Ferenc Szabados

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Hungary
Interviewer: Laszlo Banyai
Date of Interview: March 2004

The interview was conducted at the Szabados home in the eighth district of Budapest. Unusual for this district, Feri and his wife have a three-bedroom house with a courtyard. The house and yard has been owned by his wife's family for many years. Before the war, the family lived from the production of pickled goods. Feri worked as a free-lance general tailor. Although he's in his mid-eighties, his eyes are sharp and smiling. He is prepared to answer my questions, and is visibly excited to do so. He attends the Nagyfuvaros street temple with his grandson Robi. They always walk home, this is when Feri talks about the past, and Robi listens with interest.

My name is Ferenc Szabados and I was born in Ilk in 1920. Ilk was a pretty poor, backward village in Szabolcs. There couldn't have been more than a thousand residents. Of these, fourteen or fifteen families there were Jewish. Some families, like ours, had a lot of children, but you might stumble on Jewish families without children, too. My guess would be that about fifty Jews lived in the village. The village Jews were very poor, there were even hoeing peasants [day laborers] among them. One or two families were merchants. But none of them got rich. Any one of their businesses might have fit into a plastic bag. Some eeked out a living door-to-door. They sold potatoes, or milk. And there were Jews who went from one village to the other. They sold lime, and onions. One came with a nag, one horse pulling a wagon, and he would yell, "Onions, lime!". Anyway, they were very poor. The merchants, they sold everything. The horse dealers mocked the Jews, but there wasn't much difference between the two.

There was a Jewish shoemaker family in the village, a carpenter and a spice merchant. There weren't any other Jewish shoemakers in the village, but there were one or two Christian ones. But what was shoemaking? They didn't make shoes, they only fixed them. Except for the occasional merchant shoemaker, who also sold them. The postman was Jewish, and when anti-Semitism flared up later, they took away his license and gave the postal rights to a Christian. The postman had to go to Vasarosnameny for the mail, and then sort through the letters. They didn't let Jews buy the peasants' produce and take them to market. They said, 'if a Hungarian toiled for it, a Jew shouldn't profit from it.' The Jew had to take the produce to Pest and sell it at the daily price. He came back and handed out the money honestly. There wasn't any friction, well, the occasional remark that somebody stole, somebody cheated me. But when the Christian took the produce to Pest, he didn't come home until there wasn't a penny left in his pocket, but literally, I'm telling you. He drank it, squandered the whole thing. Then the peasant got nothing for his pains, didn't get any money. The pub owner was a Jew, but he never drank his profits. In 1939, they took his license away [anti-Jewish Laws]1. That put him out of business, because they took his livelihood away. There was only one pub in the village, though the spice merchant sold palinka [brandy]. The peasants often got drunk, the Jews, however, never drank.

The peasants harassed the Jews, the Jews harassed the peasants, but it never came to violence there. In spite of this, the relations between them weren't bad, they weren't poisoned. My father, for example, would come home from another village with material, to make clothes – he worked for another Jew. When the peasants came by in a wagon, they'd stop and ask why he's walking, then pick him up. They brought him home, and didn't pass him by. There were some who did, but that's what he'd expected from them.

Relations with the peasants were normal. They gave us flour on Friday nights, and on the Sabbath they lit our fires. And they didn't ask anything for it. The landowners had about 15-20 hold of land [one hold=0.52 hectares, or 1.42 english acres], their situation was fairly good. But the serfs, who had one or two hold, and rented from the landowners, their situation was pretty bleak. Poverty was high. They had to work for other people, so their family wouldn't starve to death.

The simple peasants weren't bad people. But the notaries and gentleman judges, the Vasarosnameny gentry were all anti-Semitic, each and every one. They demeaned us, and generally didn't expedite the Jewish cases they were solicited to do. They wouldn't grant a market license or refused them, until they could find out how long the person had been residing in Hungary. They collected as many taxes as a person could bear. Or I'll tell you this one example: the schoolmaster wasn't an anti-Semite. He'd come over to talk. My younger brother was a very good student. But it didn't matter anyway, because he always just got a satisfactory grade. Compared to the Hungarian children, who were worse students, they still got better grades.

