

I'm Sally Weinberg. Today, we are interviewing Tibor Messinger, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section.

Tibor, let's continue with your story of what happened to you as a Holocaust survivor. You were discussing your time in Russia, in the Ukraine, between 1942 and 1944. Do you want to start?

Yeah, I think I left off when I was telling our first experience with the Russian people, especially, I would say, 100% women and children, because all the men were gone. They were in the war, in the front, or they were partisans. And we shouldn't forget that that time, whenever I'm talking during the war, about the Russians, they were allies of United States. We had many, many sad things happening around us, with us.

Can you be specific and tell us what was happening?

For example, one of them. We were working in one place. What? It is not important. All of a sudden, we heard scream. Help. Help. Tiny, little voice. So we ran over, and we found not more than a 10-year-old little girl. No clothes on her. Her stomach ripped open. Her intestines on the ground. Blood all over.

We had, in our battalion, some doctors. So some of us, they ran for the doctor to come what they can do. And during that time, till the doctor arrived, the girl was able to say that much, that a German soldier tried to rape her, and she wouldn't let him.

And he got so angry that he took his bayonet, shoved it in her stomach, and ripped it all the way up as far as he could, and then he left. And that's where he left the girl to die. In meantime, we found her mother, but unfortunately, she arrived too late, also. The girl was dead.

So that kind of treatment did we see, what's happening and under the disguise of war. It was just something unbelievable. You would have to see that actually to believe it.

You know, so I think I might be jumping too far ahead. It doesn't matter. I can come back. One day, we had the work details. Oh, before that, we hit the jackpot. We got a new commander, this Toronyi.

The one that was with your brother?

Yes, who killed my brother.

And you are still in the Ukraine?

We are still in the Ukraine. And he introduced himself, and he said that battalions like this, who he heard is coming from Budapest. And it seems like they are the type who knows everything. He usually takes care in two weeks. That was his introduction.

Were you frightened?

Certainly.

Were the other men worried?

Everybody heard about his reputation.

So one day we go out to work, and our wonderful guard, brave, we are on the side of the woods. And the work consisted to cut woods for the winter. But the guard came to guard us. But they were afraid to go up on the tree and to be on guard if partisans are coming out of the woods. Because it was all over, partisans.

What were the partisans doing? Who were they fighting?

They were fighting the Germans.

Russian partisans?

They were Russian. No, there was just Russian partisans there. And they put some of our own Jewish men up on the tree to holler when anybody they see. No gun. No nothing.

We're working there. All of a sudden, we hear the machine guns. Certainly, everybody down on the ground. I look up. There it stands, one of the Russian partisans, and he tells me lie down if you wanted to live, you know? Not in a bad sounding voice or what is-- to care.

He was helping you.

Helping, yeah. It was over in two, three minutes. There was five or six of them only. They wiped out about 10 guards. Unfortunately, they wiped out our men also, because they didn't know who is up on the tree.

May I tell you, by that time, at least 50%, if not more, our uniform consisted of German uniform taken off from dead German soldiers. Because our original uniforms are gone. We just didn't have it anymore. We went out in summer clothes for three months. So what they saw, even a part of a German pants, they were shooting.

How do you think you escaped that? How did he know you weren't German? They knew who are we, and they said, we came here to free you. They told us. They knew exactly everything what's going on. They knew it from the places where we slept. They knew it exactly.

So they told us, let's go into the woods. They said, oh, first, their commander starts to talk to us in Jewish, in Yiddish.

The Russian commander?

The Russian commander, yes.

Do you remember his name? Did you know?

No, no. Starts to talk to us in Yiddish. He said, we cannot travel during the day because of the Germans all over. We travel at night. He said, lie down. Eat. It wasn't kosher, I know that. But who cared over there? There was a different situation there.

And he said, anybody who is hurt, we don't want to take a wounded one. Now one of my friend, who is still in Budapest, he got shot on his left breast. The bullet went in, on the other side, it went out. They bandaged him. They sent him back. So there we are about--

When you say sent him back--

To the battalion.

He walked back? Oh, yeah, they walked back to the battalion, yes. And there was about 60 or 70 of us at that time. So we were happy. OK, we are not with the Germans anymore.

This was like an escape for you.

