

HVT - 329

R, Ervin, 1927-

Ervin R., Holocaust video testimony (HVT-329), interviewed by Alex Cherney and Wolfgang Mueller, October 7, 1998.

3 copies: 1 SVHS first camera ; 1 SVHS second camera; 1 VHS copy.

Summary: Ervin was born on December 23, 1927 in Lupenji, in the Romanian province of Transylvania. In 1933, he moved to Timisoara with his parents and his sister. There his father managed his own business. Ervin entered Romanian public school. The language at home was Hungarian. Ervin's parents sometimes spoke Yiddish to one another. Ervin was a member of the Dror Habonim Zionist youth movement. They played sports and organized Kibbutz camps during the summer.

At the age of 12, Ervin was forbidden to attend school because of new laws excluding all Jews from public activities. His parents sent him to Czernowitz. In 1940, the USSR occupied Czernowitz and Ervin was allowed to go to school again.

After the Romanian army re-occupied the city in 1941, Jews were forced to wear a badge and to do forced labour. Ervin joined a group belonging to the Organisation Todt and worked at a train station. In the fall of 1941, a ghetto was established by the Romanian police and Ervin started to work for the Judenrat. A few months later, in November 1941, Ervin was deported to Mogilev, in the province of Transnistria, Romania, where he worked in a tractor factory. His job allowed him to receive food rations, to learn a profession and to be relatively safe, while hunger, typhus and deportations claimed the lives of the unemployed inhabitants of the ghetto. In March 1942, Ervin was brought to Obodovka, where he again worked for Organisation Todt. The guards were Germans, but the workers were not mistreated and the food rations were larger than before. In June 1942, Ervin was transferred to a quarry in Berszad, then to Saszined and back to Mogilev, where he was liberated by the Red Army in March 1944.

After the end of the war, Ervin went back to Timisoara. He found his mother and sister who had been hiding on a farm. He learnt that his father had died in a concentration camp. Ervin started to work in a machine factory and married in 1951. He and his wife decided to emigrate, and after giving his motorbike to the Securitate officer in charge of emigration, they received their visas for Brazil. They moved to Vienna where they received support from JIAS. After having learned about problems in Brazil, they applied for Canadian visas. While waiting for the visas, Ervin found a job at AEG. After six months, they received their visas, and moved, via Le Havre, France, to Montreal.

Ervin did not find a job in a machine factory, so he worked in a dental laboratory. He later established his own dental laboratory. After being divorced, he married a Romanian woman.