

**Mikhail (Moshe) Rossinsky**, interviewed July 25, 1996

Summary by: Joseph Bradley

Born in 1926 in the shtetl Pliskov, Pliskov district (now renamed Meshchanskii district) Vinnitskaia oblast, Ukrainian SSR. [His middle name is Naftulis, derived from his father's name.] His father, Naftula Avrums (?), and his grandfather were furriers. His mother was Ehaived Benes (?). Before the war, his family was very religious, spoke Yiddish at home, observed the holidays, and read Yiddish newspapers. Mikhail went to a Jewish school but it was closed in 1938.

Mikhail's two uncles went in to the Soviet army but a self-inflicted wound helped his father avoid the draft.

In July 1941, the Germans entered the shtetl. The Germans seized weapons, radios and gold from the Jews. Mikhail says that many Ukrainians joined the police for revenge against the Soviet authorities for Collectivization and Dekulakization [the policy of suppressing the most successful private farmers, or kulaks]. Mikhail names one policeman in particular: Maxim Borinsky. He shot a 7-year-old boy who was trying to hide, and his nephew killed Mikhail's grandmother. (After the war, Mikhail tried unsuccessfully to bring Borinsky to justice.)

In October, the Germans rounded up the able-bodied men, purportedly "for work." They were taken to a forest and shot. Mikhail ran away to a sovkhos [a Soviet state farm]. Later, he sneaked back to the shtetl to try to find his family, but the house was deserted. He reached the sovkhos but soon the police apprehended him along with 12 other Jews. Mikhail describes his capture and escape. He headed toward another shtetl, Dziunkov, and ran into another column of Jews who were taken to be shot – although they had been told that they were being sent to Palestine. These victims included Mikhail's mother, brother, sister, aunt and uncle.

He describes his escape into the forest. He finds Kirill, a friend of his father's, who hid him in his attic for six months. Somehow his father had avoided the roundups in the shtetl and eventually found Mikhail. They made contact with the partisans in the village of Kreshchatik. Mikhail and his father were caught again and taken to an execution site in a forest. Mikhail describes how he saw his father shot, how he escaped, and how he dragged his father, who had only been wounded, from the killing site to a hiding spot in the forest, until he found again the partisans.

Mikhail describes his first mission for the partisans: He was sent to blow up a drainage pipe at a bridge to slow down the Germans. He was almost killed by a German but saved by a fellow partisan. [Mikhail gives very few dates, nor does the interviewer ask for any.]

He and his father eventually make it to Kharkov. He returns to Vinnitsa oblast in 1944, when it was liberated, and then joins the Soviet army. He tried to confront Maxim Borinsky but his efforts were thwarted, he says, because anti-Semitism had reappeared.

At the end of the interview, Mikhail shows a book [maybe a typescript – not clear], *Pliskov*, by Boris Bendersky, that contains photographs and lists of Jews executed.