

I want to thank you for coming here tonight to listen to my story. I am not an expert speaker. And you have to forgive me for my poor delivery. I agreed to talk to you because the survivors of the Holocaust slowly are dying out one by one. And a few of us who are still around have the obligation to see that the generation following us do not forget what happened to the Jews during the Second World War.

--and see that it never happens again. I start by telling you that I was born in Hungary, in Budapest. And we lived near Budapest. Budapest is the principal city of Hungary. And my father had a lumber yard in Arpadfold, in this little village.

I finished the previous year, my studies, an artist, three years school. And I was helping my father in his lumber yard. Only already at this time, the Jews in Hungary had a very hard time. They started to employ the Jewish laws, the antisemitic laws. They fired all the employees who worked for the government, in the newspapers and the radio. They warned people not to patronize or go to the Jewish intellectuals, doctors, engineers, lawyers, and if they can avoid it, not to buy from Jews, not to support Jewish businesses.

As I said there was a hot August day in 1940. And I was walking toward our business, toward our lumber yard. And I saw my father at the gate standing.

And as I approached him, I noticed on his face he was very sad and frightened. And as I came, he handed me an order from the government. And the order said that I should report next day in a schoolyard a couple miles from our place where I lived. There was no instruction whatsoever to bring anything with us, clothing or food, just appear in person.

I did that. I went there next morning. And I saw in the schoolyard hundreds of other Jews already surrendered by Hungarian police and soldiers with weapons. And that day started an incredible five years of suffering because that was the first day I had to stay there the whole day long in the beating sun, hot sun, without food, without water. We were forbidden to communicate with our parents, our families, are not able to phone or send out messages. And that was the first day in my life where I slept on the bare ground.

Next day, it was the same. We were beaten and abused by the soldiers. We got some food, some liquid food. But we didn't have any utensils to eat from. So we found some scrap, rusted scrap and shared the food between us. And the Hungarian soldiers amused themselves by kicking the food out from our hands.

A sergeant, Hungarian sergeant, asked for volunteers to go to Budapest to the city for some requisition. I volunteered to go with him because I figured I will have a chance to get in contact with my aunt. She lived in Budapest. And so I was able to send a message to my family. I was sure that they are scared to death not knowing what happened with me.

Well, they took us, but not for a requisition. They dumped us in a Hungarian soldiers camp, where we were forced right away to carry heavy straw bales from second story warehouse down on ramp to the waiting trucks on our bare shoulder, the whole day long, from morning to evening. And you can imagine how we felt. We are not used to that kind of work.

It was very heavy. A bale weighed about 100 pounds. And the task was, I guess, even trying for a farm worker who was used to that kind of labor. We are, of course, dirty and bloody at the end of the day.

But I managed to get a note to my aunt. And I received from her-- she was able to, I think, bribe a Hungarian soldier. And I got some soap and a shirt and some food.

Well, I worked about two days here. And then they brought us back to the schoolyard. And with the other Jewish men in the schoolyard, we were embarked in boxcars and sent to the Hungarian-Romanian border.

At this time, Hungary had a prime minister called Teleki. He was sympathetic to the Allies, to the West, and tried to compromise somehow. But the German pressure was too heavy, too much. And he committed suicide.

You have to understand that Hungary was never invaded by the Germans. They fought with the Germans voluntarily and willingly. Only in 1944, end of the war, in May 1944, did the Germans send in 800 German troops and 20

Sonderkommandos-- they call them Sonderkommandos-- led by Eichmann, the famous Eichmann. And the purpose was, of course to liquidate the Hungarian Jews.

As I said before, Teleki, Prime Minister Teleki committed suicide. And we had a regent called Miklos Horthy. He was antisemite too. But before the German came to power, he let them live, let the Jews lived. I mean they lived their own life. He didn't interfere too much with their business and so forth and so on. He personally didn't like the Jews. But they made a living. They lived peacefully.

After Teleki's suicide, Horthy appointed a prime minister named Ladislaus Bárdossy. He was a rabid antisemite and willingly joined and cooperated with the Germans. In fact, he declared war against England and disposed the Hungarian soldiers to the German high command.

