

## Testimony-Sidney-Zalman-SCHWIMMER

Courtesy of Sidney SCHWIMMER, Netanya, Israel

I was born in Dolha, a town in Carpathia - Ukraine, formerly Czechoslovakia. I graduated from the Gymnasium School in Berehovo, and attended the Brunn(Brno) Medical University from 1936 until 1939, the period in which Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and formed a Protectorate. As a result, because I am a Jew, I was expelled with others from the university.

I remained in the Protectorate under Nazi rule, while Dolha was annexed to Hungary. While living in Brunn under the Nazi regime, and attempting unsuccessfully to immigrate to a country devoid of Nazi rule, I eye witnessed and experienced first hand, the persecution and plight of Jews in the Protectorate, including the setting a fire of the Great Synagogue of Brunn by the Nazis, and the liquidation of all Jewish activities by the Nazis.

Toward the end of 1939, my hopes of immigration became impossible and I returned to Dolha, which was then occupied by the Hungarians. At that time the Hungarian regime began to impose anti- Jewish laws and established Jewish forced labor camps. I was drafted into a Hungarian forced Jewish labor camp and served in Nagykata. After a few months, I was temporarily released under unusual circumstances.

Once again I encountered many obstacles in my fervent attempts to flee Hungary.

In 1941, when the Hungarian regime required all Jews from Carpathia to prove their Hungarian citizenship, I was actively engaged in securing a temporary residence for many Jewish families to avoid deportation. I saved and helped hundred of Jews in my native and surrounding towns, while obtaining temporary documents enabling them to avoid deportation.

I witnessed the Hungarian military (gendarmes) deporting hundreds of Jews from Carpato Ukraine to Kamenetz Podolsk, where they were killed, because they could not obtain Hungarian citizenship and were thus regarded as foreigners.

At the beginning of 1942, I was drafted once again into a Hungarian forced Jewish Labor camp in VAC, near Budapest. In the summer of 1942, I with thousand of other Hungarian Jewish males (aged 20-45), were shipped to the

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German occupied territories to work behind the battlefronts in places such as Kiev, Darnice, Pinsker Modes and Stanislav.

I experienced and eye witnessed the sadistic atrocities inflicted upon Jewish labor campers and the murder of thousands of Jews by the Hungarian military guards. Under unusual circumstances, and as an exception, my Jewish labor squadron of about 200 men was replaced. I then returned to Hungary in March of 1944. At that time the Germans invaded Hungary, and the entire Jewish population from the Carpatho-Ukraine were placed in different ghettos. I was placed in Berehovo. On May 15, 1944, along with members of my family and other ghetto members, I was deported to Auschwitz. Later I, and other able men were sent to K.Z. Gross-Rozen Wolfberg, where we were engaged in the heavy task of road construction and railroad building. I remained there until February 15, 1945. As the Soviets advanced, the camp was evacuated, and after a two week death march, I arrived in Bergen Belsen, where I was eventually liberated on April 15, 1945.

I emigrated to the United States in 1948. Since then I have been actively engaged in extensive Holocaust research. My work is archived and presented at various Holocaust centers throughout the United States and Israel. I have provided first hand information to Holocaust researchers, documenters, and scholars. My research is not only based on my experience as a Holocaust survivor, but on years of dedication to gathering data, and extensive material to supplement my experience, that establish credibility in my field of expertise. Many of the documents I collected are unique.

I currently reside in Miami Beach, Florida with my wife Agnes, who is also a Holocaust survivor. I have two married daughters living in Israel, six grandchildren, and a great grandson. My wife and I also have a home in Israel where we spend time with our family. We are very active in our synagogue and in Zionist philanthropy. We are observant Jews and our daughters were educated in Yeshivas and universities in the United States.