

KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/PNINA TORY 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: Pnina Tory Sound rolls 39, part 2-43

(Rolling)

(This is Pnina Tory, Take 9, mark)

Q: Pnina tell me how your husband and why and how
important that was for him.

PT: He was write about it but not a good deal left
from what has happened to the ghetto. And he begin to
re, record every detail and was he wasn't sure who are
going to, to stay alive and so he decided to, to keep
the diary every day and to and to put it in hiding so
that it would stay for all the, the people after us.

Q: And what other kinds of things besides the diary.

PT: All kind of documents he collected in the, in the,
in the committee. He took all the blockades from the
(oils?) down, he took all kinds of signs that the
police produced and the armbands we, all there was a
lot of, a lot of uh things hided but uh I am sorry that

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he didn't stay because he could keep the, it was very
hard to take out the diary, he brought from Lithuania,
so these other things he didn't last.

Q: When he hid documents, were you with him when he
hid them.

PT: Yes, he uh the documents were in my room. They,
they, the diary was in, were in my room after he wrote

them and he couldn't keep them in the Altestenrat in the committee so he asked me to guard it. And I got it, it when there was a, a certain amount of, of pages. So he took it in the put it to a, in a car, in crates, wooden crates and they were put into the earth. I think it, it is in the books he, after the, they dug very deep about two, two meters or more in the ground that they put it down. There was a man who helped him Goldshmit, Fabush Goldshmit who he was a technician and he helped him to hide it.

Q: And.

PT: And the crates were taken from my room, they, it was packed in my room.

Q: How big were the crates.

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PT: The crates were uh I think uh I, I...it, yeah like a, a small suitcase. How much is this. Like that. A, it was high and, and it put in if, a paper and it was very, to it was very uh it was afraid it, they could get wet so once he went and, and took out again and, and checked it and it was all right. It was dry, nothing was wet. Every document, every, every painting, picture was put into, into a, a aluminum paper.

Q: Tell me about the workshops, the graphic workshops where some of the documents were

PT: We, I don't know much about the workshops. I, I didn't go there. I only saw the result of the work or the, workshops. All these work that the Gadiel made I saw but I wasn't there.

Q: Now let's talk about some of the things, did you see this thing when it was being done, the German orders.

PT: Yes, I saw the German orders ready when it was

ready to put away.

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Q: Tell me about it. Did you see your husband when it was being worked on. Did you know about it.

PT: About this, this things. Yes, I knew but I, I tell you I saw them when it was already ready made.

Q: What were the German orders. What were some of the orders. How did they happen.

PT: The German, the German orders, as far as I know they were given to the, the committee, to the Altesten-rat. And uh and they, the orders must be (renounced?).

For instance there were orders that uh women are, are not allowed to, to, to give birth to children. They, they're Jews are not allowed to have money. Uh are not allowed to, to buy things. Are not allowed to play the, are not allowed to, to, to learn the lesson. Even the kindergarten is clandestine, the school is clandestine. All this was given in orders. But the people didn't take to the orders of, people went to, to, to learn and they went to pray. My husband was quite a, I don't believe her, but in the ghetto on Yom Kippur he went to pray because it was not allowed.

So they orders were to keep us down. To keep our level, to dispress our level to make us unhuman, to make us like, like beasts, like vegetables. And there are four, there they, they see arranged a, an orchestra

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in the ghetto and it was a big dispute in the ghetto if we have to have a, an orchestra or no. And but, we finally decided we must have everything we can lift up

our spirits and, and make us go on. We have to do.

The policy of the, of the Altestenrat was to, to keep going as long as you can, maybe they til they level, the end there may be some will be saved.

Q: When the ghetto changed into a concentration camp, do you remember that. How did that happen.

PT: Uh they, the, yes I remember the rumors that is going to change into a concentration camp. But I left the ghetto on, on uh December, for December 43 and, and after I left it was, before I left it was already announced it is a concentration camp. The, the committee, there is no power any more, they couldn't give, they couldn't manage the, the community and the people there were begin to, to take out in all kind of working places outside the ghetto. It was a very, very hard uh feelings already in the ghetto. The feelings were all the time, but this time it was a, a feeling of the end. It, it I left the ghetto because my daughter was taken out and I heard she is sick. So therefore I, I fled from one day to the other.

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TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: Tell me how it was just before you left. Was it much smaller and many fewer.