Well, as I said, they sent me from the schoolyard to the Romanian border. Well, Hitler, for the Hungarian cooperation, gave Hungary Transylvania, part of Transylvania. Now, Transylvania belonged to Hungary before the First World War and after the First World War became Romania. Of course, the Hungarians always disputed Transylvania. And they fought, they had animosity between the Romanians and Hungarians.

What the Romanians did, they build a small Maginot Line, they called the Carol Line, because their king's name was Carol, Carol Line. They were fortifications small, concrete pillboxes about 500 feet from each other on the Hungarian border. And our job was to dig out the boulders around the fortifications, filled the fortifications with explosives, and then blow them up.

We did this job. It was a terribly hard job. You can imagine especially for Jewish boys who never used to that work. But frankly, it made me strong, stronger. Every day labor out, instead of weaker, made me stronger, and so did the other boys.

The only trouble was this time that they appointed a former officer, a Jewish officer, as a supervisor. And this Jewish officer was so afraid that he will be reduced to our status that he will be forced to work like we did, that he drove us worse than a Gentile soldier would do. That was the bad part of it.

A pleasant memory that I have from that time is that, as I told you, Transylvania was just attached to Hungary. And the Romanians in general were more sympathetic to the Jews than the Hungarians. They were more liberal.

And in Cluj, in they call it Nagyvárad, where we worked, there was a large Jewish population, quite wealthy. And they still had their businesses, their homes. And they didn't suffer the punishment what already the Hungarian Jews did in Hungary.

So Yom Kippur Eve, they prevailed on the Hungarian commandment to let us go into the city. And each Jewish family hosted three or four Jewish boys. That was the best food we ate a long time because even home, we didn't have any food anymore, good food, good, Jewish food.

Well, the winter was coming. And our work was ended by this time. So they took us back to Hungary. And they discharged the older Jewish people, older people, about 25 to 40. They were the older ones. We were the young ones.

I was 21. And I was army age, military age. So they let me go home for two days to see my family. And then they sent me to a basic camp, a basic training, of course, without weapons, just the basic training and work discipline, they called it.

Namely the Hungarians formed this time work squadrons to help the Hungarian army behind the lines, just behind the lines, to do the hard labor, the hard work what every army requires-- carrying ammunition, digging ditches, and so forth so on. I was sent and spent the spring and summer in different Hungarian construction jobs, building barracks buildings, digging ditches, and so forth.

Now, in June 22, 1941, the Russians attacked Russia, they move against Russia.

## The Germans?

I mean the Russians-- the Germans attacked Russia and moved against Russia. In the fall that year, they drove us, the work battalions, the work units through the Carpathian Mountains. I don't know if you're familiar. Between Poland and Czechoslovakia and Hungary, there is a Carpathian Mountains. And they drove us through the mountains.

We walked, marched through the mountains. It was late fall, very cold. And I don't know if you're familiar with the place or heard about it, but terrible mud. Poland has mud you never saw or never imagined. So we were till our ankles in mud. And it was cold weather. And it was a horrible march toward the mountains.

Then we reached the Carpathian Mountains. The mountains were full with snow already. And we had to pass the mountain passes. And we marched through that. And the horses pulled heavy loads of ammunition and army stuff.

But even for the horses, it was too hard. And they collapsed so to save horses, they hitched 10 or 12 Jewish boys to a cart. And we had to pull those carts through the mountain passes. Of course, lots of us collapsed. And some of them died there carrying the loads and marching through the passes. I found out that the horse is worth more than a Jew.

Well, I spent three years in Ukraine as a slave laborer. I was in places, which may be familiar for older people who came from other country, Delyatyn, [PLACE NAME], Vinnytsia, Proskurov, working hard, the suffering from the 40 below zero temperature, the labor, the punishment, torture and cruelty of this soldiers, Hungarian soldiers who were selected specifically to that purpose, to guard the Jews, were undescrivable. It will take days or a book to tell you all what I went through here. But to give you an idea or give you the result, consider the fact that they took 60,000 Hungarian Jews to the Ukraine and 8,000 came back alive.

