

English Translation:

The Story of Beira and her sister Chana during WWII/ Holocaust

Beira: The last memory I have of my whole family together was in 1941 when we were happily celebrating together is Passover – We were under Russian authority our area was conquered by Russia. there were over 50 members of our family celebrating. We had a traditional family seder.

Chana: We were a traditional family and lived on the 2nd floor with a beautiful balcony We were always playing on the balcony. In our immediate family we were 3 sisters Amalia 17, Beira almost 9 and myself (Chana) 7 and my mother and father. My father was a religious man with a beard and he studied Torah and had a great deal of faith, My mother had a general education and read a lot. She worked on many community and social issues. She was honorable and generous- we realized how generous later when, despite the fact that we had little food, she still shared with those who had less than us.

I studied up until 1st grade after 1941 after the Germans entered the city there was no school/studies and then all education for jews stopped first the Russians left and the Hungarians came in for 2 weeks and then the Germans with the support of the Ukrainian police entered. There were laws limiting what the Jews could do. We had to wear white armbands with the Jewish Stars , could not go into public places could not buy from stores could not even go to the park or walk on sidewalks only in the streets- and then into the Ghetto

By March 1942 they brought all the Jews from different areas into the Ghetto... 70,000 jews. Those who were refugees lived on the streets and died on the streets from disease, starvation and the cold. There were carts everyday that would take away the dead. They would knock on doors asking if there were any dead. They collected the Jews on carts and then they would bury them. Beira where did they bury them in a communal grave?

Beira: They had a communal grave at the Jewish Cemetery

Chana - It was terrible a terrible picture – there were people sitting on the ground begging for food their feet and stomachs swollen like you see in the TV in Africa – so sad

Beira: The hunger was terrible and because it was so terrible your body and stomach hurt so badly that you couldn't sleep. Night after night we wouldn't sleep. We would count, count to try to sleep and then count the minutes, hours, and days. After a short period after we got in the Ghetto the first action took place. My father was part of the Judenrat. One day My father was called to the Judenrat and asked me to go with him – I went with him and on the way I noticed that people were running I was 11- I told my father they are taking jews and that we needed to hide- I knew a place and we hid for an hour listening to beatings and screaming - after the screaming stopped – we slowly emerged from our hiding place. We found out that everyone from the Juedenrat was stopped- they were taken out of the ghetto... In the evening when my father and I were going home we met chana she was coming from somewhere – I will let you

Chana – the same day the day before pesach I wasn't feeling well I was alone with my sister and mother in the house – we stayed inside because whoever went outside the German and Ukrainians would grab you and take you away. The Germans didn't understand the Jewish Culture or know who was or wasn't Jewish but the Ukrainians did and helped the Germans. That day we had a feeling something was happening so we stayed home which we did anyway because if you went outside the Germans might take you so everyone stayed inside. On this day the Germans came into the house and made us leave the house and made us walk toward the shul. On the outside stairs there was a woman – a mother with young kids she was dead and her kids kept jumping on her and trying to wake her up – they were little they didn't understand. At around 3 or 4 pm they told us to line up to go into the train – there were some bushes my mother told me to run-I was afraid and I didn't want to be alone. I didn't want to I wanted to stay with my mother. Where will I go - She told me to run and that she would then be able to run after. I ran and hid in the bushes and then I hear they are shooting in my direction but I was little so they didn't hit me I didn't get shot. I was alone and didn't know what to do, so I started to walk back to the ghetto- I didn't see anyone—I found my way back to the house. No one was there – I walked back to our house... I was alone. It has gotten dark—all of a sudden Beira and my father came – I told my father that they took my mom and sister and I was alone – my father was upset trying to figure out how to save my mom – In the Ghetto there were was a Jewish police – my father told the Jewish police that my mother was near the train station- the police was able to find my sister and my mother and my father paid them off and he was able to get them back. After that we continued to live the life in the Ghetto.

Beira: During one of the big "Actions" Peoples names had to be put on a list and then they would select them to stay and work or to be sent on the trains. We were right outside the ghetto hiding – my aunt had two daughters and her two year old son were hiding with us (Beira, Chana and my Mom and my Father.. my sister was still in the Ghetto and had been taken) but she and her two year old son came out of hiding because he was making noise and she didn't want to put us at risk. My aunt and her two year old son and my sister were all put on a train to go to the crematoria in the camp called Belzits – all the jews in the area was sent to Belzits and my sister saw that people are jumping off the train – my sister told my aunt lets jump off the train so my sister convinced her to jump and leave her son because there was nothing she could do for your son but you can help your daughters that are with my mother-- my sister and my aunt jumped – and came back.

Beira: During another action jews were rounded up shot in the back about 23,000- and dumped in a big ditch that they had dug for themselves.

In one of the actions they killed my sister in one of the ditches and so now only the four of us- we started looking for people that would hid us – we looked for some polish people – we paid them ahead of time of course – after 2 days another neighbor who was hiding jews was found and was killed so the polish people threw us in the middle of the day We had to find a place to hide we were looking for a place to hide- we found a small old post office bldg. with a very tiny place where they used to hold the mail and we hid there – a German unit came by and then just for fun started shooting in the direction of the post office – we thought we would be shot but luckily we weren't. We waited till it got dark and we ran and found our uncle who was living with a Ukrainian farmer – he hid us in the pig pen – it turned out he was hiding 16 others jews- the jews didn't want us because they were afraid there were too many of us- and we would be found but the Ukrainian man said too bad – we were in a hole under the house in a tiny space if one person turned we all had to turn at the same time – we were soo hungry he hid us 14 months – the Ukrainian said to my father that he needed money- my father went to find the jewelry he

hid—but he never returned- 3 months later my mother got sick and on the 15 of December she died – we were afraid to tell the Ukrainian – the other jews helped us to bury her in the garden – after the war we buried her in the Jewish cemetery. There were terribly mean people became like animals- my mother was kind and had great common sense with her gone we were orphans – when the Russians came in March of 1944 we didn't know what to do or where to go- so we stayed in the hole we didn't know.

Beira – I was 12 1/2 and chana was 11 1/2 after a few days my aunt found us she told us to get out of the hole – we went to a refugee camp for jews and we started to study we started to work and be adults- I went to the school that I was at before the war and went to the class I had been to – we didn't go back to the house from before the war we were afraid—I went to study studying that was most important – my aunt was still there she was the one who said we were going to Israel – so first we went to western Poland and we joined Dror a youth movement and they sent us to Germany and then from Germany to Israel by way of France – there were 1000 Jewish children

Beira- we got to Israel in 1945 it was hard they did the best they could but it was sad and hard but we were together we were always together and that is what strengthened us our whole lives- there is someone and something more than just yourself we had each other.