

We continue with Nathan Schwarcz's narrative. Mr. Schwarcz, you left us where you were returning to your town. Would you continue from there, please?

Yeah. So I came to my town. And I found only one person of the Jewish faith, a watchmaker, was already home. The only one home. I was the second man. I came home barefoot because I had a pair of shoes that I bought secondhand two years before. I went in to have shoes, because they wouldn't give us no clothes.

And the Jewish organizations while we were in Hungary were supplying us with certain clothes, but I would never accept because I was never a taker. I was always a giver. And I was ashamed to take. So I tried to make everything my own.

I kept these shoes in my knapsack all through the labor camp because I wanted strongly to over live the war and Hitler. And therefore, I wanted to have shoes for the winter, never mind summer. While we were still building that airport that I was mentioning before, jet Airport, the stones there were granite. And anybody knows what a granite stone-- that's just squares, hard squares.

And I was the only person of 300 companies that was walking barefoot. And my sole on my foot got to be thick as a regular sole. And my friends did not like me for it. Because they said that I'm showing an example that we can go barefoot. And therefore, if somebody's shoes are fixed, he can stay home for a day, not to go to work. And I deprived them of that privilege.

So I said your privilege is minimal to the plan that I have. The plan that I have is to over live this war, outlive the war, and outlive Hitler. And I said, a little hard, ee-oo-oh to step on a stone is no comparison to be in the wintertime barefoot, and get a cold in your kidney, and perish, and there you are. So I said, I'm saving my shoes for the winter. I said, you can all complain rightfully, but I know I'm right too.

And so now I'm liberated and I'm putting on my shoes. And I'm walking through the mountains home, not through the road. The road was circular. Through the mountains home and in three hours the sole came off. And I didn't have no shoes. And I'm walking home barefoot. This is October. Don't forget, the 26th liberated-- the 27th. It already snows in the Carpathian and I came home barefoot.

So I met there all my gentile friends from my home town, which most of them liked me very well. There were no shoes to be bought, no stores. But they promised me they were going to get me some shoes. And they were saying-- the one guy who took off the shoes from dead soldiers, maybe he'll get me a pair. But nobody came with a pair of shoes and I'm still walking barefoot.

A week later-- as I came home-- first of all, I come to my home town. I come to my hometown and I walk into my house. And the Russian army made a bakery in my house. So I walk into the house and they gave me a dirty look-- what is a civilian doing in his army bakery. I said to him, excuse me, and I walked out. I'm glad he is here and making a bakery. What do I care? I didn't come to reclaim my house.

I went up town to the county clerk was my good friend. And I took up quarters in his place. And I am going to see the mayor, which is my neighbor, just to talk a little bit. And a week later I'm coming downtown. And I'm coming at one stretch of the road, I see a stranger's coming.

Because when you live in a town that has one main street and everyone goes on that main street, you recognize the people even if you don't see their face, by their movement. And I saw this is a stranger. And as we come together, sure enough one of the boys which I liberated is coming. And this is a week later.

And I said, Willie-- he was from a town on the border of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. He worked for the newspaper. And there he had to speak Czech and Hungarian. So he spoke a little Czech and they chose him to go look for me. What happened-- I said, Willie, what are you doing here? He says, don't say-- don't say you know don't know happened to us.

He said they rounded us up, the Russians. And they put us between the prisoners, the Hungarian and the German prisoners of war. And they've taken us to the capitol. And we're telling them, look, we are-- we are Jews. We were in the labor camp, we suffered. Yes, yes, we're going to take you to the headquarters and there they'll take your part, who is who, and you're going to be sent away.

From Uzhhorod they're sent to Munkacs, the other big city. From Munkacs they're going toward Russia. My town is the last town over the border, going east from Poland to Russia. When they came to my town, they said to themselves if there is any chance to be liberated, here is-- Nathan's probably home and he is going to help us.

So one of them had a watch on his hand. And he gave to the Russian guard that was taking them. And as he took the watch, they all went downtown where the Jewish houses were. They were empty. All the Jews be taken away. They all jumped out of the lines. And the Russian guard made believe he's shooting in the air. And they hid in a house. And they sent him to look for me to help them.