Well, during this time I saw the systematic murder of the inhabitants of the Jewish ghettos in the Ukraine. You know about it. The SS came in, the Sonderkommando closed up the ghettos. Sometimes they burned the ghettos. And most of the time, of course, took out the people in the countryside. They dig their own ditches. And they're shot and killed.

I don't have to tell you about those. It's not my purpose because you read about it. You saw it in the movies and probably spoke with other survivors who told you all kinds of stories what they went through.

Well, my unit was lucky. See, we had Hungarian uniforms with a yellow band. And we belonged to the working squadrons of the Hungarian army. So the Germans didn't touch us. Of course, many of us, many comrades of mine during this period, those who are not able to withstand the terrible cold, the torture, and the punishment, perished. They died from exposure, cold, hunger, and so on.

The worst thing was the sadism, the cruelty of a man to his fellow human being. Many men enjoys suffering, to see or cause suffering. And I just give you two examples from the many.

One time an officer, who hated us, we Jews, ask us to climb up a tree. It was winter time. And we had to climb up the tree. And ask us to crawl, like a bird, like a crow.

Of course, some of us, who didn't crow loud enough, he just took his gun and shot them. And they fell down like birds from the tree. Many of us fell down frozen. And he enjoyed that. That was his enjoyment. That was his fun.

Another time, I was sent to a stable, to work in a stable. Wow, that was a fine assignment because a stable was warm. Outside was terribly cold and wind. And I was saved from the very cold temperature.

So this officer, called Homonnai-- that was his name-- came-- incidentally, Homonnai was raised-- he was an orphan-- and raised by a Jewish family in Hungary. You know him. He was famous in Hungary because he was an Olympic swimmer. So he had made a name for himself.

He came on a white horse, all right? Ordered all the Jews out from the warm stable, made us lay down in the snow. And

he rode his horse over us several times. Of course, there were many broken bones. And some boys, some workers got broken heads. But that was fun. That was his enjoyment.

Well, how was I able to stand it you may ask. Well, it's a question of luck. But really, I wasn't able to stand it, because I had a nervous, temporary nervous breakdown once. It happened that, as usual, they took us out in the woods in subzero temperature there, in Russia, to cut woods and carry woods the whole day long, big logs. And we did that from mornings of about 6 o'clock till the evening.

And we were dead tired at the end of the day, exhausted. And we had a sergeant who was a sadist. And about 6 o'clock in the evening, we saw the trucks coming to pick us up. So we were relieved that finally we can go back to our quarters.

Instead, he made us squat down and frog jump in the snow as tired and, you know, exhausted we were. Many of us weren't able to take it anymore and just fainted, passed out. And among us, myself, I wasn't able to take it anymore. I just gave up and went before the sergeant and told him, look, it's no sense to torture me or us anymore. Just shoot us. Much easier. Why don't you take your gun and put a bullet in my head and end my suffering?

He looked at me and said, a Hungarian bullet is too good for a Jew. So he handcuffed me and took me to the truck. And he said, you will rot, rot to die in a dungeon.

And he took me in his unit's dungeon. There was an engineering unit, the Hungarian engineering unit is similar to the American Marines, the toughest kind of soldiers. And they throw me in the cold dungeon there. And I was there. I don't know how long time. I passed out.

But luckily, my comrades reported it to our officer. And he had enough humanity or whatever coming over him. He intervened with the Marine commandant. And they let me go. They freed me.

As I said, the abusement and the suffering was indescribable. And many people committed suicide, many slave laborers, or mutilated themselves just to stay inside the barracks.

At one time, I dread so much to go out already to the cold that when a medic, former medic, offered me to inject me with milk, I said, OK, I agree to do that. Now, I don't know if you're familiar with the milk injection. It causes extreme high fever and you get the shakes. And with these symptoms, they let me stay in quarters for-- I was in about two days. After two days, I volunteered to go out. But I thought even freezing outside is better than taking another shot of milk. I stay away from milk even since then. And after the war, for a long time, I had a terrible reaction every time I drink a glass of milk.

