KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 1

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

WENTWORTH FILMS - KOVNO GHETTO - ISRAEL

Interview: Esther Lurie Sound rolls 44-53

Q: Take 15, could that be right.

(that's right, cassette camera roll 78, sound roll 40)

(We are speeding)

(15)

Q: Esther, tell me about the role of in the ghetto.

EL: Especially for me well we went in the, into the

ghetto at, at a period in my life where I was already

an artist who has had many exhibitions. And my day,

day to day work was painting or drawing. Of course the

arrival of the Germans and all those terrible, terrible

things that happened around me made me stop everything.

The Germans marched into Kovno on the 21st June 1941.

And uh the no one expected them because there was a non

aggression pact between Russia and Germany but uh

probably it never was meant seriously. What I heard

from time to time being said.

And then when the German armies were disenchanted from

invading England they threw the armies to the, the in

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 2

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

the direction of the breadbasket as they call it of the

Ukraine. And the first on their way was Lithuania.

Lithuania has a border with Germany. So that we had

the first, Latvia got them a few days later and Estonia

still a few days later.

But uh I lived alone then. It was after uh a year that

the Russians uh were uh in Lithuania and I had a really

flourishing artistic career.

(Change battery)

(Speeding)

(16)

Q: So

EL: So you probably heard from other sources what

happened in Lithuania, how everywhere there were terri-

ble happenings that Jews were slaughtered by Lithuani-

ans, even before the Germans came in. And when they

came in rules against Jews went worse and worse every

day. But you are interested in the ghetto.

Q: Before you go on when the war started, did you hear

things. I mean you personally, where were you

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

EL: I was in Kovno. I was in Kovno where I went a

year be, in, in 1939 I was in Belgium on a study tour.

Q: But what did you hear.

EL: When the war started the, the Lithuanians started

to kill Jews in the provinces, in the, in the small, in

the small towns. they accused the Jews of collaborating

with the Soviets.

Q: How did you hear about that. Or what did you see.

EL: I was, I was uh with a friend. We liked to be

together and some Lithuanians came to arrest us and

took us to the Kovno uh prison. And uh said that now

they are going to reven, take revenge on the Jews who

had a big hand in what was done to the Lithuanian

people by the Communists. There were many communists

and many among the Jews in the, Baltic states and they

really collaborated with the, with the Lithuanians.

But uh I, I had friends communists, Lithuanian artists

and intellectuals who said we had to choose between

Germany or Russia. We couldn't survive the war without

taking sides. So the part of the, part of the Lithua-

nian people welcomed the Germans and the other part

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 4

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

welcomed the Russians when they came in a year before.

I even had a close friend uh uh a Lithuanian artist who

was, who was very, very active in communist life. Her

husband was a deputy in the same, this is their parlia-

ment. And uh this people most of them managed to flee

Lithuania to Russia. When the Germans came in but all

the nationalists, among them painters and intellectuals

and even Jews who were Zionists were imprisoned during

the, during the Russian occupation of Lithuania. So

that the whole country was divided, very, very much

divided.

But uh many Jews went on, went out from the city to

reach the russian border to flee from the Germans but

the Russians had uh had closed the border. So they

came back. To find in many cases that their flats were

taken by Germans or by others.

Anyway there was a decision that the after what hap-

pened between the, the Jews and the Lithuanians, they

would not tolerate that Jews would live in the city of

Kovno. And uh part of Kovno that lay on the other side

of the river Eleya was designated as a ghetto and all

the Jews had to leave town by the 15th of August.

And I very much wanted to, to do some drawings of that

exodus. but it was really dangerous to, to be in the

streets. I, I could

have taken a view from, from the mountain yes, but we,

we were afraid to go out into the street. I thought

maybe I would reconstruct it in my memory. But as I

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 5

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

told you I don't have the talent of drawing from memo-

ry.

So uh we philosophized that the war would, would be

over and we would never have to leave our homes. But of

course everything happened. This is where i learned

that the most terrible things that you, you, you think

may will not happen, they really happen in the most

horrible form.

Uh I had the luck to be together with a neighbor with

whom we became friendly during the time we had to, to

be inside and uh we had to find living space uh.

Eight, eight meters to each, eight quadrant meters to

each yes. So that in a room there should be 3 to 4

people yes. And I was lucky to be with friends. And in

our apartment of 3 rooms, I think there were 15 people

or so.

The, my sister with her husband and child. They went to

another place. I had an aunt yet here who lived and a

cousin from the provinces who lived with her and I

didn't room with them, I did room with my friends.

And uh the days in the ghetto started. We were en-

croached there, we were closed up by, by barbed wire.

And there were seven entrances to the ghetto and during

the first week we were completely isolated and then the

Germans decided to lose, to use the working force of

the, of the Jews yes. They, they took them to, to

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 6

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

build the

Q: We have to put another roll of film in.

EL: It's very short.

Q: It's because it's not videotape, it's film.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 7

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(This is camera roll 79, sound roll 45)

(Take 17)

EL: Yes the, the Germans demanded of the Jews to

choose representatives and to follow council of elders,

the Altestenrat. They choose the prominent lawyers and

physicians and uh when it came to choose the, the chief

representative, no one wanted the responsibility. So

at last Dr. Elkis who was a, a famous physician in

Kovno, very, very honored. He took the responsibility

of being the head of the council of elders, the Altes-

tenrat. He was a very proud tall person and he even he

even knew how to talk with the Germans and the, and be

respected. And uh I knew several of those people who

were in the council of elders because I was a stranger

in Kovno. Complete stranger. I came to visit my sister

who had just had a baby, as I was in Europe. And it

was summer and I, I was invited by uncles to, to be, to

pass the summer in the, in the in the country so I was

uh around.

And uh but uh I had stayed a year in Kovno and I could-

n't go back to Belgium as I had planned. And I had an

exhibition of, of Is, Palestine pictures with me that I

planned to exhibit in Belgium where my professor had

promised to help me but as I was planned it in Kovno I

dis, and I, I wanted to work so I got myself inscribed

in the, in the local academy so I had models and I

could go and uh and continue my, my work and I had an

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 8

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

exhibition at the Lithuanian artist's house of my

Palestine pictures. And many of the Jews and the

Jewish schools came to visit and these were my only

contacts and it happened so that in the council of

elders there were a few people that I knew from my

exhibition.

So, so I confided in them that I was deeply fascinated

by from what i saw in the ghetto and I would like to,

to draw some scenes, if they could help me. If, if

they knew people from, from whose windows you saw

things that really some of these people uh for in-

stance, Dr. Rabinovich is, is responsible for the raid

on the potato field. He, he saw it from his window at

the, at the, at the house of the council of elders and

I had asked him to tell me about it because I wanted to

draw that scene. And it was very the house of the

elders was very nearby where I lived and then he came

and he said Esther we have uh we have a on the

potato field just from my window. So I went with him,

with my paper. I still had my materials and I did it in

a few hours. And people were uh going, going around

there, were milling around there and they saw me draw-

ing. So somebody took the, took the drawing from me

and went to show it in the during the conference of the

council of elders and he brought it back to me and said

that every, everybody was very much impressed and they

asked me to go on with it.

