

Anzhel Leon In The Labor Camp In The Village Of Chuchuligovo



I, Larry Anzhel, am the last one on the left. We are sitting on a little carriage on which we loaded broken stones. On the back of the photo there is an inscription in indelible pencil and uneven handwritten letters. '23rd February 1943, the village of Chuchuligovo - working on carriages. To my beloved mother from her favorite son Leon as a souvenir.' The photo was probably sent to my mother in a letter but much later, when I had had the chance to develop it. I don't remember the others in the picture.

In Chuchuligovo near our border with Greece, we were building a road: Gorna Dzhumaya - Kulata. There were a lot of groups from Simitli at the border. We worked on the railway tracks, too. In Chuchuligovo we were accommodated in the building of the police department: in one half of it. We were mainly given beans and lentils; the soup was very thin and smelled foul. Often we found different small animals floating on top. Since then I haven't been able to eat lentils. We were also entitled to half a loaf of bread for 24 hours. On rare occasions we were given a dessert: rice with water and that was something we accepted as luxury.

We worked for ten or twelve hours a day and everybody had a quota but if you finished the quota it didn't mean you had finished for the day. They very often found something else for you to do. We had a day off on Sunday but that, too, wasn't always the case. Very often we worked on Sundays. Our superiors would often beat the people who didn't obey the discipline and did something wrong in one way or another. For my entire service in the labor camps I was slapped only once because I talked during the retreat but it was such a slap that I saw stars in broad daylight.

When we were in Chuchuligovo near the border with Greece we worked near the railway tracks. The trains to Kulata and Greece and back went there. We saw trains with Greek Jews passing. Those were tiny open carriages. They were overcrowded with men, women, and children; old and

young people. On both sides of the carriages there was a policeman and military man with rifles to guard them.