Like an escape, yes. So next day, next-- the same night, let's go. We went with them. I would guess we ran about 40 miles. It's an awful long way, but you can do it if you have to. Next day, same thing. No movement, just sleeping quiet, the partisan guards all over. There were-- oh, I forgot to mention there was about 500 or 600 partisans in the woods, and

five, six of them came out to take care of everybody, men and women.

So all of your Hungarian guards were shot?

All of them, who were dead. They all got shot, including three or four of ours, too, who were up on the tree. They knew who is the guard. Who had the gun was the guard. They knew everything.

So the second night is coming, and it was a completely dark night. Only way we could go that we were holding each other's hand, one after the other. And our first man was holding the last man of the partisans.

All of a sudden, he lost them. And we stood there in the dark woods. We didn't know where to go. Where are we? Absolutely no idea. So we decided we have to wait till the morning.

We had the conference. What do we say? If we go out, if we meet our guards, if we meet Germans?

You had no partisan with you at all now. You say you lost contact.

We lost them. We lost the partisans, or they lost us, OK? We were with them for two days, but then in the dark, we lost them.

Do you think they deserted you?

No, no, no, no. Definitely no. Our first man, just in the dark-- if it wouldn't be-- the first night, we had moonlight. The second night, we didn't have any. And in the woods, it's easy to get lost.

So we decided what we would say if we meet Hungarians, Germans, or Russians, because all had to be a different story. For example, if we meet Germans, we had to tell them we escaped from the partisans because it sounds good. If we meet the Hungarians, same story. They knew that they attacked us. The Germans, they knew also. If we meet the partisans, hello. We are back again. Wonderful. OK?

So in the morning, we hear the chickens and everything. We knew somewhere around is a farm. So we go out and who is the first guard? Germans, again. Luckily, they knew what happened. They knew about the partisan attack, that all the guards and whoever was killed there.

So we just told them that we escaped from them. We didn't wanted to go with them. We wanted to stay with them. What can you say, you know? There was no other things to say.

So they transported us back to Mr. Toronyi.

So your escape was short-lived.

I don't know what happened to Toronyi. He came out, and he said he never saw-- we told him the same thing. We escaped the partisans. He said that he never saw such honest Hungarian Jews in his life. And for that, for two days, we are free to do anything we want. What is unheard of from Toronyi.

And since then, until he was with us, he was good with us. He wasn't bad. What changed his mind? Maybe end of the war coming or what? Nobody knows it.

Another occasion, a retreat. And don't forget, we always-- oh, OK. Will you make an order? Retreat, and then I wanted to tell you about the railroad. And then I wanted to tell you about two battalion, OK?

All right.

OK, the first one I said was, what did I say?

You want to tell about the retreat.

OK, we are retreating somewhere. We are, I don't know, maybe there are 15, 20 of us from that work detail where--

And now the Germans are in charge of you. Now the Germans--

No one is in charge. No one. No one knows what the heck is going on, because it is a retreat. The Russians are coming, so everybody is moving back. We arrive in a town.

Would you please mark down also, retreat with column? Column, C-O-L-U-M-N.

OK, so we arrive in a small town full of tanks, motorcycles, what the German had, cars, SS, Germans, and here and there, a few Jews.

Do you know what town that was?

I'm not sure, but I'm sure that is written somewhere in one of the books, OK?

It was in Russia.

It's in Russia. I'm still in Russia. And we got food from the Germans, Wehrmacht. This means not SS. The Wehrmacht is the military, the regular military. They were never bad, the German military. One of them, I will tell you what happened.

So time to go to sleep. We go out in the barn, and with one of my friend, to whom I talked, Leslie, OK, we lie down. All of a sudden, we hear the Russian planes coming. Now the Russian planes, they have a distinctive noise, not the regular plane. And they sound like [IMITATING AIRPLANE ENGINE] like this.

And we know it means half-hour bombing, half-hour, they go away. And they come back, again bombing, another half-hour. So lie down in the barn. That's all what we can do and pray. I don't know if you know what is a Stalin Candle.

What is that?

OK. What do you call what they throw down from the plane to light up the-- light up everything. It becomes daylight. OK, so it's called a Stalin Candle. That's the name of it. And it is like daylight, and they bomb everything. And they did for half-hour.

And we heard the half-hour bombing in that barn, where there was nothing in it. All of a sudden, we hear that they're moving away. By that time, these candles, they start to flicker, and there's not too much light anymore after that.

So everybody knows, including the Germans, they have to get out from there. They couldn't start one car. Each and every one of them was bombed. So we took off.