So him I met now on the road. And we are going downtown. And I went into the watchmaker. And I said, do you have something, some food to give these guys. At nighttime, I'll pick them up. Because in the daytime I couldn't move with him. Because this is the border area. And the Russians have troops, border troops. They belonged to the NKVD, to their secret police.

NKVD, yeah.

They are very strict between their own people. You got to have IDs and everything. You got to have it to move and their bridges to go. And so I was afraid to take them in the day time. At night time I took them to my man, where I lived. And they were-- and they-- and next to the barn where they keep the hay, I hid them there.

And I went to the mayor to help me get them through the guards. Because here were border guards. I know in the city you're freerer, but here is very strict. They should let me take them through. And he promised me. He promised me every day. And he always change his mind. I be coming to him every day. He is changing his mind, he's changing his mind.

And one day I'm going downtown. It's Saturday night. I'm going downtown. And I met downtown the brother of the previous mayor, who was sort of nationalist-- not a communist. This new mayor was a communist, now he's a mayor. And we start talking about our new liberators, that they're not what we expected They're not like as we expected.

And we are stopping at one spot because an army truck is coming. And they were-- in this area, the uptown didn't have-- it wasn't paved, the road nicely, so there was a lot of mud and rain. So we stepped aside we shouldn't be dirtied up by the truck.

And he says to him-- the guy on the truck recognized him. The guy on the truck was a secretary for the Communist Party from the big city, Svalyava. He says to him, you're going to have a convention-- a conference or a convention, I don't remember, he said-- in Munkacs. And we had a theater called, believe it or not, La Scala. And so-- I hear that name.

And so, he says we want all the delegates. He says he want you to come as a delegate. He says to him, well, I don't think I can come, my children are sick. He was not a real communist. He just joined the party to cover his old nationalistic things. And so he wasn't a full-hearted communist so he didn't want to go.

When he said I wasn't going to go, I hit him in the ribs in the dark, and I said, you say you're going. He got-- he didn't know what's going on. Here we're both complaining. And I tell him to go to a conference. He says-- so he found an excuse.

He said, well, listen, fellas, I'm going-- they're going-- they're telling him they're going up to the villages picking up all the delegates, all the people who are coming as party delegates. So he said, I'm going to go home. If the kids don't feel too bad, if my wife let me go, I'll go. So they said to him, well, if you're going to go, we'll pick you up on this spot.

By the time they go to the last village, it's about five miles, we have enough time to come back. So when he leaves, he says, are you crazy. Why are you going to break my ribs. And I hit him hard [INAUDIBLE], say you go. Why you break my ribs?

I said, [Personal name] I have 14 guys-- by this time another guy or two joined these people-- 14 guys over there in [Personal name] house. And [you know, Vasile was scared like hell because he was a night guard in the Czechs. And so they are accusing him that he was telling on the Communist Party when they had secret meetings. And so he's sort of scared that the communists are going to tell something on him and they take him to Siberia.

I said, you know how scared he is and I have these people in his barn and I have to take them away. He says, what does that mean to me? I said, didn't you see the truck? He said, are you crazy? He says, with this army truck with the political guys, you're going to get-- I say, yes, the leader's in the front cab. And I said in the back, he doesn't see what goes on in the back. He says, we'll get this guy on here.

I said, [Personal name] these people-- I had to butter him up-- I said, these people are factory owners. They're multimillionaires. When the war is over, they're going to beguiled you. And you know, he was a businessman. He liked the idea. I said-- I said, look, you know they're not spies. They're just innocent, unfortunate people. I said they wouldn't know any difference in back. They get up.

He goes home-- he agreed. He agreed. He goes home, tells his wife we're going. I go uptown and I get my guys and I hide them behind the priest's fence-- there's a stone fence. And I said, when the truck came, I load them in the truck, you know, the back benches. We come to the first bridge. Me and him sat on the edge, because the two of us can converse a little bit in Russian.

And the [INAUDIBLE] group comes over. He in the front, they give him documents. In the front, they have documents from the army, from the political bureau, has documents, but he still goes in the back, still goes back and look with that flashlight. And we gave him a line of BS. Oh, we're going to the convention. With give them cigarettes and we talk. Because they were not dressed properly for [INAUDIBLE].

