

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Semyon Menyuk
October 25, 1990
RG-50.030*0159**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Semyon Menyuk, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on October 25, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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SEMYON MENYUK

October 25, 1990

Q: Would you tell me your full name please?

A: My name is in Russia, Semyon Menyuk.

Q: Where were you born and when?

A: I was born in a village, which was Poland in 5 of May 1922.

Q: What was the name of the village?

A: Komarovo.

Q: Where was it near.

A: Near that's...in Ukraine, it was near the cities Lutsk [Polish: _uck], Sarny, the big city. The smaller ones is Rafalovka [Polish: Rafalolwka], Chartoriysk [Polish: Czartorysk]. Nu, it's a lot small, small cities around, and this was a village. The village it was more...most of them Ukraine people. The village got two hundred thirty houses, that's what I can remember.

Q: What...what were your...tell me about your childhood. Tell me about your parents first. Let's start with them. Tell me about them.

A: In this same village where most Ukrainer was living, there were 5, 6 families Jewish people, you know, and I was in this time...it was a school only for the ____ school. The parents send me to study in...in...to mine..to Sarny. It was living my mom...Mother's sister and I study in school. It's...uh...language, Yiddish language, and Polish. Nu, and I finish Polish school, Polish-Yiddish school, in 1938, and I come back to mine parents, to Komarovo, and I was staying with them in Komarovo until its come the...the war with Poland 1939.

Q: Let's...let's not get quite to 1939 just yet. Uh...You said...what did your father do? What was his occupation?

A: My father in this...know, I was just tell you before it was 5, 6 families. Mine father, he was...uh...worked for a Polish man. He got a lot of land and...and he managed a little what was the place, and the man...he was living in Russia. His name Shelkowski, and he come maybe one in a month, one in two months. Nu, he take some money because it was money for ...for...for the grain for the field. That's...you know, in most of them, the father, the mother, we got land and the father was working land, we got everything our own. We got a...a cow. We got a horse. Like a...like life in a village. And that's was...my father, he was a good player, a music player. He was playing on the...how it's called? On fiddle ...uh...very good. He was in...they invited him always ... Ukraine people, on weddings. Nu? He was a

nice...and my parents...my father and mother and sister, he was very nice with people, Ukraine, and Ukraine people with us. In this time. That's it what....

Q: What...what...did you have sisters and brothers?

A: I got one sister. The sister was younger...1 year or 2 years. I don't remember exactly now, but she was younger from me... and that's it. Two...two children, I and my sister.

Q: You mentioned school. Where is school...what kind of school did you go to?

A: It was...in this time it was...uh... __ it was called Tarbut. They teach us Polish language and Hebrew and Yiddish. [I finish the school,] it was Polish teachers, Jewish teachers, depend...depend...uh...what...what we study. It was a nice school. They teach us how to work and ____, it was a city...a big city. It was Polish people, Ukraine people, and a lot of Jewish people. Know...mine uncle, my mother's sister was the uncle, he was very a religion, very; and he...and he taught me to keep the religion very, very strong. And I go every day to synagogue with him and... and...and pray, and we was a life like that. You know, my father is what...not...not very a fanatic and __ we keep everything. You know, the father and the...and his wife, they were very religion. Nu, and after that in 1938 _____ I come back to my...to mine parents, to Komarovo; and I...I was living with the parents. You know, that was a child and you know, like everybody in the school, we lived... we go some evenings in school and we talked with...with our parents, you know, like...like...like today. It was the same in this time, special...special we cannot say, nothing special. Nu, such, it was nice life, you know, beginning. It certainly was a time what we begin to...begin our life. For whom it was the end, it was good. For somebody, it was not very well. You know, a lot of people now not in life, we was study with them. We was study with them. We was very good friend. We went...each other in the apartment, make the...you know, the works, homeworks together. Now, there is nobody alive.

Q: When did things begin to change for you?

A: The things begin to change, that's in 1939, when it was the war what the German with Poland. You know, during this time German take a piece Poland, and...uh...Russia take a piece Poland. You know, in this time we become...uh...the Russian comes us, and we become, you know, police by Russia. It was a problem and there was a change. The language I didn't study because in Poland they study only...uh...Russian...uh, Poland, the Polish language, and Yiddish, Hebrew, you know. And mine father began to teach me Russian language. Before he was in the...uh...first war, he was in the military in... uh... Russian...Russian military, and he knows very well Russian language. He began to teach me. Then I went to a school, you know, and I become know...to know Russian language more. I begin to work, you know, in this time it's after...it's called...it was a war. Everything change. Everything... because when the Russian came, it's a big change in the system. In Poland, it was known all...we can own something. When Russia came, they take everything. You cannot have no field, no... no... to do something, your own. You know, then I begin to work.

You know, my father begin to work. You know, he was...know some...everybody finds a job. I...I got a job that's in my village. It was...uh...stores....they called in this time, called cooperatives. I think it is the same like in the English language, cooperatives, and I was...the people from the city...from the village knowed it was worth it to come ahead of the ...of the village stores. And they... they take me, mine name to be a help in this...uh...government stores. And I begin to work with people. Most of them it was Ukraine people, most of them because all of them it was no Yiddish. I told you it was 5, 6 families. You know, I begin to work in this, and I work until...until it come the second war, German with Russia...the war...second war.

Q: How did it start for you?

A: You mean the war?

Q: How did the war...how did you feel the war began?

A: You know what? I'll tell you. When we was...we hear...we read...uh...what...what Hitler is doing in these places where they...where they come. Hitler is mean...if I say Hitler, the same in fascism. They're doing a lot...a lot of bad... uh...things... most of Jewish people, and rest not so...not so...but most was it was for Jewish. One time we was talking. You know, I didn't got practical life; I was a child in these times. Nu, what I can tell it to day...the father or the mother. We was talking. You know what? Maybe let me run, we will go away, and there were created somewhere places to go in...to go to Russia. You know, the father was telling me, nu,...he was...a war... in war... how its called, ...the other, a war prison in Germany, from the...uh...Russian military. In this time, it was not very bad in...uh...in Germany. And he say, "Nu, what can we...live here in... mine ... our parents, our...our grandparents, they born in this village. Who will do something, bad things, to us?" Nu,...

Q: Because of his experiences in World War I, he didn't really believe the Germans would do things like that?

A: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. He didn't believe what it can be like this. He...he knowed very well...uh...German language because he was in...in the prisoner war, war prisoner in Germany for over one year and he was speaking very well...uh...German. And we didn't believe it. We stayed at this time in our village, Komarovo. Only he would decide, you know, what we'll do. We'll go in forest when the...uh...the front, the soldiers will come. You know, maybe the first ones...maybe they can do something, bad things, to us. You know, and we went...we went in forest. You know, you see what happened. It's happened that the war begin in June 22 or 24. I forgot the date. 22 in June 1941. In...in this time, after maybe 7 days, not more than a week, German soldiers, we got in our places. Very fast. Very fast. Nu, that's how it begin... begin the...the war and how I feel. You know, mine experience ...I was not in the army. I didn't know about weapons, about...you know, what Jewish people...to say they write and teach us you don't need to have weapons. They don't need to teach you. We...we was quiet people. Work and my parents, my friends, and the same...I'm...and the,

mine age, not was...in this time, take me to the army. You know, then...then its change, and I'll explain you later a little. I will tell you what happened, how... That's how we was living in this time, what happened what's begin...begin the war. And what we're doing there...what they done to us, to our family, and to rest Jewish people where I was in ghetto. Nu? I don't know if...if to tell you what that's...that's how we...we went from Komarovo to the ghetto.

Q: Yes. Let's talk about that. What happened? What was that like?

A: That was...it's begin, I told you before, it was in 1941 and the Germany came. You know in this time a lot...they got numbers. Days...some people were anti-Semitism, in this time. It's not from the Ukraines--you cannot say all of them...it wasn't anything. No arms. Uh...some...some people were ____ and the Germans, they came. They began to do to us very wrong, nu, bad things. The bad things begin what every night until the Germans they come. They come to these...these people from our...Ukraine people from our village, was we studied together. We was...we played together. You know everything was...I know their family and they know our...our family and me. And they begin...first of them, it was they come...they come at nighttime, and they begin to shoot from guns. Then they take us from the houses. Everything's at nighttime. And they put us, you know, to work there and to take...to put us, you know, at nighttime it's cold, in water, drink the water from the river. It was a small river in our village. And that's everything what...what they can do. Bad things, they was doing.