Well, seeing what the Germans did with the Jewish population, watching my comrades dying from cold, from torture, made me give up any hope that I ever will return to my family, to Hungary. And the war was going on. The years passed. And there always was rumors that next week or next week or next month, they will come and exchange fresh labor, and they take us home. But that was just rumor. And we almost gave up.

The end of 1943, the tide of war turned. The glorious Germans got pushed back by the Russians. And that was the first time I saw a beaten, dirty, wounded German crawling back slowly, not marching proudly and spick-and-span, marching back toward the Hungarian and the German frontier.

The Russians pushed back the Germans. And there was a slim hope that maybe somehow we are getting back to our country, to our family. And I was lucky again. By a miracle-- and there was a miracle-- one day as we marched back, and we were strafed daily by the Russian airplanes. We got bombarded too. They didn't know the difference between Jews or Germans on the ground. We stopped at the station, and we found a boxcar.

And they loaded us in a boxcar, thinking that they are Hungarian units. And we were shipped back to Budapest. Well, I said we were lucky. We are lucky because, for instance, our brother unit, other squadron, who worked next to us in other village, before they evacuated the village, the Hungarians closed them in, in a barrack, in a compound, and dosed gasoline on the building, burned the building and the Jews inside.

And those who tried to escape somehow, break down the door and escape, or through the windows, they set up some machine guns. And the machine gunned them down there in the snow. I spoke with one of the survivors from that massacre. He was my namesake. His name was Egon Haász, not a relative, but the same name. He was able to roll in the snow to the bush not far from the building, hide. And afterward he escaped and joined our unit.

So I was shipped back to Hungary. In February 1944, I was released from the labor unit and returned to my family. This time already, the Jews in Hungary were forced to wear yellow stars on their clothing. They were forbidden to walk on the streets. They hold any job whatsoever. And if they caught somebody on the street, they were captured, put in jail, and so forth, and so on. The harassment was very, very, very intense.

But since my family had no income and we had no food, I volunteered to go to the city and look for some job. And actually, that was dangerous. I removed my star from my clothing, went in with a train. We lived in our part, I mentioned, far from the city, not very far, but in the suburbs. And I had to take the train in.

Now, the trains were constantly checked to find Jews hiding or going in the city. So I was exposed every day to the danger till they capture me and put me in a concentration camp or in jail again. But I managed for a while to work and supply my family with some food.

In October, and then in May 20, 1944, I get a new order from the Hungarian government to report to another labor camp. This time, they took me to Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia already was occupied by the Germans.

And they took me to a place called Bor-- spelled Bor, B-O-O-R. Bor was a copper mine. They mined copper and used it to supply the German war machinery with copper, with copper ore.

I never forget the sight when I arrived. Imagine a huge open mine, deep mine, and thousands of thousands of Jews working with pick and shovel mining the earth. But the frightening thing and an unusual thing, and I went through a lot, was the site that since it was hot on the [NON-ENGLISH] mountains. They worked bare, without any shirts. And the yellow star was painted on their skin not to escape.

Now can you imagine those thousands of men, Jewish men, working in an open mine there and all having a huge yellow star on the back, on their skin, painted on the chest. I mean it was an unbelievable sight.

Well, I was lucky again. And this time they sent me about three miles from this mine in a work camp where they built a road in the mountain, cut the mountain side for the railroad. Hitler figured they can transport the ore in a straight line from Bor to Germany for his factories, for his melters.

So what we did here we cut the mountains. There was the [NON-ENGLISH] mountains, white rocks, terrible heat in the summer time and cold evenings. And, well, there was a suffering again, just the same as in Russia, except here we suffered with heat. We had no water. There were many accidents, as you know in mining areas, and cutting the rock always happens.

And this time in the breaks, the work breaks, short work breaks, I used to make little sketches of the guards, little drawings of the guards and give it to them. And they send it properly back to their families. And one officer, Hungarian officer, noticed that and asked me if I'm an artist. And I said, yes.