And we went through one guard, another bridge. And we come to the city, 35 kilometers, Svalyava. That's where the unit of the transport unit, the Russian army belonged to. They went there to their barracks. And they told everybody, all the delegates who was here, go sleep someplace. And the morning we'll come-- this is Saturday night-- in the morning, someone will come and we'll take you further, another 25 kilometers to Munkacs, for this convention.

It's at nighttime, in the middle of the city. What do you do with these people? I don't know nobody here. Before all this happened my friend, the mayor, I went to him and I said, you have to give me some identification. I have no identification. They're grabbing people on the street and pushing them in the line, taking them to Russia.

He gave me identification. My friend also, [INAUDIBLE], want to show me good will here. The mayor's gone personally with me to the headquarters, the army headquarters. We come in. There's a colonel. He's this tovarisch colonel. he says, I would like you to give this man identification.

The tovarisch colonel says to this mayor, Tovarisch, do you know this man? He says, do I know this man? He is my neighbor. We were brought up together. He says, if you know him, what does he need identification for? My mayor was terribly embarrassed. And he walked out without identification. So I didn't have nothing on me.

And so I'm scared too. Now, I'm in a new town. I told these poor people, which I now have in the truck go hide in some empty houses because [INAUDIBLE] is taking me to one of his friends who has an apartment of maybe one cubicle, one little room. And I'm glad to be attached to him on his mercy, he should take me in.

I cannot take 14 people to a stranger. So hide yourself and so much. Hide someplace and in the morning I'll come. 7:00 we have to be here. You come a little early. I'll be here and we'll put you back in the truck and we'll get you to the big city.

Then we slept over. In the morning, we came to this other transport. Maybe 100 trucks were there. All delegates from all that were coming. And I am looking my eyes out for my people. And the last ones are being unloaded. And I look and they're not around. So I had to go with [INAUDIBLE] to the convention.

And the convention was that the Russians jockeyed to take apart Czechoslovakia to themselves. And the first they did, they tore off the Carpathian Ruthenia state and they made them hold the convention under their auspices. And they made them choose their own government, and so they break away from Czechoslovakia and they're independent.

So I was at this convention and I saw what was going on.

Yeah.

And there in the city I found a pair of shoes. I bought a few skis, very heavy shoes. And I'm putting on a pair of shoes. Now I'm walking in shoes. And I'm going down over the town. And I met a little fella who was from my area. And he was German. And he was a militiaman.

And I say-- his name was Hans-- how did you get in the militia? Because I was afraid that the Russians were going to take me to the army. When I was going to the major, they also wanted me to go to the army, the Russian army. And I said, I'm going to rest up a little bit because I was in concentration. [INAUDIBLE] well, rest, rest. But after a couple of days, they wanted me to join. I ran out of excuses.

So I didn't want to go back home. I actually wanted to go join the army and fight Hitler. But I wanted to go with the Czechoslovakian brigade which was coming from Russia. I didn't want to go with the Russians because they were very primitive and very brutal. And I wanted to go with mine because I know the command and everything. But my unit was-- army wasn't going in the direction. I couldn't find in what direction they were going.

So I could do the second best. I heard if you join the militia, you don't have to go to the army and I didn't have to give excuses to the officers. And this German boy told me that I can go in the militia. His father is the secretary of the Communist Party. His father is a German. I used to cut his hair in my hometown. And he was a communist.

And he never felt that-- he always said Hitler's going to lose the war and he never became a fascist. But a lot of the German socialists, when Hitler got to be very successful, they joined. He kept-- I don't know where he hid that they didn't kill him.

So I came over to him. He jumped under the table. Mein kinde, he jumped out like he would meet one of his sons. He embraced me and squeezed me. And he says, what can I do for you? I said, I'd like to join the militia. He gave me a paper and I joined the militia.

And I was in the city helping. I realized that at another concentration camp, children are coming with a train and they're being taken over by the Russian army. And the Russian army does to them things, not nice things. So I asked the captain of the militia to send me there on patrol all the time. I used to help them get back to the city without problems and get in contact with other people so that they should not be molested by the Russians.

And this was going on until May-- May in 1945. One day, I'm in a friend's house and I heard that the-- a orchestra is playing. And I start thinking, why the orchestra is playing. There's no holiday, no Czech, no Russian. What is going on?