Q: Tell us more. What kind of other bad things did they do? The Ukrainians?

A: Well...uh...first of them, they take everything, what we got ... I will tell you one...one thing. When we lived in forest, we left our house, everything. We was thinking, "I will go in the forest and we'll come back in a day, and we will come back." When we came to the house to stay...to come home; and home, they robbed everything. The people from the village, they take everything. When we came, nothing in the...nothing in the house. Then we went to live together...the second family, was my mother's sister was living...separate family, and they said, "Come to us and stay with us, if...if it's happen." You know, they take...we got no friends, and we got a horse. We got cows. They take...they take everything from us. They take us...no...and it was then sometimes come from city, Kolki [Polish: Ko_ki], and people but no policemen. It was...uh...besides German SSS...SS, they got...uh...Ukraine police. Police come and they came to us, "What you doing?" And for what? You have weapons....," come to watch weapons and to take our things from what we got. We didn't got...who knows what? You know, somebody got...everybody got a watch. They got something. They take this...everything they take...what they was looking for...for weapons. That what I told you before, what we never got weapons and we didn't need the weapons in this time. Nu, in a...you know what to...to tell you and to explain...for each day what they was doing. It's terrible things, and it's...you need...everyday it was everything new...news...uh...other news what they was doing to us. It's...it's very hard to...to now explain everything, every hour. No...in a time when it was everything it was...maybe after a couple of months...uh...from June, come the police and they take us from Komarovo, from the village and take us to

ghetto, to Kolki to ghetto. That was...when we come to ghetto, that was the most problems and the most terrible time. First of them, when they...when they take us to the ghetto from...from the village, we cannot take with us nothing. They tell...they tell us you can have only a piece bread, no...more nothing. And in this time when they take us to ghetto, nobody need something. You don't know stuff; but we felt...you cannot take it everything, because you can take, for example, 10 pounds stuff and that's it. They brought us to Kolki to ghetto. They put us to the ghetto. No...I think you know very well what this means...ghetto...in now a lot of people live, and something is doing. That was...

Q: Tell us about your ghetto.

A: We come in a special place that was in the city. They tell the people that they was living in city in Kolki, they give them one hour time....the German SS, to get...together, it was together with the police, their...the...the people...it was the German people. They tell them what...what to do. And they give them one hour, but you must to come in this place. "If you will not come for one hour, you will...you will be...uh...shoot where we will find you." That was everybody from this time, for one hour, you must be...to be every person want to live. You don't need nothing this time, only to come...to come, to stay in life. Now, and they come it was very in a...a room. I don't see apartment, like you see now apartment one bedroom--in one each room. It was for, nu, ... uh...8, 6 person in 1 room...1 room, because people come from all the city. Kolki, it was a city...uh...most of them that's in it was approximately, I don't know exactly, Jewish people, it was by 7...by 7,000 people Jewish. In city, it was in city...nu, I think 70, 80 percent Jewish people, and rest of them, it was Ukraine. Most of them Ukraine, and a little Polish people because.... And it begin this life in ghetto. We didn't got what to eat. They...they take us to work, the father and me and the sister, what we can nobody in the beginning when we came to ghetto, they take us to work and they give us, nu, 100 gram bread. 100 Gram that's, nu, ...a quarter...a quarter pound bread for a day. Then after that, it was maybe other couple of weeks, then they stopped with this. Find what you eat. What...what...find by yourself what you can eat. No...and it was what was begin...how people can go out from the ghetto. We find to change our clothes to give away for a piece bread. For example...uh....a suit what is cost a lot of money, and you go out from the ghetto, you just for 100 grams or quarter pound bread, you give the suit. You know, to eat, you don't need in this time. And the...in the ghetto, it was very terrible. First of all, the U.S...they said every Jewish must be make a yellow piece of...uh...it's called...uh...

Q: Star. Did you mean the star?

A: Yes. It was a round one...one yellow colored in front, and in back. I said that we didn't got what to eat, but they took us to any hard jobs. Besides that what they beat us. Beside that, what they did...German did...the German...the SS, they came, it was two German what they stayed always. I remember their names. Their name is...uh...Bartz and Georg. The two Germans. One is..., I know I remember it, like a Sonderführer it's called in English...uh...in German, and the other's like a [police commissarov (ph)]. And the police commissar was a Ukraine. His name is Suchkowski. These people was doing in the ghetto what they want. I

begin to tell you. They come sometimes, nu, when they have a good drink, they come in ghetto and...uh...begin to shoot...shoot somebody where...who comes on them. Because we got the yellow things...the yellow...know...things on the front and the back. Everything what they want...nobody was responsible for a Jewish man; what you can kill...a German...a policeman he can kill without any words than...easier than animal to kill. Nu, that was beginning to part of the winter time we live in the ghetto, and its begin...maybe that was in February. February, they put us--all the wintertime--they put us to very, very hard work. In springtime they take us to work, and...it was a big...uh...farm. Was Germans, and they take us all...all to German farm. I was working in the farm and my father was working in the farm, and sometimes the mother came if they didn't take her in another church, in the same to work in the...in the farm. To explain to you everything how...how it was, in the farm we was working. Nu, I was born in a village. I know all the jobs in the farm. We was working very hard. From...from the morning to...to the night they beat us. They...they doing what...what they wanted. If you work, uh...Georg or the German from SS called Bartz, they got, nu, sticks, rubber sticks. You can never say some...uh...words, he comes and hit you. You don't know for what, and what because you work, no food. Know it was in this time some good people, Ukraine, what they came to... Ukraine people, and they came to help us. Not all the people was...was bad. Nu, let me...if I say Ukraine, which I don't mean, what Ukraine...all Ukraine, between Ukraine people it was nice people, what they ... what it was good people. They help us. Know a lot of people got...a lot of people got afraid for them, but if a Ukraine man will come to ghetto and bring some food, the same people, Ukraine people, the policeman will kill him. Will kill! Is become a time what the people, one people got afraid from the other...from the other...Ukraine people. I don't think what we got...the most friend we got because the policeman kill...kill us anytime. And the same with...with German, the Germans. You know, the Germans I mean...the fascism, the SS, Germans. We was...in this time we was working, one time that begin that's 1942. One day I walked with my father in an evening time in the end of the day. They pick up us and put in a place..., nu, it's like a store, like a store room from bricks. It was they take us maybe... uh ...forty-five people...maybe forty people, they locked out...locked up us in this place and we don't know what happened. We was a night together with the people in the warehouse and we don't know what...we was thinking what it will be happening to us. Was they going to kill us? In the morning, they take out us from the...from the warehouse, and they brought us to the ghetto. When we came to the ghetto, we don't see no people. Nobody's in the ghetto. What...what happened, they maked the first pogrom. They maked it. You know what, it's hard to tell you the dates because in this time...uh...we didn't know the date. We didn't know the months. It happened....what they need us...for what reason they put us in the...in the warehouse, they need workers to...to take all the stuff what in ghetto it was. First of all, they came the SS and the policemans. They came the first, they take everything. The small stuff what is have in the house they have everything. They begin to use us to take from...take everything. They put this in wagons and to work for them and to bring them in special places where they took. I didn't say before...before the pogrom in this night what they locked up and they brought policemans from all...from other cities to...in this place to make the pogrom. I came in my house where I was living with my father and we came...I begin...I came in the first in the house and I was looking around. I think maybe I will find my mother and my sister....

