

Eugen Kohn In The Work Service



This is a photo of my father, Eugen Kohn, when he was doing forced labor in Tinca, where they manufactured cement and concrete tiles. He's the fourth from the right. This picture was taken in 1942.

In 1940 we were evacuated as well. A gendarme came and told us that according to the order of Marshal Antonescu, the leader of the state, we only had the right to take 20 or 30 kilograms of belongings with us. They gathered us and took us by cart to the forced residence. We were taken to Beius, as the Jews of Beliu belonged to Bihor County. Between 1940 and 1944 we lived in Beius, Tinca and Ginta at different periods.

Until 1944 my parents lived on their savings. My father had worked very hard after he got married, and he had saved a fortune big enough not to feel the want of anything. He even had bought a house in Arad, and he had his shop full of goods. When we were evacuated, as I already mentioned, we gave many of the goods to our loyal neighbors. Some of them gave these goods back to us later on, and the value of the merchandise increased dramatically during the course of the war. Indeed, after the war started in 1941 one couldn't buy anything, not even shoes. Textiles were out of stock, and no one was delivering cotton anymore. My father began selling some goods under the counter, and that's what we lived on. Meanwhile, those that had their fortunes in cash grew poor as the money depreciated in value. 100 lei were good for nothing, and banknotes of millions and tens of millions were issued.

During the Holocaust my father also did work service in Varciorog. He managed to come home for visits through bribery. If you gave something to the chief of the work department, for example, it was widely known that he would let you go home for a few days. In Varciorog my father worked at excavation sites. What he did I do not know - I imagine he was constructing fortifications to impede the Russians or something of that nature. In 1942 he was sent to do work service in Tinca, where this photo was taken.