And uh well I went to several places and then when,

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

when things calmed down, Mr. Tory who was secretary of

the, of the council of elders invited me for, for an

interview and told me that uh the

council of elders will help me to continue with this

work as it is very important for the archives. And

that the Germans had taken away all the, all the uh

photographic equipment so that this was the only way to

preserve some of the views. I accepted it of course

because this is naturally what I did best, yes. It was

not illustrations and it was not graphic work. It was

what I did best, drawing from nature.

And I, I started to go to places and from time to time

he called me to, to take my to places where by my own,

by my own inshertive I couldn't have gotten because you

needed a certain permit or places were closed out.

So the for instance the remains of the hospital. Uh

the Germans burned it down with all the people in it

because there were a few cases of typhus. So all the

patients and all the doctors and all the nurses were

burned down with the building.

And then after the ghetto was, uh was torn off from

the, from the territory of the ghetto and a thousand

Jews were marched off to the fort. The Germans told

them that they had taken them to other working places

but uh of course with time to believe. They believed

because no one could, no one could understand that they

took people and, and then just shot them in the hun-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 10

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

dreds and the thousands. Even that it happened a few

kilometers from us.

It was inconceivable because after all we lived in

Europe. After all, after the world war. Germany was uh

conceived by us as one of the most cultured countries.

We just couldn't believe it. yes, believed what the

Germans told us, what we wanted to believe. And it

went on through the, through the years and with, it

goes on til today. Because it is inconceivable that

such horrors are being, being done.

Q: When you went to the hospital....

EL: Yes, this was uh, uh as there were many abandoned

houses. It was in winter and there was great

shortage of uh firing wood. So the council of elders

with Mr. Tory arranged for a permit to go and collect

books and uh, and whatever could be burned in the

abandoned houses. And they got the permit to go over

the street, yes. It was just over the street, this was

the bridge that was built yes. Over that street and

that bridge stood on, on the, the stood there for two

months and still I, I, I succeeded in drawing it yes.

If I had waited I couldn't have drawn the bridge yes.

And we came to the spot and he took me and he said

Esther I want you to, to make a few drawings of the, of

the burned hospital. They went to the houses to col-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

lect and I stood in the street and started to sketch.

And a Lithuanian came over and said you stop it immedi-

ately. So Tory heard him and he came over and uh and I

stopped. But then when he went away I, I went up to a

house and I found some place from where that I did

two drawings and they are among the drawings reproduced

in my book.

And then there was the, another important thing. There

was a, a room in the ghetto where.

Q: Tell me about drawing the bridge first.

EL: About drawing the bridge all right. Uh well I, I

went around and asked people how can I get to draw the

bridge. And at that time uh I did some volunteer work

for uh by collecting clothes and, and, and food for,

for the, for the orphanage. And there was a young man

working there who received what we brought yes. And

then I met him at the house of Dr. Rabinovich because

his wife had told me that she had friends living near

the bridge. And there I met that young man and he said

all right I take you. And tomorrow he took me to one

place and I, I drew it from both sides. Yes. He was

the, was the man uh who lived there, who had grown up

there so he knew everybody and then I, I made an agree-

ment with him that every day he would come and fetch me

and bring me to a place where I can draw. And we did

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

it for uh not very long because one day he came and

said well today we are not going to draw. Why, why.

Why not? Well uh all the Jews are ordered by the

Germans to, to be on the, on the spot at a certain hour

and uh this was one of the, the small aktion when they

separated the small ghetto from the large ghetto and

then a few days later the bridge was torn down. I

still, I already had it in my collection.

Q: We have to put another...

EL: You know everything, everything I have is a, is a

wonder. (laughs)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 13

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(rolling)

(Camera roll 80, sound roll 46)

(Take 18)

EL: Yes, a very important movement in my creative work

in the ghetto began when after Mr. Tory had talked to

me and he introduced me to Professor Hy Nachman Shapiro

who was in charge of the education of the, the art of

the ghetto. They had schools there. That it was not

allowed by the Germans but still they had them. And uh

told, told me that Professor Shapiro will advise me as

what is important for the archives and I should bring

everything I am drawing to him. And he will see to it

that it goes to safety. And uh for, for a few years I

did it. It was a, I couldn't do much of it because I

was organized to forced labor like everybody else but

from time to time they give me some piece of paper that

I was employed by the, by the inside, the services of

the ghetto. And then I could go and draw every day.

And I, I went to the social services and to the gates.

All those drawings that they did near the gates and all

those, all those things that uh uh that are connected

with uh with types from the ghetto is what uh Professor

Shapiro tried to tell me. We want people, yes, how

they look. How they lived. This, this uh scene where

old people stay in line to receive their, their soup at

the social kitchen was one of them. That I that he

mostly appreciated and then that woman that sits at the

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

table and, and has her cup of soup. And then uh this

scene at the, at the gate when people come back from

work or go out to work.

This I did from uh from a window that was opposite the

gate. Where the, where the police uh department was.

And uh they came from the council of elders to per,

persuade the policeman to let me sit there. And they

bring, and they were bringing me up all sorts of people

from downstairs that I had a big collection of, of

those types but they, they were lost with my with my

collection that was lost. What, what is, what has

remained is what uh Mr. tory has photographed at an

exhibition that was arranged in the ghetto of the work

that by the time I had managed to do. So he chose

about 20, 20 to 25 uh pictures that uh were most uh

characteristical and they are what, what, what I later

uh reconstructed from the photographs he did from my

pictures.

Q: What about that house that you

EL: Yes, there was, there, there was a room where,

where there was uh in the first in the first days of

the ghetto there was a slaughter of, of a family. And

uh people were so depressed by it that they shut it up

and no one went into it. And even the living conditions

were so difficult and so crowded in the ghetto, they

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

didn't open that too. And Mr. Tory told me he wanted me

to do a drawing of the two. And it is along the col-

lection of the series

the living witness. Room after slaughter.

Q: What did it look like. How did you feel

EL: Look by that time, I tried to do a good drawing.

This, this is my concern til today. Doesn't matter what

it is. Make a good drawing. Of what you see, yes.

Don't think of anything. Only think of making a good

drawing.

Q: What did you see

EL: Well I can show, everything was up, upside down.

And there were, there were uh remains of blood and uh

and uh remains of, of human tissue on the walls. But

between them were pictures and uh arrangement of a nice

room of a nice Jewish family.

Q: Do you know why they were slaughtered.

EL: This was the, this was the, the reaction of uh the

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 16

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

first reaction of the Lithuanians yes. They, they,

they were, they, when they heard that the Germans were

coming in, they were rounding up Jews wherever they

could find them or went into, to houses and slaughtered

them in the, in the hundreds and the thousands. There

were no Jews left in the little towns. Not at all.

This was the revenge for the collaboration with the,

with the Soviets.

Q: And you drew the democracy square...

EL: Yes, I did the, I, I did the things that, that

were historically important and that appealed to me as

a, as a subject for my painting. And uh these were

mostly appreciated so they survived because they were

photographed and that, that uh we up, up the mountain

to the ninth fort. It was a most beautiful paysage, yes

a most beautiful view. With big trees and uh you see

it in the picture I did. of it.

