

Title: Robert Feher
I Date: August 15, 1990
Source: Holocaust Oral History Project
Sound Quality: good with a few interruptions
Image QUality: Excellent
Duration: 1 Hour 20 Minutes
Language: English

1:00 Robert is in the West Budapest train station getting documents that say that he is a member of the Hitler Youth Organization. He felt that he had no alternative to survive, this way he could beat the system. He said that he would not wear a yellow star because he always did his own thing.

2:07 September 1944. The identification named him an Elosz (ph), a non Jew, thus allowing him special privileges and the privilege to walk the streets freely.

3:50 It was necessary for Robert to memorize all of the information on his papers, including feigning a dialect from where he was supposed to have been born.

5:46 Hunger was his major concern. This compelled him to agree to help a Jewish woman out of the Ghetto in exchange for food. At this point and time, food meant everything, it meant being or not being.

7:50 On a Thursday evening Robert walked into ghetto to retrieve the woman. He entered with no plan as to what he should do.

9:30 He found the address where the woman was. At the home the people were packed in like sardines, many offered him rewards in exchange for getting them out of the ghetto. He did not accept.

11:20 He Made sure that the woman left with no identification. She was to pretend to be his mother and they had come to the ghetto to retrieve some clothing that a Jew had stolen from her. They exited from a different gate than the one they entered, so not to be recognized.

12:46 As he left the ghetto he kept yelling obscenities about the Jews to back up their story. They walked past the guard with no questions asked.

14:00 After this feat he felt and was treated like a hero. His food lasted him a week. He used to sleep like a homeless person, always alone.

15:00 Again he found himself hungry and agreed to get authentic Aryan papers for a whole family in exchange for food.

16:30 On a tram a woman asked him to buy furniture because he was a Nazi and can get furniture from Jews homes'.

17:40 Robert told the woman that he needed all of her identification and that of her family to get the furniture.

18:55 He now had original papers but he forgot to get the stamps that were necessary to prove that they were Aryans. The family sent him back to get the stamps.

20:00 He was now very hungry and decided to go back and get those stamps. He went back and convinced the woman to trust him.

21:36 He gave the family the papers and the stamps and got his food reward. The food lasted for a while.

22:18 He was always aware of the constant danger of being recognized.

24:15 He was constantly on the move. One day a stranger on the tram recognized that he was a Jew because his eyes were glassy from hunger. He asked Robert if he was a Jew, in turn Robert asked him if he was a Homosexual, to be both were crimes.

25:22 The homosexual and his friend promised to bring him to a relative in the countryside so that he could be fed.

26:11 He went to the country by train, it was a couple of hours from Budapest. At the house he ate tons of food--"paradise."

27:03 He remained in the country for two days then he returned to Budapest. He describes the two homosexuals as the nicest people he met during the holocaust.

28:30 He remembers the first thing that he did after he received his uniform and his papers making him part of the HITler Youths. He went to the Eastern train station to where Jews were supposed to have been shipped. He believed his mother, who had been taken the previous day, was there. A guard told him that Jews held were not there. After he reunited with his mother, she told him that she was there.

30:35 He went back to the apartment where he had lived with his mother. He did this because he could often find food in empty buildings. He found a Jewish man in his apartment in hiding, he decided to stay with this man because the man promised to take him on as a son.

32:45 The man convinced Robert to cross Budapest to get some food for the two of them from some of the man's friends. The risk was high, but he did it.

34:48 When Robert returned the man did not share his food with him. He was extremely angry.

36:42 The food was gone after a month. Robert agreed to get some more the same way. However, this time he did not return, he kept the food. He then met a boy much like himself and they became friends. He brought the food to the boy's mother who cooked it for them all to share. This is how he survived the war.

38:56 He then goes back to his earlier days and tells of a time when he was almost executed. He walked by a guard station in his uniform and a guard stopped him and asked to see his papers. As he was taking out his papers, a picture of his girlfriend fell, she was wearing a Jewish star.

40:08 The guard called him a Jew which Robert denied. The guard then asked to see his penis to see if he was circumcised, a sign of being Jewish. He then brought up to the interrogation room. It was known that people don't survive the interrogation room.

42:08 The guard had him take everything from his pockets. All around him he saw condemned people. This was in January 1945, he was liberated by the Russian army in February of 1945.

43:27 All around him the Russian planes were bombing. He prayed to God to let him die with dignity, by a bomb, not like a slaughtered lamb. At that moment a bomb hit the building across the street and he saw a chance to escape.

45:57 Everyone ran like mice. He escaped down the stairs and past a guard who had been killed by the bomb. This was the last time that he wore his uniform.

48:00 He had incredible faith in God. He felt that he could not be harmed.

49:00 He felt alone and longed for the love and trust of a person. He went to find food in a building that was empty and found food still warm. He ate the food outside next to a man who had been killed by a bomb. He decided to go to ghetto to be with people.

51:33 he stayed in the ghetto. He got lice because the conditions were so horrible. That is where he met his friend.

53:00 The Russians were coming closer. This was around Christmas. He and his wanted out of the ghetto so when a gentile became sick they volunteered to accompany her to the hospital. They escaped at the hospital. That is when he went back to the man and never returned with his food.

54:17 He had stayed in the ghetto for 3 weeks. The conditions were

horrible, the atmosphere was one of hopelessness.

55:30 He then went to his friend's mother who was hiding with others in a cellar. There he found a sense of security.

57:44 One night two Nazi's came but did not enter because the Jews outnumbered them. The next day was the Russian liberation.

59:09 He didn't celebrate he just roamed the streets.

1:00:00 A russian soldier misunderstood him and thought that he was a German so he was shipped off to a Russian camp. He escaped and walked back to Budapest. He then returned to his old apartment.

1:02:38 He felt that he was a big risk taker. Hitler initiated him into manhood.

1:06:45 He says that life is a unique experience, he would not change any of what happened because it made him the person that he is today. He experienced people in their total nakedness.

1:08:35 The ultimate survival is not that he is alive but that his spirit survived.

1:10:09 His experiences have taught him to look at life for its reality. He must look at from an outsiders point of view.

1:11:46 Seeing his mother was the greatest day of his life. His mother returned in June/ July. He finished school all by himself, and made a living in the black market.

1:15:52 He was entrepreneur at a young age.