# Magdalena Seborova

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Magdalena Seborova lives alone in a cozy and tastefully furnished one-room apartment in Brno. Mrs. Magdalena is originally from Slovakia. She was born in Mocenok (Sala region) in 1940, therefore during World War II, and at a very young age ended up in the labor camp in Sered 1, and later in Terezin 2. Most of her family died during the Holocaust. She had very little contact with her mother, who for seven years after the war was being treated for tuberculosis in a sanatorium in the High Tatras. Mrs. Magdalena was twice married and divorced. In 1972 she moved to Brno to be with her second husband, where she lives to this day. In 1984 she went on a disability pension. Despite her health problems, she is very full of life and talkative. She gladly shared her memories and experiences with us, because according to her words: "I can't take everything to the grave." Today Mrs. Magdalena lives alone, yet she is very content with her new situation. After a distressful life she'd like to have a bit of peace at least in her retirement. She devotes herself to her hobbies, such as for example sewing and making macramé lace, besides this she also likes to travel. Neither is she indifferent to the fate of the Jewish community in Brno, which she joined in the year 2000.



## Family background">Family background

I don't remember my grandparents from my father's side. I don't know my grandparents' first names, as I don't have any documents about them. Their surname was Klein. Grandpa died right after the war broke out, when I was two [in 1942]. He's buried in Surovce [Trnava region], in a Jewish cemetery of course. Maybe the cemetery is still there to this day. I used to go there with my father up to the time I started going to work. My father had 'For those of the family who died' put on his tombstone, symbolically, so that there would be a reminder of those that died during the Holocaust and don't have gravestones.

My grandparents were named the Kleins. I don't know when and where they were born. They lived in Surovce. Grandpa had fourteen children and two wives, but not at the same time. When one died, he married the second. I don't remember the names of Grandpa's wives either, due to the

fact that I was too small. I'm assuming that his wives were also from Orthodox families. The Kleins were definitely Orthodox Jews, as in photos you can see that Grandma has a wig 3, and my father was also Orthodox. Every day he prayed with tefillin - prayer straps. Grandpa owned a general store, as it used to be in villages 60 years ago. My father didn't talk much about Grandpa; we tried to forget about that whole 'concentration camp journey.'

My grandparents on my mother's side were named Julius and Hedviga Weisz. I knew my grandfather, as he survived the Holocaust. He married my grandmother in Vienna; I think she was named Hedviga. My grandmother's maiden name was Quittner. He died in Bratislava in 1954, where he's also buried. I was 14 years old when he died. Grandpa was a great person, everyone liked him. He used to tell me that he had been a painter by trade. He didn't like it at all, and so he later studied to be a master distiller. He never actually worked at his trades, because he became the superintendent of a farm in Kokosova. My mother's grandparents on my grandfather's side were Mor Weisz and Netti Schwarz. And my grandmother's parents were Mor Quittner and Katalina Braun.

After their wedding, Grandpa and Grandma Weisz settled down in Vienna. My mother was also born there. My mother had one sister, Hedviga, who died in a concentration camp. Still during the time of Austro-Hungary they moved to Slovakia, that wasn't a problem. They settled on a farm in Kokosova. Kokosova was part of the municipality of Tesare. Like most women back then, my grandmother was a housewife. I've personally never been on that farm. My grandparents certainly belonged among the more well to do class of the population. During the First Republic 4, being a farm superintendent was like being a head doctor at a hospital. It was something at about the same level.

My grandfather [on my mother's side] also knew how to speak Gypsy [Roma]. When we lived in Mocenok, Gypsy women would often come begging at our door, and he'd normally be able to talk to them. He knew Hungarian and German, and my father even spoke Serbian and Croatian. During the time of Austro- Hungary it was necessary. I don't know which language my grandfather considered to be his native one, as we didn't discuss things at the level of the Slovak Matica [Editor's note: the Slovak Matica was created at its founding plenary assembly on 4th August 1863, in Turciansky Svaty Martin. The mission of the SM was to develop and strengthen Slovak patriotism and deepen the relationship between the Slovak state and its citizens. This sentence means that they didn't consider themselves to be Slovak patriots.] My father and grandfather spoke German with each other so that I wouldn't understand them, but his Slovak was absolutely without fault. It was perfect.

I don't remember my grandmother. She went to a concentration camp and didn't return. I don't know which camp Grandma died in, we never talked about it. I didn't start discussing this subject until after 1991, as at that time schools began to also be interested in the Holocaust. Mrs. Felixova [a friend of the interviewee and a member of the Brno Jewish community] goes around to schools and talks about the Holocaust. I wouldn't be able to do this, as my memories are sketchy. I'm glad to answer your questions, but I wouldn't be able to do talk about it on my own.

My mother's father probably wasn't Orthodox. I don't know about before the war, but after the concentration camp he definitely wasn't Orthodox. He didn't pray every day with a tefillin anymore, like my father. I don't know whether he'd done it before and then stopped, we didn't discuss this

subject matter very much. I only know what I saw. I don't know how often Grandpa used to go to the prayer hall. It's impossible for me to remember prewar times, and after the war in Mocenok, they took the prayer hall away from us. My father and I used to go to Galanta to his sister's [Sidonia Hertzova], as there was a synagogue there. There's a good Jewish community in Galanta to this day. Grandpa never used to go with us. He died in 1954, and for two years before his death he was in an old-age home on Podjavorinska Street in Bratislava. I don't know whether there my grandfather used to go to the prayer hall so they'd have a minyan - ten people.

My father was named Maximilian Klein. He was born on 28th February 1900 in Surovce. He died in 1969. He was 40 when I was born. It was wartime, in hiding, a while here, a while there. We even hid in Austria. I don't know what sort of education my father had, back then one couldn't go to school much, as it was during World War I. I think that he joined the army at the age of 16. During the First Republic, while he was still single, he worked as a superintendent of a farm in Mocenok. After the wedding various persecutions of Jews started, and he had to leave his job 5.

My father used to say that he came from a family of fourteen children. As infant mortality was high in those days, and some of the children were bitten by a rabid dog, some died of croup, which was on the rampage in those days; eight of them lived to adulthood. Of those, six died in a concentration camp. Father's sister from Galanta moved to Israel in 1964. Within a half year she died in Israel, she couldn't handle the tough conditions.

I know that my aunt from Galanta was in hiding, she wasn't in a concentration camp. She was in hiding with someone in Plavecky Stvrtok. Her daughter [Anna Diamantova (nee Hertzova)] was somewhere else. She had red hair and green eyes; she didn't have typical Jewish features. So she worked somewhere as a salesgirl during the war. [Editor's note: during World War II she lived using false papers.] My aunt's husband was named Ignac Hertz. I remember we used to call him Naci Bacsi [Uncle Naci]. My aunt was older than my father by I don't know how many years. She and my father were half- brother and sister. They had different mothers. My aunt used to say that she'd studied to be a seamstress, but as far back as I remember she never went to work. After her wedding my aunt lived in Galanta. They lived in a bungalow. Uncle Ignac was in the tobacco business in 1945 and 1946.

During the time of the Slansky trials 6 they threw all my uncle's friends in jail, except for him. But it's not true that they were jailed for just cause. Slansky was also killed as an innocent man. Then he did some sort of accounting work until 1964. In 1964 they moved away and my aunt died within a half year. She was already old and couldn't take the harsh living conditions. My uncle went crazy. You can't move away at that age without it being risky. They had settled near Tel Aviv. Of course, a person imagines it differently when he goes to Israel. I remember, in 1958 I was 18, and at the Jewish community they were telling us how high the standard of living in Israel was, exactly the same as in Austria. And when I arrived there in 1988, as far as technology goes they had things that we didn't, but life was terribly hard there. For example one lady from Brno has a son there since 1999, and he hasn't been able to find work for two years now.

The Hertzes had only one daughter. She was named Anna. We write each other to this day, but only once a year. She was born in Galanta. She was 16 years older than I. She came to say goodbye to me when I might have been about 9. In 1949 she left for Israel. Back then, when the Israeli state was created, everyone from Bratislava went there. From Bratislava you went to Vienna

and Genoa by train, and then from Genoa by boat. So the Polish and all whatnot, they all went through Bratislava. In Israel she got married and had a child. She made a living sewing.

My father's mother tongue is Slovak. At home we spoke mostly Slovak, but my father knew how to speak German well, in fact so well that - at that time I was already working in Bratislava - some older classmate of mine went to see my father so he'd help her with an essay in German. My stepmother [after the death of his wife Edita Klein, the interviewee's father got married again, to Alzbeta, nee Gottreichova] spoke only Hungarian, so because of her we had to speak Hungarian.

My mother was named Edith Kleinova, nee Weisz. She was born on 17th August 1911 in Vienna. I didn't get to know my mother very much; I was 12 years old when she died. My mother's Jewish name is Noemi. I'm named Ester. During the Yom Kippur prayer, we always used Ester bat Noemi, so Ester daughter of Noemi. I don't have it written down anywhere, but I remember it. My mother spoke Slovak, Hungarian and German. She didn't attend school, as she had a home tutor - Fräulein [German for 'governess']. I don't know if my mother had some sort of a trade. She didn't need it in a well-off family. Besides this, on the farm she learned how to work in the fields, with milk and so on. I know that after the war we had to make our own butter and also baked our own bread.

I can't say for certain whether my mother was a devout Jewess. I only remember her from the concentration camp and the sanatorium. But her postcards are evidence that she was. When she mentioned God, she never wrote God, but only G. [Editor's note: Orthodox Judaism forbids the utterance of the name of God in any fashion. One of God's Ten Commandments is: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.']. For me that's evidence that she was probably devout. I don't even know what my mother's character was like, as during visits a person had to look at her like at a picture, because tuberculosis was infectious. So when we came, we could only see her from a certain distance, and she also tried to not breathe in my direction, so as not to infect me. And even if someone was I don't know how wicked, if they only saw me once every two months or even less, it couldn't show itself. From photographs I'd say that my mother dressed very elegantly, but after the war during her stay at the sanatorium, she wore only flannel pyjamas or sweatpants.