PT: Yeah, because the ghetto was cut off all, all the time a part was cut off. There is in this booklet you, you have seen it of course. A diagram of that Gadiel ma, made and you can see how the ghetto was smaller. I changed three times my dwelling. The first one was because the German work, working administration took the house. And the second they cut off the ghetto and I had to go in another place. So most people, most people were wandering so.

Q: And were there many fewer people, people were escaping.

PT: Uh, uh fewer people were because they were killed.

And in many people it was not so easy to escape. There were people who are going in the woods to the partisans and this is the underground helped them. Now also the altestenrat, the Jewish committee gave money to buy, to buy uh with them but the...

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TIMECODE NOTES:

(7-1/2 IPS 10 is up)

(Sound 10 mark)

Q: So you were telling me about

PT: So, so you asked me about uh few people flew from the ghetto because they didn't have where to go. I, uh

most children were taken out when they were very .
And when it was, uh when I flew from the ghetto they,
they begin, the ghetto began to be a concentration
camp. And, and then I, I managed to, to, to, to I
once I . To make this, this Lithuanian where I was
hiding with my daughter to, to bring my husband. There
he was not my husband then. But I asked him to bring
him because I was when I left the ghetto I already told
him you have no more tasks here in the ghetto. You have
no power. The altestenrat is not power and we have
nothing to do here. Our plan was when I sent my daugh-
ter away I am going to the forest to the partisans.
But as it happened that I got a, I was told that she's
sick and I was, I was then convinced that people would
keep a, a sick child in the working way and there-
fore I against the will of the priest who found the
place for the child, I went to the, to the country. And
I already stayed there. And so I was convinced the
ghetto is going to end. Everybody could see it. And
so I.

Q: We have to reload so cut for a second Jim.

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(Camera roll 75, take 11, mark)

Q: So you were convinced that, was this after the Estonian action.

PT: Yes, yes.

Q: Tell me about the Estonian action.

PT: Is, the Estonian action was like other strategy was the people were called to, to appear. And, and I don't remember the Estonian action. I think they, they caught the people on the street, with the people, people for the desport, we didn't, we didn't really won't believe that it is for work. So finally they, they caught the people on the streets and brought them to the railway station and I, I don't remember that is Estonian action or the, at Riga, there were sent to Riga and the Elstratos Vermache Frei, that brought it for, to this. But when there was a arm on the ghetto, the ghetto guards, he was, he was a, a human

being and he came to that workers and he told them it is really for, to for work, is not for to death. So he said if you say so, so will you kind take money in, in distribute them and they allow, and they allow to bring um clotheses, the people were taken from the streets in

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their in nothing with it. So he agreed. And indeed there were collected many we, we go through cloth, clothing and we got a, a sum of money and they with the vehicles we brought the clothes was by us that it was only one vehicle. And he, he managed to take one out. See. And finally the, the indeed they brought back letters from the people, they are alive and they got the money and they got the clothing. And this is an extra, extraordinary uh event that happened in the ghetto.

Q: And so toward the end you knew they had ghetto

was like what

PT: I, I was sure it, it will end. I was very sure and I say it I want only to take out my daughter. It was very hard. If, if not my husband I don't know if, if I would manage it. And when I et out I said I, I, I am going away, I am going to Leutz. I, I had already boots made, boots and uh and my husband was a, I didn't know if he can leave. The eldest brother is he can't run away. I say you have no tasks, you can speak of Dr. Elkins and he will hear the same thing. But I went away, suddenly as I told you and, and then I succeeded in making the agreeing to the, the peasants to, to get to hide Avraham and when he came it was already March after the action of the children. And he then told me about the, the people who flew from the, from the fort,

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from the ninth fort. This was a very big sensation.

Never, never flew anybody from the, from the ninth fort. And he told me everything about it. He told me also that he spoke to this, this Vasilenko is his name. A, a Russian, russian officer a Jew who is they find out that he is a Jew so they brought him to the fort and then he, he made this uh this escape, the plan of escape and this Vasilenko came into the ghetto and he sat with him overnight in the (routine?) from his what he, what happened in the fort.

Q: Tell me, now we're going to go way back.

PT: When, when we afterwards we didn't know anything because I had no connection any more with the ghetto. And only when we heard that the that the Russians are already in Kovno, then he left country and he went back to, to Kovno.

