

This is tape two, side a. We're interviewing Eva Adam. And you were telling me about the conditions that you had to endure during the ghetto. And you had also told me about the lasting impression of the Soviet troops breaking down the walls of the ghetto. Can you tell me about the days after your liberation?

Yes. This was the days of awakening. Days of danger still. It is a city that was run over by army that fought years together and fought every step of the way. There were occasions where people were picked up on the street for work, and they were never seen again. There were occasions where some soldiers came into our homes and bought us food.

On the other hand, there were other occasions. I could only talk about my own personal knowledge. And the main thing that we did we were looking for our families. It meant of course, we had to go back to some kind of apartment. And we went back to the house that was an apartment for us there. And if you remember where we were taken to the star house, the Jewish house because it was less damaged than other houses.

And so you understand what I mean, we were able to close one window with paper that we put in some kind of oil, turpentine, or something. And this gave us a modicum of warmth because we were able to bring in some wood. Wood came from the telephone electricity poles. They were cut up. And they were used.

Food was nonexistent. Everybody just tried to find wherever they could. And the main thing when the trailer bay opened, we went every day and we stood there days and days and days and weeks. And I don't know how long. And as everybody that arrived, do you know about this and this family? Everybody was there with pictures and tried to find his family.

And one day we had found three of my young cousins that came back from my family of 36, three of them sisters. 17, 18, and 19 years old, no teeth, and some kind of pinkish-orange, something like cotton instead of regular hair. They had worked in a phosphor bomb factory. And this what phosphor does to you if you work without any kind of equipment.

But they were there. And amazingly, they asked us if we knew anything about their family, their parents with whom they were deported in the same train with our grandparents. If you know anything about anybody, the younger aunts, 33, 37 years. Because they were in Auschwitz, but it was, as we said, in June, July of '44. And it was in six to eight weeks that most of Hungarian Jewry was taken to Auschwitz and murdered. There were no selections. If you stood in the line of five, and one person was old, or one person was either child or five, into the crematorium.

As we talked about our families, they could not believe what really happened. It was such an ordeal that they did not realize what is happening with them. So they came back, and they asked us. We didn't know anything, of course. We heard first time about gassing and Auschwitz when we left the ghetto. And since then, of course, many other [INAUDIBLE] that came to our and your knowledge.

And this is my personal feeling was that had I not been for my family, where to be a Jew person, a Hungarian, it is to be proud, I think that I would not be able to survive. Or what I remember, even what I don't remember, everything that I have seen and experienced, what held me up was the knowledge that we are extremely valuable human being. That we are constantly trying to better ourselves and to study and to work hard and to be truly careful with other people and caring.

I remember in the ghetto, when my mother asked me Eva can you think that you could forego your soup? There is a little girl that her grandma said she didn't need soup two days. And I said, yes, of course. Although I didn't feel like. But if your mother asks such a question, then you don't say no.

So in every situation, therefore, I really felt that we could, although they are behaving toward us like toward cockroaches that could have a really good step on you, and you have no right even to try to organize for yourself anything, any protection, or anything. It's all forgotten. You can't do it.

But you still remain a human person. Maybe because I was with my parents it helped. And they are bringing that you are so proud to be a good human being, a good Jew, and good Hungarian. So this makes a lot of difference.

You stayed in Budapest after the war for how long?

We ran away from Budapest from Hungary. Later, we weren't allowed to leave the country. In the first years, we waited who comes back from the family. We were involved with the Zionist movement. And we had to run away.

We were not allowed. It was in 1949 when we left Hungary by unlawful ways. And my parents were caught and put in jail for almost two years.

I arrived in Israel in three months. And I was 16 years old and was put in a kibbutz where there were youngsters of my age. And we studied and worked half day. And we worried about our parents. We wanted to go back. And they sent word from the jail not to come back under any circumstances. So we built a life for ourselves.

Who's the we? Were you with your brother and sister?

Yes. Our parents came out two years after we ran away. They were freed. They were in jail all this time, from '49 till '51. Then they came to Israel.

How long did you stay in Israel?

