

Gonczi, Emrich
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Five Video Cassettes
In Hebrew

- Abstract:** Emrich Gonczi was born in April 1925 in Ivanka, Slovakia to a middle class family of four. During the war he and his father were forced to work in a labor camp and then they were transported to Majdanek and later to Auschwitz. At Auschwitz he worked at the clinic and he described many of the doctors by name and how they conducted surgery, medical testing and experiments. After the war he met his wife. Later he participated in the Auschwitz trials. He studied dentistry in Prague and in 1964 he moved to Israel.
- 1:00** Emrich Gonczi was born in April 1925 in Ivanka, Slovakia. He had one sister. His family was middle class and owned a store. He went to high school in Nitra until 1939 when the Jews were expelled. He was studying to be a dental technician, but could not continue when the laws changed and Jews were not allowed to have professions. Then he worked in agriculture.
- 1:05** Emrich describes his small Jewish community. His father was taken to a work camp but returned on the weekends. They knew about Hitler, the war and the danger to Jews. He describes school life and anti-Semitism in the village. Then he describes how Jews were denied their citizenship and were taken to Hungary.
- 1:17** He describes Jewish holidays and how they celebrated them at home.
- 1:20** He learned to make model airplanes and radios.
- 2:00** Emrich describes his childhood. In March 1939, the German laws against Jews were enforced. The Slovak Nazi, Hlinkova Garda, took away their store.
- 2:12** Emrich's father planned an escape to Hungary, but gave it up after the Jewish community in Bratislava told him that the worst thing that would happen to them was that he would be taken to a work camp.
- 2:18** Describes increased anti-Semitism.

- 2:26 In March 1942 he was taken by Slovak guards with his father by train to Nitra and there they were registered for the labor camp, Sered.
- 3:00 Emrich describes Sered. After one week they were transported in a cattle train to Majdanek.
- 3:11 Describes the camp and the initiation in field one. They then had to build field two. The guards were Lithuanian and the camp police were Jewish.
- 3:19 He describes workers covering an area with soil where hundreds of Russian POW's had been killed.
- 3:21 In April 1942, a transport from Slovakia arrived with his father who told him that all the Jewish families from their village had been taken.
- 3:23 His uncle who was sick was in a special camp where he was killed. Emrich testified about it at a trial in Lublin.
- 3:27 He was on the second transport to Majdanek. He describes daily routines in the camp.
- 4:00 He describes work in the camp and how they built the Schiessplatz. Then hundreds of Polish Jews were taken away and killed. They had to disinfect their clothes.
- 4:06 Emrich describes the cruelty of the Kapos. A composer arrived on a transport from Terezin and had to compose songs that they had to sing at work. (He begins to sing some of the songs.)
- 4:12 When 300 agricultural workers were needed his whole family went on a transport to Auschwitz. He describes their arrival at the camp. He said that he was an electrician.
- 4:21 In June 1942, he was sent to Buna and he describes his work there. In July, he saw his father killed. He describes his emotional reaction and the thoughts of revenge that kept him alive.
- 4:26 He was taken to a DAW factory to work as an electrician. He said that he was a carpenter. He describes his work.
- 5:00 Emrich describes an incident at work and the help that a Polish worker gave him.

- 5:05 He was sent to Auschwitz and lived with people who worked at DAW. Some women from Slovakia who worked with the Kanada Commando gave them food.
- 5:11 He describes his state of mind and his work in the carpentry shop.
- 5:16 He had an accident at work and was sent for treatment at Block 21.
- 5:20 Describes Block 21. Dr. Emil Demartini, who was a political prisoner, saved him from a selection and took him to work as his assistant. He describes his work and accommodations.
- 5:27 He describes the selections on the surgical block made by the SS.
- 6:00 He describes his work as a medic during the middle of 1943. In August of 1942, women were sent to Birkenau. Later he had to take the dead from Birkenau to the crematorium for burning.
- 6:10 Describes his state of mind and his plans to escape and to tell the world.
- 6:15 Emrich describes the "Muselmen" in camp.
- 6:17 He describes other's failed escapes from Majdanek. The Russian POWs were caught and killed.
- 6:23 In the beginning of 1942 most prisoners in Auschwitz were not Jewish. Later Jews came to Auschwitz. Most were skilled workers. Block 2 was Strafkommando, the punitive block.
- 6:26 Block 21 was a clinic where men were castrated. Dr. Dering did the castrations. Emrich worked as a nurse's assistant there.
- Tape 2
- 7:00 Emrich talks about how he managed to work as a nurse's assistant on Block 21, the surgical block.
- 7:11 He talks about the medical and surgical professionals who worked at the clinic, how patients were selected and how he helped patients.
- 7:16 He describes the medical facilities, his work and medicines that were used and how they got them.
- 7:24 He describes who got medicines and who did not.

