

-TITLE-ELLA SCHNITZER
-I_DATE-APRIL 26, 1990
-SOURCE-CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-
-IMAGE_QUALITY-
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

01:00 Ivan was born in 1927 in a small Yugoslavian town Volvas.
In 1928 his family moved to the Tolkalsko border of Volsnia/
Kawatia.

02:00 Parents ran a store which served the entire town.

03:00 The town was a vacation place because it had hot
04:00 springs. They were comfortable financially until the war.

05:00 His family was a traditional Catholic family. He had a
younger sister who was four years younger.

06:00 Parents were good people who loved children and people; they
taught their children to love mankind.

07:00 Ivan's father, before the war, would buy merchandise
08:00 from all area villages. He was well liked. He never had any
prejudices against people for racial, religious reasons.

09:00 In the beginning of the war the Germans came after all

10:00 their enemies in Yugoslavia, like the Communists, Catholics
and Slavs.

11:00 In 1941 and 1942 the village was occupied by the Germans. In
1943 the village was liberated by the partisans.

12:00 From 1943 until the end of the war the Germans would invade
because the border was only five to seven kilometers away.

13:00 They searched for Jews and Communists.

14:00 Before war there were only three Jewish families in the
village. They were very rich and escaped.

15:00 When the Partisans liberated the village, the father joined
them

16:00 Helped in rescue efforts.

17:00 The island of Rabb in the Adriatic Sea.

18:00 Rabb harbored a concentration camp for Jews. It was liberated by the Partisans and Jews came to the mainland of Yugoslavia.

19:00 Erna had lived with her family in Sarajavo, Yugoslavia In 1941, the Germans came took the Jews away and killed most of her family.

20:00 Rabb was a concentration camp.

21:00 Erna says that everything she knows about concentration camps, Rabb was worse. She had remained in Sarajevo with her grandmother and her two year old daughter Ella.

22:00 Erna's mother and sister had false documents to go to Italy.

23:00 Erna could not get through to Italy, because she needed a false marriage. No one would marry her because she had a Jewish looking face.

24:00 When Erna was going to be taken away she disguised herself as a Turkish woman. She made it to the train station with the help of a neighbor. She only took her child, no possessions.

25:00 On the train Erna was very ill. So ill she could not remember her false name. Fortunately she was left alone by the conductors etc.

26:00 Erna took the train to an Italian-regulated area of Yugoslavia. The Jews were not persecuted there, they only had to wear a star.

27:00 After some time the Italians collected all the Jews and sent them to Rabb, an island off the Yugoslavian coast. The conditions there were terrible and there was little food.

28:00 One night when Erna was in the hospital with her sick daughter, Ella, the Yugoslavian partisans liberated the camp. They escaped Rabb.

29:00 The partisans put the Jews on boats.

30:00 The boats went to the beach and left the Jews there. The Jews were responsible for themselves from that point on. Erna walked for five months until she reached Ivan's village.

31:00 At this point Erna was traveling with her mother, her sister, who was 12 years old, and her baby, Ella.

32:00 They met people on the way and stayed with different families. Erna's family had lost everything they had.

33:00 Many escapee Jews were caught by Germans, because they had no idea where they were going.

34:00 By August of 1934, Erna had reached Ivan's town.

35:00 When Erna gets to the village (Toposco) she sees many

36:00 Jews who she knows from Rabb. They said that a man

37:00 named Ivan helped everyone. She saw him ride by on a bike and he looked very helpful. He was 17 Years old.

38:00 Erna asked Ivan for a place to stay. He offered his own home until he could find other shelter for the family.

39:00 Ivan lived only with his mother because his father had joined the Partisans. Later he found a place for Erna, her mother and daughter to live.

40:00 Erna helped Ivan's mother with the cooking and cleaning. In exchange food was given to her family.

41:00 Erna and her family stayed until end of the war. The Germans would come into the village looking for Jews. Whenever they did, Ivan would know, and he would warn the Jews to escape to the forests.