And it had a, a specially in rainy days it had such an

atmosphere that really appealed to me as what it was.

The, the via Dolorossa as we called it. The march to

death. By many tens and hundreds of thousands of Jews

because they brought, they brought all the Jews from

Austria, from Czechoslovakia, from all over Europe to

be shot at the Ninth fort because they, they wanted to

con, to confound the population that they were going to

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 17

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

other working places. So there, there were certain

concentration camps like Treblinka. And one of the, one

of the places of destruction

of uh of annihilation was the Ninth fort that now has a

museum where my pictures stay up. I am in contact with

them.

I, I sent, when uh after uh Gorbachev, there, there was

a release of, of many many difficulties yes. And Jews

started to come here and Jews from Vilna started to go,

come here and uh Jews from here went to, went to Vilna

and then and then they came to me and asked me for my

pictures. And there are 3 or 4 museums in Vilna and

Kovno who have my work on view yes. On permanent view.

This is why I did the etchings.

Q: How did you get drawing materials.

EL: I had my own. At the ghetto I still had my own.

Q: Where did you get paper.

EL: I still had my own paper. And uh and paper you

could get, at the, at the, at the offices, yes that

worked for the Germans. Paper was no, was no problem.

I had my uncle Dishenius, my uh did I even had my

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

colors. I was an artist in, in full creative strength

just then and I took my, I took my things with me into

the ghetto.

Q: Did you make two copies of everything.

EL: Uh this was later, this was another enterprise.

This was the archives, what I did with Professor Shapi-

ro. By the way his fate was very tragic. If you want

to hear of it. Uh this was initiated by Mr. Tory. By

the, by the council of elders itself for their ar-

chives. I did several. I, I always when, when a subject

intrigues me, I always do stay with it for, for a few

drawings or paintings yes. Especially uh when it's

beautiful and appealing from, from the painterly point

of view. So I returned it like I did the Democratu

square and I did the way up to the, to the ninth fort

and uh.

Q: And people.

EL: And people, and people and, and the, the scenes at

the, at the entrance gate, I did it in color too. It is

on the, on the outside of, on the cover of my album

this is yes. And uh

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Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: So if you were going to paint.

EL: I had my paints. Uh I, I didn't use my oil

paints. Only in later when I was when the German

commanders discovered that there was an artist in the

ghetto and they, they built me a studio so I could

paint for them yes. For the obersturmbahn fuhrer. But

this was only the last few months of the ghetto.

(reload)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 20

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(second side of cassette)

(Roll sound, roll cassette)

(Camera roll 81, sound roll 47, speed)

(19)

EL: I would like to tell you about the tragic fate that

befell Professor Hy Nachman Shapiro, the man to whom I

was delivering my, my works. When I had finished them

and uh who saw to it that they came to a hiding place.

One uh one day they started to tell in the ghetto that

the night before Germans had come to, to the flat where

professor Shapiro lived with his old mother, his wife

and his young son and took them all away. Professor Hy

Nachman Shapiro was the son of the chief rabbi of

Lithuania. Of whom I did a drawing at his request.

Rabbis don't want to be, to be drawn but his son wanted

a drawing of me of his father. And it is in, he and uh

it came out that the whole family was burned alive. And

why was it. Because other sons of the rabbi who lived

in the United States and in Switzerland had taken steps

to the pope and to all the great of the world to take

their family out of the ghetto. But to the Germans, a

Jew was a Jew. And a Jew had no right to be treated

differently from another Jew. So they burned the whole

family.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 21

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

And uh he has his little, he had his little archives of

his own, Professor Shapiro. From time to time when he

liked one of my pictures he asked me to give it to him.

And the colored, the colored uh picture in the, in the

album a Living Witness of the big blocks, he asked me

to give to him. Because he lived in one of those

apartments and i gave it to him. And uh of course I

gave him the portrait of his father and they were

salvaged because Mr. Tory took the archives of Profes-

sor Shapiro and brought, brought part of it to Israel.

So the original of that uh water color is uh in Yad

Vashem now. In the Yad Vashem museum.

Q: Tell me about drawing the Estonian deportation.

EL: When the, when the deportations began, I had a, a

long period where I did, where i didn't work because

Germans came to live in the ghetto. There, there was

a, there was a period that they discovered that the

Jewish committee was helping young people to go into

the woods as partisans. So they dissolved the, the

council of elders. And uh German officers came to live

in the ghetto. Then somehow we, if, if I felt before

it, it, it was somehow ours. Yes it, it was shameful.

It was there was hunger, there was uh desolation. We

were shut in but somehow it was a corner that was ours.

Since the Germans came to live in the ghetto, I didn't

have the feeling any more and they ere very, very uh

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 22

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

pathetic with the order and with the cleanliness. The

ghetto lost it's uh it's character.

But when I heard of the deportations I decided this I

still have to do. And uh peace drawings remained in my

hand after I had already, already put into the earth

my, my collection. And then I got a message from uh

from a Lithuanian painter, Veronica Shlebliter. Maybe

I shouldn't say her name bcuase the, the they will ask

her well wear are the pictures yes. And uh if I had

something to, something I wanted to hide, she was ready

to hide it for me and she hid it for me for more than

40 years. A nd after, after the peristroika, Jewish uh

Jewish artists in Lithuania stated to collect what

remained of Jewish artists from before the war and may

exhibitions. And Veronica came with my pictures. Yes I

learned from our press that my pictures were exhibited

in a, in an exhibition in in Lithuania. And then they

started to come in little by little. They brought them

to . First I got, first I got the xerox copies and

then I, I started to do the etchings and then I got the

originals. And these originals the museum in Washing-

ton requested and I sent it to them, for the exhibi-

tion.

Q: How did you feel the Estonian deportations.

EL: Look uh drawing is something that demands of you

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 23

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

full concentration. You don't think of what you drew.

You think how you drew, how you compose it, how you, to

make a good drawing. Doesn't, look I couldn't draw

dur, during an aktion or doing something terribly that

happened but after all the deportations, we knew that

they were deported not to concentration camps. They

were deported to other working places. The ghetto was

split up in seven the, they they started to call it

not, not the Kovno ghetto but the concentration, con-

centraziones Slager Coahene. They head seven satel-

lites and these people came with their packs and with

there children. And this is what you see of my drawing

yes. And the Aktion on children came later. And was,

was executed everywhere, In all the, in all the places

in the ghetto and in th the, in the satellite.

Uh camps yes. We all tried to hide our children and

some, some of us succeeded. we succeeded in hiding our

little boy my sister and me and took him in a rucksack.

And in our studio we had uh we had a (roof top?). Under

it we built a hiding place and in the entrance we had

our uh our arrangement of colors and so on. And we

from a, from a, from a hole. And uh I sat there too in

that hiding place and I couldn't, I couldn't sit in the

hiding place so I, I just went out and made myself a

drawing in Germans to , to check that there were not

children there. And uh we say no, no there weren't.

And he, he knocked at the, the place where behind the,

behind the door there were children yes and, and

children are not hiding there. Oh no, no, no way. And

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 24

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

they left.