So he sent me back to the camp, the compound, and gave me work in the compound. I was supposed to work half a day there. And in the afternoons, I was sent out with the guard to the mountains to paint scenery for the officer, for him.

This work in Bor lasted till September 1944. Now, you heard about Tito's partisans. And Tito's partisans, Tito's army, was starting to push the Germans from the south back toward Germany. Fighting went on. Every day we saw the liberators coming and bombing.

The bombing of the Allies were very, very intense at that time. They dropped ammunition. And they dropped food to

the partisans, the English did. And we saw they come in every morning. And I don't have to tell you how glad I was when I saw the American aeroplanes and the English aeroplanes flying over us, knowing that liberation can be too far.

Well, as I said, Tito was close. And they had to make a decision, the Germans, what to do about the mine. We were under Hungarian guards, but German supervision. The Germans moved out, and the Hungarian officer in a panic didn't know what to do with 3,000 Jews.

So he decided to close the Jews in the mine and blow up the mine with the Jews in it. Luckily, he had no time to do that. Tito was too close. The partisans were too close.

And they put us in a death march from Bor back toward Hungary. I don't want to describe this much. It was an incredible. It went on for days and days. And the suffering was unbelievable.

They shot us if we didn't march fast enough. Of course, there was no food, and so forth and so on. I mean it was a horrible march. I don't want to describe that.

I just want to tell you that one day, and it's famous in the story of the Holocaust, one day we arrived in a little village called Crvenka, in southern Hungary. And we rested there. We never knew which night they decide to shot us and kill us. So we rested there.

And it happened that the SS unit passed by and asked the Hungarian officers and guards who supervised us, what are those dirty, filthy people here with beard, bloody? What are they? What's this here?

And they said, they are Jews, and we take them back to Hungary. They were flabbergasted. Take them back to Hungary? So you just go, save your skin, and we take care of them.

So they left the. Hungarian guards left us. And the SS put up two machine guns. And 20 by 20, they started to kill us, exterminate us.

Well, the blood was flowing like water. And the bodies piled up. I hid myself under a coal pile till the morning, about 6 o'clock. And they found me. And they chased me before the machine gun.

But how lucky can you be? Luck was with me again. The German officer, the SS officer came. I remember him in a white horse, came in the brickyard. And he said, we have to stop this because the people in the village are restless. They hear the screaming and the crying the whole night. Beside, a unit of Tito, a partisan unit is very close. You are able to hear their guns. And you have to pull out here.

Whoever is left, the survivors, we take with us. And we take out of them on the road. Well, there was 300 left of us. They killed about 2,700 people there, that night, that day, in Crvenka.

The death march started again. And I don't know how many days we walked. But I found out the date. That was October 6, 1944, when they handed us over, the SS handed us over, to the Hungarian unit.

And surprisingly, the Hungarian officers were very friendly. Instead of cursing us, beating us, and abusing us, they said, we get you some food. And don't worry, we get home. We take you home.

What happened? I mean suddenly they changed their attitude toward us. Well, we found out that that day, October 6, '44, the regent, Ladislaus Nicholas Horthy secretly sent a message to the Allies to London that he gives up, he surrenders, and he want out from the war. Naturally, the Germans intercepted his message and captured him. He was captured.

And next day, the Hungarian SS commandant, a rabid antisemite named Szalasi, took over the Hungarian government, the whole government. He became the leader of Hungary. That was the famous Horthy putsch when they switched command, and Szalasi became the leader.

He immediately sent the remaining labor battalions to Germany, to the concentration camps, handed over us to the Germans. I didn't know, but that was the time when they surrendered all Jews in Hungary, older people, children, and shipped them to Auschwitz to Buchenwald and all the concentration camps to extermination.

But, as I said, I was at that time sent too over Germany. And I found myself in Flossenbürg camp, concentration camp. Now, Flossenbürg was not-- before it was not an extermination camp. It was a camp where they kept political prisoners.

However, they conducted a test, an experiment on us. We came from Yugoslavia. It was late fall, end of November. It was very, very bitter cold. It was a mountainous place, Flossenbürg.