(crying) One second.... I didn't find. Not the mother. Not the sister. We find a lot of people what was killed, but they didn't take them and they probably killed them and all the people they take on the trucks, and they put them...that was...uh...they make holes in the ground and they shot them in a special...in a special places. It was in a forest. It's maybe from the ghetto, it was 5, 6 miles, not more. And they take...they tell us, the people what they shoot to put them in bundles and to bury them, all the people. Nu, you can't understand how we can feel in that time like this what they killed my mother. They killed my sister; and I'm with the father, we staying alive. Now. We know very well what it will be the end. It will be come for us, because now we understand they need us what to do this job. That's why they left us. Now tomorrow or after tomorrow, it will be the same to come to us. How it was...everything they take you know from the houses. We cried. We doing.... It's terrible time. He--the policeman stayed and the SS man--they brought a lot of SS people and they stay and watch for us what they need to work. They finished..., nu,...then they finished what they got. They got...they give us again...a couple of houses, and they tell us, "You will live in this house," because they kill all the people and it was left a lot empty...empty houses. You know what? We come...we come with my father...we come more people. In a couple of days, it's come more people. One problem I can...I want to tell. A lot of people ask questions. Nu, why people come again to the ghetto? The time is what...it was so bad if you jumped for example from the truck or you jumped or you run away from the Germans, the time it was...the Ukraine police and a lot of people anti-Semitism was they catch you and they kill you by their self or they take you to the Germans. The Germans for each...for each Jewish people, the German was giving a pack cigarette or..or a piece bread or a...or a 100 gram sugar, so that what...the problem it was that the people what they left from the pogrom, what they run away some...it was lucky people. Nu, it was. And what happened? In a couple of days, people come back. It's come woman, men, some children...what they can walk, they can run. Nu, it was come...no, it's beginning they did...all the people, they come back. Oh, three hundred maybe people, they come around for...for...and we stay in this...the Germans what they was doing in this time, they said, "Who left in life, come back. We will not touch you. You will work, and that's it." You know, it was a lie, what you cannot...you cannot believe in that. No? In that situation like that, you cannot stay not in forest. You cannot stay not in village. You cannot stay in the ghetto. You must to come again because you want to eat. Everybody was thinking, "Ah, ...maybe here...maybe we'll leave or we'll not leave." Nu, the answer...they came. Maybe it was a mistake. In this time what they want to say you want to move, and this time it was no partisans. Nobody in the forest what can help the people, the Jewish people, but we stay...what we came in the forest. We stay...maybe it was one months more, and its begin the second pogrom. Second come...the second pogrom happened when...uh...I want to say you how I find out what it will be something. In this time when it was the war...uh...with Poland, some people, Polish people, come...uh...run away from Poland and come to the...uh...Russian...to stay Russian because the German comes to take Poland, he kill, begin to kill in Poland people. Some people was smart people, and they run away. They don't want to be...uh..by the Germans, and they came to Russia. I met with a couple of people. It was two brothers in a city...it was [Lulebiersk (ph)], and that was...the Germans saved them, and the same time they take us to work, they save what is the two brothers because they was making gold stuff for them. You know, how it come the stuff? I

will tell you this stuff how come to the Germans. The SS comes...it was...uh...in ghetto. It was called in this time a Judenrat. They come and they said, "We need 5 pounds," for example, 5 pounds. I don't know how much...5 pounds, 3 pounds. "We need gold. If you will not give the gold, tomorrow you will be shot. All of the Jewish people." From the Judenrat, the people comes to the people in the city, of that's how I begin to explain how from where its come the gold. And take...you have a spoon of gold or you have a batch of gold, you begin to give that. And that's...what that's the SS, they got the gold and they make every...any stuff. Before its comes the second pogrom, one night they came, the SS, came to the two brothers and they said, "Give all the stuff." This was the stuff...it was not finished. And they said, "We don't want to wait. Give everything." Then I meet in [Ilnick (ph)] and they take...he tell me, the brother, too, "You know what. It will be something happen because if they take all the stuff, the gold. It must be something, they think something to do for, to us." And this time I saved my father. "You know what? We will not go in the place where we stay at nighttime to sleep. We'll go in the farm." And we said to some people, to other people who believed...who didn't believe. Some believed and they came, and some friends and it was, nu, where they keep the cow, they keep the horses...they keep everything. And we stayed the night in this place in the farm. In morning, nu,...it's come the sun...come up and bring here it's quiet. We don't hear nothing, what from German ... the policeman. We was thinking...I was thinking in the...with my father together and I tell my father, "You know what? I think it...it's quiet. We don't hear nothing." We come out from the...you know, it was hay. We come out, I and the father, and they stay...the policemen and Germans. Nu, excuse me, for the ["Verfluchtene Juden, Raus!"]. That mean, "Come out." Now they take us and they begin to look around. They find more people, and they begin to beat us. My father... uh ...was speaking very well...uh...German, I told you before. He begin to talk to him. He don't want to talk, and again the same words...bad words, good words and hit him and hit me and hit other people. And they take us all...how many people they find. They find maybe in the farm, it was, nu, maybe 30, 40 people, and they take us in the ghetto, back in the same place where it was before, and they take us in...in the houses. We come to the houses. Houses stay a lot of police, Ukraine police and a lot of SS. People from the...all, they take and this time the second pogrom...maybe it was 500, 600 people they came back. When they take us... when they brought us in this house, they put us and we stay...and we stay until maybe it was in morning very early, and we stayed until 2 o'clock maybe or 1 o'clock at daytime while they find everywhere... everywhere...the police was running everywhere, and they brought all in the house. When its come the time in the house they stay is take...before this, no...uh...maybe a couple of days ago, we was talking with these two brothers. He said ...one of the brothers said...what "I make a gun;" ...nu, he didn't check the gun, if it works. I and he and a couple of guys more, he said, "Let...we will do like this. When they will take us on the...we know what they will take us on the truck and they will take us in forest," you know. They said like this. Nu ... they was older and they got more practical and they was, nu, mechanics, and they did stuff in weapons. They said...what and we will be on the truck, I will begin to shot all the SS, or the police car how it will be we will see, and you run away or how you can take...who knows to take the... from them...the guns, the weapons what they have. Now its happened we talked with them. Then when its come before about 2 o'clock, the daytime comes, the first truck comes to the door. What are they doing? The Germans stay...uh...uh... they make like a

corridor. And they take from the house Jewish people in the corridor to their truck. You must run and they stayed...if you don't run, they hit you again from how he can...with us with what...with a gun, with...with rubber, with sticks, with what hit him. Everybody what comes, run away to the trucks. We say to the people...to these brothers and young people, we say...they will go... I want to tell you one things more. When its come, the first truck, ...nu, everybody feels what...what it will be happening. Everybody in this time want to live for 5 minutes more until it will be come the second truck. No...nobody want to go the first. One goes the other, other one. On the top of the other. I come to my father, and I stay and I tell him, "Father, you know what..." uh...I tell him the story what "...here is people. Maybe we will...we will...uh...safe...we will be safe, maybe we must run away...away from the truck." He said, "You know what, son. I don't want to see your... (Crying) (Crying) I don't want to see what you will be killed up front of me, and I don't want what you will see what I will be killed in front of you." I don't... (crying) ... (crying) ... I'm sorry. I went first with the...with the guys and...and I was...they put me it was with my back side I was in the...how it's called, "bort" [**Russ: side**] in the truck, and the left side, the back side and left. Believe me, and I will never forget this...this time when they...when I come on the truck and it was a couple of people to...near to me. They was dead. They didn't kill them. They was dead, but they...uh ..., nu, from...from the pressure, more from the pressure. It was dead what take the person he cannot walk after this. Nu, it was older people. I was this time a child and I was strong. They put us....you need to...the feet all in this position to straight the feet and the other one must be...sit on your feet. And it was like that, all of them. In...in front it was a couple SS and Ukraine police. Maybe it was all the people on the truck, the police and the SS, nu, 5 persons or 6 persons. The truck begin to run...go...started to fill up all the truck and...uh...maybe in a...in a while, they take us to the...to the place where they shot...shot us...they will shot us. The truck begin to...uh...to go slowly because it was a sign not...not good highway. Then the one brother get up and begin to shot. When he got up and begin to shot, and the...uh...gun didn't work. He didn't work the gun. The police...how they said they didn't talk to whom. Everybody with guns they begin to kill on the truck. They begin to kill...the truck...I was sitting in left side. I jumped from the truck. No...how to tell you that a luck, or in this time you...you cannot think. Something, nu, right things or to do right things. Nu, instinctive, what every person what I met want to live. I jumped. I jumped and I began to run from this place. Nu, and it was...uh...in this time it was... again, I want to say it was good people and it was bad people. The bad people they cried on this...and the good people they cried and the bad people they was happy to see, to see the anti-Semitism what the German and the policeman they killed Jewish people. The next...uh...jump peopled stayed and begin to..to show. They, you have in Ukraine what's called "Zhid," dirty word for Jewish...uh ...Jewish people what we have in many languages. Nu, in this time the...the police and the German SS come and this way after the truck and come and begin to shot after me to kill me. I'm lucky. How it's happened, I don't know. They didn't kill me. And I come that's...,nu, any...in this time, I want to tell you...in this time it was a couple more, not very...maybe 5 persons what they was begin to run, young, and he decided. Most of them was...they killed the people on the truck. When I run from...when I come in a...it was called in English, a barn. I come to a barn and I come...it was a pig inside. I jumped to come on the top. In the top it was straw. Straw, yes? Straw, and I...you know what, it's in seconds because if you will do slowly with

