

RG-50.589.1095

Witness 230R, Novocherkassk

Interviewed for Yahad in Unum, 7 November 2011

Summary by: Joseph Bradley

230R was born in 1932 [no month or date given] in Novocherkassk. His father was an engineer on the railroad, and his mother was an accountant. Although he was born in the Don region, 230R does not consider himself a Cossack.

Before the German occupation of Novocherkassk [which began in July 1942], 230R saw refugees from Ukraine, who then fled further east. Most Jews of Novocherkassk were evacuated. The German presence in Novocherkassk was considerable: an airfield and pilots, infantry barracks, and a Cossack officer school, in addition to an SS unit. The Germans hoped to recruit collaborators in the Don region, so they treated the local population well. General [Petr] Krasnov, a former White officer in the Russian Civil War [1918-21] living in Berlin, issued an appeal, posted all around Novocherkassk, to the Cossacks to fight on the German side. A Cossack cavalry division was organized under [Timofei Ivanovich] Domanov. 230R witnessed a ceremony with tsarist flags, a religious procession, standard bearers, icons and a Romanian priest, when the Cossack cavalry division in full parade uniforms took an oath of loyalty to Hitler [in 1943?].

230R's father was on the railroad when the Germans cut off the line to Rostov; he returned home and hid in the cellar because he had been a member of the Communist Party. During the occupation of Novocherkassk, the Germans arrested and shot the remaining Jews along with Communist Party members and workers who refused orders of forced labor. Cossacks and local police wearing white armbands guarded Novocherkassk. 230R himself describes two encounters with the Germans. Once he and a group of boys tried to take some coal stored at the railroad station. Although he succeeded in running away, he saw the Germans shoot a 12-year-old boy. Later, he was almost shot when he and other boys were searching for food at the German field hospital.

On 13 February 1943 the Soviet army liberated Novocherkassk. The Cossack cavalry division retreated with the Germans to Taganrog, [not liberated until August 1943]. 230R details the tank battle when Novocherkassk was liberated that featured a martyred Soviet tank driver, wounded in battle and then killed and immolated by police. According to 230R, a memorial now stands on this spot.