

## **Summary of Interview with Irving Wolf**

### **August 30, 1987**

I was born October 9 in Czechoslovakia, during the war it was Hungary and is now part of Russia. I had 6 brothers and one sister. I was the youngest and the only one home before the war.

I have been on my own since I was 15 years old. At age 3 I went to Cheda and at age 7 to a state school. The Cheda was the important one.

Antisemitism was strong at the school. Cheda was Zionist-supported. At the time of the ghetto 5,000 people came from my town and all were orthodox except maybe 5 people.

My father was a Cheda teacher and a scholar. My mother ran a store and was the business person. When the war broke out I was the only child at home. I was 18 years old and we were not concerned about Hitler, we didn't realize the seriousness of what was going on. Later on "Go To Palestine Jew" was shouted in the streets. Some fled to America. My brother wrote us from America to come but we didn't think it was serious.

I was drafted into the Czech Army in 1938/39. In February 1939 when the Germans came they took us out in the yard and took away our weapons and sent us home. We were now Hungarians. I was an interpreter for the Germans for a few weeks. I tried to learn the Hungarian language. They called us to the Hungarian Army for 6 weeks.

Then they called "all the Jews strip. You are going to the labor camp and are not soldiers anymore." Most of them went to the front to pick up mines on the Russian front. None came back.

I went to Budapest. They declared me "unreliable for government risk" and put me in jail. I was in jail 18 months from 1941/2. They freed me, the police grabbed me and put me in detention camp for non citizens. It was a Hungarian concentration camp; the lice were terrible. I escaped from there with help. I went home and then Hungarian police caught me on the train and arrested me.

I escaped after 4 months and then was arrested again. They asked me what I was doing. I told them I was guilty of black market business. I must have said the proper thing, I was set free. When Germany occupied Hungary I was still travelling for business. I was negligent, I was not aware of what was going on. In Budapest I found out Germany occupied Hungary.

My brother and his wife and two children were living in Budapest. He decided to give up his two children and hide them out with non-Jews. The little boy was 3 years old and I taught him a new name and that he was Roman Catholic. The children survived. I went home for Passover from Budapest. All the Jews were picked up and put in ghettos. I did not register and did not go to the ghetto.

They established a Judenrat. All the young people were gone - they had been picked up for labor camps. I was the only one in the 20's left. I told some of the people to leave and I offered them money but they refused.

They picked up my parents I told them I knew my parents from when I was in the Army and that they were sick and I was able to keep them home 4 more weeks. Then they took my parents, my parents were the last ones to go to the ghetto. I brought in a couch for my mother to sleep on as she was ill. My job was to pick up food and throw it over the fence to the ghetto. They picked me up outside of the ghetto and took me to the ghetto. My mother asked me to stay there with them one more night. I went with them to the transport. I went to Birkenau with my parents. Dr. Mengele was there and my mother was immediately killed. Then I went to Auschwitz. I worked there. I became sick when I fasted on Yom Kippur and saved the food for the next day when it became bad. I was liberated in Mauthausen by the American Army. They did not take care of us - we

were many sick people. The gates were open. I was very sick. They took me to the hospital. I left the hospital and began begging for food. Then I washed dishes and went on to other work and became flourishing again.

I want to say that in order that this will not happen again, we need to take young Jewish children and make them feel what happened. Organize the young children, take them once a year, and let them act out exactly what happened so they will feel it and know what it means to be a Nazi. Make a film. Give them the feeling of what it was like, so it will not happen again.