## Growing up during the war">Growing up during the war

My parents were married on 10th January 1939. I was born on 16th February 1940, during World War II. My memories of this time period are sporadic. No one really talked about the war much in our family. I don't know how my parents met, as I never asked about it. They were married in a synagogue, but whether it was in Surovce, that I don't know. The wedding was Orthodox; you can see it from photographs. The wedding was with a veil and under a chuppah. After the wedding they stayed and lived in Surovce. They had a little house there, I saw it a few times and then it fell down on its own. At that time there was already great repression here. My father said that when I was born, that day was the first time they drove Jews out to clear snow from the railroad tracks. Up to then it was more or less all right. I don't know how much snow had fallen, maybe even two meters; apparently there was so much on the tracks that the locomotive couldn't get through it.

I wasn't my parents' only child. My brother was born in the concentration camp, but died in four days. It was in Sered. [Editor's note: there was a labor camp in Sered; Mrs. Seborova uses the term concentration camp to refer to it.] I remember it, it was in 1944. His name was Peter. We erected a symbolic tombstone in the Sered graveyard. All I remember from the Sered concentration camp are

the roll calls, but I can't say for sure whether it was there or in Terezin. As I've already mentioned, my brother was born in Sered. They put him in my arms, he had infant jaundice. I remember that moment when he died. It was drastic. A person remembers such things, even when he was very small. My brother died, and my mother had that dead brother of mine with her all day and thought that because of that she'd save us, and that they wouldn't deport us. When they saw that he was dead, they loaded us on as well.

My father always told me that Czechs are decent people, because they brought us food and water when those trains were sidelined. We left Sered for Terezin. As I later found out, it was the last transport from Slovakia that aimed for Terezin. Terezin is about sixty kilometers from Prague. The trip to Prague takes about 6 hours by express train [currently a train trip from Sered to Prague takes about seven hours], but for us it took several days. The conditions in those cattle cars, freight wagons, were horrible, so some already died during the trip. They gave us some pail for feces, and that was it. I was with my parents until the end of the war, because at that time the selections weren't going on anymore. I don't think that my father was there, but I used to sleep with my mother on those plank-beds, that I remember.

## Post-war growing up">Post-war growing up

I remember how the Russians liberated us, and the German guards disappeared overnight. In the morning they weren't there any longer. We knew that they weren't Germans. They had different clothing and a visible armband. They shone colored flashlights at us. I've verified it with older people on Terezin reunions, that I remember it properly. They liberated us and took us to Prague. There we lived in some hotel. I remember the procession. The victorious army in Prague, my father and I looked out a window on it. Benes [7] was there, too, waving at us from a car. I saw members of the SS, too, how they were carrying them out, and they had nicely smashed-in teeth, so the residents didn't treat them according to the Geneva Convention either. After the liberation in Terezin a whole lot of people died, even though nurses arrived. Typhus broke out there, and they weren't vaccinated.

We didn't have a lot of property, but they returned it to us. I don't know if someone was living there during the war, because I didn't have anything to do with these things. There were decent people to be found among them as well, they returned our radio and clothing that we had hidden away with them. But as I say, I wasn't there.

I didn't notice when Mother began to be ill. I know that already before the war she was ill, in Surovce. Tuberculosis shows after a certain time, and a person has constant fevers. She lay in bed and I sat by her bedside. One Russian came by, and took me, a five year old child, into his arms. I don't know when exactly it was during that summer that they liberated us. I remember that I was sitting in a nightshirt in our grandfather's house. My father's sister in Galanta also took care of me for a year. I lived with her until I started attending school. Then they put me in an orphanage. My father also had health problems. He also collected a disability pension. He had problems with his heart, and back then these diseases weren't as easily treated as now. And he also had to work. Right after the war we lived on whatever we could grow. We had rabbits, a cow, goats. In the garden we had corn, plums and potatoes, all kinds of vegetables. We could make preserves out of it, so that's what we ate. And when it ran out, we'd sell a piece of furniture or part of the garden.

And were nicely cheated in the process.

After the war my mother was treated for seven years in a sanatorium, as she had a serious case of tuberculosis, of which she finally died in 1952. First she was being treated in Vysne Hagy, and then in other sanatoria. They were all located in the High Tatras. In 1951 collectivization 8 took place. We became beggars, they took our fields. We had no money. Now we visited Mom only once in I don't know how long a while, as the trip from Mocenok to the High Tatras was terrible. We needed money for the trip, which we however didn't have; neither did we have a car. It was a completely different life from how it is these days. I pick up and tomorrow I go to Terezin and on Monday to Luhacovice. My mother is buried in Kezmarok. It was terrible. The news gave my father a heart attack. I was 12 years old, and knew that she'd die. I knew it from where they had moved her, because the only people there were those who were ready to die. My father got a telegram, and looked and looked at it, suddenly he got a heart attack. I took care of my father, and my grandpa and uncle from Galanta went to bury her. The closest Jewish cemetery was in Kezmarok. I didn't take part in the funeral, because then children under the age of 15 weren't allowed in the sanatorium. I didn't go to my mother's grave until sometime in 1973 or 1974.

After my mother's death my father had one heart attack after another, he had a disability pension of about 450 crowns. In 1952 my mother died, and in 1954 my father remarried. His second wife and my stepmother was named Alzbeta Gottreichova. There was a lot of tension between us, so when I graduated from high school, my father found me a sublet in Bratislava, with the Feldmars. I found work on my own, so from 1957 they didn't hassle me any more. I have this feeling that my stepmother came from Lucenec, but I'm not sure. One of her brothers lived in Bratislava. My father met her in Galanta, at my aunt Sidonia Hertzova's place. We used to go to my aunt's place for the high holidays, like Passover and Chanukkah, and my later stepmother used to also spend the holidays there.

As I've already mentioned, Grandpa also returned from the concentration camp. In the beginning he lived with us in Mocenok, but then moved to an old-age home on Podhajska Street in Bratislava. I used to visit Grandpa there, I was even there once during holidays. I know that I used to live with a cook in Zidovska [Jewish] Street. I was with Grandpa for about a week, we walked around Bratislava and so on. I remember that my grandpa had an old-age pension of 175 crowns, you couldn't live much on that.

Grandpa died in 1954. I remember his funeral well. The funeral room wasn't any bigger than my kitchen. The deceased lay on a catafalque. At my father's funeral in 1969, the deceased was laid on a bier. There was a plank on the bier, and on top of it was the ritually wrapped corpse. Ritually wrapped means that he was wearing a kitel, which of course isn't visible, and finally was wrapped in a sheet. The sheet is tied under the chin, around the wrists on crossed arms, and right below the calf. It's tied three times. During the service there have to be ten men present, but there were definitely more. We women were completely outside, because we weren't allowed inside. The men then went up on a hill and buried him [the Orthodox cemetery in Bratislava is situated on a hill.]. When the pit was completely filled with dirt, then we could come up from below. [Editor's note: at an Orthodox Jewish funeral in Bratislava, women aren't present during the actual burial of the deceased.]

After the war, my father and I at first lived in Surovce. My mother entered a sanatorium for treatment. Me they then stuck in an orphanage - into an aguda [the orphanage belonged to the Orthodox Jewish organization Agudat Israel, see 9] in Bratislava. I also lived with my aunt in Galanta for a year. In time my father returned to Mocenok. My grandfather also lived with us there. I didn't go to live with them until they confiscated the orphanage, because almost all the children went to Israel, but not because of that, but at that time the Communists were confiscating everything.

I remember life in Surovce. Surovce is a very tiny village. Later my father and I used to go visit Grandpa's grave, where there were symbolically written the names of other children who died in the Holocaust. [Editor's note; The interviewee is referring to the names of her father's siblings, who died during the Holocaust and didn't have their own graves.] We lived in my grandpa's old house. It was a little house that was ready to fall down, there wasn't much there. I don't know anymore how many rooms it had. Besides us, there was also the family of some shoemaker living there. We used to go for water to a well, but we did this in Mocenok, too, despite the fact that we had a well in our courtyard, but the neighbors had a stable there, and so the water was impure. I know that we had electricity, because we listened to the radio. Only a remnant of our family returned to Mocenok. There were some terribly wicked people in Mocenok.

I myself didn't begin living in Mocenok until 1949, up to then I was in the orphanage. We had a three-room house with a kitchen and workshop. The house also had a larder. We had electricity, but not water. We had a well in the courtyard, but as I've mentioned, it was bad because of the neighbors. There was an artesian well not that far away, back then I was healthy, I carried forty pails of water and we'd do the laundry.

From 1946 I lived in an orphanage in Bratislava, as my father couldn't take care of such a small child on top of work, and my mother was ill. There I was taken care of. I felt good there. In the aguda it looked like in military barracks. When a person isn't spoiled and goes through a concentration camp, which he doesn't remember much, but despite that, when he saw those plank-beds in a museum... I remember getting a case of the mumps in the concentration camp, that swollen neck. And those plank-beds, those I remember. Well, and then in that aguda there were about thirty of us in one room. I don't know how many beds a given water basin was for, I think six steps away, for ritual washing. You'd pour it over your hands, because they say that the soul leaves the body, so a person has to wash like this in the morning. [Editor's note: upon waking a Jews says morning prayers, and thanks God that his soul has returned to his body. Jewish laws state that a person can make at most four steps after leaving his bed to a container with water for the morning cleansing. Water is poured first on the right and then on the left hand, three times, up to the wrist. If this is not done, no work is allowed to be performed.]

There was a large set of glass doors. Behind them was a dining hall where there was this big trough, I saw similar ones as late as the 1970s in a Sokol lodge 10. We washed in that trough, there was no hot water. On the floor below we also had showers. It was all only girls. One floor above were 15-year-old ones, back then they seemed old to me. They were learning to sew, but there wasn't anything to learn on, because we didn't even have proper food, so they made dresses from newspaper, to at least learn the patterns. Most of them were orphans and left in the aliyah to Israel.

Often children were also adopted from the aguda. A childless married couple would come and they'd line us up in a row and pick. Two girls even went to Iceland. Most of them went to Israel. Well, and because my parents were alive, in the end they didn't give me to anyone. I remember how they moved us out, already during Communist times, the few of us that were left at the end. Most of the children left, and suddenly there were only a few of us left in that three-story building. The building belonged to the Jewish community, but back then no one asked them whether or not they'd give it up or not. They made it into an apartment building. I remember that, because when I'd walk by - a few years later I had my own place one street over, and when I walked by, you could tell by the curtains whether it was an apartment or an office. When they confiscated that building, which was on Nesporova Street, we moved. We lived at Na Vrsku, not just girls any more, but also boys, all together. There were about eighteen of us.