We, we see now little boy who was five then when they,

when the

ghetto was liquidated. I was taken to Stutthoff concen-

tration camp and all those women who had little chil-

dren they were after several days in Stutthoff they

were sent to Auschwitz. But then when we were in

Stuffhoff there was the, the assault on Hitler's life.

You remember in, in July 1944, from which he escaped

alive.

And then there, there was some optimism in the camps

that perhaps they, they, won't kill us anymore. They

will, they will want to shoot and there are Jews around

and so we believe that we will survive. But we were

sent to working camps, and we were sent back here and

back there and shlepping here and shlepping there.

And, and we were working on fortifications and on

trenches. They cut through all of Poland, yes, with

trenches. They hoped that with tanks and with soldiers,

they will, they will be able to win the war. They

believed til the end, til Hitler's suicide they be-

lieved that Germany would win the war.

I have the opportunity now as I speak German and French

to see many historical films. Yes. And I, I hear many

debates yes. And uh thoughts about what happened, why

it happened how it happened and so I, I express them

too. Yesterday there was a film on, on Hitler's life

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 25

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

yes. there is on, on cable 5, la cinquieme, the French

la cinquime, has every, every Wednesday one hour of

historic. Yesterday it was about Hitler. And I learn

from it, and I specially before our interview happens.

I try to see as many of these films as possible so as

to get a clearer view of what happened and what the

world thinks of it.

Q: Ok we need to reload. We're going to take a break.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 26

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(Rolling cassette)

(Camera roll 82, sound roll 48)

(20)

(Second sticks 20)

EL: I'm looking at you yes.

Q: Your, your drawing did you have a sense that it

was a record, a historical record, as well as art

forms.

EL: Of course. I generally I draw more freely. But

here I made a special effort to make it very realistic

and i used all my academic training to make it as near

to reality as possible, especially when I drew the

bridge, I really went into the construction to, to draw

it in a manner that if somebody wanted to construct a

bridge in a model or something, he could use my drawing

as, as a record.

I, I did my best you know in those circumstances you

don't count any more. Yes. It's the whole that

counts. And as little as there was hope to survive so

at least I felt a compulsion to leave something that

would serve a purpose. And especially since there were

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 27

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

no photographs. Later they had, they had cameras. But

at the beginning was told and retold, no there are no

cameras. What you do is the only record we have. And

uh as I had a, an academic training because uh I, I

went to study in Belgium in a modern arts school that

was, was founded by Juan develdha, who was one of

the big German uh modern architects. He was already

old and he was the director of the school and it was

based on modern art.

I chose the theater but it didn't give me the training

I hoped for, to learn. Drawing and painting. So at

the same time everybody laughed at me yes. I went to

the Antwerp Royal academy to the drawing classes where

they were drawing for a whole week a statue of, of

something yes and you had to go into every details,

detail. And I stayed there for two years. And if I

hadn't done it I could never have uh have done what I

did in the ghetto. I wanted to know to draw like

Leonardo DaVinci does. He was my ideal.

And uh at that time it was the time of the Bauhaus yes

and at the time of everything. Burned the Louvre yes

and they were laughing at me. But I once uh I visited

a lot of exhibitions when I was in Belgium. I really

had a very good time. My, my brother was living there.

I, I had planned to study art in Germany but then

Hitler was already near his uh near his seat in, in

German politics. So in 1931 instead of going to Germa-

ny, I had already prospects from German schools yes

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 28

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

because they teacher who taught

me and who discovered me he was a pupil of German, he

was a Hungarian. A pupil of German modern art schools.

He was one f the Dada movement and when I was 13, 14 he

did discover that I had a talent yes. I didn't know it

myself because I couldn't like, like my friends all

sorts of silly things yes.

And I started already to take lessons at the age of 14,

15. I was very much encouraged by my teacher and he

even uh told my parents that I should leave school and

then make a career of uh of art but my parents said

first, first finish school, then we'll see.

Q: In the ghetto when you were drawing, what did other

people in the ghetto think.

EL: They came around and they, they were very excited

and they said how good you do it so and what can be

done so that it is preserved so people will know how it

was. This was their expression. Show them how it was.

Of course there were people that said that you are

doing very dangerous things and then they, there is no,

no hope for it to survive and leave it alone and I must

really say and say it again that thanks to Avraham

Tory, I, I, I held out. I had my encouragement. I had,

I had destination.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 29

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

But then I wanted to tell you about the other collec-

tions that were coming up in the ghetto. There was a,

a man he was he was one of the workers at the, at the

organization of Jewish labor. And so he was a collector

and once he, he called me and he said that he had a

plan. He wanted to create the album of the ghetto.

Here, where he wanted to include all the documents that

came from the Germans and all the signs and all the uh

whatever was printed in the ghetto. And uh to, to, to

give them some artistic value, he wanted me to do

portraits of all the people who, who had some important

jobs. Were about 40 people that I didn't have to

worry. He would, he would make the arrangements. He

would bring the people to me and 40 portraits.

And then one day he calls me look it won't be 40. It

will be twice 40 because I, I went to Mr. Tory. He,

his name was Golub then. And uh I had to have his help

because he knew all the arrangements in the, in the

building and, and the people who were working there and

I asked him for help so he said well I'm ready to help

you on one condition. Everything you do you do double.

One for my archives and one for your archives. So he

said all right (laughs) I'll do it. There, there were

enough papers that, that were double and, and many fold

yes but I said no, I won't make 80 portraits.

But there was another artist in the ghetto. Joseph

Schlesinger. He was younger than me. He, you see the

difference in the drawing but hew as very gifted and he

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 30

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

was glad to accept it. So we shared it yes. And, and

Tory's book you see two styles yes.

Some, some are mine and some are his. By the way he

was from Czechoslovakia, he survived the war. And

lived in Czechoslovakia, he was, I was told that he was

the director of the Czech national museum.

And Tory even invited him on his account to come and

visit Israel. But he was already after a heart attack

and then he died. And we didn't know why he, why he

doesn't answer, well, why he doesn't come but about a

year ago, somebody calls me and says I am the nephew of

Joseph Schlesinger, the Washington Museum found me

because they were looking for uh Schlesinger had a

sister who had emigrated to the United States and he

lives in Canada. And he came here and he visited Tory

and he visited me and we spoke a lot about Joseph, yes.

Pity that he died. I hoped to see him again.

Q: Children in the ghetto, you drew some of the chil-

dren. You said they

EL: Well they children had the job. They had to, they

had to watch the guards because there was, there was a,

hunger in the ghetto. So as they do it in all the

countries, yes, that they, they plant vegetables. And

Germans brought us seeds and they saw to it that every

little bit of uh of earth was used for growing vegeta-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 31

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

bles. But you know the, the fences, they were

Q: Let's put another roll on.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 32

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(Camera roll 83, sound roll 49, Take)

(21)

EL: Yes, can I go on.

Q: About the children.

EL: Yes, when you watch my pictures I did in the

ghetto, so around all the houses there were fences.

During the years all the fences disappeared for, for,

for wood. For firewood. And so any patch of vegetables

stood open and who, whoever came by could, could take

what he wanted. So children were posted as watch men.