Q: And were you there when he dug up the diary

PT: Of course.

Q: Tell me about it.

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PT: Yes, we took uh, uh slip books, how do you call it, were three of us Avraham, myself and this Fivel Vochme. We found it and the my husband tell it, lied to him because he asked him, he said did they, how did they allow you. He said yes, he said it because he said it will be my responsibility. He didn't know he was told that I had a permission. The facts told him not to go near the, near the diary. And it was late in the night, we dug out three crates. We are very much afraid we that somebody will see if the ghetto burn to ashes around and that we bought everything in the rucksacks and we went out. Then we sat all the night and uh took the, the sheets of the diary and all this uh documents, the important documents in the one rucksack we left, everything's in the room cause we couldn't take it. Next, early in the morning I went out to this. Avraham was, had to hide because we are

after him all the time from the end day.

So I went in it, I had to go past the in ca to a friend it was the, the wife of the engineer, town engineer of Kovno. We have friends of ours before they were, I went to ask them to, I told them there are Hebrew books and I am afraid maybe the German came back so I want them to keep it for me. For me. She understood it is not books but she didn't ask anything. She took the materials and put it under the bed of the ch, child and uh and I went and I, I went away so the material was there and I never was we were never very,

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very no, there is we are not sure it is everything all right. So only after, afterwards, we on the way to Vilna because to get away from the gestapo from the gestapo I said from the in in Kovno and in Vilna, when I were in Vilna I was not uh I, I was all the time worried what may happen, somebody will find it there in

the house and the children maybe of the lady. So I one day I went, I got a, a permission. From the russians you had to have a permission to from one town to the other. And I went with a , I was standing. It was already cold, it was already winter. And I went to there and I took the, the material back to Kovno, to Vilna.

And uh then we kept it there til Avraham went away. At this time we were already were in contact of the Aliya Bet with the, the clandestine Aliya and they were planning our run away to Israel and uh everything was already in fact ready with everything, false passport, and false uh we are, we are supposed to go as, as uh Polish . But then one day came it's a lady that was also from the Altestenrat and uh Toti, Sri Levin was arrested. There came a friend Friedlander was his name and he told Avraham you must go away, Sri Levin was arrested. He was the head of the, of the big dream of the And Avraham was the general zionist and he said you are going to be arrested right now it so he managed to bribe an officer, a, a Lithuanian officer who he went he was a of the repatriants, the Polish repatriants of Poland, to Poland. And he took of his

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health, we had only one suitcase and put some clotheses
in his the diary. And, and so he went, he right
even took him as a, as a Polish repatriant. He did
know very little Polish. I don't know if he could talk
with the everything is right but he came of this mate-
rial in, in Lublin. His suitcase was taken from him
away. But he kept his book diary and this was what
he was important. Came to, to Lublin. He had nothing.
He had he met there the people from the Aliyah Bet,
from they and so, so he could keep the diary there.

Q: Need to reload yet. Ok, let's reload.

PT: (foreign language spoken to Avraham) I am sorry
I, the all say sometimes house and at this moment I
don't find the

PT: My lipstick is fat, it fattens my, my but maybe I
maybe this, this is not lipstick, this is...

Q: It's fine. Where is your lipstick, where is it.

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TIMECODE NOTES:

(pause)

(Camera roll 76, take 12, mark)

Q: Do you remember moving into the ghetto and what it looked like.

PT: Oh I remember it very well. It was a very, very hard time for me because I didn't bother to find place in the ghetto because I, I thought uh I, I could try

to, to save my husband and my brother.

Q: Wait, cut.

(13)

(Mark)

Q: So tell me about moving into the ghetto.

PT: It was a very hard time. I just came back from the prison where I was taken and, and I was trying to, to save my husband and my little brother were on the, my parents who were there on the 9th, 7th were also taken. And I hope they can do something so I didn't have time

