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Summary

The interview is conducted in Russian with an English interpreter.

Alexander "Sasha" Pechersky before the war lived in Rostov-on-Don. He started playing music when he was 6 years old, he wrote music for songs, sometimes dancing music, and serious music and music for plays. He started working as a worker when he was 15 years old, then he graduated the university and worked at the institute of finances. Sasha has a 47-year-old daughter.

Sasha joined the Soviet Army in June 1941. During the battle near Smolensk he was captured as a prisoner of the war. When Germans recognized that he was a Jew, he with other Jewish soldiers was sent to the work camp in Minsk.

Sasha tried to run away several times from the cities: Vyaznya and Borisov, but was captured.

Sasha was one of the leaders of a major escape of prisoners from the Nazi camp Sobibor.

Sasha remembered that Sobibor was a labor camp, not everybody was killed immediately upon arrival, and that allowed them to escape.

Sasha tells the story of the escape.

Arrival of Soviet/ Russian soldiers and officers brought some hope to the prisoners of the camp; they felt that somebody is fighting for them.

Sasha knew that the prisoners had to rely on themselves, Soviet army was far away, about 80km from the camp; and they started planning escape.

The escape included big group of people, but Sasha believed, that only about 10-20 people will be able to escape. The uprising and escape also included blowing up the German guards and obtaining their weapons.

They had a plan to move out as one group, but when Germans realized what was going on, and Frenzel alerted other Nazis, they started shooting, and panic started among prisoners and everybody ran in different directions.

About 50 people escaped, they were hiding in the woods behind the bushes. They stayed there till next night, then they walked for several kilometers. Sasha realized that they had to send several people to the village for information. In the village they learned from boys that the Germans were hunting for them, and they changed direction.

Sasha's position was that their mission was accomplished; Polish Jews had to find Polish people and they were in a familiar environment of their country; Russians had to go back to the Soviet territories.

Sasha remembered that his group had to cross river Buk to get to Belarus it was not far from Brest. He didn't know how to swim, but didn't tell his comrades until they started crossing the river.

They found a farmer who showed them the shallow place in the river with stones on the bottom, so they were able to cross Buk without raising attention.

Sasha's group joined partisans. He was in Voroshilov and Zhert's partisan groups. As a partisan he engaged in several actions: sabotaging railway lines, shooting airplanes.

Later the partisans joined the Soviet army. He fought in the Soviet Army until he was wounded in his foot in the battle near Zhitomir. He met his wife during that period.