On foot.

On foot. That's the only thing what we knew to travel all over Russia, Ukraines, and Poland. So we ran out. And a few hundred yards, all of a sudden, we hear voices, again. Help, help. And we see a nice sign in German. So I translate them in English. "Officers toilet," actually "officers latrina." That's the military word for "toilet."

So we go over there to help them. We pull them out halfway, and we see two high-ranking officers. You know what we did? We dropped them back so fast, we didn't even know what happened.

What was the matter with the officers?

That they were German officers.

And were they dying?

No, that's where they jumped in, when the Russian came.

They jumped into the latrine.

Latrine, from the Russian plane, so that they wanted to get out. So we figured, we were in German uniform, almost. It was almost totally dark. They'll never find us. We just dropped them back, and we continued. Find the other Russian home and sleep overnight. That happens, too.

So you were safe at that point?

Oh, yeah, we were safe. Other plane things-- we were sleeping somewhere else in a barn. We hear, again, Russian plane coming. We always knew when is a Russian plane. We hear it is coming closer and closer. We said, oh, my God, now here it goes. It will hit the barn, because it was so close.

And I don't think so in the dark that it went through more than maybe 30, 40 above that barn. And all of a sudden, we heard it went down. In the morning, the work detail was to find the plane and see what is around there. Turned out it was a Russian plane. We found the pilot's charcoal-burned body, what we buried later on. We found his wallet. Three beautiful children and his wife. We took the pictures. After the war, we will try to return it. But the SS had other plans on this one.

So at this point, you are free and roaming the countryside of Russia without the battalions?

Yes and no. There was no actually close supervision anymore, that time, I mean, in that particular--

What year are we in now?

In '43.

1943.

'43.

About what month, do you think?

Depending, wait a minute. What was the weather? On that particular situation, I would say about August, August, September. Because I know later on, it came, again, the cold. Because I know right after, one of our biggest problem was to find the right size of shoes. That was gone, and I have a small foot. So actually, my foot was constantly in rug, you know? And that's how I was walked in it. I found the--

In rags, you mean?

Rags, rags, yes, OK. So and I remember that was real cold. It was right after that, I know that. So it had to be around October, November, or December. We arrived in a place, and again, I have to say the Russian woman, she took off the rag from my foot. Unfortunately, the skin came off, too, with it. Because everything was sticking to it. So she bandaged. And they tried to help everybody as much as they could.

The Russians.

The Russians. That was our only help, where we could turn. Now, there were, I would say, almost 95% of the houses

were Russian people. If we would have said the word, and a lot of them said, I want to get over to the partisans. Many of them told me, too, and my friends, too. Stay here. Overnight, I take you over to the partisans. I don't know. I was too scared.

You didn't quite trust them.

No, no, oh, there was no question about trusting them. I was in such a physical condition that I didn't feel that I can last. Because what would they ask for me?

What weight do you think you were down to at that point?

That point, I don't think so I was more than 80 or 90, that time.

Pounds.

Pounds, yes.

You were having trouble finding food.

When we didn't find, we stole it. Or not always but there was many times.

Did you find that you were hungry much of the time?

Mostly. Now we have work details what was beautiful. Like, for example, the human mine detector. You ever heard that story? No? OK.

Work detail, partisans constantly mining railroad tracks. Germans on work detail-- Germans on detail to guard the railroad so the railroad can go through. At night, partisans coming out from the woods and blowing up the railroad, the tracks.

Don't forget I'm talking woods, what I think it is 400 miles long. The Bryansk Woods. That's 400--

How do you spell that?

B-R-I-A-N-S-K.

B-R-I-A-N-S-K.

A-N-S-K. I think it's 400 miles. I think, 600 kilometer. I think that's what I learned, if not, I learned it wrong. So we got a call, I don't know, 15 or 20 of us, work detail to the Germans. Hallelujah. Good. We're not with the Hungarians. We are with the Germans.

Well, when you say "you got a call," who called you?

A German commander, or the commander or the who is in charge of all the battalions. They put in a request. I need so many laborers. Then they go to the different labor battalions, and they ask, we need 20 men here. We need 100 men tomorrow morning there. How long? We don't know.

But in the meantime, when they went to get you, where were you, in the Russian home?

With the Hungarian. Yeah, the Russian homes.

In the Russian homes.

OK, now, these Germans were in a better place to stay, because at first, the Germans were put in places, the better homes.