And they let us stay out a day in the cold. And they hosed us down with cold water. They wanted to see how long it takes us to freeze and how much cold we can withstand, probably to find out how to protect their soldiers in Russia or some other reasons.

Anyway, many of us dropped frozen on the ground, weren't able to take it. Those who survived the day were taken in a room, in a washroom. And we were marked with a pencil, with a red pencil on our forehead, T and X. Of course, we didn't know what we got because. We just looked the other guy's mark on his face.

X meant extermination. They are useless. T means transport, to take them into another camp. As I said, Flossenbürg was not a work or extermination camp. I had a T, probably because I spent three years in Russia. And I was used to the extreme cold weather and survived the ordeal.

They sent me to Nordhausen. And the Nordhausen camp was in the Hartz Mountains. And the code name of this camp was Dora, D-O-R-A.

They had a code name because, in Dora there was an underground factory. And that was the famous underground factory where the Germans manufactured the V-1 rockets, which they used against London, against England, a fantastic big factory underground. And the workers worked in this factory. It's not Jewish workers, not only Jewish workers, in fact very few Jewish workers, mostly Poles, French, Dutch, name it. All the people they were able to get from all over Europe, they collected them there and let them work in the factory.

Well, I was about two weeks in the barracks inside. They fed us with some soup, milky soup. There are even some noodles in it. They wanted to feed us up a little bit for work.

[AUDIO OUT]

--but are so weak, that the SA, a painter, working for him, he drew little pictures. It was Christmastime for the block leader. And then he took the little pictures, little cards, and bribed the guards with it. And they were glad to receive those pictures because they sent them back to Germany to their families as a Christmas present.

And they found out that I am able to draw. And they told me, you Jew, you stay in here, stay with the Frenchman and help him draw pictures. So I did that. And I became from him a double ration, two bowls of soup instead of one. It was a big deal for me.

However, after two weeks, when the Germans decided that they are not fit to work, he told me one night that tomorrow, we'll take them out and, you Jews will be get rid of. I begged him to save my life. He didn't answer me. Instead, he told me that he's glad to get rid of this miserable band of Jews. He'd rather have Yugoslavs, Poles, or German criminals in his barrack than us.

So next morning, they took us out about 6 o'clock in the morning. It was pitch dark. We had a roll call. The SS came with wolf hounds and following him came a prisoner, a clerk, with the pencil and pad and took our numbers. Each of us have a number on our chest. And he took our numbers.

He passed me by, took my number, and proceeded to the next prisoner. And I prayed to God to have a miracle. How many miracles can he produce?

And suddenly, I felt a hand behind me. Somebody grabbed me and throw me in a bush nearby in the dark. And I heard this block leader whispering in my ear, be quiet.

So I laid there. And I saw the whole unit turning around and marched out from the camp. I never heard of them again. They took in the mountains and killed them.

Well, after that, he came for me, took me in the barracks. Well, you have to imagine this camp-- I mean concentration camp, it's in Nordhausen. That wasn't a small place. There was 20,000 people working. It was like a town, hundreds of barracks and streets.

And there was constantly lighted with big spotlights. It was light even in the night. It's like a town. So he-- and prisoners were marching up and down, coming from the job, going for the job, from one barrack to another and so forth, so on. There was a community, a big, big place.

So he just walked with me to his unit, to his barracks, and told me that as long as you work here, I feed you, you paint. And I take care of you, number wise, because he had to count for each people in his barracks. The Germans were not fools. They had roll calls every day.

But he managed to do this because he had a night shift, sleeping the whole day inside the barracks. And in the evening, the other shift came in, the day shift came in, so there were exchanges. In this particular barrack, the only barracks in the compound, we had-- didn't have to stay roll calls. All the other barracks had to come outside from the barracks, stay in line, every morning. And they counted the people. Here, they took his word for it that 120 or 130, or whatever they were, were sleeping in there.

Well, so I worked, as incredible it sounds, as illegal in a concentration camp. Never heard of it. I mean I was illegally in a concentration camp because my number was taken already. I was dead. And I was still alive inside.