Once a week we'd go to the theater and to Grossling to the covered swimming pool. We also used to go to the movies. It was definitely better there than in Mocenok. When a car drove by, you couldn't see from one side of the street to the other. Back then there wasn't pavement everywhere. If my mother would have been there, and not in the Tatras, she would only have suffered in that dusty environment and would have died within a half year. In the aguda we were cared for by qualified staff. We also had a cook. The staff was exclusively Jewish. Recently I went to have a look at the former orphanage. Originally there had been large rooms there. We had steel beds, on which in the evening we'd wind ribbons that we wore, and in the morning they were as if they'd been ironed. Currently there's an old-age home in the building. The rooms have been reconstructed. Out of those large rooms they made these cubicles. One washroom in the middle and two rooms, one on each side.

Our daily routine began with morning hygiene. We had to wash and pray. They watched over us, so that we wouldn't make a mistake in Hebrew. After the morning cleansing we had breakfast and then went to school. The school was across the street, there where Nesporova Street is, down a few steps and then there's Podjavorinska Street. That's where I went to school. After school we of course had to do homework. The school in Podjavorinska Street was a state school, and no one from the residence was in the same class with me. We were of various ages, we even had children of preschool age. One day a week they also took us to the theater. I don't remember how we observed holidays in the aguda, it's already 55 years ago.

In 1999 there was a reunion of children that survived the war. We were divided up according to nationality, so I was with the Slovaks. There was a bunch of us there, Mr. Salner, too. [Editor's note: Peter Salner is the current president of the Jewish religious community in Bratislava.] They had come from abroad as well. Everyone told a brief summary of his life. One man put up his hand, but he didn't speak Slovak any more, because he'd been adopted by Hungarian parents. That doesn't matter, I said, I can speak Hungarian, so I translated it for the others. And one lady from abroad, a certain Dr. Januliakova, proclaimed, 'Well, a Slovak even has to have a translator at home.' I wanted to say to her, 'You're the tourist here, this is my home.' But I kept quiet, because silence is golden.

After returning from Bratislava, Grandpa had a servant, we called her the cook. Then, when there was no longer any money to pay her, we called her that wife of Father's. Grandpa preferred to go to the old-age home in Bratislava. It was true poverty, we had nothing to eat, only what grew in the garden. Before we'd had fields, we also had flour in sacks at home. We got a commission on the

peppers we raised. We handed in the peppers in sacks; I don't know how much the peppers could have weighed. We had fruit growing in the garden, which we made preserves from. We also put up with gourds and leczo [a dish made from peppers, tomatoes and onions]. We still baked bread at home. I don't know what year they started delivering bread to stores, it was available after Thursday. My stepmother didn't bake bread anymore.

In those days [the postwar period] Mocenok had mainly a Catholic population. In prewar times there had been a smaller Jewish community there, but I'm not sure if there had been a synagogue. In childhood I thought one building could have been it. It wasn't later that it dawned, when I was talking with a friend, who found out that she's one quarter Jewish and didn't even know it, that the town also had a Jewish school. Her father also attended the Jewish school, because he was told that they had better teachers there. In reality they put him there because he was half Jewish. My classmate also didn't find out about it until after graduating from high school. We only attended elementary school together. My classmate's family thus avoided the concentration camp. I even knew her father.

In my view, Jews in prewar Mocenok were Orthodox. I'd say that once upon a time there was no other kind. In Bratislava I'd seen a Neolog 11 synagogue, but in these villages they were definitely Orthodox. And when Galanta as Orthodox, and even Nitra was Orthodox, why would Mocenok be progressive? Before World War II there was a Jewish elementary school in Mocenok, but afterwards it didn't have to exist just for my benefit.

There wasn't electricity everywhere in the village, people didn't have the money. The houses were also built in a row, beside each other. Their doors faced a common courtyard. Those that didn't have electricity had petroleum lamps. We had electricity, even a radio. We heated, as was the custom then, with a tile stove. We didn't have an oven, because it took up too much room. Grandpa's house, which we had in Mocenok, had once been a pub, which is why it also had a toilet. It was only a privy, but very hygienically constructed. It wasn't an outhouse with a heart-shaped cutout like you see in old films. [The Slovak equivalent of the classic crescent moon cutout as a symbol of an outhouse in the West.] Someone in the family had owned the pub, but I don't know who anymore.

We had almost all kinds of household animals, because from 1951 onwards we had to hand in a certain amount of livestock 12, for example eight bulls. They had to be young, still uncastrated. Only draft animals were castrated. Uncastrated bulls were intended for meat. You had to hand over eight bulls a year, that was the law. When not enough were born, we had to buy calves and raise them. We also had pigs. With them it was easier, because pigs can give birth four times a year, while a cow only once every nine months. We also had two horses in the stable. In the beginning they were necessary, because buses weren't running yet, and they served as transportation. While I was still attending school in Bratislava, when I returned home a cart would be waiting for me at the train station. It wasn't until later that bus routes were established. In 1954, when I began going to school in Sala, buses were already running.

I often felt an anti-Jewish mood in Mocenok. It was really horrible. Those people were Neanderthals. When I wore pants, people would start throwing dirt at me. [In those days women in villages usually wore only skirts. Pants were considered to be exclusively men's clothing.] And then within a year everyone had them. I remember, back when my grandfather was still alive, we went to have a

look at the fields. It was during summer vacation. One old granny came by and they started talking. She was looking at me, I was wearing shorts and this striped sailor top, and suddenly she asked, 'Mr. Weisz, why is your grandson wearing a ribbon?!' Well, I didn't understand it, it was a beautiful striped shirt and shorts, like a sailor. In Bratislava it was normal. And in Mocenok they saw it on me for the first time. The first year I started attending school in Mocenok, my father had to come for me each day, so that they wouldn't nearly kill me on the way home from school, it was unbelievable.

During the war people had taken Jewish property, and were afraid that they'd have to return it to Jews that had returned from the concentration camps. Many Jews told me about it, my aunt from Galanta [Sidonia Hertzova] also told me about one incident. After the war she went to ask for her cupboard back, and people said to her, indignantly, 'But they said that they'd murder you all in concentration camps! Why, more of you have returned than left!' These people had a guilty conscience, and we were the only Jews in Mocenok.

I remember that at one time religion was compulsory, up to I don't know which year, when school reforms took place. On my report card in the 'religion' column I had 'unclassified.' At one time I also attended Catholic religion classes, but I've got to say that the deacon, or whatever he was, was really disgusting. He spoke in a very anti-Jewish way, how we'd crucified Christ and so on. During that time, when religion class was being held, I walked around the courtyard even on the coldest days, rather than listen to that. During Passover that teacher sent a message to my father that he liked matzot, and for him to send some. At that time I proclaimed, 'Only over my dead body!' But I've got to say, after that came this one young chaplain. He was decent. I faithfully attended his classes during the entire year. After the school reforms 13 religion was no longer compulsory, and was taught only after lunch, so I didn't attend it. Our fellow citizens regularly broke the windows of our house, that was routine.

In the 1950s this one family moved in with us. They were very decent people. Their father was a policeman. He didn't want to sign some piece of crap of Husak's 14, so they threw him out of the police station. They put him up with us. From then on we didn't have any more broken windows, because people didn't know which windows were theirs and which were ours. They had four children. They were named the Bendiks. To this day I consider their youngest son to be my brother; their mother always said that she liked me the best. Of course, after all, I didn't want new shoes from her. The other children were quite aggressive. They knew how to wring what they wanted from their parents. They had a very small income. Their son and I write each other letters to this day. They weren't natives of Mocenok, because their father was a policeman, they'd been transferred there from someplace else.

After the war my father remained an Orthodox Jew. In everyday life it manifested itself in that he prayed with those straps - tefillin. He always wore a hat. In Mocenok we couldn't be kosher, but when he moved to Bratislava, he again kept kosher. We spent holidays at my aunt's in Galanta, as there was a synagogue there, which they eventually tore down sometime in the 1970s. Now Galanta residents have only a prayer hall. Recently I read in Delet that Galanta is still the best kehila [Jewish community] in Slovakia. [Editor's note: the monthly magazine Delet is the only print periodical in Slovakia devoted to Jewish issues. It is published with a print run of 3000, 40% of its readers are members of the Jewish community, and 60% are other Slovak citizens.] I still remember the furniture in the synagogue. Up above was a grating made of bamboo or wood. The men were

down below.

During my youth all the men in Galanta wore a kitel and a large tallit. Today they don't have ones like that even in Bratislava, they only wear small ones now. During the holidays, when we'd be at their place, Uncle Ignac [Hertz] led the services. I went to the synagogue with my father. Back then women didn't attend synagogue, only during the high holidays. I didn't like any of the holidays, not even one. I had a hard life, the only one among five thousand primitives in Mocenok. We had broken windows just because they were bored. During my childhood we visited my aunt in Galanta fairly often. She had a nice villa with a garden. Back then my father attended the synagogue regularly. My aunt eventually moved to Israel, in 1964.

During Yom Kippur my father fasted all day, and was only in the synagogue. During Passover we ate matzot and prepared seder. My father usually led the service, but my stepmother also knew how to do it, because she had observed holidays with her first husband as well. It didn't look like my father had to guide her. At our place the service was done only in Hebrew. Most of our prayer books were written in Hebrew. There were also some dual-language ones, but only in black-letter script, it's only now that it's all being modernized. Here in Brno, Rabbi Koller prays in Hebrew, but then translates the text into Czech. I attended religion in Bratislava, there we had compulsory religion classes. By the end of those three years we were already reading, writing but also speaking with each other. During the First Republic many people knew Hebrew, and when they arrived in Israel they already knew how to speak. On the other hand, I've also come across a case where a lady lived in Israel for many years, and didn't learn Hebrew.

I only remember celebrating Purim from the residence, because I played Ester in one play we put on there. We put on plays for ourselves, just for fun. We had no audience, as most of the children didn't have anyone. I had my father, but traveling from Mocenok by bus and train, that wasn't all that simple. And the others didn't have anyone at all. I also remember Chanukkah. In Mocenok we had a village house with wooden blinds on the windows and doors. You couldn't see out into the street. The candelabra is supposed to be put on a windowsill, the rabbi told me that by the door as well, but I've never seen that, only when he set it out at the community. [The interviewee is referring to the current Jewish community in Brno.] We had quite a few of those candelabras, we used to put them on this wooden lath. My father lit the candles.

