

ROLE PLAY

Role play is a non-traditional theatrical performance without stage, scenery, and costumes. The actors, the role players, recite their scripts without the trappings of theater. The “actors” read their lines from paper in hand while staring above the heads of the audience’s. Most of the time the role players are selected from the audience just minutes or seconds before the presentation starts. One actor may perform more than one role. To enhance the Role play presentations, sometimes, we used Power Point, but most of the time, we employed the Flip Chart method.

Text of Role Play Presentation.

Sandor Vandor

I am Sandor Vandor.

The inhabitants of St Anna am Aigen helped me to survive the HOLOCAUST.

The Nazis wanted to annihilate every Jew in Europe.

For starters, the Jews were rounded-up and **DEHUMANIZED**, stripped of their dignity and humanity by placing them in special segregated cramped confinement, such as ghettos, brick factories, and transporting them to the killing grounds, packed in sealed box freight cars and/or forcing them on a death march.

My mother was rounded-up and forced into the ghetto and the brick factory. Within a short timeframe, she was also sent on a crowded freight train ride to be killed in the gas chamber of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp.

And me: I was forced on a death march for 5 days to reach a brick factory, where we received no food and no personal hygiene facilities were available.

During the death march, our change of clothing with almost all other personal belongings were confiscated.

The death march was the shortest, cruelest way to dehumanize. Choosing to keep your humanness you would be shot to death on the spot. Choosing to stay alive, you dehumanized yourself.

At age 19, I was forced to work, expending all my physical energy until I dropped dead. **PEOPLE WERE WORKED TO DEATH** by forcing them to exert 3000 or more calories daily.

During the winter, using primitive implements, we had to dig a long, deep trench for border reinforcement. A group of 10 Jewish Slave Laborers had to dig and landscape a 5-meter-wide, 5-meter-deep, and 1-meter-long trench every day. Every person had to do 2 ½-cubic-meters trench space a day.

An incentive was given. When a group of 10 finished their daily quota, they were allowed to go back to the barrack earlier. My group of 10, regularly finished the daily work earlier.

My friend, Gyuri and me, we used the gained time for rest and/or begging for food from the villagers.

All that work, while providing an **EXTREMELY LOW-CALORIE DIET** with food rations of only 200 - 250 calories a day, caused acute weight loss.

The daily menu consisted of:

Breakfast – about a ½ liter of warm liquid (color brown – like coffee) and a piece of bread approximately 100 grams.

And dinner – another ½ liter warm liquid (color gray – like soup).

Any other food or drink were prohibited and not served.

To stave off dehydration, one must have a minimum daily intake of one liter of liquid, which the NAZIS were providing to harvest our work.

With begging food, I supplemented about 400 calories a day. Still, in less than 2 1/2 months, I lost 1/3 of my body weight.

By losing that much of body weight, from 60 kg to 40 kg. I was rapidly approaching the “drop dead” finish line.

On top of the weight loss **NO PERSONAL HYGIENE WAS ALLOWED**. No water to wash up and did not have any clothing to change. A sure way to induce a life-threatening epidemic. I was contaminated with fleck typhus, a deadly disease with high fever and diarrhea.

The NAZI commandment was: The citizens may NOT talk to a Jew, may NOT invite a Jew in their homes and may NOT give food to a Jew. It's all punishable by death or concentration camp. The punishment would be applied not only to the individual but to the perpetrator's entire family.

And despite it all, the brave local population helped us with food supplements. They helped us outside and inside of their homes. They helped us in broad daylight, for all to see. Even the impossible, that some of the food givers were affiliated with the Nazi party. Outstandingly, no inhabitants were hurt.

And now some words from contemporary righteous.

Sister Lina

I am Sister Lina. I was a very young nun, member of the “Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception” teaching order at the school of “Schulschwestern Eggenberg”. After the war broke out, the anti-religious Nazis quickly shut down the school and sent the nuns, who were teaching, packing. I lost my job. I found domestic work with a family in St Anna.

Some years later, I was already at age 23. The Jewish forced laborers walked past the front of the house where I was working. Every morning, I would throw apples through the window towards the marching Jews. Once an SS officer caught an apple. He came into the house to investigate. By the time he arrived inside, he found only a young maid polishing shoes while singing nursery songs, busy at work. I was warned frequently, by friends and family members, not to help the Jews because I'm going to bring trouble upon myself and my family, I could be shot to death. Despite the warnings, I continued my "apple crusade".

One day, I met two Jewish slave laborers on the street. They were looking for food. I instructed them to follow me, and I led them to my mother's house in Risola. I invited the two Jews inside the house and gave them bean salad to eat. With that act, I was also implicating my mother in the "crime" of feeding Jews in our home.

After the war I continued my teaching mission at the Schulschwestern Graz - Eggenberg.

I met Sandor Vandor in 2009, at the facility of HLA Schulschwestern Graz - Eggenberg. I was 87. After my retirement, I was still active in my mission to teach and care for a group of kindergartners.