- 7:26 He describes Block 10.
- 8:00 He describes Block 21, the surgery room, the operations performed there, and the sanitary conditions.
- 8:13 Emrich describes social life in camp, the mood and the parcels they received from the Red Cross.
- 8:18 He describes the bookkeeping and archives in Block 21. There were medical reports on inmates alive and dead as well as pathology reports.
- 8:22 Talks about a failed group escape and how everybody was hanged.
- 8:28 SS Claire did the selection in Block 28. Emrich gave evidence against him at a trial and also mentions Dr. Wirtz.
- 9:00 He describes Block 20. SS Claire ordered him to take the dead to the crematorium. Block 21 was for infectious diseases and Block 28 was used for selections.
- 9:07 Emrich describes his state of mind at the time and the many suicides in camp. He was helped by SS Demartini who sympathized with Czechs.
- 9:14 Describes SS Claire who killed patients on Block 20 by injections, pretending it was medicine.
- 9:21 He describes bearing witness at a trial for SS Claire.
- 9:26 He describes Block 21 where Dr. Dering and Dr. Schumann castrated homosexuals.
- 10:00 He describes Block 24 which was a whore house. There were both German and Jewish women there. He went there to do health examinations.
- 10:04 He talks about Professor Clauberg in Block 10 and the castrations and killings of patients.
- 10:08 He describes Block 10 and how SS Zabel taught him to prepare the "basis solution" used in laboratory experiments. Later Dr. Weber came to work in the lab. At one time, 300 young women were brought and Professor Clauberg, who did research on quick methods of sterilization, used them as subjects. Dr. Schumann did it with X-rays. He was a witness at their trials.

- 10:15 Emrich mentions names of people who worked in these blocks. He witnessed killings in Block 11. Tells the story of Dr. Klein, a Jewish woman who worked there.
- 10:23 The laboratory was in the Reisko Institute of Hygiene. Mostly women worked there.
- 11:00 In Block 10, he met Anina Salem who told him about the experiments they did on the women. Dr. Clauberg injected them to sterilize them. Another method used was radiation to make them infertile.
- 11:03 He worked at the Reisko Institute of Hygiene preparing solutions for lab experiments. He describes the Reisko labs, names the professors who worked there and what they did. Some of them were Jewish.
- 11:09 He describes his work in detail. SS Fuger and Sabel provided him with meat as reward for his work.
- 11:19 Describes getting human flesh and blood for experiments and pretending he did not know where it came from.
- 11:25 He had an accident with a water pipe, was accused of sabotaging the project and was beaten up.
- 12:00 The SS gave him different jobs, such as establishing a telephone center. He describes the experiments done in the lab. Professor Jacobowsky did experiments on Malaria. Nobody finished their experiments because they would have been killed.
- 12:08 Professor Macorsky and Dr. Reiman developed tests for different blood groups. SS, Dr. Münch, did experiments for medications for pleurisy.
- 12:20 He talks about Dr. Weber who liked him and helped him.
- 15:00 Emrich describes the population in Block 20 and all the musicians and the orchestra in the camp.
- 15:11 He describes some of the people he met in the camp.
- 15:15 Poles who worked in the hospital were okay. One of the SS was an addict and they got him morphine from the pharmacy in exchange for food.

- 15:23 He describes selections of patients and how he helped save some of them. He talks about the Dutch Jews who were naïve and believed the Nazi lies.
- 16:00 He describes the system of bartering for food. Jews from Slovakia knew that the Russian army was near and he decided not to take any risks before liberation.
- 16:07 He describes where he stayed together with doctors and scientists, many of them Jewish and what he learned there. He stayed in Block 21 until January 18, 1945.
- 16:13 He describes Jacob, a Jew from France, who was strong and whose job it was to beat up people and also be the hangman. He could not avoid doing this and he was viewed as important to the SS.
- 16:17 There were rumors about the Russian advance. On January 18 they were ordered to march out of Auschwitz. Most of the SS had already left. He left with his group from the clinic.
- Tape 3
- 17:00 Most diseases were bacterial, like Malaria. Dr. Kovalska and Dr. Flack worked on cures.
- 17:06 Block 20 was the psychiatric block. Describes cases and treatments, mostly shock therapy. No Jews were in the psychiatric block. Mentally ill Jews were killed.
- 17:11 Describes leaving the camp with the Germans when the Russia army advanced.
- 17:17 He was able to get on an open coal train. He gave himself a non-Jewish name, Imri Kuklag and said that he was a medical student. He then describes the ten to twelve day ride to Mauthausen.
- 17:23 He describes Mauthausen. He removed his Jewish ID. From there he got on a transport to a camp called Ebensee, where there were underground factories.
- 18:00 He talks more about Mauthausen. Dr. Thomacheck worked there in the hospital and he gave him a letter to the "cement" camp. He describes his work in the tunnels.