Sabbath was observed every week. My stepmother always dressed up, everyone was nicely dressed. We had a cooked supper. Otherwise at suppertime we had the same thing as for breakfast - coffee with milk, and bread. But for this holiday we really did cook, even with those modest means. We also performed the Havdalah, but we didn't have one of those nice colored candles, only a white one. My father poured some slivovitz [plum brandy] over something, lit it on fire, and we enjoyed the aroma of that 'spice box.' Then we went to have a look at those three stars. We didn't have a Jewish calendar. At our house we did everything, but I can't say that I had some sort of love for it, because on the other hand my fellow citizens humiliated me. I took it as some sort of punishment.

My father didn't have any strong political opinions. And what kind could he have had? He was a farmer, and after 1945 on a disability pension. He had a frightfully small pension. Before that he'd been an employee - a superintendent on a farm, so he paid health insurance and various deductions, so they gave him something, but very little. You couldn't live on it. My father still

listened to Radio Free Europe 15 and thought that things would improve. He didn't get anything from that 255 16 either. My father wasn't a member of any political party. No farmer, what's more one that had had everything stolen, was a party member. Those were terrible conditions. Someone on a disability pension wasn't of interest to anyone. During Communism they took everything away from us. We had a small farmhouse to which belonged a granary and stable. They let us keep the house and stable, we kept goats in it. We couldn't get into the granary, but lots of rats could. The whole house was swarming with them. I was tough, and when the rats were leaving the granary, we went to kill them ourselves. We killed dozens and dozens of them.

The residents of Mocenok were mainly of the Catholic faith, we were the only Jewish family in town. Beside our house there was this house with eleven chimneys, meaning that eleven families lived there. One of them was a Gypsy family. They didn't all live under one roof [meaning they didn't live all together]. The house was divided into eleven sections. Each one had one room, a kitchen and a stable. The Gypsies didn't have a stable. Eleven families in one house. Almost all of Mocenok lived like this. In some places there were only three families and in some, more. We lived with the aforementioned Bendiks. We had excellent relations with them, but we didn't have conflicts with the other neighbors either. Our house was located on the main street. There was a bus stop close by.

I don't remember whether my father had some sort of close friend. I was attending school in Sala, and I don't know how early in the morning I had to get up. We used to go to sleep with the chickens [as soon as it got dark]. There was no television back then. He was with my stepmother, whom I didn't get along with. My poor father was a choleric, one heart attack after another. Those are people who mustn't get upset. Why didn't I like my stepmother? No one liked her. An egocentric personality. When she was off at some spa, my friend Karolina Bednikova and I snuck into her room. My stepmother had honey cakes that she'd baked there, which she used to eat on the sly. Out of spite we also drank some of her liqueur and ate some almonds. She couldn't tell on us. So that sort of person.

We had pink covers on our pillows. We used to call it angin. In the morning I looked in the mirror and I was all covered in feathers. So I looked at the pillows, and they weren't ours. They were white. Ours were all pink. I said, 'But that's not ours.' Well, and she says, 'I'm cleaning here.' I said, 'My head as well?' So whatever was good... and she always said, 'Ez az enyem, ez a tietek.' [That's mine, that's yours.'] No one could like her. She was horrible. She was a seamstress and I didn't have anything to wear. Today I sew for myself, so it's not a great art. She was terribly self-centered, selfish. Her family would come over, wolf down everything we had, and didn't give us anything. I worked myself to the bone out in the garden, and she'd say, 'Meg ott van egy korte.' ['There's still one more pear there.'] So, who could like her?! As soon as I could, I got out of there, and we didn't have anything to do with each other any more. My grandfather [Julius Weisz] didn't like her either. He even went to an old- age home because of her, even though the house was his. He chose to go to an old-age home rather than put up with constant aggravation.

During holidays and summer vacation I used to go stay with my aunt in Galanta [Sidonia Hertzova]. During winter or summer vacation I occasionally also went to be with my aunt in Trnava. She was named Jolana Fischmannova. She was my mother's cousin. At one time they had owned a store in Trnava - a hardware store, but they sold everything there. From nails to fridges. Above the entrance there was a sign that said Fischmann; today there's a shoe store there. Their store was on

the main street. It was a large prewar three-story building, it even had central heating. My aunt had two daughters, we used to go to the swimming pool together when I was there during the summer. I was older than they were, so they also took me to some restaurant with a dance floor, and my uncle would dance with me. That was nice. My younger cousin was named Viera, today she's got a large family. The older one is Marta.

The entire family from Trnava emigrated in 1964. The whole family left. Back then my younger cousin had about a half hear left before high school graduation, but they expelled her. Not because of her studies, but they had horrible neighbors, who were most likely informing on them. They used to come search their house and asked where they had gotten the money for their vacuum cleaner and so on. They wanted to move them out to the Czech border region. They also often made life unpleasant for them because of their Jewish origin, but also because they were capitalists, because a three- story house... The whole thing was theirs, and they stuck two families in there, and wanted to move them to that Czech border region. They applied for permission to go to Israel, and it was issued right away. In their passports they had written, only to Israel, but not back.

In Israel my aunt began sewing. The times have changed, no one needs that any more. Now they've got secondhand stores there, a dress for one shekel, and a beautiful one at that. My aunt's husband was named Janko Fischmann. In that year, 1964, when he arrived there, his former employees were already waiting for him, with a job in their own company. The did some sort of accounting. Gradually they somehow managed to get to the point where they were standing on their own two feet. At that time the Germans had also already begun to pay out compensation, which helped them as well. My aunt and my younger cousin [Viera] live in Haifa. My older cousin [Marta] eventually moved to Germany. My younger cousin has many children, and the older one is by herself.

For the first three years I attended school in Bratislava on Podjavorinska Street. I don't remember my teachers from Bratislava. During that time I didn't have any sort of close girlfriend. On 1st September 1949 I began attending school in Mocenok. I started in Grade 4. In 1954 I began attending high school in Sala. The entire eleven years I was the only Jewish girl in class. Actually, not the entire eleven, because in Bratislava the Schönhausers attended with me. One of the brothers left for Switzerland in 1968, and the second lives in Bratislava to this day. I didn't like it there [at high school in Sala]. We didn't have any money. My father used to get 450 crowns disability pension. I had to graduate in a dress of my mother, which she had worn still back in the time of the First Republic. But my mother was smaller than I was, even when I was 12. You can imagine it. At banquets only the teachers danced with me, because my classmates snubbed me. In 1958 the building of cooperatives began, and all of Slovakia was emptied out. Most people sold their houses and bought an apartment in Bratislava, so that the anonymity of the city would protect them a bit. Oh, those Slovak cads!

During my childhood we didn't subscribe to any newspapers, as we didn't even have money for bread. Only in school did I have to buy Kulturny zivot or something. [Editor's note: The weekly magazine Kulturny zivot was published from 1948 to 1968. It was an organ of the Slovak Writers' Union.] Our Slovak teacher, who's long since died, poor thing, said that whoever doesn't buy it, won't get a better grade than a C. That was in high school. There weren't any knuckleheads like that in elementary school. I was hard for me to ask my father for money, when he didn't have any. When there was a [school] trip, I'd rather tell them at home that the school was being painted and

that we didn't have to go to school. I had different responsibilities from others of my age. At home we had various books, mostly of a historical nature. They were written in black letter [also known as Gothic script]. Once my father was also explaining something about anti-Semitism from them, but I don't remember very well any more. He read me passages from those books, as I didn't know how to read them. When I came to Bratislava from Mocenok, we had a lot of those books. I don't know where they ended up.

I didn't talk about our financial situation at school. The best thing was that I liked that Slovak teacher. Up until she died I used to call her once a week and helped her as much as I could. Which is why it was terrible for me to find out that teachers had a 15 percent commission from the sale of those magazines. Back then it didn't at all occur to me. My girlfriend, who lives in Sala to this day, told me that many times the books arrived at the school library, and some of them never made it there [i.e. the teachers took them home]. She knew about it, because she got to know her and helped her back then. It was a terrible disappointment.

I dare say that the teachers at high school liked me, but I them as well. It was mutual. I especially liked Professor Valkovic. He was very good at lecturing, back then he was also the principal. Otherwise, as a person he was a swine. He taught psychology and logic. We had these subjects once a week. I didn't have to prepare for them at all, not even crack a book, as I remembered every word from class. I was the only one that he didn't harass. From the school hallway you could see out onto a church. He got the school administration to watch who was going to the Virgin Mary [meaning who was going to church]. One of my girlfriends didn't get into university because of him, and only for those reasons [Editor's note: The Communists suppressed all religions and faiths. Members of all churches were discriminated against. ]. A few years later I found out that the mothers of some students had caught him and given him a beating. At night they threw a blanket over his head, and gave him a good thrashing, because he went out of his way to make trouble for children in terms of their political profile, prevented them from going to school and so on. Towards me he behaved very well. I excelled in his subject. The math teacher liked me as well, but I wasn't very good at math. Our math teacher was named Melichar, and our Slovak teacher Slobodova. There was, as there is today, a music school in Sala. That was her building. When she retired, she sold it and moved away to some apartment in Trnava.

At school I didn't feel any anti-Semitism from the teachers, only from my classmates. They knew that I was Jewish, as in Slovakia a person who's named Kleinova can only be Jewish, nothing else. My classmates later regretted their behavior, right at our first reunion. They danced with me. Not this last time anymore, but the time before we danced all night. I hadn't been there for 20 years. I never spoke openly about our school days with them, I suspected why they'd ignored me. I didn't have to ask.

In elementary school girls were friends with me. In high school there wasn't time any more, as we traveled. An hour in the morning, and back again after lunch. In Mocenok I hung out with the girls. In the beginning, when we still had a farm - horses, and there was snow in the winter, we'd hitch them onto a sleigh and take the poor ones for a ride. But a year later they took them from us, it could have been in 1950, 1951, at that time collectivization was going on. We had a nicely fixed up courtyard, not like other people, who had a literal pigsty. There were flowers planted everywhere, and we kept chickens behind a picket fence. We also had fruit trees planted in the courtyard, so you could play there as well. In the summer we had heaps of fruit, for children it was paradise.

I had one very close friend during my school years. As a single girl she was named Eva Lahitova, and after marriage Dikanova. Now, when I saw her after 20 years, I thought that I was looking at her mother. She probably did, too, but I see myself in the mirror each day, so I don't notice it. We write each other to this day, but what she writes me doesn't interest me that much any more. Once I came to see her, and I thought my eyes would pop out of my head. There, there was a picture of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, with one of those bleeding hearts. I said, 'But Eva, you were a Communist! I liked you better when you were an atheist.' When she writes me, she doesn't write me about what she's doing, but writes me some passages from the Bible, so I hardly read it. When we were young we spent a lot of time together. I'd buy tickets to the theater and we'd go. During school years we also used to go camping together. During Communist times Eva was a Party member. She had to be, she was the principal of a nursery school. We never talked about Judaism together, nor about things that happened during the war. Never.

