

**RG-50.462.0176**

**Interviewed 31 July 1987 in Philadelphia**

**Summary by Joseph Bradley (JB)**

Samuel Blyakher was born on 18 June 1919 in Kopyl in Belorussian SSR [present-day Belarus]. His wife, Liubov, was born 5 May 1920, also in Kopyl; they were married 1 January 1944 and had two sons, Boris and Arkady. Before the war, Samuel experienced no anti-Semitism, and his family observed the Jewish holidays.

When the war broke out, Samuel was in medical school in Leningrad. In July 1941 he joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Leningrad Partisan Regiment as a medic. On 21 July 1941, the regiment found itself behind German lines, and in August Samuel was wounded. [JB: Samuel never says, nor does the interviewer ask, whether the regiment was captured.] He remained with this regiment until September when he was released to continue his medical studies in Leningrad. [JB: If the regiment was behind German lines, it is unclear how Samuel would be released; likewise, it is unclear how he made it back to Leningrad, as the blockade had just begun.] In April 1942, Samuel joined the Soviet army and was sent to the Volkhov front [near Leningrad], where he fought to the end of the war. He describes the hunger and cold in Leningrad under the blockade.

In answer to questions, Samuel states that he had no contact with his family during the war. He saw no German executions of Jews. He did not know about the Soviet Anti-Fascist Committee or about Ilya Ehrenburg's and Vasily Grossman's *Black Book of Soviet Jewry*. [JB: this was never published in the USSR, so it is unclear how Samuel would have known about it.] In his wartime units, there were many Jews, and Samuel experienced no antisemitism.

*[No sound from about 31:20 to 34:00.]*

Samuel comments on his postwar life as a physician. Although Samuel did not know about the antisemitic wave of 1948-1953 until later, he said the most difficult years were 1952-1953 during the Doctors' Plot, when sick people refused to see Jewish doctors. By the mid-1970s his son [not clear which] experienced antisemitism and emigrated in 1978; Samuel followed in 1980.