So we got the call. I don't know, I think 15 or 20 of us go to the Germans. So we arrive there, and the commander explains what is our work. When it gets dark, every two hours, other two men, one goes left, other goes right, I don't know, three, four, five kilometer, what is about three, four miles-- no, two, three miles and walk the railroad ties. That's the name, the ties, yeah. And about 100 yards behind us is a German patrol. So if there is a mine, they will know because we are flying up, you know? Partisans knew everything who is in the front. Not one of us were ever blown up.

But the German commander, he says, in the morning, you come in. You lie down. You rest until the evening, you do what you want. You're free to walk anywhere you want here. You get exactly the same ration of food as the German GI, same cigarette, chocolate, everything. So it was a heaven to work with the Germans, but it was not SS. It was the German Army.

And to my opinion, they loved the war just like you and me.

So what year was that?

That was about middle of '43. Middle of '43, yes, I think before the retreat because after came the retreat. Now retreat, I think you marked it down with column, right?

OK. A retreat again with the Hungarian guards-- when I say retreat, it doesn't mean 216 of us. Maybe 80 or 100 of us, whoever is left, with the horses. I think we had, that time, 15 horses, I think 15 wagons, and 25 horses on the side.

At this point, did you have any knowledge or were there any rumors going around as to how the war was proceeding?

No. Because they kept all the newspapers, all the letters what they got, the guard, the Hungarian guard-- and don't forget, they were so intelligent that most of them didn't even know how to write or how to read. Many times, I had to read their letters.

But there was no indication what's going on. All what we knew, the front is going back. That's all what we knew. But where do they stand? In Africa or in England or anywhere or in Italy? No idea. We were too far out, away from everything

I didn't know anything was going on in Hungary. Because if my father would have wrote to me, if I would receive that letter, some of what I received it. If there was some hint of anything, they would censor it, anyway. It was cut out, anyway. There was no point even to write it.

So my other retreat with these horses, and I said 25 horses on the side. And there was 80 or 100 of us, pulling these other 25 wagons. Save the horses.

You were pulling?

Yeah, everybody else. All of a sudden, Russian planes coming again, OK? And how dumb were this Hungarian guards? To me, if you are in a war and you are in a retreat, you are spread out all over. No. We were coming in a column, you know, that they can spot us very easily.

So we heard the planes. They heard that, too. Off the road, into the woods. Unfortunately, the other men who were with the wagons, with the horses, they had to stay on the road. And we went off the road. And I know some of us, including me, we were hungry at that time. And I saw berries all over.

For a half-hour, we were eating berries. You know, laughing, you know that finally we got something to eat. Then when we got back on the road, we were not laughing anymore. We had almost all the horses dead, including many of our men. And who didn't die, they were close to it.

Was that from the bombing?

From the bombing-- Machine gunning. It was not bombing. They were coming all the way down, maybe 20, 25 feet from the ground, you know? Russians, they were not beginners. And we buried all of them and continued.

So we arrive, in the evening, to a place, a lot of Germans there, including whoever was left with the guard. One of the guards told me, next to me, he said, oh, I stay with you because the Russians won't shoot you. They knew. They had the idea, too, you know?

So we arrive at night, and they announced that we will get food now.

The Germans?

Germans, yeah. Or I don't know. There was maybe a Hungarian battalion there. I don't know, because they were fighting forces, too. Some of them, not our guards.

And I take off my knapsack I take out my metal. You know, how you call them? Utensils. I was trying to eat. I couldn't. It was shot through from the side. What was on my back. There was a bullet, went just behind my back, shot through my utensils.

When did that happen? Do you know?

When the Russians were shooting down.

Oh, then you didn't know it.

I didn't know it.

You were that close.

That close.

To getting a bullet yourself.

I still got the utensils. All what I had to do, just walk over to a dead Germans and take it away. There was serve yourself. Because even all over, things like this, what happened, happy things.

One of the-- oh, boy, I never can forget either. That was happy. We are working out in a field with my friend George. Suddenly, we hear a motorized column coming on the road. The motorized could be just the Germans.

So it turned out, it was two battalion coming. And remember that we were one-third German, one-third Hungarian, and probably one-third naked uniform. It was summertime.

So we went up to the road to see what's going on. And we stand there, and all of a sudden comes the first car. The open, as you can see from the movies, the German Colonel standing in the car, studying the map with the other one.