When I was young I didn't do sports actively. I'd call it more recreational physical education, but hardly sports. In Bratislava, on Hlboka Street, I visited a Sokol clubhouse, but only when I lived in that Kozej Street. Then, when we got an apartment in Raci [a part of Bratislava], I had to stop, as I had it an hour further to work, and I didn't get home until after midnight. I also participated in a Spartakiada 17. Recreational physical education looked something like this. We'd begin exercising around 8, until 10. We either exercised with some equipment, or did some exercises in the gym. Women and men exercised separately. When I went to the Spartakiada in Prague, the post office bought me sweatpants. [Editor's note: at that time the interviewee worked at the post office in Bratislava.] Now, recently, I was throwing them away, it seemed a shame to do it to me. I at least saved the zipper from them. It was group exercise, and there were also university students among us, who had to exercise to get credits. They were always amazed, and would say, 'You don't have to, and you're doing it voluntarily?! Boy, are you ever stupid.' But we loved doing it. The first time, I was at a regional Spartakiada in Nitra in 1956. And in 1960 I also participated in a national one in Prague. They didn't choose from among us, everyone who applied went. We stayed in some school. We slept on folding cots. After my wedding I slowly stopped exercising, I didn't have the time.

## Adulthood in Czechoslovakia">Adulthood in Czechoslovakia

After I finished high school, I moved to Bratislava. I lived with one Orthodox lady. She was named Feldmarova. Today her son gives people tours of Chatam Sofer's 18 tomb. When I rented, I lived on Kozej Street. At first I worked as a sales clerk in an electrical appliance store. It was very hard work, as back then everything was made out of iron, not out of plastic like today. I found my next job in an interesting way. I had one classmate who was a year older than me. She used to visit my father because of German compositions that he used to help her with. She worked at the post office. She wanted to go to university. They would only let her go from her work when she would have found a replacement for herself. Well, so she brought me in. I suited me as well, as I needed a sedentary job. I worked there as a phone and telegraph operator. Back then it was growing, for example for May Day [1st May, Labor Day] one company would congratulate another. The Bratislava exchange normally handled about 9,000 telegrams a day. Today it's all automated. Well, and during May Day, there might have been about 30,000 of them. The phone handset weighed about a half kilo. What's more, on the days when Jozef and Maria had name days, everyone from management had

to help us. It was no joke.

Within the scope of the post office, I also worked for the Post and Press Association. To be able to work there, I had to take a half-year course in Myjava. After finishing the course my work was accounting related to newspaper and magazine subscriptions, and of course also billing. There were many delivery women under me. This was better work than being a phone operator. No one lasted very long in that job. It was hard on the nerves, to the point that sometimes we even trembled. There was a huge amount of bossing about, you weren't even allowed to cough. When we were calling someone, we weren't allowed to say 'Hello,' as it lengthened the conversation, and thus the post office was losing money. They monitored us. There was this one room in the building where they could listen in on any operator. When they recorded a mistake of hers on tape, she was immediately docked a percentage of her salary. You could only say 'Hello' in a local call, so when the call was to somewhere in Bratislava.

As a phone and telegraph operator, I initially worked in the main post office building in Bratislava. In those days the post press service was located in Bratislava's Old Town. Several years ago it moved, to where the Bratislava train station is today - the New Town. When the company was still located in the Old Town, I used to go visit my colleagues. When I came from Brno, I always slept in the Palace Hotel. Today this hotel is no longer there, in its place there's a bank. In the morning, when they dropped me off, I took my bag and went to see them. I'd always bring them coffee or ice cream, we'd talk, and then I'd go for a walk around the city. Well, and during one of my visits, I once again set out for my former workplace, but they were no longer there. The gatekeeper told me where they'd moved, but I didn't go there to see them, I don't even know where it is.

At work I came across expressions of anti-Semitism, mainly in the telegraph department, and even the president of the ROH 19 was a former captain of the Hlinka Guard 20. I might have been about 19 years old then, but I was outspoken and with at least forty young people I organized a petition to have him removed. Even despite our efforts, he was always unequivocally elected. They didn't even look at the ballots. He must have been a swine, if he was a captain, and not a rank-and-file member. As president of the ROH he was also responsible for the company savings plan. This meant that they deducted some amount from our salary and put it in our savings account. In 1961, when I was getting married, I wanted them to give me my savings book. There could have been about 800 crowns there. He had the savings books in his possession, and it took several days until he gave it to me. They didn't give me bonuses just because I was named Magdalena Kleinova. They'd take them from me and give them to someone else. I was always the best worker, because I had to work hard to make enough money. I was alone, while the others lived with their parents. It wasn't a nice life. Not at all. Only now do I have a good life, because I'm financially independent thanks to the various funds that we have. [Editor's note: The interviewee is referring to compensation for deportation and imprisonment during World War II.]

After my second marriage we moved to Brno, where I worked for twelve years in Lachema, and from there I went on a disability pension. Lachema is a factory that makes pure and laboratory chemicals. I didn't work in a lab, but in an office, as a department head. It was a higher position than that of the invoice clerk in Bratislava, but it paid less.

I had a good workplace in Koospol. If I wouldn't have gotten married, I'd have stayed there until retirement. It seemed like in a store with high fashion to me, because foreign clients would show

up there as well, that is, not directly to see me, but overall the standard was higher. I worked on the 11th floor on Gottwaldovo Namesti [Gottwald Square], everything else took place on the ground floor. Several times a day I had to go down and collect from the other employees what they had prepared for invoicing, what they'd sold. I didn't experience anti-Semitism in Koospol, there were only a few of us. Not in Lachema either. My work consisted of me sending out orders that hospitals or schools had placed and our factory had manufactured. I wasn't as content in this position. I worked in an impossible building, there wasn't even a toilet there. I had to put on my coat and cross over to a different one. We even had mice there. Well, but I lasted twelve years there. What could I have done? On the other hand, I didn't have it far from home, two or three tram stops.

I liked working in Koospol best. To this day I keep in touch with some Lachema employees as well. As a ROH payee, they invite us once a year, we go for dinner, or they invited us on a vacation. It's very good, these things are subsidized by the ROH. [Editor's note: after the 1989 revolution, the Communist ROH organization was disbanded, and its function was taken over by regular trade unions. Some people, however, still use the old term ROH] Their president, who's been there for a terribly long time now, is a very cultivated person, and always organizes something. There are chateaus that used to belong to the Luxembourgs in the Brno region, we also went on trips there. There isn't anything inside them, but the buildings are nice.

Lachema had about 1,200 employees, the vast majority of which were women. On International Women's Day some gymnasium was rented out, where there were tables. The few men that were there organized it all for us. We all got a gift. I don't know what they paid for it, but once they gave us something that they wouldn't even wear in Africa. The gifts were in these little boxes, about the size of matchboxes. Someone brought them to our table. The woman that opened hers first exclaimed, 'Yuck, pink beads!'

In 1984 I went on a disability pension. I could have gone even earlier, but I didn't want to, as I wanted to have worked 26 years. I suffered from a congenital hip joint defect. Both of my hip joints are steel, one of them has even been operated twice. My condition grew worse from day to day, so they had to replace one of them. The second I waited for. So I walked around on a crutch. My apartment at the time was ideal for me, it had only five steps. They operated me for the first time in 1985, but by then I was already on disability. It was already hard for me to get onto a streetcar, neither could I sleep. It hurt at night, too. After retiring I spent my free time doing handiwork. Even before that I'd learned to make macramé lace. The macramé lace method is very old, it goes back to the days of Rudolph II [Rudolph II, of the Habsburg line (1552 - 1612): in 1572 he was crowned King of Hungary in Bratislava, in St. Martin's Cathedral. In 1575 he became the Roman and Czech king, a year later the Holy Roman Emperor]. I learned it in one women's group. I arrived there with string and all necessary ingredients. I also learned to make porcelain dolls, and I sew bags. I spend all day sewing.

I didn't observe holidays in Bratislava. I was glad to not have to. Back then we didn't have Saturdays off, and besides that we had only two weeks of vacation. I was very careful with my days off, and didn't want to take time off and go sit in a synagogue for Yom Kippur. My father's and my opinion differed in this. Even before we didn't agree much, but he was supporting me and I had to listen. My father didn't agree with me working on Saturday either.

After graduating from high school, when I started working in Bratislava, I also moved there. Later my father also moved to be with me. Initially I lived at Kozej 18, in a sublet. Then the house in Mocenok was sold, and we bought one in Bratislava. It was also located on Kozej Street. At first I lived there alone, because the house in Mocenok wasn't sold all at once, but bit by bit. In the meantime I got married, and then my father arrived. By then there was already not enough room, the house didn't even have a washroom, so we decided to move. We managed to exchange that one room for an apartment on Zrinskeho Street. My father became a member of the Bratislava Jewish community. When he died in 1969, I arranged his funeral there. I was with him, because he was dying in some little chateau in Ruzinov. I was with him from morning, just at night I'd go home to sleep. Once I came at 5am, and they told me that he's died at 7 in the evening. They used to take the dead to the hospital at Na Kramare. Well, and so I went to Na Kramare. There was this little room there, where there were medics and one doctor who you could tell was a Jew. I asked him if I could speak with him outside. He agreed. 'Excuse me, my father died' and I went to reach for my purse, to give him a hundred crowns. He caught my hand and didn't let me open it. He said that the Jewish community had already taken care of it.

My mother-in-law died about a year after my father, but by then I was in Brno. They buried her in Bratislava. I didn't take part, as there were major feuds regarding gold amongst her relatives - nieces and grandchildren. I didn't want to get mixed up in it. My hair stood on end when I listened to them. I got on relatively well with one of her nieces. I was working in Koospol, and she in some company nearby. We used to visit each other. There were a lot of companies in the neighborhood. We got along well until I left for Brno. Since then I haven't seen her. I don't even know where she lives anymore.