My father, Jozsef Schwartz built the only orthodox prayerhouse [bes medresh] in the village. He knew everyone, and everyone in the village knew him, but then he was born there in 1888. I don't know anything about his parents. When he began building the prayerhouse, everybody contributed a little something, even the peasants helped him with this or that, or some came to work. My father was the voice of the Jews, that kind of a superior, without official status or title. There was no rabbi, cantor or kosher butcher in the village. Once a week, the butcher came from the neighbor village, Gyure, to do the kosher butchering. At the beginning of the 1930s, I don't remember exactly when, but they killed the Gyure butcher. Supposedly, everyone knew who the killer was. But they never caught him. In his place, they took some big man. Once they attacked him on the road to Ilk. That's when he took out the khalef [Hebrew: a ritual knife used by a shochet for the preparation of meat.], then told the chump to just come on, if he wants to fight. I don't have to tell you, he bolted. The so-called wealthier Jews were the tailor, the shoemaker, the carpenter, the spice merchant and the horse dealer. The rest were very poor.

From my father's side, my uncles, Herman, Samuel, Abris and Sandor left for America, because at that time there was incredible poverty in Hungary, especially in Szabolcs. This was before the First World War. They left in 1920, but two of them (Herman and Samuel) later returned, because they weren't happy there either. They didn't know the ways there, and didn't learn the language. Here they somehow made it by, although they were very poor. Both died before the war. Samuel had five children, but only one of them returned. Ida, Jozsef, Pepi and Rozsa didn't come back [from Auschwitz]. Ignac survived and then died in Budapest in 1998. Herman had six children. Izodor, Simon and Sandor emigrated to America in 1945. Jeno went to Israel, and died there in 2003. Eva and Karola were deported and never came back. The other two (Abris and Sandor) stayed in America, so I've lost touch with them. Sandor had a lot of children, but we don't know anything about them. My father's two sisters lived in Pirics, a nearby village. Amalia Schwartz married

Hermann, who died before the war. I don't know what happened to Amalia. They had three children. Regina and her husband fled with their son to the Soviet Union, they were in a Gulag for five years, where her husband died. After the war, they came back and settled in Hungary. Miklos didn't come back [from the war]. He had eight kids, only Arpad survived. He settled in Israel under the name Chaim. In 1928, Jozsef settled in France. His children, Rudi and Edit, are still living there today. I keep in touch with them. I don't even know the name of my father's other sister. She was also deported, with her husband, and her daughter, Rozsa. They never came back.

My mother was Karolina Unger. She was born in a village near Ilk called Lovopetri. Likewise, I know nothing about her parents, only that grandmother was called Bejle. I do know about one of my mother's brothers, Vilmos Unger, who was also born in Lovopetri, in 1889. He married and had two daughters. I don't know what became of them, if I recall correctly, they were deported to Vienna in 1939.

I don't know how my parents met, nor when their wedding was. I was born in 1920. As for my siblings, Jeno was born in 1907, Erno was born in 1910, while my little brother Bela saw the world for the first time in 1922. My older sister, Berta was born in 1915, my younger sister Eva, in 1927. Eva was probably seventeen when she and my mother ended up in Auschwitz. Berta didn't learn a profession, she helped around the house until she got married in the second half of the 1930s, also to a Samuel Schwartz (A very common name then), with whom she moved to Tiszaszalka. If I remember correctly, her husband was a merchant. They had two children, one of which was named Gabor. The other boy's name I don't recall.

My father didn't dress in traditional clothes, but he always wore a kippah or a hat. I remember they made a photograph of him, and he was bare-headed in the picture. It annoyed him so much, that he drew a hat on his head. My father was a talker, but he wasn't soft-spoken. He had a commanding demeanor. He had authority, because he whatever he said, he never changed his mind. The community respected him. It's not surprising then, that he built the village's only prayerhouse. My father was never political. He fought through the First World War in the Royal Hungarian Army 2, and was even held in Italian detention [Italian front] 3.

My father worked as a tailor, and this insured him a fairly narrow means for us. Mother directed the household. We had a cow and about 50-60 geese, but we didn't make money from them. We ate them. My mother stuffed a goose for four weeks, and the liver swelled so much from that, that the neighbors came to gawk. My mother would have the kosher butcher slaughter one or two a week. My parents spoke Jewish [sic – Yiddish] with one another. We also understood what they said. If there were Christians in our company, they would flip over to Hungarian, because they didn't want people to think they were saying something bad about them.