Not long afterwards, the Allies bombed Nordhausen. I guess they had the northern side already because there was a precision bombing. They bombed the SS barracks. But they didn't touch the compounds where the prisoners were housed.

Their buildings, the SS buildings, went up in flame. And they decided to evacuate the Nordhausen camp. So we put on boxcars, in boxcars, first and were shipped out from the camp.

Then, we marched because they stopped the boxcars. We had to evacuate the boxcars. They put soldiers in the cars. And again, we put us in cars again. And they stopped us someplace else.

What happened was that there was a tremendous confusion in Germany. The Allies came from the west, the Russians pushed from the east. And the Germans had no place to go anymore, just north and south. They had a corridor of north and south. There was a total confusion.

Some of them wanted to get rid of the Jews by killing them. And some of them wanted to save their skin and run. And during this time, of course, we didn't get any food. And many, many of the Jews died in the boxcars, on the road. But I managed to go with one unit, or shipped with one unit, to the famous Belsen camp, Belsen-Bergen camp. Those, of course, who were still alive reached the camp.

Now, when we arrived in the camp, I saw Germans only for one day. After that, the Germans left the camp. They left us for six days there. We were exhausted. I

Try to give you an idea, in the six days between the Germans leaving Belsen and the Americans, in fact the English unit,



moving in to Belsen to found us, 10,000 people died in the six days, mostly from typhoid and starvation.

I was semi-conscious when the Allies arrived. I have very faint memory of it. A British unit came in, as they told me, and they liberated us in April 15, 1945. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

We got a few questions.

Oh.

I guess we have to be very thankful for all the miracles that took place. Do we have questions?

You didn't tell [INAUDIBLE]

We can't hear.

They must use the mic.

I don't understand why [INAUDIBLE]

Can't hear you.

I know his family was immediately taken away. How come they left your family?

Munkács was--

I'll get it.

That was anyway, still a part of Hungary, all right? And the Germans moved in Czechoslovakia. I mean they occupied Czechoslovakia. And they were the first ones who were killed and destroyed.

I mentioned in my story that I went through that part as a slave laborer with the Hungarian army with yellow armband and Hungarian uniform and witnessed the execution of the Munkács and Czechoslovak, Polish, then later on Ukrainian Jews. They didn't touch the Hungarians till the very end, because, as I said, Hungary was not occupied by the Germans.

When Szalasi came to power after Horthy was captured, then he handed over all the Hungarian Jews. And Eichmann saw to it that every day thousands and thousands of-- right. Right.

The first Jews were taken from our part of Hungary from Budapest, where the Polish Jews. In Poland, they started to kill and exterminate the Jews. And they gave an order any Jew who lives in Hungary should be captured and deported to Poland, taken to Poland.

As matter of fact is that when I was in slave labor in Hungary-- I told you I was in demolition work and construction work working for the Hungarian army-- we had a young boy whose parents were Polish. He was a Hungarian boy, but his parentage, his parents were Polish and lived not far from Budapest. And he was working with us.

And one day, they told him to come into the commandant and send him over to home with a pass. He was even happy to go home, get away for a day from work. And he was shipped with his family to Poland, to that part of Poland. And I remember one night, we were passing a town, the town where they exterminated Jews.

Day before, the SS Commandant came in, surrounded the ghetto, and destroyed all the Jews. And we set a camp not far

from the town. And we preparing supper, or they prepared supper for us. And suddenly, somebody from the woods came, a little boy, hey, remember me? Who on earth is that from the Polish woods? Some guy.

And it turned out, that was that boy who worked with us a year or two years ago in Hungary, Polish boy. And he told us that his family was killed. And he was able to escape. You know they thought he was dead and escaped and was hiding in the woods for months and months, eating whatever he was able to find.

And then he saw the Hungarian working unit and heard our voices and recognized some of us. And he dared to come out to show himself. We hid him for a long time. Then one day, they found out that we had one more than supposed to be. And the officer handed over him to the Germans. He was killed.

Just go.

Did you know-- I mean, [INAUDIBLE] did you know how the world hadn't abandoned you?