that, in a second you will be killed. I come and I put...in the straw, and I don't know a lot of words how its come...in the straw and I put on me, straw to cover my...my...myself, and it's after maybe, nu,...not more than 2 minutes. Not more. Comes I hear...when I stay in the top on the straw and the...it was standing near the hiding where they take the...the people, the Jewish people, in the truck, and it was near but I hear everything and I hear what the...how they shot. It was very close from. That's the barn, it was very close. I feel what I mean blood. All my face was in blood. I was thinking where they shot me and they were...and I was wounded. Know and I don't know what is happening with me. I feel my nose is bothered me and what is blood, and in this time if you can run or you can do something, you don't care about this. Then in a couple of minutes, he...the police, in comes the owner from the...from the barn, and the policeman said in Ukrainian, ["Sudeya Zhid zabir" (ph)] That means "a Jew comes in your...came in your barn from the truck." He begin to come...the policeman comes...they come 1 or 2...I don't know how many it was and comes in the...on steps and comes to watch me in the top. Nu, in this time, I was...I cannot tell you. I was not dead and not in life. How I was feeling. Nu, it was terrible. I know what here...when he will find; in my luck, when he comes up he takes from the middle, the straw from the outside and the other side and put them on one side and the other side and he...he said, ["Nemar Zhida" (ph)] That mean, "It's not here. He's not here." Nu, when I hear what his words. Nu, I cannot explain to you how...what happened to me. Come...he comes down and go away from this barn. In a couple minutes when he left, comes the owner in the...from the barn and his wife or children...I don't know the truth, and he begun...begin to talk to them. And he don't know what I'm in this same barn I'm up there and I hear this everything. He begin to..to explain to them what is happened. What they kill everybody, what not far away the place where they killed them. It's terrible...a terrible place. And then he say, "I need to take mine horse in my barn because the German tell me, ...the police, to come to take--the highway what they killed the people--to take them and to bring them to the...to the place where they kill them." In a couple a minutes ago, ...nu, it's taken...I don't know, maybe a hour or a half hour...I don't know exactly time, he comes back and he says what, "I put dead people and I take them to the place where they kill all of them." And I hear, next day I hear how they...the guns...how they kill them. And I remember the...the mens they took on the trucks and children and woman, they...a lot of police and they...they go with...by themselves on foots they walk. How long I will live, how long, I will never forgot the voice when they went...and it was the barn stay very close by the highway what they went. They cry. They doing terrible...what you cannot... And I know that was my mother; but not in this time, no. It's people that I know. And I...you must to stay, but what I cannot help. I cannot help nothing. Because if I will go out they will kill me, that's it. And you...you must be with that and to stay. It's finished...they kill; and I hear everything, how they shot everything. It become evening. Nu, what to do? I was thinking what to do. I cannot stay here. And if I...I need to eat. I need to come out. I cannot stay. What to do in future? My...uh...village. I was decided to go in my village because I know a lot of people. I know good people. I know bad people. And I know the...the place where I can walk in the forest, nu, and maybe...maybe I will...I will be in life. I don't know how long. I don't know. I decided, nu, how to go to the ghetto to my village, to village Komarovo. It was near. Nu? We got two bridges from go to ghetto and I know if I will come to the bridges, the bridges they stay...uh... German people or police, and I decided

to go with...in forest and go to my...to my village. How to come...came out from the...I begin to come out from the...from the barn. The owner, he locked out from the other side. I cannot...I cannot come out, and I cannot make noises because if some noise I know what somebody will be here. In this time, the barns was covered with straw, not like...uh ...you know in America or other places, but we got some covers...uh...metal or what. I break the...the straw on the top. I take...I take...I find....how it's called? ...it's metal. Its in the end sharp metal, what you take hay, I took from them. And I come from the top very quiet and I began to run. I come over the road, what they take the people into the forest. When I come to the forest, I tell you honestly maybe each my step after 2, 3 step I fell down. I got like...I was looking for somebody like stay the SS, stay the police, what they hear, in this time. Okay. I came..., nu, it was maybe three quarters kilometers until what I run to the forest. I come the forest. I was tired, very tired, and I sat down; and each leaves in the forest when they begin is my hair, know comes up like...like in...I cannot forgot how they, all they time it stay in my eyes, the Germans...the police, how they kill, what I think...I think...what Germans stay behind me or up...all that.

Q: Wait. We need to pause. Let's stop and take a breath and then we'll talk about this.

A: Okay.

TAPE #2

Q: Let's go back to the forest. The tape is on. You're in the forest. Tell us about that.

A: When I came to the forest and I decided what I need to go only in mine village, it was in this time middle of the night. And I know what... the time goes, and I need to go until it will begin to be day. I need to come...it was a river still, a big river and I need to come over the river. And this time I went maybe a half hour more and I come at night time...sick people at night in the forest that was workers and I was come and sit very close and I hear what they talking. They talking in Russian...in...uh...Ukraine, and I see what I cannot come to them because they...they talk and I see what it's not good friend for Jewish people. I go on side and come near to the...uh...to the river and I begin to run. Run, you know, it was...I need to pass by...uh...by a 15 kilometers...15 kilometers. It's...uh...maybe a 10 or 12 miles. Maybe it was more a little. I came...that was a city very close to ours. It was called [Kolikovich (ph)]. And one hunt I got what I...uh...take from mine...uh...from my barn what I come out, and they handing somebody want to catch me all, because I got that's with metal...stiff.... How it's called?

Q: Pitch fork.

A: Yes. I come to the first house and I knock in the window. At nighttime, and I tell them. That was my big mistake. My big mistake, but later I was thinking "What...what I'm dong? I'm by myself and I knock on a...at night time in a door and I don't know. Maybe it's a police house. Maybe...maybe whose somebody what can kill me." Nu, it's done. Nu, it's...I'm lucky. The finish is good. Comes a lady to the window and begin not...not with something wrong. She begin to me to talk very polite. "Please, I'm by myself. I cannot go with night time. I...I cannot help you." Nu, I see what she is afraid for me, not... I stay this time, I don't know what to do, what I am afraid. Nu, she begin. I see what I cannot do nothing. I come to another house. The same. Nobody want to go at nighttime out. Come to the river and I begin to break boats...small boats, and I go over the...uh...in the boats over the river and the side, there is my village, Komarovo. And I begin to run how my...how I came to run to come to somebody. In Komarovo, I know people...uh...Ukraine people, good people, and they come...the sun become...become...I don't know the time...this time I didn't know only I was looking only in the sun. That was already...it's night...in the morning become...the sun will come up, and I come to the...to the man he take me at home. I come at home. He begun...begin to ask me, "How do you think...how you can run away from them?" Shortly I tell him what happened. He was very sorry for me, and nu, he say what "I can help you." And I was...his son and I...we explained together in the same village.

Q: This is the man....you've come into the house of a man you knew before.

A: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes, what I know him before. That...that... I came to my village, village Komarovo. I begin to ask him who is in forest. "Maybe you know somebody's in forest.

