

RG-50.378 #029

Furman, Margarita Nikozayevnia

- 1.01 Born December 28, 1925 in Minsk. Lived in Minsk. Had one sister and two brothers. Father worked in a flour mill.
- 1.05 Talks about her youth, hobbies, schools.
- 1.06 Describes flour mill in which her father worked. Family had a cow, raised rabbits. Father was a communist party member. He was arrested in 1937. Released after 6 months. After his release, had no enthusiasm for communism.
- 1.23 Interviewer asks about mood after German occupation of Poland, whether there were rumors in Minsk of impending war. Furman says that she doesn't remember any such conversations. She had no idea war might be approaching.
- 1.26 On June 22, 1941 she learned of outbreak of war from her father. He said family should try to leave Minsk. But local authorities would not allow family to leave. Minsk soon was bombed and city was in turmoil. Furman family left and went in the direction of Mogilev – due east – on June 26. It took them a month to reach Mogilev on foot. Both Margarita and her mother wounded by bullets on the way.
- 1.29 Soon after they reached Mogilev it was occupied by German army. Describes details of their walk to Mogilev.

[Break]

- 2.00 Describes what they brought on walk to Mogilev. Of the four children, a young brother remained in pioneer camp where he had been when the war broke out.
- 2.05 Describes entry of Germans into Mogilev. Germans began searching out Jews and communists. Jews moved to ghetto. Within a week her father was taken away. Never returned. Later heard was shot along with a group of other men. There were a series of round-ups of both men and women.
- 2.16 Margarita's mother told her that she wanted Margarita to survive in order to find her brother Grisha whom they had left in the pioneer camp.
- 2.18 Margarita, who was blonde and didn't look Jewish, was separated from family by Germans, who thought she was bystander when rest of family taken.
- 2.23 She remained in street while family taken away. She went to cemetery to spend night. Taken in by family with a daughter the same age. Family found out she was Jewish, but said they would not tell authorities.

[Break]

- 3.00 Margarita's Jewish identity given to police by another acquaintance. She is arrested. She was beaten, put in a prison where there were German guards. She continued to deny that she was Jewish. Then taken with other young women to Poland – not sure where. Does various works. Taken to Germany. Worked cleaning rooms in various houses. Was surprised how well Germans lived/treated. One German housewife gave her clothing. Stayed in this camp – near Berlin – until liberated by Americans.
- 3.09 Interviewer returns to questions about ghetto in Mogilev. She was able to leave ghetto easily because she didn't look Jewish and because house was on edge of ghetto.
- 3.10 Describes life in ghetto.
- 3.15 Describes life with family after mother arrested.
- 3.16 Describes three month period in prison.
- 3.18 Describes life in work camps – how weak or sick persons selected out and taken away.
- 3.28 Margarita says no Germans ever made any advances towards her in the work camp. She was unaware of any such instances in connection with the other women prisoners.

[Break]

- 4.00 Describes instances in which prisoners became sick from drinking polluted water.
- 4.02 Prisoners aware that Germans being driven back by Allies.
- 4.05 Describes various punishments in the camp.
- 4.07 Discusses relations among prisoners.
- 4.10 Describes feelings on liberation by Americans. After war she and others were treated as traitors in the USSR. Found her brother in 1947.
- 4.26 She married after the war. Husband was arrested in 1952 for theft of government property – although he was innocent – and served 13 years in prison.

END OF TAPE