42:00 Ivan started rescuing in the first place because of his upbringing. He says the people needed help and he had a good heart.

43:00 The first person he helped lived in his attic.

44:00 This person's nickname was Cholso he was Sarajevo and his whole family had been taken.

45:00 Cholso was weak and sick He was hiding from both the Germans and the Partisans, because he did not want to be drafted.

46:00 Ivan says it is hard to describe the conditions people lived in. It is something we cannot understand.

47:00 Whenever Germans invaded Ivan had to escape also. They knew he was hiding Jews, so they came after him. He would join the Jews in the forest.

48:00 One story Ivan tells is how he sent the families to the forest when the Germans invaded. This time, though, a few of the families got lost (including Erna's).

49:00 He went after them asking people what direction they had gone. He found out they were walking towards a German village.

50:00 He finally caught up with them at the edge of the forest. They were close to entering the German village.

51:00 He brought them back from the forest. He had some food with him.

52:00 They spent a night in the forest. It was cold, there was no food, and Ella had no shoes.

53:00 Ivan's mother and sister did not have to escape when the German's invaded they were safe. Because Ivan was the only son he could do what he wanted.

54:00 Ivan's parents were good people. They understood what he was doing.

55:00 The other family's who helped Ivan, did it because they were doing a personal favor to him.

58:00 Ivan says he was not too afraid because he escaped too when the Germans invaded. He knows if he had been caught it would have been worse for him.

57:00 When the Germans came, they usually had to escape between two days and two weeks.

58:00 Altogether about 300 people escaped from Rabb. Ivan took care of five to seven families at a time.

59:00 Every time they escaped he had to find a new place for them, because the Germans would rent the inhabited in places.

1:00:00 Erna's family used newspapers as covers.

1:01 Two of her toes froze, and she still suffers. Ivan carried her on his shoulders, escaping through snow.

1:02 Ella does not remember much.

1:03 After the war, Erna's family went to Sarajevo. It

1:04 took a while to establish themselves.

1:05 The mother, brother, and daughter were left of Erna's family.

1:06 After Rabb, her brother had been drafted by the Partisans, as had most people.

1:07 Erna went to Israel in January of 1948. Ivan visited in 1963.

1:08 Ivan was separated from Erna because Ivan's father had come back from the Partisans dying. Ivan had to take care of the work.

1:09 They had meant to get married.

1:10 Ivan went back to his family. Erna's sister and mother

remained in Sarajevo, so Ivan kept up his contacts with Erna.

1:11 In 1963, when Ivan visited her he decided to stay. He knew people in Israel and liked it there.

1:12 Ella says Ivan is like a father to her, She convinced Ivan to stay and to be a grandfather to her four children.

1:13 Ella is in the interview because this topic brings

1:14 back too many memories for Erna. She needs strength from her daughter.

1:15 Israel has been good to Ivan. He worked as a painter until he got a hand infection. Then he became a cleaning man at a bank.

1:16 His family had taught him to live with very little. He is happy with what he has.

1:17 He worked very hard and had two heart attacks. Erna is always happy with what she has.

1:18 He shows an article about himself and Erna. He was

1:19 interviewed because he was living in such bad conditions.

1:20 At the time of the interview they were both very sick.

1:21 Ella says she wanted her parents closer. Whenever she saw them they were in bad condition.

1:22 Ella's husband retired early and took out a loan to buy a new place for Ivan and Erna.

1:23 Ivan says he has nothing to add. He says he is not

1:24 looking for publicity. Ella says that Ivan did

1:25 everything he could for her family.

1:26 Ivan says that children should learn about righteous Christians and what they did.

1:27 In general, he says that the children of Israel are not learning enough about the Holocaust.

1:28 Erna says it is important to realize how special the Christian rescuers were.

1:29 Ivan says the older people know who he is.

1:30 He adds that the children think that anyone who is Gentile is bad. Their consciousness should be raised.

.END.→