On Nov. 2013, still living in the same HLA Schulschwestern complex, Sandor Vandor visited me again. We had a very pleasant meeting reminiscing the past.

Maria Haarer

I am Mrs. Maria Haarer from Waltra of the Township of St. Anna am Aigen. In the winter of 1945, I was 18 years old. One day at the front of our house I saw eight or nine Jews come to the door begging for food. I went back to the house and started to prepare food for the Jews. While I was slicing bread, a police officer arrived to conduct some business with my parents. I was frightened to be caught red-handed and expected to be punished. But the policemen went about his business.

When the policeman left, he said, "**I didn't see anything.**" I continued slicing bread to feed the starving Jews.

In the "72 Hours" project of 2008, my granddaughter Franziska Haarer was one of the young people to build the Mahnmahl für den Frieden, the Memorial for Peace Monument.

Frieda Neubauer

My name is Frieda Neubauer. I still feel the pain from working in the trenches. I was 15 years old. I had to work three weeks on, one week off for the war effort. I had to provide my own food while working. I did not receive food or any help or even the basic tools to dig with. Yet, during war, in the face of hardship I still regularly put small food packages at the tank trench where the Jewish Slave Laborers were working.

On certain days, I had to show myself in one barrack at the Hölle to update my workbook reporting the hours I worked at the fortification job. On one of those visits I noticed something behind the barrack. Many human corpses were stacked up in a pile. The whole pile of bodies was buried in a mass grave near Deutsch-Haseldorf. Later and in the days, that followed, I visited the mass grave, and the earth was still moving, because some people were still alive.

Ferdinand Legenstein

My name is Ferdinand Legenstein, I live in Sichauf in the Township of St. Anna am Aigen. I was 11 years old when the Jewish Forced Laborers were in St. Anna. I remember that every time my mother, **Theresia Legenstein** went to St. Anna, she always carried one or two loaves of bread under her arm with her for the Jews. She was 43 years old in 1945.

Anna Dunkl

My name is Anna Dunkl. I was born in 1890 and departed in 1985 at the age of 95. In 1945, when Jewish Forced Laborers were housed in the Lippe Warehouse, I was frequently throwing food packages over the fence for the Jews. I knew that it was dangerous, but I did it anyway. I was warned by friends and other people to be careful. Once I was caught in the act by a German soldier and he told me if I will be caught doing it again, I will be killed. After that episode, I did not throw food packages over the fence anymore. But I hid the packages in the nearby bushes for the Jews to find it. And they picked it up.

Lisa Amschl, Age 10

My great grandmother, Anna Schlögl was born in 1900 in Jamm 117, St. Anna am Aigen. She has always been telling my grandmother, who was born in 1948, what she had lived through during the war.

When she went to church in winter, she noticed Jews who were standing below the wall surrounding the church. They were barefoot and begged for food. Every Sunday when she went to church, she took some bread with her. During the service she sneaked away from the church and threw the bread off the top of the wall, because it was forbidden to give food to the Jews. But one day she heard that the Jews had been taken away. Only sometime later she learnt that the Jews had been taken away to the concentration camp.

Sandor Vandor

With my friend Gyuri, we periodically visited the neighboring villages for food supplements. One day, around March 15, we visited the village of Aigen. After knocking the door, we were passively invited inside. While we were inside, both Gyuri and me, each received an egg sandwich. Two slices of bread, with scrambled eggs in between. A tall glass of apple juice for each, plus apples to take along. **That scrumptious food saved my life.**

Sixty-years later, in 2005, I returned to St Anna am Aigen to say THANK YOU for saving my life, I met with contemporary eyewitnesses, among them Mrs. Maria Lackner, who gave me the egg sandwich. The meeting inspired me to write a poem,

SIXTY-YEARS LATER



Upon a time 'twas nineteen forty-five,
I'm on the road to the abyss in the dark.
At the crossroad Maria appeared as a Princess of Light
Also, Martha as Maiden at her right.
With magical food, she illuminated the way back to life.
Despite all her good deeds, she nurtured doubts.
Sixty-years later, I traversed land and sea.
We yearned for a reunion, and we met again.
While clutching her hand, Martha and I oversee
Her tears were washing away all the remaining doubts.

During our conversation with the ladies I repeatedly said, “**Thank You**” and their faces constantly radiated **fulfillment**.

And now let me recite quotations authored by famous people of history.

Edmund Burke: *The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people do nothing.*

Primo Levi: *It happened; therefore, it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say.*

Mahatma Gandhi: *A good person will resist an evil system with his whole soul. Disobedience of the laws of an evil state is therefore a duty.*

Contemporary witnesses lived their natural life without studying the sage’s remarks. They acted the way their conscience dictated. They disobeyed an evil system to help fellow humans. Also learned that their effort was fruitful. Their faces with their mystical smiles radiated **goodness and fulfillment**.

Just for thought:

You cannot look another way. You must make a choice and act.

Doing something out of hate is detrimental. Doing something out of love is beneficial.