I went to the army after the young people. I went to the Academy of Music. I had finished Academy of Music. I met, again, this young man that they came out with at the time. Of course, we fell in love. We married. We had our first child.

And in 1961, we came out to the United States to study. I got a Metropolitan Opera workshop engagement. And my husband got into an extremely good program in one of the [INAUDIBLE] College of Medicine. He wanted a surgical oncology, and only here he could've taken. In Israel at the time, there was no surgical oncology.

We stayed here for 10 years, then we went back to Israel, where I sang and taught in the Academy of Music. And my husband was head of department of surgery in a government hospital. And then we came out for-- he had an invitation, and I liked the idea for a year or two. But we remained here and become American citizens. And now, we are turning and going back to Israel to live there.

I wanted to ask you if there's anything that you would like to add at this point before we conclude the interview. Is there anything that you wanted to mention at this time?

I only could talk about those things that I remember. I succeeded to erase so much during all those years. I am 64. And it is surprising that I was able to remember even those things because through my life most of the time I've heard that Hungarian Jewry we have nothing to say. We have no right. We did not behave according to the heroism of like [? Barashi ?] ghetto and so forth. And we all together have less right to ask at least pay attention to us because we have suffered less.

But today, if you ask me, I don't know really to be wiped out in eight weeks to eight months' time compared to three, four years of terrible, terrible suffering and more even. But really to be murdered, and you know that when the Hungarian Jews arrived for three days the Earth moved because the children were not to be put in the gas. They were put alive in the Earth. And it took them days to die.

So I am not sure that in the ghetto where we were about 200,000, and after several weeks we were 100,000 or less, and I don't know how to say it. You suffer even in a short time when the suffering gets so tremendous. It's not right. It's not true. It's not correct to say that you didn't do your duty as a Jew because you didn't have an uprising. Because in Russia, it took three years. And the young people were there until there was an uprising. Not that I want to say anything besides that they were the heroes of all history.

But the fact that the Hungarian Jews, whatever we were able to do to stay alive to show them that we are still human

being, you behave to us like cockroaches, but we are very valuable, very upright people. And we are very capable. We are tricking you. And we won't let you. And we are making papers, and we are doing whatever is possible to run away to live like Christians.

To a child like myself, when they took us to the ghetto in the 20 minutes we are so surprised that we didn't take any clothing and any food. The day after this, when the ghetto was yet open, I went back personally, 11 years old myself, and took down from the apartment everything I could put my hand on it.

And I took a person that knew me-- it was dangerous-- with his horse. And he took to the ghetto all the stuff that we really lived on. The reason we didn't die. So even children, even young people, even old people, we all did the most that within a few weeks' time was possible to do.

I want a clarification on something that you had mentioned. You mentioned that your father had done some kind of service, some kind of military, paramilitary, something. You said he was in some kind of service. And he returned. And you also mentioned your brother had an armband. Can you clarify the role of the men in your family during this time?

Yes, I can. Jewish men were called into service not as soldiers, but as the Jewish Legion. They had, as I explained, no right to any kind of protection. No right to food more than just somebody that gives them or not. They did not serve as soldiers, but as personnel that prepared roads, prepared ditches, prepared the way for the army.

They were tortured with behavior. They were killed. They were murdered. And everybody from the age of 16 till the age of 50 something was supposed to belong to those army helpers, so did my father and so did my brother. And they constantly ran away.

And to run away, it was extremely dangerous. You were killed for nothing. Not to mention running away was a form of heroism. And you didn't help them. You tried not to do this. And you tried not to do anything that would make their life easier.

So my family did the same, unfortunately, of course. Besides my father and my brother, all my father's brothers were murdered during this time as soldier helpers, all of them. All my mother's brothers, one of them done in Russia, the other one in Budapest, not to mention grandfathers and all their relatives that were taken to Auschwitz.

So young people were separated, not fed, tortured, killed just like old people. But Eichmann know his lesson much better, much more than he knew before. And the time he had was much shorter because it was really from 19th of March till the end, which was for the ghetto, the 18th of January, 1945.

I thank you for doing the interview. This concludes the interview today.