

Interviewee:	<u>SHERMAN</u> , Leonid	Date:	May 2, 1981
Interviewer:	Max Rosenfeld		
Audio tapes:	2 Yiddish	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None	Translated:	Yiddish to Eng. (written)
		Translated by:	Max Rosenfeld

SUMMARY

Leonid Sherman was born on October 15, 1914 in the town of Molovick, Russia. Leonid shares his childhood memories of his family's flight without their father to the town of Belaya Tserkov in 1918 because of fear of the *Petlura* and *Makhno*, local bandits after the Russian Revolution. He recalls that his family was not particularly religious, but that they were steeped in Jewish learning. He was in a Zionist youth group, the Little Bears, from 1922 until 1925 when it was outlawed by the Communist Party. He recalls that Jewish schools were closed in 1930 and he had to attend the Russian school.

In 1933, after a two year training, Leonid went to Crimea to work teaching wheat harvesting, and there met his father who had been away in Germany for 19 years. Leonid details great hunger and unemployment in the area. He also recounts meeting his wife at a collective farm in 1936 while studying in Birabidzhan. In 1937 his father was taken by the KGB and disappeared. Leonid was drafted into the Russian army in 1941 and became an officer in charge of delivering ammunition and supplies to the front lines. During the war his unit liberated concentration camps. At the end of the war he was stationed in Berlin until 1946. Leonid describes returning first to Belaya Tserkov after the war and then to Kiev. He describes the antisemitism he encountered in Communist USSR. He called 1948-1952 "the Black Years" and described the doctors' trials and the deaths of Jewish writers. Jewish war veterans were barely recognized by the government. During the 1950s Leonid's own children were victims of antisemitism in the educational system. Leonid and his family were able to emigrate to the United States in 1977 coming via Vienna and Italy. He expressed his appreciation of the freedoms one has in the United States as compared to life under communism.

Interviewee: SHERMAN, Leonid Date: May 2, 1981

SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War II (1939-1945) Personal narratives, Jewish
World War II (1939-1945) USSR
Antisemitism in USSR (1945-1956)