## Married life">Married life

I was married twice. My first husband was a Jew, but not the second one. The first was named Pavol Fuska. I'd known him since I was small. He was a native of Bratislava. He lived near me. My first husband changed his name, I don't know if it was his idea, but he took a name that someone in the family had used as a partisan cover name. I think it was from his uncle. He took the name at the age of 15. After getting married I was automatically Fuskova. I think he was originally named Feldmar. At the post office, where I worked, as if on purpose they wrote Fuchsova anyways. [Editor's note: in Slovakia most Jews had German-sounding names.]

My first husband's family wasn't religious. They were secular. His mother was secular, as well as his second father. He was a sympathetic person. It was a case of a widow marrying a widower. We didn't observe Sabbath at home. I'd go to the synagogue, but not because of religion, but because I knew that my former landlady, Mrs. Feldmarova, would be there, so I'd go say hello to her. Otherwise I didn't go to visit them at home, we weren't again as close as all that.

My first husband was a Slovak, but at home they spoke only German. My husband had one half-brother, because as I've mentioned, a widow married a widower. He didn't have a full brother, his father had also died in a concentration camp. My husband was born in 1938, he was two and a half years older than I. After getting married we lived in the house on Kozej Street. It was only one little garret. We shared a toilet with the other tenants. There weren't individual bathrooms.

My first husband worked at first as a telephone repairman and then as a master at a telephone exchange trade school. Besides working he also finished technical college. Then their master didn't want him, because he was the only one that had a college degree. When the School of Chemistry in Krasnany opened, they stuck him there. He was missing some qualifications for that position, and so he had to finish teachers' college. It took four years. It took place in two-week stretches in Trnava. Well, when he finished it, he began criticizing me, 'You idiot' [meaning he had college degrees and looked down on his wife]. He reproached me in such an unpleasant fashion that I asked for a divorce. This was in 1970. At that time I was working in Koospol, which had a dormitory for singles, so I moved there.

What did my husband read? Trash. Detective stories. We didn't subscribe to any newspapers, as I'd had enough of them when I'd worked in that post press service. There I was able to read everything for free. In 1968 21 there was already some sort of freedom of the press, I grew disgusted with it all because one day they'd write something and the next they'd take it back. I don't even read the TV program we buy. Even this bores me most of the time. Now, radio and TV, that I listen to and watch, but newspapers don't interest me at all. Even now, when I buy some, I always know that it was exaggerated and that it's actually different. It's misleading.

After the divorce I moved to a singles' dormitory. Later I met my second husband, Pavol Sebor. We got married, and didn't even have anyplace to live yet. We lived apart, he in Brno, I in Bratislava. They then built a co-op bachelor apartment, so I moved to Brno. Eventually we managed to exchange the bachelor apartment for a larger apartment. Sebor began drinking, more and more. Well, it was no fun anymore, and I wrote my aunt in Haifa [Jolana Fischmann]. She invited me to come visit them in Israel, and so I went there. That's how my second marriage ended. And today I'm already happily divorced for eleven years. I live alone in my own apartment. Neither the first nor the second [husband] annoys me any more. The second was worse, but I was with him longer as well. He asked for the divorce, not me. He found someone younger.

My second husband had a PhD in natural sciences, in inorganic chemistry. He spoke five languages. We had a civil wedding. He wasn't a Jew. They were a decent family. They didn't know at all that I was Jewish. His parents lived all the way over by Pilsen, so we rarely saw them. Sebor and I agreed that we won't even tell anyone about it. Once we were watching something on TV, I don't even remember what anymore, but they were saying something against Jews. The old man [the interviewee is referring to her husband's father] began getting upset at the program, that they're making Jews out to be idiots, why after all, they're intelligent people. Really.

My husband's family were atheists. My father-in-law was 14 years old in 1918. After the fall of the monarchy [Austro-Hungarian Monarchy], when the bells rang, half of Bohemia left the Catholic Church, and those that felt patriotic became atheists by conviction. My second husband was five years older than I. I don't know where he was born, as his father was a high- ranking army officer, and they had moved frequently. His mother tongue was Czech. I couldn't keep in touch with his family after the divorce. We buried it long ago [i.e. broke off contact long ago].

After moving to Brno we lived in that co-op garret in Kralove Pole [a part of Brno]. When we saved up some money, we moved to a state-owned apartment. We exchanged our bachelor apartment with one older man. The new apartment had two rooms, but wasn't any bigger than my current one-room apartment. The kitchen was half the size of the one I have now, the front hall wasn't as

big either. When I was married, we all had low salaries, and so we couldn't live high on the hog. We used to only go to Balaton [Lake Balaton in Hungary], because it was cheap there. Today Hungarians say that it's expensive, and prefer to go abroad. In Brno I began attending a women's association. I wasn't a member, I just used to go there. That's where I learned to make macramé lace.

## Moving to Israel">Moving to Israel

After my second marriage fell apart, I immigrated to Israel in September of 1988. In April 1990 I returned. In Israel everything was nice, but I didn't have prospects of surviving it. I lived on the fourth floor, without an elevator. There were only a few buildings there, and nearby the town of Nahariyya. Every little while some car would come by and kick out some dog. Later someone came and poisoned the dogs. In the meantime one Ukrainian woman and I tried to feed them. We didn't have much food ourselves, but we tried. So that's Asia. If you're not there from childhood, it's hard to get used to it. A person can't start living there at the age of 48. In the beginning I got along in Hungarian and Russian, and Hebrew courses were mandatory at the time. There were many empty apartments in Israel. But truly empty, you could see it by the blinds. When I lived in the housing development, the blinds didn't move all year.

After World War II I didn't think I'd ever move abroad. Those that applied for emigration were well equipped. I didn't have a reason to go. They were mainly people that had some sort of employment, or skills, and though they'd be successful abroad. My aunt from Trnava [Jolana Fischmannova], whom I knew the best because I used to visit them during vacation, left as well. That was in 1964.

I didn't expect that the situation in Israel would be such that I wouldn't last there. My aunt wrote me to come, but never wrote me what it was like there. I worked 16 hours a day as a janitor at construction sites. Those that had been living there a long time didn't even get apartments, while we as repatriates got them right away. There was a great deal of tension between the various groups of the population. They didn't like it, of course. I wouldn't have liked it either.

I was terribly tired, terribly. I decided to return home. They helped me with it, I wouldn't have managed it alone. Someone said they were going to Tel Aviv, so I went with him, to get a passport. I played dumb, that the border police had taken my passport when I was leaving for Israel. The way they did it in Russia. Finally they issued me a passport good for one year. I told them that I was going to Budapest to get my teeth fixed. All Israelis who could did it, because even a plane trip, hotel and a Hungarian dentist all together were cheaper than a dentist in Israel. I knew this and made use of it. And so I came back.

When I'd been in Israel for two years, they stopped my disability pension in Czechoslovakia. After I returned they resumed it. It wasn't complicated to get it back. The district doctor sent me to a commission, where I answered some questions. I got a stamp and in two months a check came. They didn't know that I'd been in Israel, only that I'd been abroad, if they'd known that I'd been in Israel, I wouldn't have gotten anything. After I returned home, I at first lived with my second husband. Later he asked for a divorce. I bought my current apartment, I wasn't divorced yet when I moved out. I had two houses in Sered from my mother's side returned to me. I managed to sell one of them.

# Reflections">Reflections

I had the worst opinion of Communism, but I lived according to the times: 'Hold your tongue and keep in line.' I also remember the Slansky trial 22, back then I was about eleven or twelve years old. My father even believed it, but I never believed anything or anyone. He always thought that things here would improve, and I didn't. When I was leaving for Israel in 1988, my cousin told me that Communism would fall. He was the son of one of my father's brothers who hadn't survived. He and his mother had survived, and immediately immigrated to Israel. He used to claim - 'Communism will fall.' In 1988 I arrived in Israel, and the very first day they introduced us. When he said that sentence, I thought to myself: 'Sure, it'll fall 300 years after I die.' And within a year it really did fall.

In 1980 my husband and I were on vacation in France, in Cannes. But not in a normal way, that we just got into our Trabant and went. My husband was working as an interpreter for a youth soccer team from that factory he worked in at the time. He got to know some Frenchmen that he was corresponding with. I didn't get to know them until a year later. First we invited them. They were here for two weeks. Back then we still lived in the bachelor apartment. We had to rent a one-room apartment where they slept, otherwise we hung about all day. One week we were in Lipa in my husband's villa after his parents, because at that time his parents were already dead. The villa was about 38 kilometers from Prague. It was also close to Karlovy Vary 23, Marianske Lazne 24 and Karlstein. We took them all over Czech, and then we went to visit them.

In France there was no problem with communication. My husband spoke French well, and I was good at making gestures. They dragged us around everywhere with them, but to places that I wasn't at all interested in. For a while we were also at the seaside, but then they announced, 'We're going for lunch.' And after lunch we didn't return there. There were such distances there, and so many cars, that you had to wait for the lights to change four times at an intersection. It was horrible, three hours, four hours in a car, and only in the city. They sat and talked and I didn't understand them. They came for us and took us fishing, well, fish don't interest me much. What was I supposed to do on that boat? I was glad when we were sitting in the Trabant and driving to Brno.

My impression of the Prague Spring was that I thought that things were going to be better. Well, and when the Russians came, my personal situation didn't change much. Just that in those years I got a better job than at that post office. I followed the wars in Israel on the news, but back then there was Communism. What was in the news was so embarrassing. At the time I was already working in the post press service, so I had newspapers for free, and I thought that it was terrible. My whole family was there.

I got into the Jewish community in Brno very easily, but for a long time I didn't want to join, because I didn't like the people there. And I don't like them to this day. It wasn't until the year 2000 that I joined. In 1991 the Terezin Initiative 25 was founded, and then Slovaks began going there as well. I don't hold any position in the Terezin Initiative. I'm only a regular member, nothing more. People from the Jewish community in Brno also go on Terezin Initiative trips, Mrs. Felixova has called me a few times, but on the whole it bored me.

I go to the Jewish community mainly during holidays. I used to go there while I was able. I was also at the opening of the synagogue in Liberec. No one applied, except for me, so I went there with the leadership. I was also at the celebration when they were registering Trebic in some cultural fund [UNESCO]. I don't observe any Jewish traditions at home. For example just now I was at seder, which we paid for and it was pretty good there, there were great people there. But before that we had Purim and even before that Chanukkah, which I paid for there, and I stayed only a while and went home. Rabbi Koller [Moishe Chaim Koller, current Brno rabbi] has been there for a year and a half, and makes a big to-do of it all.

