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Summary

Israel Ungar, born in Ushvala, Transylvania, very small village; 18 March 1929; eleven children, very religious home, primary school 9:00 and chayder 3:00 until 6:00 or 7:00, no electricity or gas, few thousand people, 60 Jewish families, soup and then to bed; siblings: Hillel, Mandel, Yacov, Israel, Pinchas, Vermush, Rosa, Baul, Helen, Eva, Clary, and Freig; father was a livestock and produce merchant, mother had a restaurant in the market, sister worked in dress shop; Mother, Yochavit, but called Hermina, Father, Abraham, but called Habish, grandparents came from Germany; Rabbi Weiss was rabbi of synagogue, son was Pinchas, had 10 or 12 children; spoke Hungarian at home and at school, village languages were Slovak; lot of anti-Semitism; completed 6th grade; Chayder teacher was Mr. Hecht; clothes washed in the river; when 11 or 12 apprenticed to tailor shop; continued to school and chayder; for further study needed to go to other cities; Bar Mitzvah was called to Torah; when finished school in the summer worked for brother taking sand from river to sell to a building company; continued going to chayder until deportation; 1944 deportation began in ghetto, villagers were taken to ghetto outside village near brick factory; wood yard next to ghetto; Hungarian police supervised life in the ghetto; brother Pinchas was beaten by Hungarian police; ghetto closed and put on a cargo train to Auschwitz; 1939 Jewish men were taken to labor camps in Russia; sister, Helen who lived in Budapest with Christian papers was not deported; no resistance whatsoever; Hungarians did not come inside ghetto but surrounded ghetto; minyan and Shabbat in the ghetto; families kept together and no drastic incidents; in ghetto February 1944 to May 1944; taken in cargo train, long journey, doors from train closed, thrown in train like sheep, no food or drink was given in train; family together, only place to sit, no place to lie down, traveled for two or three days; disembarked from train and saw German soldiers for the first time; walked about 20 minutes together as a family holding hands, walked to gate where selection took place, Mengele was at the gate doing separation, Israel and Pinchas went together, given number 137325; rest of family disappeared; sent to block 18 with gypsies, in morning stood in yard for three or four hours and were counted, if moved were badly beaten, then sent back to block on bed; this went on for three weeks, taken from Auschwitz to Volsburg (perhaps Wurzburg) concentration camp, more than 100 people in block 18, Jews were put in one corner, internal life ruled by Kapos, outside of block ruled by Germans, Kapos did not treat people very well, would beat people, beaten when he gave food to his brother

Auschwitz conditions: breakfast- tea, lunch – soup, dinner - ½ kilo bread and soup, had to hide bread, collected food in center where one stood in the queue, had own bowl and cutlery, water taps outside barracks, stayed with brother, no friends, did not know what was happening at Auschwitz, kept under strict surveillance by Germans, escapees killed on the spot, nothing to do all day, number on jacket and hat, rainy weather, clothes always soaked, had to stand still

May 1944 taken to Volsburg (perhaps Wurzburg) given proper beds with blankets, good conditions, counted in morning, taken by truck to work at tree nursery, put in charge, replanted trees in cities, German officer in charge of nursery brought him a sandwich every day, gave his German authorized food to brother, striped clothing, Polish Christian Kapos were terrible, beatings, 78 people in a block, brother hard work in a tunnel

October 1, 1944 transferred to Abensvey, walked about 150 kilometers from Volsberg, half a kilo bread and some soup, very cold and hard, surrounded by German guards, walked about 6 hours per day, were given rest one day, taken to work in a coal tunnel, counting in the morning German officer and Kapos, worked in kitchen, got caught slipping food to brother and was beaten, brother disappeared just before liberation, never came back from work, crematorium, Polish Christian Kapos

May 1945 - Liberated three weeks later by American forces

At liberation, in the morning, gates open and all the Kapos were dead, killed by prisoners, by 10:00 AM American jeeps came, American soldier spoke Yiddish and put him in an American mobile hospital, British would not let them into Palestine, still under 18 years, took train to Czechoslovakia and put in hospital in Budapest, for two weeks, sister, Helen, came to hospital, three weeks later went to back to village where he was born, taken to Bucharest by his cousin to go to boarding school, The Hammer, supported by Jewish agency, boys between the ages of 14 and 17, learned mechanics and history, Zionism and general education; joined Zionist movement; religious feelings faded; remained in boarding school for 2 years;

November 1947 – emigrated to Palestine, about 4,000 people on ship, British surrounded ship and taken to Cyprus; given accommodations and food; then let all the children without dependents into Palestine; Cyprus to Haifa less than a day; taken to a kibbutz; school, work in vineyard and army training; after 3 months went to the underground army; with unit until became state of Israel and began serving in regular army; in the Palmach; served in Emech; fought on the Jordanian border;

November, 1955- emigrated to Melbourne, Australia

1961 – went to England, remained in England for 1 year, married

1962 – returned to Melbourne

1967 - went to Israel for 5 years

1971 – returned to Melbourne

1981 – 1991 in Israel

1991- returned to Melbourne

sister in Bergen-Belsen, husband a dentist

his experience affected education, concentration, made up for losses by learning and studying as much as he could; interrupted his continuity, loss of family, he attributes survival to strongwill and never willing to give up