
“Joining the Partisans”

Video Transcript

And . . . so we just didn't know where to go, we were lost again, and then this peasant [Tichon] came to us and he said, Look, there are rumors that partisans, Russian partisans, [are] in the vicinity, and . . . I don't know whether they are friendly to Jews. They might kill you, but I might talk to them, perhaps they [will] accept you, and we said, Well, we have nothing to lose. We waited a long time, actually, and then came out a commander for political affairs and he started interviewing us. He looked at us: skeletons were sitting there, four skeletons [with] dirty, long hair overgrown, and . . . he started asking questions. He [said], So where are your weapons? We didn't have any weapons. So how many trains did you dynamite? We didn't. So I thought he was not going to take us in, but being that my uncle was a trained scout, they needed a scout to lead them into the vicinity where the partisans were. They were strangers in that part of the country, so they took us in because of my uncle.

“Partisan Life”

Video Transcript

Living [as] partisans, to me, it was like a picnic already after what we went through before the partisans. The partisan life was actually very good for us, because [of] living by ourselves in the forest and hungry and wet and not being able to get any clothes or to wash ourselves—for a whole year we did not wash ourselves, and [for] water, we had to dissolve the snow in order to get a little bit of water, and if we baked a little bit of bread and we brought it back to the forest, we hung it up, [because if] we left it on the ground the animals ate it, so we used to hang it on top of the of the trees in order to preserve it. It was difficult. My legs were burned completely, because it was so cold [that] when [I] sat in front of the fire, I did not feel that my flesh was burning [on] my legs. It was a horror, but when we came to the partisans, to me that was a good life. I was not alone, and if I was going to die, I was going to die as a fighter, not because I was born a Jew. I was going to die as a fighter, and that's what kept us going.

“Killed as a Fighter, Not Because I Am a Jew”

Video Transcript

I didn't even bend down my head, I wasn't worried that I [was] going to get killed. If I was going to get killed, I was going to get killed as a fighter, not because I am a Jew. So that, that itself gave us strength to go on. This was the mentality of people who went through all these atrocities in the ghettos. So this is the way we crossed railroads, in the middle of the night, and the railroads were watched. And we tried to avoid it, but it wasn't possible.

“Life on the Front Lines”

Video Transcript

My role was to be there to help if somebody [was] sick or wounded, to provide some help for that person. I was not in charge of putting a mine under anything; there was a specialist in that field who had the mines and put it there. You get thrown into it, you learn while you work and you do [the] best you can under circumstances. We didn't have any medicines or even bandages. . . . We had to wash the bandages we took off from the wounded, who got maybe better, and we took them off and we had to wash them and use them again. They were under our protection. All the bandits knew if they were going to touch them, they were going to be punished for that.

Student Notes

Student Notes (continued)