They had a, no how do you call it.

Q: Straw

EL: No, no something they could make noise with.

Q: A whistle

EL: They had a whistle yes, and then a policeman would

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 33

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

come and help them yes. Because everybody was hungry

wherever he, he saw a tomato or something and he would

take it if, if it was not watched yes. So I say in my

text that one of the most uh agreeable sightings in the

ghetto were the, the little children watching the

gardens because they had Israel style little, little

caps on yes. And it was a nice sight.

Q: And tell me about the po...

EL: The what.

Q: The pottery. You went to the pottery.

EL: Ah, the pottery yes. I went to the pottery to, to

draw people at their work and then I noticed that they

were doing big uh containers and I decided that in a

big container, my pictures would be well protected when

I put them into the ground.

Q: Let's cut. (waiting for siren)

(Speeding)

(22, this is slate 22)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 34

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: You went to the...

EL: I went to the pottery and uh this was already the

time when there were German advisors and supervisors

everywhere. So I, I had somehow to appease him yes so

I gave him one of the drawings I did in Vilna yes and

so he allowed me to come and, and go whenever I liked

and he let me do some drawings of the pottery. And I

asked the workers to make for me big containers. The

size that I could put my pictures into them and bury

them with a cover yes and they did it for me.

And even, yes, what I wanted to tell you, you are, you

are talking about art in the ghetto. There was another

artist who was a good friend of mine who had his exhi-

bition at the artists', the artists' house in Kovno

imm, immediately after me. My, my exhibition uh closed

uh at the end of uh December and his started in, in

January. And we became good friends and we, we went

often to draw together in the ghetto. And there are

some of his drawings in, in Garfunkel's book. I have it

here, I will show it to you. And uh I gave him one of

my pots, yes. And he buried his, his uh collection.

Many times we went together to draw the same, the same

subjects, the same people that we were finding and he

died in Dachau.

But his wife, who looked very Christian. They had a

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 35

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

little blond girl that she managed to give uh for care

into a Christian family and she left the ghetto when

the ghetto was liquidated while Jacob went to, went to

the camps with all, with the whole transport. We were

in together in the on the, on the train. When we ar-

rived in, in Yerdanzig, women and men were separated

and the, there were I saw him for the last time. He

died in Dachau.

Q: What was his name.

EL: Uh Jacob Lipschitz. Jacob Lipschitz. And his

wife knew about the, the hiding place and she found his

collection and she brought it here when she came with

her daughter and she, they came to me and I saw to it

that Yad Vashem bough the collection and it is exhibit-

ed in the, in the art museum in Yad Vashem during the,

the exhibition that was now they have changed the

exhibition. They have something else. But uh we are in

on the same on the same uh plate as the Luria and my

biography and Jacob Lipshitz, his biography.

(Siren)

(Speeding)

(Take 23)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 36

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

EL: By the way Joseph Schlesinger was an energetic, a

very nice young man. And hew as very much involved in

art so he assembled young people around him and he was

lecturing them on art and uh telling them about artists

and teaching them and, and uh to me came some young

people who did something at all to show, to show me

what they did. A little girl with uh with a name Ira

Berman was bringing me little sculptures she, that she

did in the ghetto. And later she, she did some little

sculptures in the trenches that we were building and

she brought them with her to Israel and uh she died

very young and the family brought the little, the

little things to me for me to decide what to do with

them. And uh I and I told them to give it to Yad

Vashem and they are at Yad Vashem. Little heads that

she did in the trench during our uh labor days in the

women camps.

Q: Do you remember burying your jars.

EL: Yes, sure.

Q: Tell me.

EL: We had, we had an argument with uh with Golub,

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 37

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

with Tory. He had the hiding place for his, for his

archives. And he said to me that uh that he would be

ready to take my collection with the whole collection

of the of the uh Altestenrat archives. But I said well

there is no, not much chance that I will be alive, but

maybe yes and then I want to know where they, where

they are. So he said but this I can't disclose to you.

So you can, you can have your collection back. And I

decided to take the, the jars. They were in a hiding

place. I went there and I took them and I buried them

in the back yard of my sister's flat. Yes. They were

never found and I think that Lithuanians who uh turned

the ghetto upside down for, uh for gold and jewels and

they found whole, whole uh big uh jar with papers, that

they, they got angry and threw it away or tore it, tore

it up and they, and maybe it's still there. So that

there were about 200 drawings and water colors. So

saved were really all, only those who, who were photo-

graphed by Mr. Tory during my exhibition.

And then the other collection that was initiated by Mr.

Zundelivich that I told you that he uh he, he was

persecuting me everywhere yes. If, if he hadn't done

so I would probably not have done it yes. He was

sending me people, the most important people in the

ghetto yes. I had a broken leg yes and so I

couldn't go out (laughs). I had a, an accident in a

working place. So they came to me.

But I did it you know and when you put pressure on

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 38

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

somebody he does it if he wants or if he doesn't want

to. The, the landscapes and the, and the, the types

like you showed me, the couple, these I'd do, I did

willingly but having to do with people who are always

busy yes and you don't know how to talk to them and how

to uh sit with them yes. And, uh and once they, they

give you an interview and then they have no time. Come

another time and that it was very difficult. But he,

he, he was so dedicated to it yes.

The interesting thing ius that most of what he collect-

ed survived. The whole collection that Sarah Milo has

survived in its entirety yes. And Tory who was, who,

who, who was on the, on the, on his flight from Kovno

yes through, through Russian communist territory uh had

many difficulties. He said that all the papers were

taken away from him and uh the official was called out

of the room for, for a few moments so he grabbed it and

he ran away. (laughs) This is how my pictures were

saved. This is what he tells me.

Q: We have to reload.

(end first tape)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 39

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(second tape)

(Camera roll 84, sound roll 50, speed)

Q:: Let's jump how did later

EL: I didn't know that, that something was photograph-

ing. There is a big collection that a man called Kadu-

shin did nd it was exhibited at the Washington museum

but uh I didn't know about it. All these things were

very secretly done because it was very dangerous that

the Germans should learn about it.

Q: So but then many years later you got copies of the

photographs and you made a grid

EL: No, no, no. These photographs well you should

understand it. The photographs are of my pictures, my

pictures were photographed and this is what I did. I

reconstructed them from the photographs that were taken

from my pictures at an exhibition that I had in the

ghetto. I must always explain it again and again be-

cause don't understand it at first hearing yes. I what

I did is from my own pictures. Not from other people's

photographs or things.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 40

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: Tell me you divided it

EL: Yes, this is how the classic artists did it.

Q: Well tell me that as if

EL: Look, look whoever ha understands something in art

and has seen an art book of, of, of uh uh making uh

working from a sketch to a big picture, this is what

cause, this is what, how it was done. Rubens worked

like that and Rembrandt worked like that and this was

the way to enlarge pictures. Because you divided the

small one into a grid and then you made one on a big

grid and every little uh quadrangle had to have in it

the same thing. This is how you a is pictured.

Sometime I speak half French, half English, excuse me.

(laughs)

Q: ...to tell

EL: I wanted to tell you about other artists yes.