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to bother with a place in the ghetto but when the time came near and there was going to, the, they to close the ghetto I had to move. And so I had traveled to get a vehicle because so alien were not allowed to, to serve the Jews, to, to rent to the Jews but if much money managed to get a vehicle to my . The nanny of my daughter was with me. She was a Lithuanian, a Lithuanian nun and she stayed with me til I went to the ghetto. So I left my, the child with her and I packed the whatever I put, put on a the vehicle and I went to the ghetto. It took two hours every time to, to, it was a long, long row of vehicles going to the ghetto and the I came there. I didn't, I didn't have a place where to put it so I put it on the courtyard of some acquaintance and that my mother in law was already in the ghetto because she had there a relative. They took her in. So I put on the courtyard of there. Three days I went with the vehicles. On the third day I took with me my daughter and we came there it was already late in the evening before the, before the curfew began. At this time, I already had a room by miracle I had a room. Because I was going to some of these men who were with us, dealing with the of giving places to the ghetto dealers. But he had no, he had nothing. You couldn't give what he didn't really to us a lawyer Gershwin. He was a brother of a friend of mine.

And uh in the, the last thing the last days he came to him that man and he had, had three, three rooms flat

got. In the end he told him he, everybody could get

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only one room for his family. So he said yes, I give you the allowance but if you give one room for Mrs. Shazer. So he asked who it is. He heard that I am board and total I know and I was very glad and then he came to me, to us like a miracle. I had a, a room so the last vacant they came already to this room, to this place where.

Q: And what kind of vehicles did people use to...

PT: Carts, carts and horses. There were, there were no autos I saw.

Q: Did some people walk to the ghetto.

PT: No, I don't remember that people, he could walk but he couldn't carry, carry things. It would take a valise or something.

Q: And what was it like living in the ghetto.

PT: How can I describe what it is living like being in a trap. You can't go out. You, you don't know what, what happens next day, next hour. Especially the chil-

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dren. To us it is such a fright about the children. I myself when I saw a child I saw the, the mal, the, the is flying over them. I knew the children, I remem, very great danger because children don't work. They done, they, they are only, they are only would asked to

feed them. They are mouths to feed. So I, I felt I knew that the children are in the first round to go and then and then afterwards or already there was in , there was an action and all the children are taken out so I was all the time frightened and thought how can I take out the child from the ghetto.

And this is ironic. Because before the war broke out, and I was sitting at the radio, radio set and Hitler was speaking, speaking shouting, crying, like, like an animal and what he will to the Jews. And Deni didn't, didn't understand German but she felt is when she came in and she said to me, lady please give me the Shulameet, I shall take her to the country and nobody will know she is a Jew. I shall keep , because they say terrible things will be done to the Jews. She heard it of course in the, in the church. I, I think, I admit that I thought no, I, I shall not give the child. Because a child must be with her mother. I thought well she'll be hungry, or she'll be cold. But I, I didn't think about it that they will kill, they will kill innocent people, innocent children. I couldn't imagine it.

I sa, and there was another thing I thought. I give

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her to the, she will, she will get a, she will get a
gentile, she will not be a Jew anymore and I said to
the Veronica, no I can't give away my child. And then
came a time when I going to, to Veronica. And then
she couldn't do anything, she was working in a monas-
tery. And she didn't have a place you could go, take
her so we began this church, this uh for a, for a place
for her. And this, all this made Avraham, and it's a
long story.

Q: In the ghetto did getting what was that like.

PT: It's a, it's at first it was very hard. Whatever
we brought from, from the before the ghetto and we
managed to buy in the last minute, we had it was gone
very soon and then the, the first month it was couldn't
get anything in the ghetto. And where brigades were
going out to work and they brought food. But the, the
brigades it wasn't yet ordered. Afterwards they, all
these work it was ad, administration and the, and the

it was a order. Everybody was, could go out but in the first we had the went out into the, to the so I, I went to ask to, to the gate and there was a policeman and I told him look I have nothing to eat at home. Please I must go out so he said all right I shall, I shall help you.

So he had to a German a little brigade of 8, 8

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people and he told, asked him he said look my sister must go out in town, so please take her. So the German oh so hi, he went and he sold to one woman, you stay here today and this woman will go. And this woman went every day and they, they were not in lack of food. But they begin to quarrel between themselves who should stay. And I stood there as it was, I was very, very much it was, there were quarreling and cursing one another. It was terrible. I stood still like a mouse.

Afterwards when, I want to tell you this story because it is very drastic. I went out and I, they were going on foot about ten kilometers or so. And it came to the place and the people were very kind to me and they came and asked me if I wanted a , if I want also apparently I was happy to, to get it and then I never came. And he told me we are going out to, to, to buy and change our things on food. I had, I had with me of course towels, some blouses or so I went out with him and at the end of the day I had a fortune. Potatoes and carrots and, and the, the cabbage. 20 kilos I went to food, it was a fortune.

