachau; doesn't remember how long he was there. Soon moved again, but does not remember exactly where. Remembers he was in Czechoslovakia, in a camp in Litomerice [Leitmeritz]. Ended up in Flossenburg in Germany where he was eventually liberated by Americans in April 1945.

[Break]

6.00 Was also in a camp in Mildorf briefly. Says cannot really remember with any accuracy. Transported from one camp to another by train.

6.05 Describes life in the Mildorf camp; food, work, punishments, nationalities of prisoners. Says relationship between German Jewish prisoners and other prisoners were good.

6.13 From Mildorf moved to Flossenburg. He and other prisoners ordered out of train and then many shot by German guards who feared imminent arrival of American troops. Shortly thereafter, German guards flee or surrender. Americans hand out food packages. Prisoners in worst condition cared for in barracks.

6.25 He stayed under care of Americans during the month of May 1945. Then returned to Soviet side.

6.28 Says treatment by Soviets after liberations was not good.

END OF TAPES