There was an excellent German uh graphic artist, Fritz

Gadiel who came into

the ghetto. He ran away from Hitler and came to Kovno.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 41

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Uh they came from Austria, they came from Germany, they

came from be, because they knew there was a non aggres-

sion pact yes. They, they thought they were safe in

Lith, in the Baltic states. And uh he was a great

artist yes and when, when he came he wanted to work and

he went to the, to the uh committee of the elders and

he said look I will draw you your, your posters. In my

manner and he was uh a great artist of the, of the

letter. Of the written word. It was something fantas-

tic. And he was, he was writing the, the announcements

the Germans made in letters that from afar you could,

you could know what the, what the, what it was saying

yes. If it was something threatening or it was some-

thing uh uh something agreeable to the order of the, of

the ghetto.

And before the aktions there were he gave the, the

letters such a character that from afar people knew

that uh a disaster is, is coming. And uh these people

uh wanted to be employed more or less in their uh in

their art. They opened at the, at the big uh werksta-

ten, there were, workshops yes, where they were working

in repairing uh German uniforms and, and the big spe-

cialists made the, made the, made the woods for the

Germans and uh and whatever they wanted yes. And they

opened a department for toys. For which they used all

sorts of, of pieces of wood and so, so the Germans, the

Germans could send presents to their wives and children

for the, for the holidays.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 42

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

And when the new commandant was to come, everybody was

very, very excited because they heard that they would,

should doubt the, the toys department. But when he came

to see what they did it stayed on. But at that time, uh

I had already given been given a job by, by the German

uh by the second in command yes. He wanted, He wanted

uh a copy of the picture that one of the officers had

bought. The mother sitting uh sitting at a picnic with

two children. He bought her a production while the

bookshops in Kovno and uh his superior wanted one too.

He couldn't' get it so he looked for a painter in the

ghetto yes. As in some uh officers there were some of

my drawings so , so uh Obersharfuhrer Berger came, came

to see, called me to, to come and see him.

Well yes, I am an artist, I can do it yes. I want to

see your pictures. Well I said when I live with many

people together. It might not be easy. I want to see

and he goes. Then we surprised somebody taking a bath

of the anyway I found some, some of my pictures and I

showed him. Well you know how to, how to do it and I

will call you. Because I had no way of, no where to do

here, to find a place for me.

And I waited for him to call me and then suddenly

somebody told me yes but Schlesinger is already working

on it. Schlesinger's wife was working at the at one of

the offices and, and when it was told we needed

they said well Mr. Schlesinger's husband is an artist

let him do it. You already started and what about me.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 43

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

So I went , I, I said I was with waiting for you to

calling me. Why didn't you come, you told me that,

that I should

wait yes. So they decided well you will do one and he

will do one. We will give one to the first Ober-

strum von fuhrer and one to the Hauptsten fuhrer for

Christmas. Yes. He gave his private tour to us so we

could put out, put up our easels and, and make it ready

for Christmas. Yes. And since then uh Hauptsten

fuhrer, Haupstein Fuhrer yes it was Rink, invited me

once and he said I want to see some of your pictures

because if you are an artist I don't want you to go to

the, to the meat factory. Uh, uh the taking care of,

of slaughtered hens. Yes this was, this was the work

of the women of the ghetto yes. For their, for their

yes. Taking the, preparing it for uh for canning yes.

Yes uh, uh chicken meat yes, and but it was a good

place. They could take home the, the heads and the

heads and the, and the feet yes so they had something

to eat yes, but I didn't go there because I had a, a

broken leg.

I could go out of the ghetto. It was very important for

me to get the job so eh said so you work for me and he

went to the phone and phoned somewhere. Make a, make a

studio for uh for the artist. And there was a studio

yes. But uh the council of elders decided we won't

have a single artist. We will build a whole workshop

about it.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 44

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

So Gadiel started to do his graphics and Shlesinger was

the second painter and with them worked a very talented

you, young artist whose picture you saw at Tory's.

Bension Schmit. He was 17 years old. He was so gift-

ed, so he, he had never studied. There are such natural

talents. I am not one of them yes. I had to study hard

and to work hard to get where I got. And he did the

picture of uh of uh of uh no, deportation with the Jew.

Do you know the picture. Probably Tory told, showed it

to you yes.

So there were several, several of them yes. And I know

of a young, of a young artist who she, when she went to

work she did portraits of the German soldiers. They

gave her some bread for it, that's all. I did many

portraits for Germans and got a piece of bread for it,

yes. Later in the, in the women's labor camp there was

a, even a German, a German yes.

Q: We need to reload.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 45

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(Camera roll 85, sound roll 51)

(take 25)

Q: Now you left off, would you just say again you

painted many portraits of Germans.

EL: Yes, for a, one even bought me a whole bread. This

was such a, such an event yes. Yes, later in the camps

when the Germans when they knew that I was an artist

they brought me photographs of their children and their

wives and uh once our commandant who was a very bad

German. He, he, he caught me drawing and he came even

beat me up. So the, the other the other soldiers said

instead of a prize you get beaten up. And then he came

to me later. Look, I am going on my leave. Please do

my portrait and tell me what you need. I will bring

you. And then he brought me paper and, and china ink

and in my little, little book, the Jews in Slavery

there are drawings done with the pen and ink, yes.

Over done with a sliver of wood. With, with some

ink that the Germans gave me to write the numbers on

it, to write for our, uh for our numbering yes. So

there were different ones yes. But they exchanged him

later because he started the romance with, with uh with

one of the women in the camp.

So the next one was better. And then uh they over-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 46

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

whelmed me with, with work yes. And then they started

to bring me every day uh, uh a cup of soup from the

German kitchen yes. (laughs) I share it with sick

people because I could sit in the sick room for my

drawings yes. The, the it was warm there yes and so

once one of the Germans took me in, in, in the evening

into town to draw his mistress yes. And she brought me

a package of onions. She has heard that we were so

desperate for onions because onions had vitamins. It

helped to survive you know. I've always shared what I

had.

Q: And this was all in

EL: No, this was in the, in the, in the, in the labor

camp. In Stutthof I had my story too because the kapo

there had a mistress and when she knew that I was doing

portraits here and there she came and she wanted her

portrait done. And she said to me if you don't make me

beautiful, you will see what will happen to you. So

well she was, she was satisfied and then she took me,

gave me a whole bread.

We, we got a slice. I got a whole bread. Made a feast

with my friends.

Q: So the other things happened in the concentration

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 47

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

camp

EL: This was yes, this was in the concen, concentra-

tion camp. This, this, this was, were the little,

little uh let's say the delights that got up here and

there. It never lasted yes, never lasted. Because

Germans were exchanging the personnel all the time.

They, they were afraid that we were fraternizing.

Q: Back in time.

EL: Back in the yes. What I wanted October.

Q: 1941

EL: All the great action yes. Well there was the

announcement that everybody but everybody had to go

with his whole family to the big Democratu square and

there will be a count of the population, how do you

call it. There is one word for it. And whoever will

be found in his home will be shot on the spot. So

everybody of course was very, very much afraid of it.