And the we came to walk back. After we worked all the day, we went back and we saw then who, who tried and, and shouted and she, she went forget what we were going in, in a line of twos. And I was so silent, I felt so guilty. And she looks at me. I went into and I, I couldn't, I couldn't go on with this household. It was so, so heavy so she looked at me and she said you

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know give me your, your, your parcel, your rucksack.
And she gave me, she had a only a satchel briefcase
because she didn't need much. She, she went every day.
So I take the briefcase and I felt I had, I believe
couldn't go and I think I wasn't used to it. And
after several kilometers I gave, I am going very heavy
so she looked at me and she said give me these two. She
went and she gave me some little things she had. And
she kept, she took my parcel and her parcel to the
ghetto. And this was a woman who cursed and shouted
and I was so much afraid of her. And this was the
first time I brought in food at the ghetto.

We didn't have, we didn't have uh when it was, we get
to, fuel. We didn't have fuel. So, so I had on the,
on the was sending my, my bed uh my bed. It was very
hard wood. Very good hard wood. So I had to, to, to
how you say. To, to cut it to pieces and I burned
with this wood for some time. And it so the people,
people used to go and the fences. They took off the
fences and the, the wooden fences and the burned
things. The Aldestenrat had fer, permits to bring in
afterwards. We never, everything was . That
cabbage bring in food for and or if this permit they
brought in again and again not little so that, so we
managed to solve the problem. And not very good but
some....we could get on.

About the food, after we got what we could, the, we are supposed to be a without money. We didn't have to have

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money and they gave us food, the Germans gave us food. This food was not to, not to die, not to live. It was for instance, it was 200 grams of bread but we got only 120. Because Altestenrat didn't, didn't announce all these old people and the children were in the ghetto because they are afraid you will be in your latex. So we had, so they had to take off from all our other people the brain. And to give these people real clandestine. We now and so we had 120 gram bread. For instance in my house I, I, a cousin of mine, he used to go every day on the airport to us. Very hard work. It was early in the morning til late in the night. It was in the sun and in the rain and the, and they didn't get anything. Not even the Ushnik we've got in the other brigades. So of course we gave him all the

bread we house. So he had a long time we were without bread.

Later on we're, were to live in these conditions. We have smuggle din floor and bread was baked and you could get to

People were going out and changing things and buying and bringing and selling it in the ghetto. So there was already we kept going if they wouldn't kill us.

Q: Are you almost, we need to ...

(beep) (end first side of cassette)

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KOVNO GHETTO EXHIBIT Interview w/PNINA TORY page 22

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TIMECODE NOTES:

(Camera roll 77, take 14, mark)

(Sound roll 42)

Q: (inaudible)

PT: In the evening, when he knew about this call to go out to the, to the Demogra... place, we knew it is something very great going to happen. We are very frightened but it, we didn't know what will happen. Nobody knew. And this night we didn't sleep at all. I said, sit at night I, my, my cousin and my two cousins they were with me and they also sit all the night in the , all the night eight of their . In and my neighbors, they were neighbors, very kind neighbors and they came in and they said to me you know it is not good that we on is a child. It is very, very dangerous. A woman without a husband with a child, they will take, I don't know, they didn't know where but it will not be good. So they are giving me husband so in this house there were a family of and two more gentlemen, singles. So one of them as supposed to appear as my husband as, as and he uh so he told me when somebody will ask you you will say your husband he say you will say he had the brigades, to lead, a leader of a brigade. So he's a brigade leader and I am here.

So indeed we went out, we are very, very frightened. We didn't know what is going to happen. Early in the morning it was 6:00, we are going with candles to, to

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TIMECODE NOTES:

lighten the place to scold and, and we stood all in rows according to the working places. And our how, by how went away. And people on there stood on a , on a, on a high place on a high hill eating a sandwich and pointing, red, left and right, left and right. We didn't know what is good and what is bad. And then suddenly I stand uh opposing him. He look, he's looked at me and I spoke quickly. My husband is a leader of the brigade and he's there and then he came this man came running and he said this is my, my wife and daughter and then he said wife, and we went through. I thought somebody is shout and say you are doing good, you are doing well, this Sri Levin and so I passed by. I didn't know where I'm going, what is going. Then we stood there til evening. People were fainting all the place of especial old people couldn't all the day long without food in the cold, fear. And then when he I found myself going back to my, to my room and my daughter said mother we'll come home you'll make me, you'll make me a porridge. She didn't want to

eat at all. She didn't eat in the ghetto. And now it was so amazing, she asked for food.