Maybe Jewish people, more.” He tells me things like this; but he didn't see him, no. Uh...he say, what I know, and he did not know, but Srulek Feierman from my...from the same village, he comes before...maybe before one month, he comes...he...he run away from the first pogrom. He run away, and he's now in the forest. Nu, where he is? He said, "I don't know.” No, he told me, the name from the forest name and ...I know very well the places and the...he gave me a piece bread. He gave me to eat. Nu? And I left because if somebody will catch me in his home, he will be killed and I will be killed. I went from his home and I come in the big...big forest. Big forest. The first night no food I got. I didn't go to some...to... to houses to ask for eat or what. And I came in the forest and the first night...that's...that's mean the second night, first night I was...when I left from the...from the barn. I cannot find a place for me. I cannot sleep. I cannot eat. I cannot...nothing...,nu, ...in forest and the same I never by myself in forest to sleep. It was nu,...unusual. Unusual. Nu, the first night, the second night, the third night, the days that I walked around.... I cried. I don't stop to cry, to... and no clothes on me when I run from the truck. It was a short and pants on me. Nothing...nothing more. Nu, maybe the third day or the fourth day, I don't remember exactly, I began to come to people what they live...live in forest. They got people...a lot people, they got houses in forest. And I...I know very well the people. Very well. Nu, I was thinking I will choose to this man, I can come to him. Nu, I choose...he's a nice man. He was a nice man. Nu, it was right I came to people...to this man and I was asking, "Maybe you know him. Was somebody in the forest.” He say...what he is the second Srulek. His name is Srulek like mine name, only my name is Menyuk and he's Feierman. Nu, where he is in forest, I cannot tell him because he don't say. He comes to...to...have a piece bread or what to eat something, and he go away. In this time I...I went to the forest again, and I...by myself I was maybe 2 weeks or 3 weeks...I don't remember exactly. And then one day I was going and I see a man go...goes in forest. Know...you know what...he afraid...he from one side afraid...and the second side I was happy--maybe...maybe that's he. I decided to go to him, and the same thing and we see he knows me and I knows him. And we meet together. Nu, he was older than I am. He was maybe 8 years or 10 years older from me. I was younger. He was..., nu, and that was beginning a life two people. That was 1942 that was...and we begin...

Q: Who is this man?

A: This man...he was to mine...a Jewish man from the same... uh...village Komarovo, and he run away from the first pogrom, but it was a month ago from Kolki ghetto. Nu, when we met with him, I know him and he knows me; and that's...know, two of us. It's a little easier. He begin to explain how he run away. I tell him how I run away. Nu, what...what we can do. We cannot do nothing. We begin to talk with people...uh... with Ukraine people. If some people more, what you know. No more Jewish people, and nobody in forest that you can... No, we begin build life with him, two of us. We didn't got what to eat. We didn't got what to drink, eat. It was war and what you can. We come in the gardens, we find something there. We can stole, and we did. I say that what it was. To some people, we came. Some people give us..., nu, in the beginning it was a little bit easier for somebody. And then, nu, after a couple of months, they told if somebody will give food or will not say...uh...to the Germans, the SS, what it's come the Jewish people, they will be killed...the Ukraine. Nobody want to give you

some food. That's...that was the worse time in the _____ but a couple...couple people, very good people, what they help us. They help us with food. They help us with news to tell us what is going on. We was thinking, nu, that somebody was saying us that German take Moscow...uh...that's...that's and if German will stay that is our life comes to end. Nu, we can hold couple of months in that. One man, it was very excellent, very good person. He was...he was like in this time, he was like a father to us. Behind food, one time he...he saved us. How he saved us, I'll tell you. It was no...in...uh...when its become cold time, somebody...the police from the ghetto...somebody tell them what two Jewish people go around this in this village, Komarovo. They came maybe...uh...20, 30 or 40 person..., nu, ...police, to catch us, to kill us. Now, you can understand how deep it was the antisemitism in this time. Was for two people--they know what two people--they take a lot of police to come us to kill us. When we came to this guy at nighttime, Ukraine man, Ukrainian, and he tell us you know what's truth. Don't go these...these days. Don't go in this place where we always we come to people to beg something to eat or do something. Don't go this place. Why? He said it was people was talking...it was...uh...you know the place where people comes...uh...to pray in...uh...a village. It's a [circle] we say...it's a [circle] and its...and people began to talk what it's going this day. It was Sunday. It's come a lot of police and they will kill what they two people...the two Jewish people what they're going in forest. When he tell us what that's no...that's...they decide what he cannot go more in this place. We didn't come in this place maybe...maybe a month...month, and then after a month what's in forest, you need to come and there to beg a piece bread and to eat something. When they see us, "Eh! You know what, we didn't believe what you will be alive," and they begin to tell us. What every...every night it was maybe it was 3 nights or 4 nights two, three policeman in each house was waiting for us, what we will come in the house. I don't know how lucky we in, until now I don't say, to thank the person what he told us...told us. What he didn't told us, we will...we will come, probably we will come to this place, and we will be killed. After then, nu, it come wintertime. What to do wintertime? Wintertime we cannot go. And in this same time, nu, and I want to...excuse me...everything was...uh... How it's called? Lice. On us, it was lice. What I tell you, it's un...unbelievable. Unbelievable! When you come in the house for one second, if it's warm you cannot stay. Everything our...all the skin, all everything, it was in blood. Everything! And hungry. Nu, and its come...it come wintertime. What we can do? We begin to talk between us, and we make in forest...in the top, we make..., nu, it's called in Russia "Shalash." [**Russ: a hut made of branches**] Nu, it was cold, become first...first frozen, and we cannot stay there and we cannot sleep, nothing. Then we decided, "Let me make a hole in the ground," and it begin...we begin to build the hole in the ground. We cannot leave the hole what some people can see. We build a hole and we take the ground. We take maybe, you know, for a half mile because if somebody will see fresh ground, thats mean for somebody...somebody is doing something in...in forest. It's getting...somebody will come and to watch. We put this in water. We put this in places so nobody can think for this, and we make the hole. We covered the hole, and you go...we go in and ...uh...we covered the hole with some leaves...leaves or it's called, you know, like... like... piece like that, we take to cover the hole but nobody. It was better. Than in the top on the ground was better. Nu, we got again problems. The problems is when it snowed and you come out and you left...you go in snow, you can see what somebody people goes in there. So if anybody came somebody find. We stay maybe 2

days, 3 days, we stayed. It's a lot of snow and people doesn't go. We stayed. We don't come out from the hole. We eat snow. We make from snow...we make water. It's terrible water, to drink from snow the water. Food, I don't say food...food we got. We always we keep...uh...some flour, make with water and eat...eat that's food. It's...we eat what...I cannot describe what we eat. Everything, what it's...what we can find. Raw potatoes or any...any food. Nu, we..the wintertime it was very hard when we stayed in this time. At nighttime we goes...we go, nu, to wait anywhere to eat and we come in...uh...places and you cannot go with...with the highways or the ways you go always straight and you come to water, wintertime. You passed a lot of water. You come wet. You cannot make a fire. The...we make fires maybe like people...uh...thousand years ago make the fire. You...you never, nu, ...maybe see how...how it's a stone and a piece metal and you hit this and it comes...know I don't want to...that's not...know we make...nu, at nighttime you cannot make the fire because you can see from far away the fires is the night we run away then its come a daytime morning, then we make a fire in forest and we stayed...we take off the clothes and I cannot say what's it's clothes. No, it's junk, or in other words. Nu, and we dry up and there again we need to think what to do again. 1942, after that's the wintertime, we began to talk to come to houses they say what it's comes what we have in the forest people. What people, they don't know. Nu, they comes with...uh...with weapons. They come the same. They ask for bread. Who is that? We don't know. Nu, they said it can be partisans, Russian partisans. In this time when it become the war prisoners, Russian war prisoners, run away from the...from them...from the Germans. And they come in forest, and they become not in the same time...uh... Russian prisoners and the same time, they...it was come the Ukraine...uh...people what they was, nu, with the "Nationalisten." Nu, they was thinking what they want...uh...undependant [**i.e., independent**] Ukraine...undependant. It was differents kinds. It was one people they want...undependant. The other one want... dependant from Germany. Nu, the names...different groups... different groups. They call in this time, Banderovtsy,¹ [Minekovtsy (ph)], Bulbovtsy.² That means the who was the boss, their boss. And the ideas was differents. What they did...what some Ukraine people...what they want undependant Ukraine....undependant. Nu, in other one to be undependant to Germany. Nu, not to Russia. Nu, all of them...if these people...they was anti-Semitism in the idea, their idea. They don't want other nationalities. They want only to be only Ukraine must be lived in Ukraine. It was very close with fascism. Very close. They killed...the same they killed Jewish people, they killed other nationality people. I want to show you example. It was in the same... when we was in forest. And this time it was in Komarovo, in this village it was a Polish family, it was the father and a daughter. They come at night and they kill them. For what? What they Polish people, and they killed them. In this time, we got afraid to come to these same...to these same Ukraine people to be...and we was right looking for the Russian partisan. Russian partisan, and it was very hard. It was a couple...then people saw them. Nu, it's hard to come

¹ After Stepan Bandera, Ukrainian nationalist leader who lead a group under the standard "Semastina Ukraina" (**Trans:** "Independent Ukraine").