Everybody came but at that time there were already

brigades. These were groups of people who were protect-

ed by the Germans yes. Who worked for them in town or

somewhere. They came to fetch them. People with pro-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 48

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

fessions yes and they, they were separated not to touch

them. And I went my, I went with my sister, my, my

brother in law was already away with the 500 intellec-

tuals they had taken. In the beginning of the ghetto

my, my sister with her two years old yes.

And the young man who had helped me with my drawings,

he came with us. And he said that the, that we were

his family. Because he was a brigadier in a, in a

detachment that worked at the airfield and he had his

privilege. And his uncle was in the, the council of

elders. He had the jordan shein, the jordan paper. It

was the, the paper that saved people. And on that day

10,000 people were separated and uh driven to the

little ghetto first.

At the beginning no one knew what, maybe they wanted

to, to renew the little ghetto because it was very

crowded here. And uh they said no they had to send

people to, to Germany for other work in, in other,

other camps. But the next morning the we noticed that

the big, big numbers of people went up to the ninth

fort. That fort that we called the via Dolorossa and

then it was told that they shot them all. And then no

one, no one , no one wanted to believe. Til a woman

who survived under the corpses and crawled out and she

came and told the story. Still no one look you could,

you couldn't take it. You just couldn't take it.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 49

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: A woman came back.

EL: A woman came back because they shot the people and

sometimes they did, they didn't shoot them they only

wounded them. So they crawled out back again yes. And

somehow they found their, their way back to the ghetto

and they were telling their stories.

Q: Did you talk to them.

EL: Yes, I talked to, talked to her. She was a young

woman of 30. She looked like 50, 60. And I write

about her. I just went through my material to remember.

And then uh

Q: Did you see the next day you saw people coming back

with the

EL: The, yes the next day from back from the, back from

the, from the, from the mountain they came with uh with

uh lorries, with trucks with full of clothing, and full

of baby buggies, all they things they had robbed from

the people they executed.

But from me you wanted to know about, about uh cultur-

ally in the ghetto. So I wanted to mention that there

were musicians, there were many musicians. That at a

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 50

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

certain time were organized in an orchestra. And there

were orchestra performances when even the gestapo

people came uh to listen to them. And uh there were

writers and we had uh lectures. I even gave a lecture

on art. There were doctors who lectured on uh on

medicine and there was, there was some uh some uh quiet

in the, in the middle of, of 43 and when I went for my

lecture they already talked about sending people from

Kovno to Estonia. And I even thought of canceling my

lectured but people were already assembled there and I

de, I delivered.

But uh this time never came again. And then came the

parcelation and the sending to the, to the satellite

camps and the dissolution of the ghetto.

And then a new commandant came. A new commandant who

had been in, in Mauthausen. He had been, he had orches-

trated the, the gassing and the, and the, and the, the

extermination of, of hundreds of thousands and he came

to be our head in the ghetto. The Germans when they

want, when yeah. Can I go on.

Q: We have to put one more roll on. Do we have one

more .

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 51

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

EL: Where did I stop.

Q: I was going to ask you

EL: Oh yes ask me questions yes.

(Camera roll 86, sound roll 52, take)

(This is mark number 26)

Q: Day to day life in the ghetto, aside from your art,

when it was at a peaceful time, what was it like.

EL: It was peaceful then I, I, I went out drawing.

Look I had my sister with, with her little, with her

little child and then sometimes my sister wanted to go

out to town and somebody had to stay with the child.

We had our hands full. Yes. And then they asked me

for all sorts of teaching people and showing people and

uh when I worked with, for the Germans I, I worked the

whole day in the studio.

Q: When you

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 52

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

EL: When you went out to work you came back at, at 7

at night yes. I was in the working brigades like

anybody else. I was working at the airport. I was

working at the at the agriculture. I was working. But

then when, when, when somebody for instance we were,

women were working at agriculture in a farm, in a big

farm where they grew tobacco and was, it was in Lithua-

nia it was still a, experimental yes. And there was a

professor who saw me drawing so he asked me to, to, to

paint a few plants for him and then the manager of the

farm saw me painting so he asked if I can paint the

portrait of his wife and uh and then I was sitting

there and painting portraits at, at, it was warm and

they give me to eat. And then the neighbor wanted a

portrait and til we, one winter they, they the women

who were working there were stealing something. Of

course they were stealing. They were hungry. So he

sent them back before their time. And uh and I was at,

at their flat. I didn't know about it. So somebody

came and said uh the mother of that lady came and said

well your, your brigade is out yes. You hurry to, to

catch them. So I hurried and I fell in the snow and I

had a broken leg. That took me months to heal and, and

was an open wound. Yes and it and they took me, they

took me on a wagon with a, with a horse to the hospi-

tal. It was quite a tragedy (laughs) and my sister came

crying. But I did many drawings in the hospital.

Q: Let's cut for a second. (discussion of siren

during last conversation)

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 53

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(Speed)

(twenty...?)

Q: The jewish police, were they a good police force.

EL: They were a good police force yes. And they, they

were really the, the elite of youth in Kovno. They had

very difficult jobs. There were many Zionists between

them. There were many intell, intelligent people among

them. But you know that on the, on the day of the

children's action they arrested the whole Jewish police

so it could not uh collaborate with uh with, with

people in the ghetto in saving the children. And by

the way they came to take the children when the, when

the, when the people were out to work. So the people

came back in the evening they didn't find the children.

You can imagine what crying and shouting and, and uh

what a noise rose up in the ghetto when the, the people

didn't find the children at home. And the Jewish

police they took them to the ninth fort and they de-

manded of them to disclose where there were hiding

places for children. And those who went with them,

there were a few, stayed alive and the others were

shot. The bloom of youth. I knew many of them.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 54

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: The underground.

EL: I, I, I knew not many but I, I was not from the

place you know. But I, I knew that there was an under-

ground and I knew that uh that they were organizing

youth and looked among the youth there was the move-

ment. Anyway we will not survive so at least we will we

want to die as fighting people, not like sheep.

Many times when I lectured in uh in kibbutzim or uh I

have here a traveling exhibition and I have films and I

was invited twice a year on, on Yom Hashoah this is

Holocaust day and the tenth of tivet is the memorable

day of, of the dead whose burying place is not known.

So they, they have it as another, as another holocaust

Day. That I was invited in kibbutzim in organizations,

in museums to, to have an exhibition of my etchings and

to come and, and lecture and I have even films made of

that, videos made of that, that I showed one of my

films and then there were questions and answers. Uh

and what was the question I forgot.

Q: In the ghetto did you ever teach children drawing.

EL: No because uh because if I, if I had and they were

very disappointed that I didn't help them with it.

Because if I had done it I couldn't have found time for

my collection, for my work.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 55

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: And when you were deported toward the end. You

were deported?

EL: Yes.

Q: Describe to me those last few days and describe to

me how it was going there to be deported.