When we came home there was nothing to eat because the cousins ate the from there wasn't anything that was it. The neighbors opposite in the same room we have , my good neighbors were . These they were there and there I got, got something to eat for my daughter. And then next morning we knew that many, many people are gone. Many, many houses are empty and it was a

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TIMECODE NOTES:

terrible, a terrible, terrible uh feel. In them the people were gone were also the parents of my sister in law. I was very much friendly with them and the evening before she came in and she her face was burning from excitement and she said what is going to happen to me. Though what, something terrible is going to happen. And next day in the, they were gone. Of course in the morning they took the people, we are brought to the

little ghetto and they were taken to the ninth fort.

Q: Could you hear, could you hear the shooting.

PT: No, no the shooting we couldn't hear, it was quite far away.

Q: Did you see

PT: No, I, I didn't see. I didn't see. I, I, I imagine I was so of my daughter every, everybody was so nervous and so depressed but they, they the little kids was quite a far away. And from there they were, there is a to the ghetto and the picture of Esther Lurie, the the ninth fort.

Q: Do you remember the hospital burning.

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Interview w/PNINA TORY

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TIMECODE NOTES:

PT: Yes, of course I remember. Everybody heard about it. I didn't see it. It was in the six of, six of the morning. They shut up the little ghetto. They didn't let in and they didn't let out. For, Doctor Browis was on the way to the hospital with his son, Dr. Jake Browis now and this I heard from them afterwards. I didn't see it but they were from the, they were on their way to, to the hospital. He took his son I think because he thought it is safe, it is safer there in the hospital.

So when they came near the bridge, a woman kept him uh and she asked him questions. Doctor, tell me what is and she kept him and he told her I have to go to work. And go to the hospital but she didn't let him and so he answered her and he kept, kept about ten minutes so he came late. And when he came to the bridge they didn't let him over and so they were saved both. Dr. Browis and his son were saved from the burning of the hospital because they burned, they, the patients and the doctors and the sisters and the sisters even . Only there was saved the, the par, the maternity. The maternity department was far away and they left there the children and the mothers. And a friend of mine was giving

birth to a child there in the, the place. and she stayed alive.

They came and they put in all the children in a row and, and uh one of them came in and they looked at them and they smiled. I don't know maybe they a little

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TIMECODE NOTES:

child at home. But he let them stay. At least, I, I think it was just a miracle. But these friend of mine who gave birth to a child. She had five children, nobody but the children stayed alive. All of them are gone afterwards, the children's section.

Q: Your work forced labor

PT: I was not forced to work because they at Altesten-rat, they managed a work in the ghetto, so mother of little children had not to go to work. So my cousin

who was had to go to work but she didn't manage to bring anything. She went to work and she said I don't work for Hitler so she didn't, didn't want to work. So the other people beat her up, they had to do her work. So she came home always crying. She didn't bring anything. So I told her you know you stay with Shula-mete here and I'm going to work. Instead you.

So, so I went to work. First, the first time I told I have to go outside I looked for work and there was a brigade that it was leaving by an engineer and I went to him and he gave me work. So I went every day to work. First we went on foot. Was a short time we were taking by buses but I went to work every day and got back. Went away to the food so parcel of 20 kilos, 25 kilos but then I already could carry because I got used to it. Til the, til the gate. After the

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TIMECODE NOTES:

gate. I went down there was a stone that I couldn't

walk.

But this went on til I was caught. One day I was caught by the, the alien secret police and after that I was afraid to go out so it there was no sense to go to work. So I didn't go any more.