And I went down. And I see two orchestras going toward the city hall. They build their statue for Stalin and a little stage like, a couple of steps and a little stage. And a high school teacher gets up there. And he says, comrades, until now we were a small Carpathian Ruthenia nation and everybody stepped all over us. He says, from now on no one is going to step over us. Because today tovarisch-- Comrade Khrushchev, which was at that time only the secretary the Communist Party of the Ukraine, he says connected us to the big Ukraine. [INAUDIBLE].

So there was about 30 or 40 people gathered there. Everybody got white in the face. They all expected the Czechs to

come back. Because now they realized how democratic and nice they were. Before they didn't appreciate them as much as they know now. You know, the difference between the Hungarians and the Russians, now they would like them to come back. But no chance, no they're connected to Russia.

Now I know we're not going to sit around there. I was waiting at home and I helped some people. I used to take them home to Carpathian where they had some things hidden. A girl used to come. They used to want to go to their houses, which was occupied by somebody else now. And they were afraid to go to their own house. Maybe they had family jewelry hidden in the garden. And I used to go with them to unearth that.

And then one day I'm going downtown and I saw the Russian troops, NKVD troops, the green brigadiers, with their German shepherds and Russian shepherds. So I realized that they are going to close the Iron Curtain on our state. And I went all over town. And I told all the people that I could, if you want to get out the easy way now is the time.

And they start asking questions. I said no questions, no answers. If you want to get out from here the easy way, now is the time. And that night I went on the train. And I went to Budapest. I was going to Prague.

Did they listen to you? Did they do it?

A lot of them did. I was going all through the city. And I said, you tell your friend, you tell your friend.

It was Czechoslovakian people, not Jews that you were telling to leave?

No, they were Jewish.

Jewish.

There were no Czechoslovakians there.

Oh, there weren't.

By the way, while I was in the Carpathia in the militia, once in a while a Czech soldier from the Czech brigade on the Russian line used to come home on furlough. Because they came from Russia and they were fighting Slovakia, so they were coming on furlough. When they came they were always being persecuted by the Russians. And I couldn't understand, why should they persecute the Czechs, who are historic allies of the Russians? Plus, they belong to the Western democracies, why should they persecute.

Well, only later they did fall in line, they didn't want to see no Czech presence, no Czech soldier. They wanted to annex it to themselves. They didn't want to show a Czech presence. So they would persecute them and give them trouble. So then I realized why it's for.

So I went to Prague. And I was going to stay in Prague. I still didn't think of going anywhere else. I know Palestine is still closed. The British won't let go, nobody. And so I was going to stay. I'm a citizen of Czechoslovakia. I'm going to say in Czechoslovakia.

I came to Prague. And as soon as I came, I got disappointed. I saw only Czech and red flags. I didn't see American and British flags. So I said to myself, here comes another Munich. It looks like we were being already given away to the Russians. If I don't see-- they're allies, and I don't see English in Prague, I don't see-- I don't see English flags and Americans, their presence not here, that means we're in trouble. We were given away to the Russians.

And I was there six weeks. And especially one day there was-- again, vans were going down the road. And I'm going to see who is going and what. And I see they say on placards Union of Political Prisoners-- in Czech, [CZECH]. Union of Political Prisoners, I said, that must be a very respectable group. Let me see where are they going and what do they want.

So we come to the famous Wenceslas Square. And the master of ceremony gets up there. And he says, gentlemen-- ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry to announce that President Benes was not able to attend because he had a cold or some excuse.

And I didn't like that excuse because I said to myself, if people came and political prisoners, he would be half dead, he would come to see such a respectable group who suffered for Czechoslovakia. There's something wrong. There's something red. There's something infiltration. And things don't look good. And you better leave here too.

And so I was in contact with other people, certain-- from Poland, certain people came there. They were very happy to be there. They were very helped by the Czechs, the Red Cross and giving all kinds of assistance. And with a group we came over to Germany. And we came Landsberg am Lech.

And so there were about 5,000 people. Zionist organizations start being organized. And Ben Gurion came once to have a speech. And that was when the fight was going on. And the Irgun was fighting against the British in Palestine. And it gave us a very big lift when the Irgun announced how they retaliated to the British Nazis, which we had in Palestine at that time.

And I was ready to go to Israel myself. Then a girl came from Poland with a group. I met her and she had a sister here. And we got to going out and later on we got married. And she said she would like to go Palestine too, but she has no family, nobody but only one sister, which is in America. She wants to have some family. And she'd rather go here first. Maybe later we go to Israel.