The house we lived in had a room and a kitchen. There wasn't a bathroom, nor pipes or running water. We heated with an iron stove, for the Sabbath and weekend, we'd fire the oven, too. Wagons were seen here and there, don't even mention automobiles. Our village was such a small place that it didn't even have a market. Residents just exchanged whatever goods they could with each other.

We lived in Ilk at home according to orthodox rules. Our small community came to the prayerhouse my father built not just on weekends, but during the week, too. The Sabbath was celebrated strictly. Even though my father was a heavy smoker, he never took his tobacco out on the Sabbath.

He liked the holidays, when you were allowed to smoke. It somehow connected to a good general atmosphere. My mother kept a kosher household. She cooked before the Sabbath. There would be a delicious chulent bubbling in the oven. We had a Shabesgoy, a shikse who lit the fire in the oven on the Sabbath. Her father was a wealthy peasant who supplied us with flour. We baked delicious 'barkhes' for him in the oven. That was his price. My bar mitzvah was in Ilk. That was the first time I put on a tefillin. I still know how you have to put it on your head below where the hair grows.

The four years of school in Ilk, I attended at the Calvinist school. There wasn't a Jewish cheder in the village, surely because there weren't enough Jewish children for one. We studied together with the peasant children. They learned the Calvinist catechism, but, honestly speaking, it only got through their heads really slowly. The truth is, we learned it faster than they did, and we weren't even required to learn it. We even went to church sometimes, for fun. We even joined the choir. We got along well with the minister there. If there was going to be a wedding, that meant a lot of fun for all of us.

We went to Vasarosnameny to the Civil [school] 4. I moved there for that period. I went to a Calvinist school there. Strangely, I never experienced anti-Semitism in school. I even got along well with the teacher who came from Transylvania and was a 'turulos' [from turul bird –mythical eagle of ancient Hungarian folklore; used as a symbol by extremist Hungarian nationalists]. When my mother came to Nameny [Vasarosnameny], the teacher even complimented me, and said I had a big future to look forward to. What kind of future was possible for a Jew then?! We celebrated Miklos Horthy's birthday 5, and mourned Trianon 6, but I don't recall any other special political demonstrations.

Nameny was a lot bigger place than Ilk, almost a city. They had a number of prayerhouses, for there were 180 Jewish families living there. There wasn't one neolog 7 among them, but there were some who were more religious than most. They dispersed to temples all over, according to their liking or their acquaintances. I remember there was a house of prayer for young people. The community in Vasarosnameny was serious. With kosher butchers, rabbis, jeshivas and mainly – why we went there – with cheders. We woke up at half past five in the morning, we prayed, and then started our studies. By eight we were already sitting in the Calvinist school, and in the afternoon we were learning in the cheder again. The Jewish community there supported us. They placed us at a merchant's house, I slept there, but I ate somewhere else everyday. They organized who would have lunch for the Jewish kids from Ilk. We studied the Tora and Talmud in the afternoon, so we would progress in Judaism, too. I went home from Vasarosnameny every two weeks. We were so poor that I had to walk. I would have some fun by driving a wagon wheel in front of me with a stick the whole way. On the Sabbath, Jews who knew a little more about Judaism would come into the city and ask us questions. Every week they tested us.

I could have gone for more than three grades, since I won a scholarship on the basis of my good scholastic results. My father couldn't even pay the reduced tuition. That's how I ended up a tailor. I had apprenticed the tailor profession in Nameny. My older brother, Jeno also went to school in Vasarosnameny, and learned tailoring and sewing. All three of them made that same trip that I had. They learned their father's profession as apprentices in Vasarosnameny. Jeno went up to Pest in 1930, and opened a tailor's workshop on Baross street. Though, nobody ever left Ilk until then. Ilk was a village left behind, and they cursed him for leaving it. He was the family benefactor. He was a clever man. It went well for him, and pretty soon he sent money back home to us. When

Erno and I finished our apprentice years, there was money for a ticket waiting for us at the post office. We all joined him and worked together as brothers. We sent money home every month, so our parents and sisters wouldn't lack for anything. I joined my two older brothers in Pest in 1937. I was astonished when I saw my brothers eating treyf. Both changed their names from Schwartz to Szabados, Jeno in 1936, Erno in 1937.

