

FISS, Simha
Latvia Documentation Project
Russian
RG-50.568*0012

Disk 1 of 1

In this interview, Simha Fiss, local resident of Daugavpils, talks about the persecution of Jews and his life during World War II.

[01:] 01:20:00 – [01:] 05:34:59

He gives his name, date and place of birth (March 22, 1927; Daugavpils, Latvia); mentions that his family was poor, his father worked as a blacksmith, and the children went to a Jewish school; describes how on June 24, 1941 – a few days before the Germans entered Daugavpils – three policemen broke into their apartment and demanded gold; they kicked his father and threatened to shoot him; one of the policemen happened to be a son of a neighbor and his mother came and kept yelling at him until they went away; says that anti-Jewish attacks had already started; talks about a Jewish neighbor who was found dead in the street; discusses how that same night they left Daugavpils heading north; mentions throngs of people, mainly Jews, trying to escape during the German bombardment.

[01:] 05:35:00 – [01:] 09:49:59

He talks more about the policemen; they were young and armed and wore a special band on their sleeves; reports that Jews had already been hiding or trying to leave Daugavpils; recalls hearing shooting in the streets, and women's and children's cries.

[01:] 09:50:00 – [01:] 12:09:59

He says that his family only took documents, some food (bread and sugar), and a few garments with them; talks about contradictory rumors about the advance of the German troops; remembers hearing about an acquaintance, **Tsodok Kaplan**, who returned to Daugavpils and was killed near his house.

[01:] 12:10:00 – [01:] 20:59:59

He mentions that two of his elder brothers had been drafted into the Soviet army; describes the family's ordeal in Ludza and Zilupe on the way to Russia; talks about the death of his brother's wife, the loss of belongings under German bombardment, the separation from his parents and younger brother, and roaming with another brother in the woods; comments on being helped and given food and money by strangers; relates reconnecting with father and a month-long trip to Shumerlya in Chuvashia (Russia); talks about settlement in a collective farm, *kolkhoz*; discusses the subsequent reunion with his mother and brother; comments on being drafted into the Soviet army in 1944 and serving for seven years in the Baltic region, Poland, and Germany; discusses his return to Daugavpils in 1951.

[01:] 21:00:00 – [01:] 27:39:59

He talks about two older brothers who were killed in action; talks about Jews coming back to Daugavpils after the war; cites that out of 12,000 Jews only 2,000 survived; mentions that Jews were killed all across Daugavpils; describes his taking part in the reburial of Jewish corpses in 1989 and women and children from the Pogulyanka area being identified by exhumed bones and objects found nearby (toys, strollers).