And so we were there for two years, until our papers got ready and time came. And we came to the United States.

Was one of your children born there too?

One child was born here. My oldest daughter was born in [INAUDIBLE].

When you were in Prague, how did you manage? Did you know people there?

They had established places-- the Czech had established places, anybody that was anywhere in Germany, concentration camp, or for that matter, anywhere dragged away to Russia, they had the best facilities, giving money, clothing, food, shelter, assistance.

In fact, I want to tell you something, what happened to me when I was in Germany. The Polish Jews would look at me, and look at me, and look at me like suspiciously, funny. And I said, why are you looking at me? He says I'm looking if you're normal or you're not normal. I said, why?

He says-- they say, we went through Czechoslovakia. And we saw your people. And we would give our right hand to belong to a country like Czechoslovakia. He says they are the finest people. When we asked them how to go someplace, they don't show us the road, they take you there. He says, this is not done in Poland ever, nobody. And so we are wondering, why are you leaving such a country? We would give our right hand to belong to Czechoslovakia.

So I say to them, listen, fellas, my grandfather was a very hard worker. And he accomplished a lot in his lifetime. And I said, but whenever he accomplished in the First World War, the Russian army broken it twice and they robbed us of everything and we were left with nothing. So I said for the next 20 years, people have to pay taxes to pay for the war debt and for the war damage.

And I said, and then another war came, this one, and again the Germans and the Russians. And I say all the work we did, eight children and my mom, is also destroyed. I said, Czechoslovakia is a small country. It cannot defend itself. It's always either from these-- somebody comes, and you get pushed around.

And I said, am I going to now raise a family and work hard all my life and pay for the war taxes and then 20 years later again a war. I said I'm leaving Czechoslovakia because it's a small country, it cannot defend itself, and I want to go there

where I don't have to have a war every 20 years. This is the reason I'm leaving Czechoslovakia, not because I don't like my country.

Tell us about your family. What happened to them?

So then I start finding out-- well, I was still in the militia in Munkacs. And some of the-- one of my cousins kids start to come home, then they told me what actually happened. And I waited there until the last day, until the last minute till the Russians, because maybe somebody is going to survive.

But they were hardly children, my brothers and sisters. And I thought someone's going to survive, but nobody survived. I heard-- the witnesses, they told me what happened to my younger brother and to the sisters. As far as they know, they said one sister worked in the kitchen and she was all right till the last minute.

In a concentration--

In concentration camp, yeah.

Were they in Auschwitz?

I think Auschwitz, yes, or Mauthausen. I've forgotten which concentration they were taken. And in the last minute-- a lot of people perished in the last minute.

Your parents too?

The parents were taken to the gas chambers right away, as soon as they came. So I heard, with all the rest of the people. The Hungarians rounded them up on the last day of Passover. And there was no bread in the house to take with you.

And my mother managed to-- the children send away some of my clothes to this clerk of the city hall, where I took up to live. And he hid them in the ground. Because he would be caught, he would be shot. In the ground, and some of the clothes was rotten. There was no much-- not much plastic in those days to wrap.

And so what happened to the rest of the-- the cows, I don't know who took them. Probably the Hungarians took them for the war effort. And everything was just taken away. And they were rounded up, put in the synagogue for a week. And then they were marched to the train, 12 kilometer, and taken to the big city, Munkacs.

And there they were being put for about a month or two on outside, still very cold, in the rain, on a brick yard, a brick factory. There were a lot of bricks being stored. And I heard that the Hungarians took their people and tortured them and hit them, influential people or successful people, and things like that. Very bad things were going on.

But how old were your parents at that time?

My mother must have been around 53, 54 and my father around 60. Still in good shape at that time. But I just-- that's when I start thinking, how could the Germans be so brazen and do this in the next minute. That they must have gotten a gentleman's agreement, permit, by the world.

When was this that they were taken away?

'44.

'44.

1944. This was only-- this was only six months before I was liberated. It was-- it was-- they surrounded the town. The army surrounded the town, rounded everybody up. I imagine they did not think that they are going to be killed, or maybe they would have run too. I think that they were telling them that they want to walk with them because the front

line is going to come to the Carpathian, they don't want to have them in their way.

