



Judy Russell on Ernest Levy



Questions & Answers with Timestamps

1. In what ways did antisemitism affect Ernst's life?

2:00 In 1938, Ernest's family were given two hours to leave their home in Czechoslovakia for good, and were left at the border with Hungary

03:44 The family had to start again from scratch in Budapest. Ernest began working at the age of 14.

04:38 In 1944 Germany took over Hungary, the family broke up and Ernest was imprisoned shortly after refusing to attend a youth camp where Jews were picked on and demeaned. He was taken from the prison to Auschwitz and spent a week there

2. Ernest said that he survived because of a few good people he met. Who were they and what did they do?

05:53 Walter – a fellow inmate who was later sent to a different work camp and Ernest never saw him again. He always felt guilty about the fact he didn't go with him and that he'd let him down.

07:47 Anton – who was in charge (charge hand) at the engineering factory where Ernest was sent. He ensured that the men were given enough food so they could work, he got to know the men. He also helped to smuggle food from the factory to the prison camp. This was dangerous for the prisoners as well as Anton. He did this until he was replaced by another charge hand.

09:21 Helmut – a young guard with a common interest in music. He helped to provide food, blankets and warm clothing and gave him extra rations when they were on death marches between camps, which Ernest shared. He also gave him some shoes.

11:27 The farmer who allowed the prisoners to be housed in a barn during bad weather, he gave them extra rations

12:40 An unknown soldier who pulled him out of a pit of bodies

13:38 Emma, a young German nurse who nursed him back to health after the war

3. Discuss- what was their motivation for helping? Could they have done more? What else? Why didn't they?

Glossary

Hungarian Uprising

The Hungarian revolution of 1956, also known as the Hungarian Uprising, was an attempted countrywide revolution against the government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the policies caused by the government's subordination to the Soviet Union. Widespread discontent of soviet imposed communist rule and oppressive policies is what caused this uprising.

Auschwitz

Complex of concentration and extermination camps in Poland, of which Auschwitz-Birkenau was the camp with gas chambers. There were 1.1 million people murdered on this site, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Wüstegiersdorf

Concentration camp in the Polish mountains, set up in May 1944 and primarily for Polish and Hungarian Jews.

Chargehand

A worker who is in charge of others on a particular job.

Cantor

The person who chants worship services in a synagogue. They lead the congregation in song and prayer.