What do I think about the division of the republic [the division of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic in 1993]?! There's always been more swine than troughs. I'm not a minister, or an ambassador, but those that wanted it, they're the ones that divided the republic. Normal people didn't want it, because after these 70 years we're so mixed around that everyone's got children here and parents there. I definitely did better to stay in Brno, as health insurance is better here. I'm a sick person, I'm an invalid, for me it's important. I can't say who I feel closer to, Czechs or Slovaks. We Jews prefer a larger crowd, so we can get lost in it and not stick out.

My compensation was arranged by the Terezin Initiative. I was granted compensation by the Czech-German Future Fund 26, but also the Claims Conference, and I also get something from the Czech government.

## Glossary">Glossary

**1 Sered labor camp**
created in 1941 as a Jewish labor camp. The camp functioned until the beginning of the Slovak National Uprising, when it was dissolved. At the beginning of September 1944 its activities were renewed and deportations began. Due to the deportations, SS-Hauptsturmführer Alois Brunner was named camp commander at the end of September. Brunner was a long-time colleague of Adolf Eichmann and had already organized the deportation of French Jews in 1943. Because the camp registers were destroyed, the most trustworthy information regarding the number of deportees has been provided by witnesses who worked with prisoner records. According to this information, from September 1944 until the end of March 1945, 11 transports containing 11,532 persons were dispatched from the Sered camp. Up until the end of November 1944 the transports were destined for the Auschwitz concentration camp, later prisoners were transported to other camps in the Reich. The Sered camp was liquidated on 31st March 1945, when the last evacuation transport, destined for the Terezin ghetto, was dispatched. On this transport also departed the commander of the Sered camp, Alois Brunner.

**2 Terezin/Theresienstadt**
A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. The Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a 'model Jewish settlement,' used it to camouflage the extermination of European Jews. Czech gendarmes served as ghetto guards, and with their help the Jews were able to maintain contact with the outside world. Although education was prohibited, regular classes were held, clandestinely. Thanks to the large number of

artists, writers, and scholars in the ghetto, there was an intensive program of cultural activities. At the end of 1943, when word spread of what was happening in the Nazi camps, the Germans decided to allow an International Red Cross investigation committee to visit Theresienstadt. In preparation, more prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, in order to reduce congestion in the ghetto. Dummy stores, a café, a bank, kindergartens, a school, and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

### 3 Orthodox Jewish dress

Main characteristics of observant Jewish appearance and dresses: men wear a cap or hat while women wear a shawl (the latter is obligatory in case of married women only). The most peculiar skull-cap is called kippah (other name: yarmulkah; kapedli in Yiddish), worn by men when they leave the house, reminding them of the presence of God and thus providing spiritual protection and safety. Orthodox Jewish women had their hair shaved and wore a wig. In addition, Orthodox Jewish men wear a tallit (Hebrew term; talles in Yiddish) [prayer shawl] and its accessories all day long under their clothes but not directly on their body. Wearing payes (Yiddish term; payot in Hebrew) [long sideburns] is linked with the relevant prohibition in the Torah [shaving or trimming the beard as well as the hair around the head was forbidden]. The above habits originate from the Torah and the Shulchan Arukh. Other pieces of dresses, the kaftan [Russian, later Polish wear] among others, thought to be typical, are an imitation. According to non-Jews these characterize the Jews while they are not compulsory for the Jews.

### 4 First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)

The First Czechoslovak Republic was created after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I. The union of the Czech lands and Slovakia was officially proclaimed in Prague in 1918, and formally recognized by the Treaty of St. Germain in 1919. Ruthenia was added by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Czechoslovakia inherited the greater part of the industries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the new government carried out an extensive land reform, as a result of which the living conditions of the peasantry increasingly improved. However, the constitution of 1920 set up a highly centralized state and failed to take into account the issue of national minorities, and thus internal political life was dominated by the struggle of national minorities (especially the Hungarians and the Germans) against Czech rule. In foreign policy Czechoslovakia kept close contacts with France and initiated the foundation of the Little Entente in 1921.

### 5 Jewish Codex

Order no. 198 of the Slovakian government, issued in September 1941, on the legal status of the Jews, went down in history as Jewish Codex. Based on the Nuremberg Laws, it was one of the most stringent and inhuman anti-Jewish laws all over Europe. It paraphrased the Jewish issue on a racial basis, religious considerations were fading into the background; categories of Jew, Half Jew, moreover 'Mixture' were specified by it. The majority of the 270 paragraphs dealt with the transfer of Jewish property (so-called Aryanizing; replacing Jews by non-Jews) and the exclusion of Jews from economic, political and public life.

## 6 Slansky Trial

In the years 1948-1949 the Czechoslovak government together with the Soviet Union strongly supported the idea of the founding of a new state, Israel. Despite all efforts, Stalin's politics never found fertile ground in Israel; therefore the Arab states became objects of his interest. In the first place the Communists had to allay suspicions that they had supplied the Jewish state with arms. The Soviet leadership announced that arms shipments to Israel had been arranged by Zionists in Czechoslovakia. The times required that every Jew in Czechoslovakia be automatically considered a Zionist and cosmopolitan. In 1951 on the basis of a show trial, 14 defendants (eleven of them were Jews) with Rudolf Slansky, First Secretary of the Communist Party at the head were convicted. Eleven of the accused got the death penalty; three were sentenced to life imprisonment. The executions were carried out on 3rd December 1952. The Communist Party later finally admitted its mistakes in carrying out the trial and all those sentenced were socially and legally rehabilitated in 1963.

## 7 Benes, Edvard (1884-1948)

Czechoslovak politician and president from 1935-38 and 1946-48. He was a follower of T. G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, and the idea of Czechoslovakism, and later Masaryk's right-hand man. After World War I he represented Czechoslovakia at the Paris Peace Conference. He was Foreign Minister (1918-1935) and Prime Minister (1921-1922) of the new Czechoslovak state and became president after Masaryk retired in 1935. The Czechoslovak alliance with France and the creation of the Little Entente (Czechoslovak, Romanian and Yugoslav alliance against Hungarian revisionism and the restoration of the Habsburgs) were essentially his work. After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by the Munich Pact (1938) he resigned and went into exile. Returning to Prague in 1945, he was confirmed in office and was reelected president in 1946. After the communist coup in February 1948 he resigned in June on the grounds of illness, refusing to sign the new constitution. 8 Nationalization in Czechoslovakia: The goal of nationalization was to put privately-owned means of production and private property into public control and into the hands of the Socialist state. The attempts to change property relations after WWI (1918-1921) were unsuccessful. Directly after WWII, already by May 1945, the heads of state took over possession of the collaborators' (that is, Hungarian and German) property. In July 1945, members of the Communist Party before the National Front openly called for the nationalization of banks, financial institutions, insurance companies and industrial enterprises, the execution of which fell to the Nationalization Central Committee. The first decree for nationalization was signed 11th August 1945 by the Republic President. This decree affected agricultural production, the film industry and foreign trade. Members of the Communist Party fought representatives of the National Socialist Party and the Democratic Party for further expansion of the process of nationalization, which resulted in the president signing four new decrees on 24th October, barely two months after taking office. These called for nationalization of the mining industry companies and industrial plants, the food industry plants, as well as joint-stock companies, banks and life insurance companies. The nationalization established Czechoslovakia's financial development, and shaped the 'Socialist financial sphere.' Despite this, significantly valuable property disappeared from companies in public ownership into the private and foreign trade network. Because of this, the activist committee of the trade unions called for further nationalizations on 22nd February 1948. This process was stopped in Czechoslovakia by new laws of the National Assembly in April 1948, which were passed

that December. 9 Agudat Israel: Jewish party founded in 1912 in Katowice, Poland, which opposed both the ideology of Zionism and its political expression, the World Zionist Organization. It rejected any cooperation with non-Orthodox Jewish groups and considered Zionism profane in that it forced the hand of the Almighty in bringing about the redemption of the Jewish people. Its geographical and linguistic orientation made it automatically a purely Ashkenazi movement. Branches of Agudat Israel were established throughout the Ashkenazi world. A theocratic and clericalist party, Agudat Israel has exhibited intense factionalism and religious extremism. 10 Sokol: One of the best-known Czech sports organizations. It was founded in 1862 as the first physical educational organization in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Besides regular training of all age groups, units organized sports competitions, colorful gymnastics rallies, cultural events including drama, literature and music, excursions and youth camps. Although its main goal had always been the promotion of national health and sports, Sokol also played a key role in the national resistance to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Nazi occupation and the communist regime. Sokol flourished between the two World Wars; its membership grew to over a million. Important statesmen, including the first two presidents of interwar Czechoslovakia, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Benes, were members of Sokol. Sokol was banned three times: during World War I, during the Nazi occupation and finally by the communists after 1948, but branches of the organization continued to exist abroad. Sokol was restored in 1990.

**11 Neolog Jewry**

Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was supposed to discuss several issues on which the opinion of the traditionalists and the modernizers differed and which aimed at uniting Hungarian Jews, Hungarian Jewry was officially split into two (later three) communities, which all built up their own national community network. The Neologs were the modernizers, who opposed the Orthodox on various questions. The third group, the sop-called Status Quo Ante advocated that the Jewish community was maintained the same as before the 1868/69 Congress.

**12 Contingent**

A set amount of mandatory contributions in kind to the state at prices determined beforehand. During the era of capitalism, contingents of mandatory agricultural products were decreed only during certain, mostly wartime and post-war periods. Up to the year 1939 in the Czechoslovak Republic, interventions by the state into the buying and selling of agricultural products were only partial, and pertained only to certain types of products (wheat monopoly, contractual sugar beet regulation, etc.). In Slovakia, contingents were put in place by government Act No. 99/1942 Coll. on the regulation of wheat and grain products. In the contingent system, a farmer had to hand over to the state his entire production, with the exception of by-products (seed grain, seedlings, feed grain) and the bare minimum, determined by law, subsistence rations. In Slovakia grain could be threshed by a thresher whose owner had the permission of the Agricultural Office. On the basis of threshing results, the notary office determined the delivery of grain contingents by assessment. During wartime, the purchase of contingents in places changed to confiscation and the pillaging of farmsteads. The contingent system continued with certain changes after 1945 as well, in the interests of ensuring food supplies and to overcome the consequences of war. During 1945 - 1948, contingent purchase of agricultural products was organized in accordance with a decree of the Food and Supply Commission, which also determined the size of subsistence rations for agricultural

producers. In 1948 a per-hectare delivery of contingents was put in place for beef, pork and eggs (for example 24-59 kg of beef cattle, 16-45 kg of pigs, etc.). The subsistence ration was in the neighborhood of 170-260 kg per person per year, and for milk a maximum of 0.75 liter per person per day. On the basis of a resolution of the IX Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the contingent system was canceled, and during 1949-1952 it was replaced by a contractual system.