And so-- not that there was-- they were able to run away. After all, they were only older people and the smaller children.

Did they know what has been going on? Did they know about the camps?

No.

No, they didn't know anything.

It was not only brazenness, but it was deception as well.

Yes. No, they didn't-- no, they didn't. We never knew-- the only we knew was that killing was going on in Poland, but not that systematic camps being-- people being killed.

The final solution.

Nobody knew about it. Nobody knew that. I never heard it mentioned. I would say even the Hungarians who were above us, the bad ones, the good ones-- the good ones maybe would have-- they always give us the news, what was going on-- would have probably told us. It was being kept a secret.

And I am a lot of times surprised that why did the Allies keep it secret? Why didn't they throw down-- what do you call those--

Bombs.

Leaflets. Leaflets.

The leaflets to the people and arms too. It would have created a chaos for the Axis armies. If people have arms, they could go in the Partisan and do something. So it was deception actually from the East and from the West. And so I'm many times very surprised how unorganized we were ourselves. But--

I-- I'm sorry.

We were not organized. And we didn't have no couriership of any kind. Like I said, not that it would help a lot. There was nothing to fight with. There was no armament to do something with. But maybe a couple of brave-- if they would know, a mother, I'm sure, would have wanted the child to survive. She would have said, go do what you can. And so someone would try to help themselves, go in the forest and maybe try to survive a few more would survive. But the deception was very full.

Did you have any relatives that survived, aside from your brother-- your immediate family-- cousins?

Just cousins-- just cousins from our area, a few cousins survived. I would say to you that for a long time I was a little bit even angry at our religious leaders, especially the orthodoxy. To my opinion, they twisted our religion away from a historic-- away from a historic, proud, lenient-- I want to say lenient, not leniency, but something-- linear, something, that leads us from there.

And they brought us in just a sort of fanatical belief in religion and in God. And it is a deception also because our history does not start like that. Our history starts where Moses is told go and take Canaan, and yet, he doesn't trust God himself. He sends away a group a group of couriers--

Spies.

--of meraglim, spies, to find out what's going on-- Joshua bin Nun and Caleb [INAUDIBLE]. He sends them to spy on

the country to see what was going on. And every time I have a discussion with my people, I tell them you're hypocrites. You twist our religion onto this fanatical thing, just blindly believe in something, but you're told that you do and God will help you. God will never help you if you don't do nothing.

You feel they didn't stress Am Yisrael enough. In other words, the nation of Israel and more the faith. And that's all.

No, only blind faith, but not our historic, proud history of the Maccabees, of the fights.

He made them more passive.

Yes.

God would help them.

Yeah. And that if something is going on bad that it's a punishment from God. I don't know for what, some kind of punishment. My mother was-- we Jews, we don't believe in saints, but there is such a thing, my mother was a saint. She would help everybody in the world. Gentile and Jew would come to our house and get a little potatoes and a little milk.

And we would help everybody. And everybody called her mom, the Gentiles and the Jews, everybody. She was-- and my father would never utter a word of any bad against any human being. They were such a decent, hard-working people. And I would say, that just doesn't make sense, God punishing-- punished them, the innocent, the children. This doesn't make sense.

One of the things we've learned, certainly, is that, in the post Holocaust world, is that it was necessary to rely on other human beings. Did you know about Wallenberg, for example? When you were in Budapest, did you know about any of-

No.

--the things that were being done?

Wallenberg came after. When I was in Budapest, this was in 1942 till '43, and I was there in this labor shoveling snow till March. Wallenberg probably was in there and I'm not saying he was not. But at that time, Hungarians-- by the way, I think I'm in the time and I leave out a lot of things.

While we were-- before I ran away, when we were still on the border of Poland and the Carpathian Czech, as a Czechoslovakian, one morning, comes the good news. Horthy, the leader of Hungary, told the soldiers to lay down their arms. And the courtier, the Gentile courier of our guard gave us the news. And we had a happy day. A beautiful September day, September the 20-- I don't remember the date. Beautiful, happy day, laid down their arms.

I didn't know what was going on. Later I found out what was going on. So by afternoon, I figured the war is over and we're going home. But by afternoon, Szalasi, the fascist captain, who was the leader of the Hungarian Fascist Party, was being led out by the Germans from prison. He took over the helm. And he went on the radio. He told the Hungarian soldiers, Hungarians hold on your-- hold on your lines, and fight, and this and that.