² After Taras Bulba, a 19th century Cossack leader.

to the.... One time that was..., nu, I cannot tell you the date or the month. Nu, they came to Polish people and this time what that's very...very interesting. German...the SS, fascism, make a political edict. They put the Polish people again[st] the Ukraine, the Ukraine again[st] Poland...uh...again[st] Polish people, and each other begin to kill. Ukraine people comes to the Polish villages and kill the...the Polish. The Polish, when they have...uh...when they can...they have...they can come to the Ukraine, they do the same. Nu, in this place it was from ... not far away from our village, it was a Polish small village, very small. Now the Ukraine was much more than Polish people. Then we decided with...oh, I missed one thing more. You know what, uh...the time is going past, a lot of...of episodes... it's a lot...a lot of episodes. I cannot explain all the episodes. Nu, the most important I...I forgot to tell you. When we was in forest, we...uh...find people and they said what these guys...what he's with me...he's... his sister's husband³ is the next...he was in next village, in [Kulikovich (ph)] . You find good people and they...they tell him, they went to the other village and they told him what we said to come to us. And in wintertime...it was in wintertime, we find him. We find him, and he comes. His foot, it was frozen at all. He didn't got nothing, only everything in the blood. He cannot walk at all. We left him in the same place, in the same place what we make the hole and we bring something ...a piece bread or what, and he stayed in this hole..., nu, ...and to some medicine...no medicine. We take some leaves, some,... nu, it's not...you cannot stay like that. No?. I didn't finish. When become what Ukrainians to come in the forest because they want to build Ukraine undependant. You know the politic was the same with the Germans. They kill us, and they kill the Russian partisans. They want to kill Russian people. They don't want nobody to live in Ukraine. We came in the one time he got...uh...he's older from his...the second man what I met with him and first he said, "We'll go."

Q: What...what was his...the second man you met in the forest. This is?

A: Yes. Together. Yes, together with him. He said to me, "You know what? We'll go to the Polish people." We went to the Polish people that was...that was begin Spring time, and we went to the Polish people. We went to the Polish people and we begin to talk to them and that, "You know what, we're Jews in the...", and we was asking for partisans. One young boy, maybe he's alive. Now maybe where I don't know. I don't remember his name. He was, nu, maybe this age what I am, and he said to us, "Okay. Come tomorrow. Come tomorrow in morning. The partisans will be here." And I will met...us with the partisans. And it was. We came in morning...in morning and he say it comes...it was, oh, maybe 8, 9 people. Nu, they have a couple guns, a couple rifles. Nu, it's better than nothing. He met with us and we came with them to the partisans. Nu, now we happy. So we came in a house that's in forest, that big forest. It's in another...another place, another village. We shave. We shave. No, I didn't tell you. We didn't look like persons...like animals, with the beards, dirty. We didn't never...that's...that's take a year. We didn't wash our face. No, it's terrible. I cannot explain to you. Nu, now they gave us clothes. We shave all and feel now what we persons. We was looking...they was no smelling to us, you see. You know, you can...we can see what is.

³ This third man was the husband of Srulek Feierman's sister.

You're people. You're not animals. Know, and it's...we stay with them a couple...maybe for a week. We begin to go with them... nu, to do some things. We went...we find policemen. Nu, I need to tell the true. We killed, we...we...uh...burned with fires what is his...uh... house with fire, for bring that. Because it's...uh...every person, "If you do to me wrong things, I will do the same to you." And it was people. Who's the people? The Ukraine people...it was...they was working in their villages, and, nu, someone it was, nu, when the Russian was...he was policeman. He was another something...a worker, a office worker. They killed the families. They killed everything, and they go in the partisans like me, like everybody, and from them it was born the partisans. A couple persons comes from what there was prisons...uh...how it's called? They was war prisoners, and they went to the forest. Nu, in...after a week or two...I don't remember exactly, and this year that's begin 1943, it's in other places, it's become lot partisans, another places is left Jewish who was the most of them, in the partisans...Russian people...that's the war prisoners, Jewish people and Ukraine people. Was.... And they became partisans. The partisans...it's how they met. In one group 20 people, in one group 10 people, in another group.... Nu? It would depend how they met. Nu, they got...uh...still what to do to come together to find people what in the forest and to bring them all together and to do something what...what get...against the Germany. Nu, in after a 3 weeks its came from the bigger...the bigger partisans that near Manevichi [Polish: Maniewiczze], Rafalovka [Polish: Rafalowka]--that's the places, 3 people and they take us with them to in the Lager [Bedzetyz (ph)] in the forest. That was to White Russia; and the place that's very big forest, what we can...Germans will not come in these places. Nu? And it's better what we can do something. Nu? And the partisans when they came, that's was this life a different. We was with people. We was doing...we got a..., nu, to do some things ...uh...what we was doing most of them with partisans. Nu, I cannot do these things what its are war prisoners, what he knows how to make, nu, ...to blow up the road...road or...uh...what he was doing. I was, for example, I like I am. We stay and watch from side what the police or German comes. It was a lot...a lot. And they make the...they put...it was dynamite on the railroad, and when they...when they...uh...its comes, they...how it's called?

Q: The train.

A: The train. Right. The train, when its come in this place, blow up. Nu, and we was...and we was good people what they said what goes German soldiers. We find all the places. Nu, it's a big story. Take a lot of time. No? What we was doing most...uh...we find a lot...a lot of Jewish people in this time comes and its becomes...we find places. Nu, a lot of woman, children, put them in forest and it was...uh ... "Soyedineniya...", it's called: "Soyedineniya [Diadia Peka (ph)] [**Russ: "Formation 'Uncle Peka'**"]".⁴ That's... uh... partisans group, and different people. It was Ukraine, Russian...uh... Jewish, Armenian. A lot different people. A lot of different. Nu, everybody got...left not from good stuff, go from home to live in a...in a house and to go in forest. Nobody want to do this, but if you want to live...you want ...you see what...what they're doing wrong things, these people decided what to do.

⁴ This was a sub-command of the partisan brigade lead by Josef Sobesiak (known as "Max") and Mikula Konishchuk.

Q: Could we...could we back up a little bit? The...the forest. Where was this forest again. Can you explain it a little better?

A: That... Yes. The forest that was...uh...to comes to White Russia. It's called Byelorussia. Nu, it was begin from Ukraine, and it was big forest. We were staying in forest that's between Rafalovka, Manevichi, Kovel [Polish: Kowel], what that's the area most partisans because it was a very big good place where...where partisans can stay. Because in one places it was...uh...war there, and people cannot come in this places. And for us it was a good places. I don't want this life in the partisans to...to explain you everything. It was a lot. Nu, I want only to show you mine personal life why...how...how it's...how it was and how...how I was very lucky to...to...to stay in life.

Q: Will you tell us though...I need to know...we would like to know a little more about this life. You said you were like a guard when they...when they blew up trains. Can you tell me some other things that you did with the partisans? What other kinds of activity did you do?

