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Summary

Kurt Ungar was born in Vienna, Austria on May 3, 1926. His parents were Alidar and Louise (née Pestelnykov?). Kurt's mother's family came from Russia during WWI. They were interned in Vác, Hungary where she first met his father whom she married a few years later in Vienna. His father ran a film distribution business; they lived comfortably. He had one brother, Arthur. Kurt describes his other local relatives and activities as a youth, including school fights and antisemitic acts that increased after 1937.

After the Anschluss, his father returned to Hungary in 1938 with the family following shortly thereafter, eventually settling in Budapest. Kurt learned Hungarian and attended school until finishing in 1942. They continued as observant Jews and attend synagogues in Budapest. His father, who was then in the fur business, foresaw that Hitler would seek European conquest, but Kurt paid little attention. After graduating, Kurt became an apprentice dental occupation, after which Germany invaded Hungary and Kurt was drafted into a work brigade in Vác in May 1944. The brigade, guarded by Hungarian soldiers, was sent by cattle train to Croatia, then onto a newly built labor camp at the Bor copper mine, now in Serbia. Kurt describes the harsh work and treatment there. There were other concentration and labor camps nearby, one containing Italian POWs.

Without notice, the workers, all Jews from Hungary, were evacuated to Bor. After two weeks, they were put on a march to an unstated destination, but within a couple of days they were freed by Tito's Yugoslav partisans. Kurt went on with the partisans, but they had to avoid German soldiers still in the area. He and three friends crossed the Danube into Romania at Orșova. They were arrested by Romanian police, but were permitted to travel to Bucharest under light guard. On arrival, they were freed and soon met local Jews who treated them well. He met another escapee, Miklos Abelas (?), with whom he agreed to go to Palestine in December 1944. But they had to return to Bucharest due to the British blockade.

Kurt traveled to Budapest once the war ended finding his parents still living in their slightly damaged house. His brother, who had also been sent to a work battalion, had also returned safely. In late 1946, he went to Bratislava to buy a car, which led to starting a used-car business with his father. He traveled to Vienna in 1948 and obtained Austrian citizenship to avoid Hungarian army conscription. In 1950, he married Therese and together, they joined his wife's sister-in-law in Melbourne in December 1952. He worked as a welder, then a car mechanic and a maintenance engineer before buying a small business, working there until he retired. He had one daughter, Evelyn, born in 1954. His parents and brother remained in Budapest; Kurt visited them there 4-5 times.

He concludes with some insights into the impact of his experience and thoughts for future generations.