



Thomas Buergenthal and a Polish soldier, 1945, USHMM.



Thomas Buergenthal, Lybil BER, Wikipedia.

#75
befreiung

Thomas Buergenthal (*1934)

In 1933, just after Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power, Thomas's Jewish parents moved from Germany to Czechoslovakia. Thomas's father had worked as a banker in Germany, and then bought a small hotel in the Slovakian town of Lubochna. Many of his father's friends in Germany came to Czechoslovakia to escape the Nazi government's unfair policies and stayed at the hotel.

1933-39: Slovak soldiers who had sided with Hitler took over the Buergenthal family's hotel in late 1938. They fled to Zilina, a nearby city, and lived there until after Thomas turned 5. Then, his father took the family across the border into Poland. On September 1, 1939, they boarded a train heading for a boat that would take them to England. But the German army invaded Poland that day, and their train was bombed. They joined other refugees, and walked north to Kielce.

1940-45: In Kielce the Buergenthals were put into a ghetto and then a labor camp. In 1944 Thomas was deported to Auschwitz with his parents. It was now January 1945, and the advancing Soviet army forced the Germans to evacuate. Thomas and his family were marched out—children at the front. Day one was a 10-hour march and tiring; they began to lag. Stragglers were shot, so Thomas and two boys devised a way to rest as they walked: They'd run to the front of the column, then walk slowly or stop until the rear of the column reached them. Then, they'd run ahead again.

Thomas was one of only three children to survive the three-day death march. He was deported to Sachsenhausen, where he was liberated by Soviet troops in April 1945.

From: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/thomas-buergenthal>

In 1951 Thomas Buergenthal emigrated to the United States, where he still lives today.



Bernhard Storch (right), 1943, Storch family.



Bernhard and Ruth Storch, Storch family.

Bernhard Storch (*1922)

Bernhard Storch was born November 19, 1922, in South Poland. When World War Two erupted on the 1st September 1939, Mr. Storch left home on the advice of his mother ahead of the approaching German Army seeking safety. After 10 days he arrived in the city of Lwow. On the 18th September, the U.S.S.R. troops occupied the City. In the beginning of May 1940, he was arrested by the KGB, (secret police) and transported with thousands of others to a labor camp in Central Siberia.

After the declaration of War by the Nazis on the USSR in June 22nd 1941, Mr. Storch was released from the camp in November 1941, and enlisted in the Polish Army in November 1942. He was called to duty in March 1943, and was discharged in September 1945. During his military service he helped in the liberation of four extermination camps, three in Poland and one in Germany.

Mr. Storch was in Berlin when the war ended. In January 1946, he left Poland with the hope of leaving Europe, and eventually, with his wife Ruth they left Germany on the 12th of April 1947 and arrived in New York on the 22nd of April 1947.

From: <https://hhrecny.org/speakers-bureau/bernhard-storch/>

Oral history video with Bernhard Storch by the USC Shoah Foundation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMHvG7dFhAc>

Bernhard Storch was one of the polish soldiers, who liberated the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on 22th of April 1945. He today lives in the US. It makes us very sad, that he and his son weren't able to join the commemoration for the 75th day of the liberation as planned.