A: Well, I'll tell you...uh...like this. They didn't got enough...enough...uh...weapons, and we need the dynamite, for example. The German left a lot of bombs from the... from the air...from the airplanes, and they didn't blow up. Some people that they know people that they know from the army, they take off...I don't know how to call their dynamite where it's hit the ground, and it's come off the dynamite. They take off pieces and go. It's a big risk. They take off. Then they brought in the lager, and we begin to...uh...in fire the bomb, hang up the bombs into ...uh...to make the dynamite to a position for liquid, like it's become like a liquid. It's...if it's in normal position, it's hard like...like wood. Now, if you put some...now you know what, it's a big risk dynamite to put in fire. It's a very risk. And you know what I'll tell you. In this time, I didn't know the risk what I was doing. Now we...it was done and we made forms, wood forms. Then from airplanes from Russia, they put...uh...they parachutes with some weapons and they send us small dynamites, pieces dynamites, what you can put detonator, what you put it inside and how the...how the all the process how it was. You put them in...on the...uh...railroad and with string, nu, maybe a 50 meters or 100 meters at nighttime, and when it comes...the...uh...you tell me and I forgot?

Q: The train.

A: The train. When it comes the train, he...he pull it, then...then it's...uh...it's blow up. And they need a lot of dynamite, a lot of dynamite. We didn't got a lot of dynamite. Is what we was doing with that: we make from the bombs, make the liquid, and put them in forms. Then the small forms, the small dynamite in the big form dynamite, and that...it was a big, big help. They need more to...to put...if...if it's a railroad...a bridge, you need a couple pounds...a couple pounds dynamite. And nobody give you. The German didn't give us. Nu, it's a lot...a lot of things what we was doing, but together we went...no, then I...I...uh...missed, I find relatives in the partisans. I find the relatives, Menyuk. My name in was...it came from Rafalovka. It was the same ghetto; nu, he was killed in the partisans. We went...nu, and they

didn't come back. Yes, I didn't tell you what happened ... with this...uh...know...friend, what he was in the... uh ... forest. Two of us--I and the other, Feierman--we came together in the partisans. His...uh...his sister's man ...husband, what he cannot walk; we left him in the same place in forest. When we left...nu, we want to tell him, "We'll go together." He said, "Look, how I can go together? You... you help her. You can go, and I cannot go yet. For me, you will be killed and I will be killed." Nu, we didn't got a choice. And we tell him, "If we will find something, what we'll come to take you." In this time people from this same... uh... village, Komarovo, they find him in forest. And one Ukraine man, what I say he was in police, he take him at home. He take...he helped him to build a house. The Jewish people... guy, he helped the man to build a house. He was working all the time, then he killed him. And that finished his life.

Q: Who killed who?

A: That's the Ukraine man killed the..the Jew what he was with us [**NB:** Feierman's brother-in-law]. He killed him...then that's after when they came this...the partisans, they find people what they tell us...know what...then I came...no, I'll tell you later what... And we came with this...with...with... Srulek, with him, we came the partisans and we stay with him. Nu, the partisans, this life, it was much, much better. What if we will be killed, I know for what. What I'm doing together with people, with partisans to...uh...uh...for the...for the Germans, to take them out from the place. And we was happy and we didn't ...nu, we didn't think about our life in this time. We was very happy. Nu, I told you what a lot of people. Nu, in 1940...1944, they take the...the Russian army... army... uh... came back, nu, and the Germans...nu, how to explain? It's hard for me to explain what..uh...they lose, Germans they lose in the war, and Russian army come...uh...come back to Ukraine. In this time, they send us--the partisans--they want to send us to Poland. Nu, we was ready everything and come the...uh.. to the Russian, no? They didn't got the...uh.. it's..it's was the war and it wasn't in this time. It was between Kovel. Nu, and they...uh...they take us in the army. They cannot go farther, and they take us to Russian army. We was standing... that was Rozhishche [Polish: Ro_yszche]...from the partisans, and we become Russian soldiers. When we become then...begin a new...a new life again. In this time when the army come, Russians, they tell us who wants where to go. If you want to go to police, the partisans, you can go to police. If you want to go in the army, you can go in the army. Nu, in police went, people...most of them, what they got families...Ukraine people, they got families live in this...uh...villages or a cities, they went to police to work with police.

Q: In...in police, as policeman.

A: As policemen, yes. And who don't want, you can go down. You got a choice. Or...or... Nu, for people like me...more you...I didn't got nobody left. Nobody's in life. I know it. I...I say that I will go in the army, and I went in the army. The army...uh...we comes. They begin to teach us...nu, and teach us, that's our job. Not very easy job, it's again... what you go, nu, it's...it's 95 percent what you will not come back. The job it was...what you need to go that

the Germans in the front stay...you need to go at nighttime, and take German alive to bring them because we need to know what...what is...what they doing, what they plan, what they...they commandant, what they said to...to the soldiers...nu, was a job like this. The food, nu, this...this time they give us...uh...in the army, you have good food because they know we can stay one weeks, two weeks, not more, because it will be happened. We went...uh...seven people...we went for...uh...to do our job like that. When we came the first time, we cannot come to the...to the places where the...

A: I don't understand. Why don't you slow down. Just explain what the job was and what...what it is you had to do, and how you went about it.

A: In Russian, it's called "Division Razvietka" [**Russ: Intelligence Squadron**]. That's mean that the Russian soldiers take a couple persons, a couple men, soldiers and send them to the soldiers, to German to...to catch...to catch a couple German people. One, two, three that's how it's possible, you catch. If not possible, they say it's not possible, come back. The first time we didn't catch. We didn't catch, we came back. The other side...nu, to do this, it's a big process...a big process. They don't go...uh...in that time, how was I say it, go and do that. No. Before to do this job, some people...one guy or two guys, they go and to watch what people, German people, goes from there to bring water or do they goes to make food, some things, and they're on a side what we can come and to catch them. That's...that's what ...and then we go to catch. They give us knives, we got...we got guns, and in this time they gave us a little vodka to be more...nu, how it's called?...hard, hard. Know, I tell you it's a...it's a job what you don't know in one hour, two hours, you can be dead. Then it's happened...it's happened the second time when we went...uh...a couple of guys was killed. I was wounded. They make a...uh...new...with bombs, with struts. They shot, and I was wounded in the foot. I was wounded in the foot and very, very hard wounded. People take me from this place and brought me in the place where we stay, and thank God...thank them, if the...somebody's in life. And it begin in the hospitals...in hospitals, the beginning, it's what they called hospitals, near to the front, they do it only a job, but easy job, you know, to change something. Nu, and then they put me in the hospital...far away, a hospital. You know in hospital, I was in hospital seven months because they want to take off my foot. No, I didn't give to foot...that's a long story.

Q: You asked them not to take your foot off?

A: Not... Yes. No, it didn't got...they...uh...take medicine and the medicine and make operations, not one operation... maybe, I don't know--5 or 8 operations. I don't know. And its comes 1945. I was wounded 1944 in June...in June... my ...in June...uh...month. And this time I was all in hospitals, you know. Then when I was...uh...they finished mine.....mine all medication and what...more, not more to do this with me. Then they say you can't go...in the army I cannot go because more...I am on crutches and I was a invalid. Now I begin a story what to do? Where to go? They asked me, "Where you want to go?" And it's hard to say, I don't have nobody. Nobody where to go. Nu, and that one guy...he's Ukraine...a Ukrainian guy...know he's from near Odessa. He tells to me...I tell him, "I don't have where to go." He

say, "You know what? Come to me. You will stay how long you want to." And he took me to him that's like into Odessa, not a city--it's a village. And I came to him, food and he got a lot of relatives in the...in the village, and they treat me like...him like a son and I'm a brother, his brother. Very good. Nu? Again, I stay with him...uh...maybe a couple of weeks. Nu, what to do? I want to know what is...what maybe is something from relatives which is alive. And I went from he...from Odessa. I went to Kiev. I went to Moscow. I went to Lemberg [L'vov, or Polish: Lwów], and I come in this place and begin to come...there in the ghetto where I was...I came to Sarny, I came to Kolki, that was mine...mine place. And this place is with a lot the Ukraine people that was in the forest, and they kill Russian people. They kill again Jewish people. It was a place, a terrible place. After the war... the war was ending...end, and it was again this...a lot of problems.