We were standing there, and we didn't know what the heck to do. If they find out we are Jews, they shoot us right away. So we saluted them. And I don't know. It was automatic from that German officer or what, he saluted back. So the MP who directs the whole column sees this, and he gives the order to the two battalion, who were coming to clean out the woods from the partisans, to salute us.

Now can you picture this? Two Jews standing on the road and two German battalions walking by and saluting them. We were scared to death. We didn't know. Laugh-- if we laugh, they would know right away, you know, something is



wrong. Happily, nothing happened. They went by.

You were good actors.

I think we were more scared than actors. That was to see--

How many times you came close to losing your life, and each time you managed to escape.

I put it this way, it did not matter. It didn't matter if you get close to losing your life, because in your thought was one thing. If I lose my life, so? The whole thing is over. It doesn't matter. But you still have the will to live. And it's unbelievable how strong it is. No one knows it until you get to that point, you know?

Not everybody had that strong will to live. What do you think gave you that strong will to go on and carry on, no matter what?

Circumstances. I was never big. The big ones died first because of the lack of food. Maybe the attitude.

What was your attitude?

Even in the big trouble, we could laugh.

You had a sense of humor.

We could tell jokes to each other and laugh on it, yes. I don't know maybe that and otherwise, God. I mean, there is no answer to it. No one can give an answer, just like no one can give an answer why did the whole thing happen? Who put that idea in people's mind to do it? Can anyone give an answer to it? I don't know.

Is there any other what I mentioned before?

Let's go on.

On the side, do you have anything else?

Well, we talked about the railroad and the retreat column. Let's go on from this point, what happened to your life? You told me about how you escaped this Russian bombing. And you're on the road, retreating with the Germans. Now, where did you go? What happened to you and your friend?

Well, let's make a jump to 1944, May. I know that time, we arrived outside of Warsaw.

Who is we? When you say "we"--

The battalion, whoever was left.

Whoever was left of your battalion.

Again, work detail-- go down to the edge of the River Vistula.

Vistula, yes?

What is the river from Warsaw to Gora-Calvary.

To what?

G-O-R-A. G, like George, O-R-A, dash, Calvary. C-A-L-V-A-R-Y.

We arrived there to do work down by the riverfront.

And who is in charge of your battalion?

Hungarians.

Hungarian.

To make wire fence by the river edge. Don't forget, other side, Russians, OK? The other side of the Vistula was the Russian forces.

How did you get to this point? Did you go by train? Walk?

Never, never. Forget about the question, train or walk? Everything is walk. After it, will come train. That was a place where, during the peacetime, provided the fruits and vegetables to the city of Warsaw. It was a resort place. But this time, it was full with the German officers, but we were working there.

Food-- what we could find. There was hardly any food anymore, because we're talking Summer of 1944. What we found for four months was fresh tomatoes. I lived four months on tomato.

And don't try to give me tomato. If we go out anywhere and my wife sees a piece of tomato, she reaches for it, and she takes it. Because she knows I ate for my rest of my life, tomato. I don't know. There's a mental block or anything. I'm not sick from it or anything, but I just don't eat tomato. I had enough.

Every day, you had that?

Every day, tomato and tomato and tomato. And if we could find-- don't forget this one was in Poland, already. Now we are in Poland. We jumped through Ukraines. Walked through Ukraines. Because actually, individual things would be very similar to the rest of them, beating, hunger, cold, mistreatment, daily.

Every day?

Constantly. So there is no difference in it, you know? So losing weight, losing comrades, losing friends.

And yet, you managed to carry on.

Still there, you know? So comes the day of August 20, 1944. But again, I can't forget. Why? In Hungary, one of the biggest holiday is August 20, 1944, Saint Stephen's Day, celebrated with, I think it's founder of Hungary. And they just sent back, United States just sent back Saint Stephen's crown, a couple of years ago, to Hungary, if you remember? You remember that?

So they celebrate his day and fireworks and everything. And we saw the fireworks, Warsaw burning. So I can remember that day because it was August 20, 1944, and I grew up with that date--

As a holiday.

As a holiday. So around in October, we get the order, rumors. One is we're going home. Second, we're going to concentration camp. That time, we knew what is it. We heard about what is it.

You heard about a concentration camp and what was going on?

Yeah. So we went all the way around Warsaw, through Warsaw, Praha. That's a suburb of Praha. I remember that name.