Not whatsoever. We got propaganda in Nordhausen. The loudspeakers gave us German propaganda, how gloriously they advance and the war goes beautiful. Even the last day when they started to bomb Nordhausen, the day before, they said they win the war. They are winning.

Ivan.

I think it's terribly important for you to know how necessary was for you go through this painful experience with us. So many survivors of concentration camps for many, many years were not able to crystallize the whole experience and relate the story. So many of them try to protect their children and never told story to the children because it's just so difficult. I think we all appreciate or we should appreciate how beautifully you told your story.

Thank you. I didn't want to do it. I just thought of thousands of thousands of people I saw dying. And I thought it has to be told because, well, they died without any reason. They deserve that their story should be told at least. People should know about it.

Unfortunately, you who listen to this are not the people who should know about it. Younger people should be told and retold and warned, mostly warned. I mean it can happen.

But so many parents do not tell their children this story, because it's just too hard.

Well, I told my son. And I was very, very, very-- he formed from the group in his school and to study the Holocaust. And he was very active in Holocaust studies.

Yes.

Is their possibility you'll write a book about it? [INAUDIBLE]

Well, I am not a writer. I'm a very bad speaker. I'm not a writer. But I will marry a wonderful person who is a teacher and maybe she decides to write a book or something. I don't know.

[INAUDIBLE] do you have a name for [INAUDIBLE]?

No. I don't remember them. They were published. There are books, Hungarian books and Hungarian studies. A professor, named Brahm, who is a professor in the Columbia University, lectures in the university, did magnificent books, studies, and truly documented books. I have, for instance, home all the documents that Eichmann ever issued, in this case, how many Jews from where, when. All the correspondence is written down and translated and said it in English. There is a literature.

I wanted to say that for many years, there were no publications about this. People didn't talk about it. But I think that the

last 10 years or less, we've even seen documentaries on television. Maybe they're not all true, a lot of it is acting. But it's coming out now.

There are books. We had two, I think, they're newspapers with different systems for written books about the Holocaust. And more and more, it's coming out now, every few weeks or months or something. And people are beginning to know that there was a Holocaust, not that it's just something that didn't happen [INAUDIBLE].

Ida.

There are also people who are writing that there was no Holocaust.

Unfortunately, well, that's what I said. We're dying out. The witnesses are gone. And you can tell whatever you want.

[INAUDIBLE]

I left out the postcard. You want a postcard, still. Well--

[INAUDIBLE]

I mentioned that, in Nordhausen, I was painting cards for a Blockführer, a block leader, and helped a French painter to draw little pictures. Now, where did we get the material for those pictures? Naturally, they gassed and killed lots of Jews. And in their clothing, there were cards and things like that. And they collected those postcards. And he had a few.

Not me, but this Frenchman drew a beautiful painting, of a modernist building in a park. It was gorgeous with trees, an ultra modern building. OK? And that was really beautiful. And he told me that he found this card in a pocket of some Jew were killed. And that was Haifa, the picture of-- not Haifa, of Tel Aviv.

So one day, an SS officer came in. And they loved pictures, loved [NON-ENGLISH]. They wanted every room, just beautiful. So he came in and saw this painting just finished by the Frenchman, the beautiful modern building with trees and everything. This is wonderful. Wunderbar. What is this?

And the leader said to him, that's how Germany will look after the war. And he said, Jawohl. That's right. Little did he know that was Tel Aviv. Even concentration camp has humor.

Seymour.

Why don't we [INAUDIBLE] some of this to kids.

To kids, yeah.

I did already. Yeah. Yes.

How did he react when [INAUDIBLE]?

Oh, they were quiet like a mouse, not a peep. And one of them wrote me a beautiful letter thanking me for talking.

Was it just the higher grades or was it--

8th grade.

8th grade.

OK. [INAUDIBLE]

Well, we thank you all for coming. And we thank, Steve.

[APPLAUSE]

You're very welcome. Thank you for listening to me.

[APPLAUSE]

It was very well done.

Well, forgive my accent and my syntax is very bad.