

## From the Testimony of Abraham Eckstein about Moving into the Nagyvarod Ghetto

Q: The Jews before that - they lived spread out in the city or more concentrated?

A: There was more or less, every city had a Jewish quarter, you know. We happened to live in the Jewish quarter. You see, it was like that, in this street we lived here and here was a cross street that was named after a rabbi. The rabbi was the first rabbi in the city - the rav, you know. The chief rabbi - his name was Fuehs. And there was concentrated the *kahal*, the slaughterhouse, the Jewish schools - everything that was there. Here on this side was the neologue section. In the city they made the ghetto. They figured out, they made the ghetto where the most Jews are concentrated, you know, in order not to go and have big bother to take big trucks and so on and so forth, but everything would take time because they wanted to make fast, fast, fast. Matter of fact, they concentrated the Jews - it took about eight, ten days, that's all, the thirty-two thousand Jews, that's all. Not only that, but from all the vicinities, from the villages and so on and so forth, they all brought them into the city.

Q: Do you remember approximately a date?

A: Well, that was beginning of May. It was the beginning of May when they made the ghetto. Besides that, that mayor - if I would know that. It's just too bad that I didn't bring it along. I didn't think of it. It was a big write-up in the Jewish Week - if you heard that in New York. You heard about that paper? He and his wife, that mayor who made that ghetto and he put thirty-two thousand Jewish living souls on the slaughterhouse for nothing else but power. Just power. Because he was promised a big position in the government. In the fascist government. Just power. Who put this article in that paper - it was a big write-up - it's his own son. His own son is a big writer - he lives in Washington, D.C. And the highlight of the article - he had another two brothers. These three brothers was born here. One of them was born yet in Nagyvarod. And they all....he was the youngster who wrote that article. And the two brothers

pleaded with him that he should forget about it and don't go and search and make an issue and he didn't listen because he just couldn't...

Q: He felt guilty.

A: He felt guilty. He couldn't stand what his father did. He just couldn't stand it what his father did. And he went on searching. He went to Najvarod and shows that picture and he got in touch with Jewish people who still lived in Najvarod and in other words, he wrote a book about that, too.

Now as far as the history of my city, there was put together a book here in Israel - the history of the Jews of Nagyvarod. I have it, I have the copy. The name who composed it, who put together, I believe it was the president of the *kahal* in Najvarod after the war - his name Grossman.

Q: But they were in the area of the ghetto?

A: Yes, the area of the ghetto. The Vishnitzer Rebbi headquarter also in the ghetto. Matter of fact, they managed to escape him from the ghetto, the Vishnitzer Rebbi. That day when the ghetto started and they started to concentrate the Jews into the ghetto, I was standing...they gave me right away as young as I was a job - I should direct the people coming into the ghetto, where should they put them, which houses, so on and so forth. And I was standing in front of the door from the *shul* - they call them "*Schass-Chevre*" - and I see them all the time coming in with this truckloads, the way they bring in with the children and these rabbis and everything. My heart was bleeding that time and I always was talking to myself: "*Ribbonoh schel oilom*, how can you do that? How can you look at that?" What I should tell you? The most prominent, finest people, what the world can produce - intelligent, learned, "*baal tzedokes*", *baalei batim*, which they erected schools and they carried on the most "*balbattisches*" Jewish life - they put them on a truckload and they broke them in all to the things like animals. It's absolutely with no consideration as a human being.

**Source: Yad Vashem Archives 0.3- 8843**