And they listened to him. And at night time, back to where we were, still were, because the fascist leader is now in control. So I wanted to say this in something-- in connection with something.

I was asking you about people who might have been good, who might have been-- were you connecting with that story you told me on the break about the military officer who helped you? Is that in some way connected with that?

No, the military officer who was so good, and I started to say this story at that time, he asked me do I want to go home-- do I want to go to the staff-- because everybody who was born under the Czechs has to go back to the staff headquarters. And I said, no, I want to stay with you, because he was a nice officer. And I didn't think they're all that nice. I didn't

meet bad ones yet. He was the first one.

So the next day, he called me in, and he said, I'm very sorry, another order came and says without exception-- they didn't tell them you've got Nathan there left over. So in a diplomatic way, without exception, they knew that I'm still there. And so they took a truck and send me back to the camp, in Carpathian, to the headquarters. And all the people there who were born into the Czechs, whether they were Hungarians, Lithuanians, Germans. Jews, they were packed there with their [INAUDIBLE] and ready to go.

So then I found out what happened. Being that in this battalion, not all the officers were as good as mine. And some were not treating the Ruthenian boys so correctly. And knowing that the Russians are on the border-- at that time, the Russians had divided Poland with the Germans-- they ran away. When the Hungarians realized that two guys ran away, they took everybody who was born under a democratic regime, and they packed us up, and they send us behind Budapest.

So I came to-- and they split us up. Every three people to a new battalion. And that battalion, the three people go to, each person to a different company, be split, so that this shouldn't happened, what happened in the First World War, the Czechs ran away. So that's where I encountered the bad guys and the good guys, some good, some bad.

Later on, I met another officer who was the real commander of our company, but he got sick and he was in the hospital. And so when he came out, he was a good soldier. He'd make no exception. He treated everybody nice. But he didn't last there long. He was always in the hospital for certain reasons.

And so other came to assist. And they were antisemites. But you couldn't be in contact with them, because who knows anybody address after the war. You don't know people. People come into the army and just know his name and that's it.

Or even what happened to them.

Yeah, or even what happened to him. Somehow-- somehow bad things always happen to good people-- more to good people than to bad people. And so--

In the few minutes that we have left, tell us a little about your life in America when you came here.

Well, my life in America was I would say hard. Because I was a proud man at home. We had-- because people were so poor, and we had a little bit more land, you felt a little bit better. We could give and not be on the taking side. Then you come over here and you're a nobody. You haven't got nothing. They don't know your record, that you come from a decent family. And the bank would not give you assistance. They don't know your credit.

And so I had to work-- I worked for 20 years seven days a week to accumulate something for my old age, to give my children, they shouldn't feel inferior. And so--

You were a barber?

A barber. And I was a little bit involved-- I know real estate. When I came and I used to cut somebody's hair, I saw how people read the newspaper and they watched Wall Street, the stock market. And that got me terribly upset. What kind of way of life that is, when a person has to look at that, and his pulse and heartbeat goes up and down, up and down.

And I said, that's a very unhealthy-- if I would ever have money I would never go in that direction. Because I want to first save my health. When you have health, you are a very rich guy. And so you got to watch your health. I said, if I ever have money, I'm going to my old-fashioned way, the real estate way.

And so when I had a little money-- I didn't have money. I bought real estate with borrowed money. And I made out very, very well, better than anybody. I bought a little land, \$35,000. 20 years later I sold it for \$350,000. And so, a couple of pieces of land. And then, you know. Of course, you have to scrounge, make those payments and don't go on vacations.

But your old age is nicer. You feel secure, you feel nice. And it's nice to go to a party and give a nice donation. I'm always happy, like I said, to give. If I can give that makes me very happy.

And your children have all been educated.

The children are all educated, all went to college. I paid for them. And they're good children. They never touched a cigarette. They never touched, for sure, not a drug. And so they're decent citizens. They work hard. I gave them the work ethic that you never cheat nobody but yourself. If you're honest and straight, you will always go far away, further. You'll always be accepted. And you'll be recognized. It takes a little longer, but it is surer, safer, and more decent.

Have you been able to talk with them about the things that you experienced in those years and about your own family?

