



Eugene's Story, Chapter 2

In 1944, March 19th the Germans occupied Hungary completely. Within a few days we were ordered to wear the star of David. Munkacz had a very large population, Jewish population, matter of fact there were Sintis, Gypsies, Germans, Poles, Slovaks, so there was a mixed community.

Within 4 weeks the Germans created a ghetto. Fortunately where we lived that became part of the ghetto and therefore we didn't have to be moved out and moved into somebody else's house but we had to accommodate other people who were brought in. Then on the 14th of May 1944 I was coming home from school. I entered the street where we lived, a distance away I noticed a German army lorry and some Hungarian police. As I got closer I recognised my two sisters and my father back of the lorry. As I got quite close I witnessed an SS man hitting my mother across the face and throwing her back of the lorry.

I was immediately ordered onto it, I wasn't allowed to go into the house or leave my school bags or change my uniform. The back was shut and we set off, we travelled roughly a kilometre into [---] brick factory, it was a very very large brick factory. We were ordered off, as I turned there were the SS, Hungarian police, dogs, fellow Jews, their children, women, elderly people, young people. In front of me I noticed cattle wagons, the door open, they were all opened, don't know how many there was but I learned later on there were 50 We were ordered onto it, in the middle of it there were two barrels. One of them had water in it and the other one to relieve yourselves.

There were roughly between 110 and 120 people crammed in, children, elderly people, sick. The door was shut, course it got quite dark by then and the train set off.

My father and 12 other members of the community who were selected to be the council, the city council who were ordered to provide a list of the Jewish operations and we were told, I remember my father coming home and told us not to worry nothing's gonna happen to us. But sadly the 13 people, the 13 families were the very first ones to be deported. The train set off and to this day the noise of it, the sound of the engine I can still hear it and it sounded like scchh scchh scchh.

We proceeded some way where a friend of my father, a Mr Kornreich who had his son and his wife and his daughter there with him on the same wagon, said to my father, "Bela, if we get to Kosice if the train doesn't turn left then they're not taking us to Hungary seemingly". I learned later on that the fact were that they were gonna take us to Hungary and work there but that wasn't the case, the train didn't turn left and we went on.