- 18:06 He was assigned as a medical assistant to the camp hospital and sent to the surgical unit. He describes his work and the other staff workers.
- 18:15 His daily routine now included American bombardments in the vicinity.
- 18:24 He heard of a plan to kill all prisoners by faking an air raid, sending everybody into the tunnel for protection and then exploding the tunnel. He warned everybody and they made plans to escape.
- Tape 4
- 19:02 He talks about food in Auschwitz and the symptoms of starvation.
- 19:13 He describes the medicines they received in the Hygiene Institute and how it was decided who would get them.
- 20:00 Talks more about food, the food coupons and the canteen.
- 20:04 He explains the thoughts that kept him alive.
- 20:07 Emrich shares stories about the people he met and different periods of depression.
- 20:15 He describes different departments in the Institute. Professor Fleck and others from Lvov worked there. The SS kept these Jewish doctors and scientists for their own benefit to develop cures for typhus and medicines for Germany.
- 20:20 Talks about Block 28 and how it was a kitchen and used for classification. From Block 10, Magda Hellinger was head of the block. He names nurses. Dr. Feikel was responsible for all experiments on typhus. He remembers that the author Tadens Holu was there.
- 20:22 Describes leaving Auschwitz and the death march to Ebensee and pretending to be a Christian political prisoner. He lived and worked with non-Jews in the operating room. It was his job to administer the anesthetics and also work in the hospital with the many others who were wounded. He describes the surgery aspect of his work. Dr. Weiss, who was Jewish, did the selection of patients in the surgery and he was cruel.
- 20:28 He describes the good conditions for himself at work.
- 21:00 He lived in the camp with Dr. Carlil, a communist, who told them of the SS's plan to get the prisoners into the tunnel and then explode

it. The prisoners organized and refused to go. Then the Germans just left. The second plan of the Germans was to poison the water system.

- 21:13 He describes how they organized the resistance. The Germans did not poison the water but did leave.
- 21:17 They organized a court in camp and killed the Kapos. He describes the tribunal representing all prisoners, which decided who deserved to be killed.
- 21:28 Emrich describes food distribution in the camp.
- 22:00 Talks more about the tribunal and how the Kapos who were killed were burned in the crematorium.
- 22:18 He describes liberation by the American Army, who built a hospital, distributed food and clean water.
- 22:24 He shows photos of his family.
- 23:00 Talks more about working in Ebensee, pretending not to be Jewish, and helping friends.
- 23:11 He describes the American hospital.
- 23:13 He went on a truck to Linz and then by boat to Bratislava. There he met his aunt on the boat.
- 23:30 He tells the story of his aunt who had given her baby for safe keeping to a non-Jewish woman. She found the boy after the war and tells his story.
- 1:00 He describes surgery in camp, and speaks of individual cases.
- 1:12 Emrich discusses the Jewish community in Bratislava who took care of him. There he met Rosenberg who had also survived.
- 1:16 He returned to Nitra and found the man who had given him away. He had him arrested.
- 1:21 He returned to Bratislava and met friends.
- 1:23 Emrich went to Teplitz and visited Paul Reichert who adopted him. He was then 20 years old.

- 1:27 He met his wife in 1945 and lived with her.
- Tape 5
- 2:00 He got married in 1946. The relationship with Reichert soured.
- 2:05 When the Auschwitz trial started, he participated as a witness against some of the SS, Kaduk, Palitch and Claire. He describes the trials.
- 2:11 He made it his job to tell his story in different places, supported by the anti-fascist party. He went to Israel in 1961.
- 2:14 He talks about his continuous nightmares.
- 2:19 Emrich studied dentistry in Prague.
- 2:22 In 1984 he went to the United States to be with his sick daughter. He joined the "New Life" club. Lectured in many places and then returned to Israel.
- 2:28 When Stalin died in 1953, there was an increase in anti-Semitism and he was haunted by the Secret Service.
- 3:00 The Czechs wanted to jail him under the influence of anti-Semitism and Communism.
- 3:07 He was not allowed to go to Israel in 1948 because the Czechs needed medical people. He was constantly harassed by the secret police until he finally came to Israel.
- 3:14 He came to Israel in 1964 and after an initial difficult time, he developed his private practice and did very well. He has two children and four grandchildren, all of whom live in the United States.