Praha is a suburb of Warsaw.

No, there is a Praha. Don't mix it up with the capital city of Czechoslovakia. But there is a suburb of Warsaw what is called Warsaw-Praha.

How do you spell Praha?

P-R-A-H-A. Warsaw, dash, Praha. So we go around all over, and people out there, they thought there are no more Jews. Because we had all the yellow stars or whoever had the yellow armband. And all of a sudden--

Are you still wearing a yellow armband?

Mm-hmm. All of a sudden we supposed to. Some of them, who took them off, a complete German uniform, maybe escaped. And some of them maybe went with-- I think I know one of them who went with the German Army because he knew perfect, 100% German. And all of a sudden, he said he was wounded in one place and went to the other battalion. That happened, too, OK? Probably until he did take a shower because then he was in trouble. You know, that was war. You took chances on everything.

You never took the chance to try to escape in that manner?

The only thing what I-- I didn't took it.

Because after all, you knew perfect German, also or did you have a--

No, I didn't know perfect, no.

You spoke German.

Yeah, I still speak but not perfect. That reminds me about the-- before I go back to Warsaw again, we did a lot of sabotage. I attended one of the meeting, a lecture what they had about resistance. We couldn't talk about the resistance. If anybody would say from us that he was involved in any fighting resistance, I would say he's lying.

Because it was where did he got the gun or anything? Maybe he picked up a gun from a dead soldier or something or a machine gun. OK, so I would say it was more of a individual effort than a resistance. But I would say we did a lot of sabotage.

Your battalion?

All of us.

Well, that is a form of resistance.

I said, fighting resistance, like burning up food warehouses. Germans.

What was the sabotage you were going to describe?

This one. Then, when we were worked around German motorized vehicles, whatever we could damage on it, steal spark plugs or anything else and just disappear. We don't know where is at, and they just couldn't use them.

To get food, who cared that we-- one group, one of my few friends make a disturbance on one side. And I walked with the other friend out on the other side in the back with a big box of chocolate on my shoulder and start walking back to the house, where we stayed that place.

We didn't look back. We get a gun in our back, so what? Who cares? I didn't get the gun. We had the chocolate.

But somehow, we managed to survive. Who didn't steal didn't survive. And to steal there, it was the same thing like here, I'm breathing. You know, it's not a moral question.

From whom did we steal? From the Germans. Where did they get it? They robbed everything wherever they went. So why not? Who cares? Wherever we could do a damage, glad to do it.

When we were digging ditches and there was by any chance a river or what, if we could flood them, we were glad to do it. We were at service, and we did.

And didn't get caught.

Didn't get caught.

You're here to tell the tale.

No, I know. We were lucky. We were not scared. Because I know I went by one rule. So what? What can happen? How much worse it will be if you are dead?

It's a sad situation when you get to that point that you say now, oh, it will be a heaven if I die, compared what I have now. It isn't easy to die.

So back to Warsaw, so it was October. We go around Warsaw. All of a sudden comes the order, back to the front. So let's go walk back to the front. It's not too far, maybe 50, 60 kilometers. That's not too far. That's 30, 40 miles.

We were there, till I think almost end of November or early December.

1944.

1944. So back, again, around Warsaw. And I wish I could remember what was the name of that city where we went. And we stopped in an old school house to wait for the train to go to the concentration camp. And that was the place where we had changing of the guard.

Instead of our guard, the Hungarian, we received 60 Ukrainians in SS uniform, worse than the Hungarians. Because the Ukrainians are known how nice they are, especially if they belong to the SS. So that was almost the middle of December or after. I know it was that close that when they told us that where we'd be going next day--

Do you remember where they told you you would be going?

No, no, no, no. They said that we're just going into the wagons. They didn't say anything where. But even the sight of not just SS but knowing the Ukrainians, it really scared us. And then we said, now here we are 2-and-1/2 years, through all the hunger, cold, degrading, no clothes, nothing. All of a sudden this. What's in the future?

Why in the heck they just don't shoot us and get it over, yeah? It was just, we couldn't understand why. Because we felt we are maybe a little bit different because all the things what we did for the Germans, they felt, out in the front. Because regardless, we still were a labor battalion. So now, we figures, now the rumor is coming true. We're going in a concentration camp.

OK, Tibor. Let's stop at this point and take a break. And we will continue, and you will tell us what happened when you went to the concentration camp, the next part of your story.