### 13 Religious education after 1945

According to the model of the Soviet school system, and in accordance with the dominant ideology, religious education in schools after the liberation in 1945 just lingered on. Propaganda aimed against religion found fertile ground in schools, whose goal was to propagate it onto the families as well. During the 1950s a clearly atheist form of education was instituted, with teachers being obliged to note which students regularly attended mass. These students were then called in by the CSZM (the Czechoslovak Youth Union, later the SZM, or Slovak Youth Union) for an interview. An alternative to the CSZM were the Pioneer organizations. In 1953 a unified school system and a mandatory 8 year attendance was put in place. Parents whose children had lost a year due to the war were promised that they could make up the material within the scope of a one-year course, if they sign a statement that their children won't attend religion classes. As a result of differing, double upbringing of children (one type in school and another in the family) a certain schism in the family itself took place. After 1968, if parents insisted on religious education for their children, they had to request it in writing, with the signature of both parents. These requests were gathered in class by the home room teacher, who handed them in to the principal. The principal would send them to the regional school board. Principals had to be present during religion classes. These classes were taught by the local priest. Instead of established phrases - greetings according to the time of day - a unified greeting format was instituted: "Cest praci" (Honor to Labor). The result was that older children stopped greeting grownups. Religious education was fully instituted in the school system after the year 1989.

### 14 Husak, Gustav (1913-1991)

Entered into politics already in the 1930s as a member of the Communist Party. Drew attention to himself in 1944, during preparations for and course of the Slovak National Uprising. After the war he filled numerous party positions, but of special importance was his chairmanship of the Executive Committee during the years 1946 to 1950. His activities in this area were aimed against the Democratic Party, the most influential force in Slovakia. In 1951 he was arrested, convicted of bourgeois nationalism and in April 1954 sentenced to life imprisonment. Long years of imprisonment, during which he acted courageously and which didn't end until 1960, neither broke Husak's belief in Communism, nor his desire to excel. He used the relaxing of conditions at the beginning of 1968 for a vigorous return to political life. Because he had gained great confidence and support in Slovakia, on the wishes of Moscow he replaced Alexander Dubcek in the function of First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. More and more he gave way to Soviet pressure and approved mass purges in the Communist Party. When he was elected president on 29th May 1975, the situation in the country was seemingly calm. The Communist Party leaders were under the impression that given material sufficiency, people will reconcile themselves with a lack of political and intellectual freedom and a worsening environment. In the second half of the 1980s social crises deepened, multiplied by developments in the Soviet Union. Husak had likely

imagined the end of his political career differently. In December 1987 he resigned from his position as General Secretary of the Communist Party, and on 10th December 1989 as a result of the revolutionary events also abdicated from the presidency. Symbolically, this happened on Human Rights Day, and immediately after he was forced to appoint a government of 'national reconciliation.' The foundering of his political career quickened his physical end. Right before his death he reconciled himself with the Catholic Church. He died on 18th February 1991 in Bratislava.In 1893, the associations both in Prague and outside of it merged into a culturally oriented fellowship, the National Czech-Jewish Association, which published the Czech-Jewish Papers. At the end of the 19th century Czech Jews were also successful in having many German - originally Jewish - schools closed, which Czechs considered to be advance bastions of Germanism.

**15 Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany**

The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

**16 Act of the Slovak National Assembly on compensation**

In connection with the realization of Act of the Slovak National Assembly No. 305/1999 Coll., as amended by Act of the Slovak National Assembly No. 126/2002 Coll., on the alleviation of some injustices to persons deported to Nazi concentration camps and prison camps. The compensation applies for deportation to Nazi concentration and prison camps and jailing in them during the years 1939 to 1945, and for death during deportation and jailing in a concentration camp or prison camp. According to the stated Act, it was necessary to submit a claim for compensation at the ministry in a written request, which had to be delivered to the ministry no later than 2nd December 2002, otherwise the right to compensation in accordance with the Act was forfeited. In connection with the realization of compensation in accordance with Act of the Slovak National Assembly No. 255/1998 Coll. as amended by Act of the Slovak National Assembly No. 422/2002 Coll. on compensation for persons stricken by violent criminal acts, the act governs financial compensation of persons whose heath was damaged as a consequence of intentional violent criminal acts. Compensation may be requested by a claimant who is a citizen of the Slovak Republic, or a person without citizenship who has valid permanent residency in the territory of the Slovak Republic, if the damage occurred within the territory of the Slovak Republic.

**17 Spartakiada (Sparta Games)**

A mass sports event, named after the gladiator Spartacus, who led a slave revolt in ancient Rome. The author of the event's name is J. F. Chalupecky. The first Spartakiada took place in 1921 in Prague at Na Maninach. The first national Spartakiada took place on 23rd June 1955 in Prague at the Strahov stadium, in which 557,000 people participated. The event was the culmination of celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army. All

strata of the population were involved in the exercising of Spartakiada compositions, from younger and older students, adolescents, youth in apprenticeship programs, members of Zvazarm (Union for Cooperation With the Army), university students, men, women, parents with children to soldiers. Each category had its own composition, choreography and exercise uniforms. Further national Spartakiadas took place in 1960, 1965, 1975 and 1980. After the separation of the Czechoslovak Republic on 1st January 1993, mass gymnastic exercises on a scale of the Spartakiadas were no longer organized.

**18 Chatam Sofer (1762-1839)**

Orthodox rabbi, born in Frankfurt, Germany, as Moshe Schreiber, who became widely known as the leading personality of traditionalism. He was a born talent and began to study at the age of three. From 1711 he continued studying with Rabbi Nathan Adler. The other teacher, who had a great influence on him, was Pinchas Horowitz, chief rabbi of Frankfurt. Sofer matriculated in the Yeshivah of Mainz at the age of 13 and within a year he got the 'Meshuchrar' - liberated - title. The Jewish community of Pozsony elected him as rabbi by drawing lots in 1807. His knowledge and personal magnetism soon convinced all his former opponents and doubters. As a result of his activity, Pozsony became a stimulating spiritual center of the Jewry. 19 ROH (The Revolutionary Unionist Movement): Established in 1945, it represented the interests of the working class and working intelligentsia before employers in the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Among the tasks of the ROH were the signing of collective agreements with employers and arranging recreation for adults and children. In the years 1968-69 some leading members of the organization attempted to promote the idea of "unions without communists" and of the ROH as an opponent of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). With the coming to power of the new communist leadership in 1969 the reformers were purged from their positions, both in the ROH and in their job functions. After the Velvet Revolution the ROH was transformed into the Federation of Trade Unions in Slovakia (KOZ) and similarly on the Czech side (KOS). 20 Hlinka-Guards: Military group under the leadership of the radical wing of the Slovakian Popular Party. The radicals claimed an independent Slovakia and a fascist political and public life. The Hlinka-Guards deported brutally, and without German help, 58,000 (according to other sources 68,000) Slovak Jews between March and October 1942.

**21 Prague Spring**

A period of democratic reforms in Czechoslovakia, from January to August 1968. Reformatory politicians were secretly elected to leading functions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC). Josef Smrkovsky became president of the National Assembly, and Oldrich Cernik became the Prime Minister. Connected with the reformist efforts was also an important figure on the Czechoslovak political scene, Alexander Dubcek, General Secretary of the KSC Central Committee (UV KSC). In April 1968 the UV KSC adopted the party's Action Program, which was meant to show the new path to socialism. It promised fundamental economic and political reforms. On 21st March 1968, at a meeting of representatives of the USSR, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany and Czechoslovakia in Dresden, Germany, the Czechoslovaks were notified that the course of events in their country was not to the liking of the remaining conference participants, and that they should implement appropriate measures. In July 1968 a meeting in Warsaw took place, where the reformist efforts in Czechoslovakia were designated as "counter-revolutionary." The invasion of the USSR and Warsaw Pact armed forces on the night of 20th August 1968, and the signing of the so-

called Moscow Protocol ended the process of democratization, and the Normalization period began.

**22 Slansky Trial**

In the years 1948-1949 the Czechoslovak government together with the Soviet Union strongly supported the idea of the founding of a new state, Israel. Despite all efforts, Stalin's politics never found fertile ground in Israel; therefore the Arab states became objects of his interest. In the first place the Communists had to allay suspicions that they had supplied the Jewish state with arms. The Soviet leadership announced that arms shipments to Israel had been arranged by Zionists in Czechoslovakia. The times required that every Jew in Czechoslovakia be automatically considered a Zionist and cosmopolitan. In 1951 on the basis of a show trial, 14 defendants (eleven of them were Jews) with Rudolf Slansky, First Secretary of the Communist Party at the head were convicted. Eleven of the accused got the death penalty; three were sentenced to life imprisonment. The executions were carried out on 3rd December 1952. The Communist Party later finally admitted its mistakes in carrying out the trial and all those sentenced were socially and legally rehabilitated in 1963.

**23 Karlovy Vary (German name**

Karlsbad): The most famous Bohemian spa, named after Bohemian King Charles (Karel) IV, who allegedly found the springs during a hunting expedition in 1358. It was one of the most popular resorts among the royalty and aristocracy in Europe for centuries.

**24 Marianske Lazne/Marienbad**

A world-famous spa in the Czech Republic, founded in the early 19th century, with many curative mineral springs and baths, and situated on the grounds of a 12th century abbey. Once the playground for the Habsburgs and King Edward VII, as well as famous personalities including Goethe, Strauss, Ibsen and Kipling, Marianske Lazne has been the site of numerous international congresses in recent years.

**25 Terezin Initiative Foundation (Nadace Terezinska iniciativa)**

Founded in 1993 by the International Association of Former Prisoners of the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto, it is a special institute devoted to the scientific research on the history of Terezin and of the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' in the Czech lands. At the end of 1998 it was renamed to Terezin Initiative Institute (Institut Terezinske iniciativy).

**26 Czech-German Future Fund**

A multi-state institution resulting directly from the Czech-German Declaration of 21st January 1997. By laws passed by the Czech and German governments it was founded on 29th December 1997 as an endowment fund according to Czech statutes, headquartered in Prague.