Q: Did you get thrown in jail

PT: I got thrown in jail but I didn't mind the jail. I was, I thought this is, I don't come back to the ghet-to. I was, stay we're three women caught. Not from our brigade from it was a day they went out for, for to catch Jews. We are found everyone in a separate cell in the cellars of the secret police and we are sure that next day they, they are, they are giving us to the Gestapo and then they were, were from the Gestapo, they us to the ninth fort. And all that night I was standing in the, in the bars and thinking what will become of my little girl. What I, I was not secure with my cousins and she was kind of a little bit Sure, I have all the night on the floor, how what will happen to her, what will happen to her. But in the next morning, the morning they took us out of cells and they said come and sign down that you will never go out of your working place

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TIMECODE NOTES:

and, and we sign. We are very much astonished. We sign and then they say now we shall confirm your submission. And the, the confirmation, they took big sticks, to beat us up. Say beats of I was so happy to get the beats because I understood I am going home. And a friend of mine she is no more, she for get strength. She was, she was she became to collect the potatoes and they tried to cried to her Livka leave the potatoes run. Because as long as you were there, they beat us. They beat us so strongly that they found us on the street, on the, the of the pavement. Jews are not allowed to be on the pavement, so on the street they til we were on the street, they beat us and then we stood and now what.

Every minute could come somebody else to take us in. Because are Jews and there were people came outside because we took it out, up when we went out. And every

minute we put the, they give us nothing that we are released. Not but then we thought where is the nearest brigade, Jewish brigade work place and we went to and he put a, got safety there. There, there we waited til the evening when the brigade came, went back to the ghetto. So we went to them.

My daughter didn't know until morning that what happened because I come back from the, from the work and she is already asleep and in the morning I got out, I get out at 5:00, 6:00 so she's a, still so she didn't know but when she came to the kindergarten the children

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TIMECODE NOTES:

tell her you know Shulmete your mother is arrested, your father is arrested. So she runs to my cousin and she said so my cousin tried to, tried to frighten her, to smooth out a little bit but then in the evening. But then they already got from the brigade, they got already news that we are alive, we are, we are coming

back.

Afterwards, I was like three days in bed because I was so badly, so badly beaten that I couldn't . But this didn't I was happy to get the beating.

Q: Tell me about how important it was for Avraham to keep a record.

PT: Oh it was very important for him. And I uh I agreed to hide it in my room because I also

Q: We've got to reload, put another roll of tape in.

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TIMECODE NOTES:

(Sound roll 43, this wild sound take 13)

Q: Tell me about

PT: It was very important to him because never of our, nobody of us had much hope we shall stay alive and, and we he wanted to, to record everything for the outside world that they should know what the German did to us, what the German did to the Jewish people and these, also the only way to record everything every day, day in and day out, to write what happened. I was the same, I felt the same thing and therefore told me. He said I think a diary, I agreed to write it because it was not such a simple thing. But I was thrilled to hear that he is writing a diary and he wants to, to keep safety or for the outer, outer world.

Q: Tell me about some other

PT: Sorry.

Q: Tell me about some of the other documents that he kept. Like maybe you could tell me about the compilation of German orders, that how he kept other documents....

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TIMECODE NOTES:

PT: The German orders they are ti, this one was typed, taped. Yes he just collected order that he went in to the Altestenrat and he what he copited on the tape, this or himself taped it or he had a secretary uh her name was Elshtein, Lucia Elshtein and she was from the very few people who knew about the diary and she taped for him these entries. And then he put it on the at the so he collected it. Every day he wrote what is going, what is going in.

Q: Now, now I want you to tell me about another but I want you to use his name instead of just saying he.

PT: I yes.

Q: Ok so did you see this thing when it was together, did you see this memorial tablet.

PT: I, I . Yes I saw it. I saw it in the ghetto. I, I as I told you I saw it when it was made, Avraham brought it to my place in order to safeguard it but uh then I saw it.

Q: What was this thing, why did he make the

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TIMECODE NOTES:

PT: This uh this is a, I can't, I can't see. This is a graphical

Q: ...of the people killed.

PT: Ah yes. This is a graphic of the people was, the people were killed gradually in the, in the 41 and then in mostly in 42 they were killed. There was a actions, one action after another. And Nina wanted to have it visualized. I don't I can't see.

Q: And what about this, this book, the year book with the maps. Tell me about the year book with the maps.

PT: The ghetto was put off every time a peace , people were sent to death and so the place was very

Q: OK.

PT: People were killed or sent out to other place for work like to Riga. And, and then the Germans cut off this place, out of the ghetto. And so they visualized how it went every time. the ghetto was a little big

smaller, the small ghetto went away. They worked hard

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TIMECODE NOTES:

to place a away. And so every time so if they,
Avraham asked Gadiel to make it in a, a graphic that
would be clear to see.

