



Ibi's Story, Chapter 2

They announced about 2 weeks after we came into that ghetto they announced that we have to prepare food for 3 days because they are taking us into Germany to work. So of course my mother baked, cooked, everything was labelled, dinner breakfast so on, for 3 days. When they took us out to the station, the station was an important station, that is where all the trains were coming in and you would change. We lived near Slovakia and when we arrived there what I noticed was there wasn't a soul in the station, there wasn't a train there, nothing. And right in front of the platform there was a huge long train consisting of cattle wagons. The wagon doors were open and we had to go in there.

Now this was already in April and it was cold and we had warm coat dressed nice and civilised and upon entering the wagon I noticed that the far left corner was partitioned off with blankets and when we looked behind there were buckets for our needs and in the opposite corner there were buckets with cold water for drinking. So we had to sit down on the floor and on our little baggage, we all had little cases with a set of underwear, some change of clothes, you see we didn't know where we are going and what's going to happen. Some toiletries and that was all. They shut the wagon and it was a dreadful feeling. We were left in semi darkness. The only light came through the side of the wagons where air came in. And there was a deathly silence. You couldn't hear a baby cry. Everybody was full of foreboding, frightened. Where are they taking us? What is going to happen to us? And the train began to move, gathering speed, going very fast. And in the slits of the wagon we could see that it's just passing by stations and didn't stop. So a couple of enterprising young men stood on each other's shoulders in order to reach those openings in the wagon to look out and as the train passed a station and they read the names on the station we soon realised that we are not going to Germany, they are taking us opposite directions up through Slovakia. So they were taking us straight away to Auschwitz. And that's what they did with all the Hungarian transports.

My father was very unlucky, you see when we got into the train they said, we had to pick 10 men who will do all the things for us if you wanted to, well my

father was one of the 10. And during the journey we stopped once to take up water for the train and they took the dirty buckets out and they brought fresh water in for drinking. And my father, whose German was perfect, asked one of the German soldiers, "Where are they taking us, what are they doing with us?" And he didn't mince words. He told him what they are doing. And he came up with that knowledge and he never said a word to anybody and he sat all night knowing that. And when I woke up in the morning I saw that his beard, he had a little beard and it was very very fair, it was blond, and on both sides there was a white stripe. He got white that night, grey.

My mother used to dole out breakfast, lunch and so on. I can't even remember to go to the little room in the 3 days. And on the 3rd morning, very early – it was just getting dark - light – I woke up. It was silence. The train didn't move. So we arrived somewhere. And we are sitting there, people woke up, right until the sun came up, probably 2, 3 hours. And then they started opening the wagon. And I sat opposite the door and when the door was opened all I could see was blue sky, sun, very cold, windy, and we had to get out of the wagons. The first thing I noticed before any orders came, about 10 yards or less in front of the wagon as far as you could see there were a row of SS men with rifles on their shoulders standing and in front of them were some chappies in stripy uniforms and striped caps and these were the inmates, that we found out afterwards, who were already languishing in Auschwitz. And they were going to see us through the selection.