EL: Well uh we knew that, that everything was uh that

the, the Russian army was approaching. By the way I was

then working for the commandant of the ghetto and we

were copying for him uh landscapes and so on and he

loved very much the, the landscape and he said to me

that he wanted to send me to a Lithuanian farm to paint

a few pictures from him, from the Lithuanian country-

side. He didn't want the ghetto. He wanted to send,

maybe he wanted to save me or so. I already made plans

that I will take a little boy and, and I will save

this one and save this. And when I brought him his last

picture and I said well herr Obersterman fuhrer you

said you wanted to, to send me to uh to a farm in

Lithuania to paint for so, so he said oh please wait a

few days til things calm down. And a few days later we

had to march out of the ghetto. That was the end of my

career with the obserman fuhrer. Yes.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 56

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

But we were, we were marched off in uh to Democratu

square and we were waiting to be led to the railway

station. And they take, came out there were no, no

there was no railway for us. There were no, no how do

they call it, there were not cars. And we, and we

stayed for 2 or 3 days under, under the, under the sky,

we slept outside. They didn't let, let us go back to

our homes, yes. Til there were cars and til we were

led to the station and we, we were, we were optimistic.

Maybe the Russians were already a week later the Rus-

sians came. They liberated the Kovno very soon after we

left. Yes.

Q: Was there burning.

EL: They burned the whole ghetto yes. They

Q: Was it started while you were still there.

EL: Yes, yes, they started Gadiel's, Gadiel's little

boy and his sister's little girl, they, they were

together with Bension Schmidt in, in a hiding place in

our uh in our studio. And Gadiel with his family went

out and, and Bension Schmidt he didn't come out. He,

he was burned inside yes. And I met Mrs. Gadiel later

in Stutthof and she said that they had taken the chil-

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 57

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

dren away from them and Gadiel was in Dachau or some-

thing like that. They both survived, I, I heard from

them. I wrote them a letter. I

Q: The burning, did you see the burning.

EL: From afar we, we saw here and there flames. Yes,

they, they were looking for hiding places where they

hid the children. There were hiding places under the

houses yes and many people survived in those hiding

places. But many people they, they, they took them out

of that hiding places and brought them to the assembly

point where we assembled. A friend of mine, they came

it was so hot in those hiding places that they came

nearly naked yes. Anyway in Stutthof they took every-

thing away from us yes so it didn't matter that they

had not . And then we were given pajamas yes and

then we were only wondering that our showers had water

and not gas in them.

Q: They did

EL: They did.

Q: We need to get a little bit of room tone.

EL: You think I can't be quiet.

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 58

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

(room tone)

Q: OK, end room tone.

(end first side of cassette)

EL: Want his first name

(wild sound )

EL: Yes, every ghetto had, had one witness to send for

the Eichman trial and so they were very, very careful

in choosing the, the man what was considered a great

honor. But many people didn't want to appear as, as

witnesses. Because uh the people itself was angry at

the, at the people who stood at the head yes and some-

how they didn't want to confront it. I don't know but

Segalson, Mr. Segalson who in the ghetto was the manag-

er of the great, of the big workshops, he wanted to do

it very much. But his doctor told him that his heart

was not in a condition that he could do it. So they

were looking for somebody else.

And uh sometimes they are a little eccentric so they,

they decided to propose me and I was chosen and i was

on the list of witnesses in the Eichman trial and, and

uh newspapermen from all over the world came to, to

interview me here what you see this is a woman from

Sweden and there are, in my, in my album of, of uh

journal, journalists' papers there are Americans and I,

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 59

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

I don't know from several countries.

And then the, some of the important people who them-

selves didn't want to appear as witnesses they uh they

uh didn't want to accept me as a witness. They said

she doesn't belong to us. She, she's a stranger. What

does she know of Lithuanian jewry and an artist yet.

So they choose a, a doctor, Doctor Pertsekovich and uh

then being a witness, I couldn't go to the trial.

was I lived in Tel Aviv but I, I would have gone.

It interested me but there was no television then so I,

I heard the, the sessions on the radio and once I heard

Dr. Pertsekovich uh was uh testifying so I understand,

understood that I was off. So I wrote a letter to Yad

Vashem that uh I would like to, to be out of it. So I

wanted to be free. I wanted to go to the trial. So

they an, answered me all right. We have somebody else.

And then I started to go to the trial and did these

drawings. And uh one appeared in Dabar in the original

was stolen. And the others, I don't know. Yad Vashem

has it (hebrew) but it appeared in, in some of the

newspapers and I have here copies. And generally the

Jews of Kovno did not, did not really appreciate what I

was doing. Only the intellectuals. The many thought

what was in their heads when, when all this was happen-

ing. Art? They couldn't understand it. And some were

angry at me.

And when I did the portraits for Mr. Sundalevich uh

Video Tape No.\_\_\_\_ Camera Roll No. \_\_\_\_ Sound Roll No. \_\_\_\_

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 60

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

collection uh one of them even told, I don't want you

to draw me for that collection. I don't appreciate all

that effort. When uh Mr. Tory's book appeared and all

those people were mentioned and the portraits were the,

the same man who was a good friend here and his wife

and his son. By the way his son survived with his

father the Dachau concentration camp. And two other

sons. They had said sent before the war to Israel.

They met their mother, the mother and father in Italy

when they were in the jewish brigade. It, it was some

story from I don't know from uh from beyond. The

tragic thing is that one of those sons who was in the,

who was in they sent the boys to, to, to the mother's

parents. He, who lived in already in, in Palestine. He

fell in the war of independence and the other son died

suddenly of a com... The eldest has some issue, yes,

there are some. But Dr. Rabinovich and his wife died

at the grand age of over 90, yes, his wife was 96.

They wanted to interview her for the museum and the

one, the youngest son who was in the ghetto with her

parents. He, he had his bar mitzvah in the ghetto and

I promised him that I would do his portrait as a

present to his bar mitzvah. But somehow he didn't come

out. So I always when I met him here I always told him

I, I owe him, I owe him something yes. And he came to

collect (laughs) Yeah. And I saw to it that all the

children and grandchildren had a copy of the , of the

picture of the raid of the potato field that their

grandfather had helped me to create yes.

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KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/ESTHER LURIE-SHAPIRO page 61

Interviewed (7-17-97) by Sandra W. Bradley

Wentworth Films, Inc. 9400 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 TIMECODE NOTES:

When I met him here we were, we were good friends for

all those years. He said you know after all I regret

that you didn't draw me in the ghetto. So I said come

I'll draw you on. What. But he died in the meantime.

But the son lived on and he, he was the he was in, in

the, in the Washington Museum. I sent Naba to him

because the many, many people, people don't know as

much as I know yes. Because I was really friendly with

those top people. Because they were the intelligentsia

that was uh visiting my exhibition in Kovno before the

war. The only ones I knew in Kovno. By the way Gafu-

kin's son survived and Dr. Persekovich's son survived

and Lipschitz' daughter survived.

And Rabinovich's sons survived. He was in Washington

lately. They interviewed him there and we are in con-

tact. And I think he told me that he, that he in-

scribed himself for inter, for being interviewed by

Stephen Spielberg. yes. I, I didn't do. I only respond

when somebody comes to me. I don't, don't take any

incentive any more because i am always in fear that I

couldn't, couldn't do it. Couldn't fulfill what I am

promising.

I am glad I did what I did today. And that you are

content.

Q: Thank you very much. (end)

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