

Laszlo Galla In 'work Service'



This picture was taken in 'work service' [forced labor], in Csucs [Romania], in 1943, where we had to dig tank traps. In this kind of rocky ground, we had to dig with normal shovels. Csucs, you know, is in Transylvania and most of the mountains there are rocky, and it was quite difficult. But here it seems to me, well these are already ballasted so they don't cave in, we had to ballast these, build supports for the sides. We didn't have gloves or such, we carried these enormous stones with our bare hands and reinforced the walls. We worked from first light to dark, at least ten hours a day. We didn't have uniforms, just uniform hats and armbands, yellow ones. And in this picture there are a few national guard, who were the henchmen.

We got food. There wasn't any variety, but you could get your fill from it. You had to, because the next day you had to work. We slept on the ground, generally, on some sprinkled straw. I think it was in Csucs where we slept in some schoolroom. Why they didn't have school then, I don't know, because we were there the dead of winter. But it was regular, that wherever we got a place to sleep, we couldn't sleep there. Well, during forced labor I never slept in a bed, nor bathed in a tub. I slept on a blanket thrown on some straw thrown on the ground. For a while we were in Nagyvarad [Oradea, Romania], and there we had it real good, at the huge, many-acre area of the Gabor Aron National Guard Artillery Cadet school. We might have slept on a bed there, but I'm not sure of that. Everywhere else, for those four or five years, when I was part of it, we always slept on the ground.

I got this photo from my friend Miklos Klein, who called himself Miklos Fabian after the war. He wrote the following on the back, this is after the war: 'See, what a proud, gutsy fellow Galla is: Of course, here we defended the homeland. We never thought about a death train to Mauthausen.' I was with him throughout this [forced labor] the whole time. Unfortunately, he's not pictured here.