Q: Did you.

PT: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about him.

PT: I, I, I didn't know him so personally. Well, I
saw him I spoke to him but I didn't know him. But I
know about Avraham very much appreciated the service.

He said he's an artist, he makes wonderful work.

Q: What about Dr. Elkins.

PT: Yeah, of course. I knew Dr. Elkins also before the ghetto. He was a doctor of our family. My parents and I was also in the ghetto when I sent away Shulemete. I went to, to ask what will be Shulmete because she shouldn't eat nobody will try to food, feed her. So he said it's all right. She will survive. It will

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TIMECODE NOTES:

Q: (inaudible)

PT: He was a wonderful man and I was in school with his son Professor Yuli Elkins, I was in school with

him. And we are great friends still today. And so I had that I brought on my body this last, last letter of Dr. Elkins to his children. He gave it to Avraham the night he, before he left the ghetto. He came to Dr. Elkins and he went out and it was also he didn't, he didn't now that he's going out, we've got to run from the priest. He used to call the priest from time to time to ask him if he knows something about us. If about Shulemete and me. So he uh called this day and the police told him come tomorrow morning. A vehicle is coming to, to get you. He used very much a . they was ready for it. So I went in the night to Dr. Elkins and there was Dr. Garfinckel and Dr. Elkins. And tell them and ask if he can go away.

So Garfinkel was very skeptic. He will say you will not make it. You can't make it so far away to go away but Dr. Elkins said if you were my son I would say you go. You will go you will succeed and you will have something to tell. You will tell the world what happened. And he gave in then he took out the, last letter he had it ready for his children. And he gave it to him.

And he brought it to the, to the country where I was and

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Interview w/PNINA TORY

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TIMECODE NOTES:

then we took it as we went anywhere. Went to Israel.

(pause) He, he thought it is so important to, to have it not only to have written the diary and to put it into say into the earth, into the hiding but also maybe when the nobody will be left from us and so he went to a priest, so I a high priest he knew and he brought him the plan how they crates were here, where the crates were and he gave it to him. And he said if nobody who finds it will stay alive, please, please see that the crates were picked out and give an order to make Jewish community aware it will be one. And the priest told him, you'll hide, you will stay alive but he, he thought somebody must know about this diary to take it out, diary and document.

Q: Thank you very much. Keep rolling.

PT: Now it is, it is hard to go into this uh the mood of those days.

Q: OK. I want to get

PT: I know he can read.

AT: I'll read a few.

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TIMECODE NOTES:

October 3, 1941 The hospital for in, for infectious diseases in the ghetto together with its facilities, patients and medical staff has to be set on fire.

Infants have to be transferred to Fort Nine. P.S. The order was carried out on October 4th, 1941. I remember it well, terrible.

October 27, 1941. All ghetto inhabitants irrespective of age or sex have have to leave their houses on October 28th and gather by 6 a.m. on Democratu square. Those found in their house will be shot on the spot.

January 26, 1942. Curfew after 9 p.. and death zone 3 meters alongside fence.

July 24, 1942. Pregnancies and births in the ghetto are prohibited. Pregnancies have to be dead, terminated. Pregnant women will be shot.

Q: Let's wait one

(Sound roll that is wild sound 14.)

(Wild sound 15)

AT: I'll read a few. October 3, 1941. The hospital for infectious, infectious diseases in the ghetto

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TIMECODE NOTES:

together with its facilities, patients and medical staff has to be set on fire. Infants have to be transferred to Fort Nine. P.N. the order was carried out October 4, 1941. I remember it well.

October 27, 41. All ghetto in, inhabitants irrespective of age or sex have to leave their house October 28 and to gather by 6 a.m. on the Democratu Square. Those found in their homes will be shot on the spot.

January 26, 1942. Curfew after 6, 9 p.m., and death zones three meters alongside fence.

July 24, 1942. Pregnancies and births in the ghetto are prohibited. Pregnancies have to be terminated. Pregnant women will be shot.

Q: And one other thing I want to ask you about this. Do you know what this is.

AT: Oh , this is the, the list of the streets of the ghetto. The number of houses in each and the number of rooms. I this. My work.

Q: Thank you.

(end interview)

Video Tape No. _____ Camera Roll No. _____ Sound Roll No. _____