Q: Who was killing who? Explain please.

A: Uh...Was killing, the Ukrainian...uh...they want...they want undependant Ukraine. They killed the Russian soldiers, Russian workers, what you cannot come. How [NB: who?] they can kill, they killed. They killed a lot...a lot of people in this time. It was the war...the war was the end of the war. Know...uh...I missed one...uh...one note from this time when I was...came to Kiev and I come back to mine city. That was in 1947...uh...and all the time until...maybe until 52...1952 or 1953 when what these people, a lot of them they killed...a lot of them come out from the forest...a lot of them moved I don't know where...what it happened with them. Nu, now we can what it's going on in Russia. Nu, that's the...most things what...what is happened to me, but I want to say more. I never believed what a man can survive from this place what...uh...I told you only maybe it's one...one hundred day from that's what I survived because it's...if to write for each day, for each year...will be a story maybe...I don't know from 5,000 pages...pages a book. It's hard to. Nu, I'm luck what I'm in life. Nu? I want you...to tell you to explain how I married. That's...that's not...nu, I married in Kiev, then we...1945, we came back...this life was in Kiev very hard, and I moved again to my place where I was born and where I was in the partisans, where I was in forest. When I came in my city Kolki, that's 1947...'46...I'm sorry, '46, I came my city. People what they saw me, they didn't believe what I'm alive. And everybody comes and tell me, "Ah, that's you," or "It's not you." That you're not human life. You know, after the army. I looks like...like person a mystery. Before I didn't got another one and long time I was in uniform, because this life it was very hard. Nu, and then it was born...the older son was born in Kiev, came to Kolki, in this same city and was born the other son and a daughter. Nu, and I begin to work in the same city...uh...nu, and the final what...what in this time what I can do. What I done, to good people and I done the same what they done in the time what they done to me. The good people need to help, and the bad people I told what I can do it, it was done.

Q: Explain.

A: First of all I came...nu, it was not very possible. Nu, you cannot come from when they come to come to kill somebody. You cannot do that, and it's maybe without the government, without...I explained to the government too, what I know some people. They arrest some

people. There is some people that...that I find...uh... stuff what we got sometimes they take our...from home. I find something...I take this...it's not...uh...no, I don't want what they didn't use my...mine things. I don't want. Now...and then stay in...in...uh...in the same place. Nu, I moved in couple years in other places and the last year I moved to Kiev. That's in 1960..., 1973 or 1970. I don't know exactly. We moved back to Kiev, then we decided...nu, the antisemitism become to grow every...if it was after the war, it was OK after the war. Nu, if it comes a couple of years ago, the anti-Semitism become...grow and grow and grow...uh...I don't know...it's...for what, why I don't know. I want to tell you one things to show your a example how the anti-Semitism grow up. For example...I don't want to tell you what it's...from long time, but Jewish people need blood to make for Pesach the Matzah. That's lies. I will not talk about it. I will tell you a new story what is happened then when German comes and the anti-Semitism people could be what they want. They want to show people to kill Jewish people. In...in Russia, not only in Russia, in every country, you...you...the manufactories make shoes from leather and rubber not to make...uh...to save rubber, they make in this places like a cross....like a cross. It's in this time, people take off some to make grow up the anti-Semitism. Someone find...how that's what is a cross in the shoes.

Q: In the heel.

A: In the heel. Yes. And he was...you see...that Jewish people make...that's...I tell you honestly how many thousand, thousands Jewish people what they killed for thats.

Q: I don't understand.

A: They show...they show what...in religion what Jewish people is...don't like cross and don't like Jesus, and that's what they make the shoes to step on the cross.

Q: The claim is that the Jews made the cross.

A: Yes. The Jews made...made the shoes to people go in to step on the...on the cross. Nu, that's everybody what the Jews don't believe in Jesus and...and that's what is...I want to show you a example how many thousand, thousand Jews was killed for thats. Thousand, thousand Jews. You know what, ...

Q: I need to go back. We have very little time left. So I would like to go back for 1 minute to the partisans and your being ...when you were in the woods in Byelorussia. Did you have a leader, somebody who...who led this group? Did the group you were in have a name or were they part of someone else? What was it called?

A: The name is "Soyedinenye [Diadya Peka (ph)]" [**Translation: "Formation Uncle Peka"**], you know, if to translate that's [Diadya Peka (ph)] in his name what nobody didn't say the real name. And they make, how it's called, a special name what nobody will know. It was

[Diadya Peka (ph)]. And the real name is...uh...[Palkomi (ph)] Brynski.⁵ His name is Brynski. He's a hero, Russian hero...he lives...I don't know if he lives now. Nu, he was in Moscow, and he's a hero, and we got more...new names. I was [Atryat Slbuka (ph)]. Nu, a lot of...lot of...new heads on the partisans. Nu, and this time who knows where they are.

Q: Did you do other things? You talked about blowing up trains. You talked about making dynamite from bombs. Did you do anything else while you were in the partisans to attack in any way, to fight back?

A: Yes. We went...nu, partisans was a lot...a lot of people. We went to, ...uh...save...to be safe from the Germans, villages. The German comes to take everything from the villages, cows...uh...horses, meat, everything. As [NB: And] we comes and we stay to ...uh...how it's called?...to don't give to Germans to come in the villages. And we...we tell that was like partisans places. It was a lot...a lot of villages, but we keep the people...a lot of villages, what they didn't see more...more the Germans. A lot of times but they didn't see at all because the Germans got afraid to come. And that's what they...some villages what they...German take for the army. They tell them... eh...from the villages to bring butter, to bring milk, to bring some stuff, everything. We know when they will take this, we came at the right time and we take from them, from the Germans, and we bring back to give to the villages and some...some things we bring into our people in the forest to have to eat. Nu, you know what in the time for partisans, it's a lot of...uh...wars and a lot of what you need to done, it's...you cannot know to feel what I done...it was done...there...there...there.... It's a lot.

Q: Excuse me. You wanted to thank people on this tape. You said at the end there were people you wanted to save thank you to. What...what words...something you wanted to add. We're almost finished.

A: I want... Yes. I told, nu, before what it was the Ukraine and what it was in police and what they want undependant and they killed...they killed people. Nu, it was not all of them. No, it was...I want to say thank you in 9...uh...thank you a thousand times the people, Ukraine people, what they saved my life. Were not these people I were not in life now. No, a lot of people they now dead, their children now they live, and they know me, what it was in forest and I live...live for they helped. And they helped a lot...a lot of other people...not a lot of them. Nu, and I want...want things I didn't say what I come to America.

Q: I just need to know because we are running out of tape. What year did you come to the United States.

A: I came...we came in '76 year. We came here. We had relatives. I'm...first of all, I want to say thank you the Russian government....uh, I'm sorry!...American government what they take us to America, and I want to say thank you ...uh...American people; they begin to teach me, my

⁵ Brynski held the military rank of Colonel.

family what in language and to work they take me. And I want to say thank you my...uh...relatives what they helped us. Snyders, what they helped us when we came and they help us until... until today; and the Jewelers (ph) family and Brunners, and I want to thank you to Canada and Toronto, family Perlmutter. They help us when they came. And I want to say my job when I begin to work, it was in District Lock and Hardware Store, where is work. Different people it was. White people, black people, Jewish people they help us. But we didn't know a word, any word. I want to say thank you very much for them for they...for they...any way they help us to study, to know the language. All the people American. That's...

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much.

A: And...and... Excuse me.

Q: We are out of tape. If we have about 3 seconds, Bonnie, I would like to show the partisan thing. Let's do that. That's it. We have no more tape. We have just enough shape to show your partisan thing and we're out of tape.

A: And I want to thank you what I came today to...to explain this and... No?

Q: I'm not important, but thank you.

A: No. You done...done a big job and I...and I wish you and your colleagues and all the...the staff that works in this field would live in health to finish their business.

Q: Thank you. Well, we try. We try.

DOCUMENTS

1. Soviet partisans [post-war] identification card.
2. Soviet certificate of award for participation in the partisans.