Of course, of course. From time to time, we take walks. And they want to know. And I tell them about-- they're very interested to know about-- more interested to know when you were a youngster, when you were their age, how-- what you were doing.

When did you start to talk to them about your experiences during the war?

When they got to be-- when they got to ask questions. When they got to ask questions. My older son is more receptive, more interested than the other two. It looks like affluence brings a certain apathy.

Complacency.

Complacency. Not as interested. My first two children are more-- have more feeling and more knowledge, than the other two. Because they were born in a little bit more affluence. They're also decent, honest, very good people, but I don't think that they have the same feeling like the first two. It looks like that to give too much to children spoils them a little bit and gives them less to think, less to struggle about. And they're not-- they're less of a person than the guy that has to struggle. I notice this even in my own children.

You look upon the first two as the children of your struggling years.

Yes.

And the other two as the children of your more secure years.

They're different. They are closer-- all the ones love us, but my first daughter is to us not a daughter. She's actually a mother. She takes-- never let's my wife, for the last 10 years, never let's my wife make no party. She makes it. And no matter what, she wants to work for her.

And my older son, too, would do anything to come and help me fix this. And now the younger son, unless I ask him, he wouldn't volunteer. Or my older daughter. If we ask her, she'll do anything you ask her, but she wouldn't volunteer. Where the first daughter, she knows, she plans ahead. Thinks that mom shouldn't work hard. So there is a difference.

Do you have any other questions?

Are there any things you'd like to say in closing before we--

I would like to say in closing one thing which I have in my mind. And that is that somebody should write a book about world injustice. And the title of that book should be "You, the Criminal Silent Majority." "You, the Criminal Silent Majority."

When I think about all the things that are happening, I see how the world goes about. For example, people ask me in the United States in the barbershop a lot of people ask me, what do I think, could a think like this happen in the United

States. And I say to him, if you're not going to get mad from my honest opinion, then I'll tell you. If not, I wouldn't talk to you. No, they say, they're not going to get mad.

And when I tell them they do get red in the face. I said could happen anywhere. And I explained to them why it could happen. I maybe did not read a lot of books, but I did a lot of observation. My observation is this. In every nation, in every country, there are 3%-4% idealistic people which fight for any right, whether nationalistic or any kind, for justice. Then there are 3% and 4% opportunistic people. They will lie, cheat, kill, maim, just to get to the top of the helm.

The struggle in every country goes between these two groups. The bad group always wins, most of the time wins, because they use brutal means. In the middle of this sits probably a decent, but I would say to the world, a decent criminal silent majority. Why do I call them criminal? Not to speak up in time for any justice, or injustice, brings to this what we just experienced.

There is no dictator who can become strong if the people that don't like him speak up. And they go to the city hall without sticks, and without rifles, without [INAUDIBLE], just to voice their opinion. But they're sitting home and letting these two groups fight it out. And when the bad group takes over, and takes all the hoodlums and gives them the right to be-- what do you call when somebody tells you--

Legitimizes them.

Yeah, legitimizes them, and then they go-- they got the control. And they put the police under there. And they got you already in check. And by this time, it's almost like late, and everybody-- and he doesn't want to get involved. And they take over. And then brutality starts.

Therefore, I would like somebody should write a book about this to point this out to the people. The name of the book should be, "You, the Criminal Silent Majority," with a picture pointing the finger. Because I notice if you make a picture on a book, you go by, and it looks to you the picture's following you.

I noticed that when my boss one time brought in a police Gazette in the barbershop. And the picture-- was a Herculean man. And he says, coffee can kill you. And being I never drank coffee at home because it was too expensive, and I came to America and I was hooked on coffee. And I loved a good cup of coffee. When it tell me coffee can kill you, I grabbed the book and I started reading it.

And it says that caffeine gives you cancer. And I cut out coffee that day. And until a dentist told me, don't be silly, everything in moderation will not kill you, but overdone. And so since then, I will drink a little bit, but not so much. But I noticed the way the picture.

And so I would like somebody should write a book. And it should shock the average citizen of the world-- "You, the Criminal Silent Majority." Now you are silent. You are criminally silent. Because you're letting the opportunists-- the bad guy take over and do bad things to the world. And therefore, he is a criminal silent majority.

Nathan, thank you very much.

You're welcome.

[MUSIC PLAYING]