I made primarily Jewish friends in Ilk and Nameny. When I suddenly found myself in Pest, we had Christian friends, too. We didn't keep kosher. Mother wasn't there to watch us. Until I went to forced labor in 1941, we regularly went on excursions, to the cinema, and to dance classes. Although most of our friends were Jews, we also made friends with Christians. It wasn't a reason to exclude someone, because we saw everyone for the person they were. If they were respectable, we were made friends with them.

I wasn't able to get accustomed to my new profession, because I was called up into workservice [labor battalions]8 on October 13, 1941, into the V/2 company, to Hodmezovasarhely. We got soldier's uniforms, but they soon stuck a yellow armband on us, to differentiate that we were Jews, not fully-privileged Hungarian citizens. They took the uniform off of us later, at the request of headquarters. Then everybody was in civilian clothes. They left us the hat, but there was a national colored button on it, which they took off it, so we wouldn't desecrate the Hungarian national colors. [The national guard ministry decreed in March of 1942 that the Jewish workservice should wear their own civilian clothes, and should sew a yellow armband on them, but in a lot of the groups the uniform had already been taken away by the end of 1941. Until the spring of 1942, there wasn't general proscription of the yellow armband, but depending on the commander, this was also widespread.] I was put in the dispensary, in the sewing workshop. From that time, in November of 1941, they then took me to Korosmezo, in the Ukraine [this belonged to Hungary at that time]9 where we built tank traps and bridges. In the fall of 1942, (probably in September) we returned to Hodmezovasarhely. From then on, we were put to work in various parts of the country all the way up to September of 1944. We were in Orgovany, Pahi, and Csengodo, where they made us build military training areas. In the beginning of 1944, we went to Szeged. When the Russian groups reached the city [Budapest] in September 1944, they (the Hungarians) marched us through Sandorfalva, Baja, Mohacs and Pecs all the way to Kormend. From Kormend in the beginning of October 1944, they deported us to Eberau, Austria. I was in the Libenau camp in Graz, from where they took me in April 1945 to Hitzendorf, and then in May of 1945, at the end of the war, I was liberated.

I had made friends with a girl named Annus Ehrlich in Hodmezovasarhely. Before she was deported, she gave me a few pages of a prayerbook and asked me to pray for her, too. She also wanted to give me a jewelbox, but I didn't have the heart to accept it. She said, if she doesn't return, then I could have it. I knew that, the constables 10 would take it from her the first chance they had, but still I couldn't accept it. I still don't know what happened to her.

There was a band of fascists living in Hodmezovasarhely. They wrote in newspaper articles that we didn't work. We just hang around and molest Hungarian girls. They connected us to everything. The city had already emptied out so much, only a few of us remained with our yellow bands. They called us into the Brigade commander and said that we shouldn't listen to the lieutenant colonel's words. Don't do anything for him, work for him, because we'll be immediately on the front. Hardly two days passed before the lieutenant colonel called us in to sew a suit for his son. Well, now what

do we do? We couldn’t say no. On top of that, next to our quarters was a house where Jews were living, and they had been taken away the night before. We sewed his son the suit that night. If we didn’t sew that suit, they really would have sent us to the front. The commander said we should sew a suit for his son, because he also 'did for us'. That was all he let us know, that thanks to him we weren’t taken away, too. Now where was this great friendship coming from? He once asked me where I was from? I told him Szabolcs, and he also came from there. That word was enough for him to not have me taken to the front.

They took us to work in Orgovany, Pahi and Csengod. These are villages around Kecskemet. In these places, we built traps and trenches so tanks couldn’t get through. We built the obstacle out of wood and covered it in dirt. The forest was 15-20 kilometers away, and from there we brought the trees for the work. The whole thing was 2-3 meters high. Later in Germany, we did the same thing. Five in the morning we woke up, we got a little black water instead of coffee. We went there on foot. There they put a tree on each shoulder of two men, long trees, and those we had to carry to the location. There and back was a day’s work. We tried not to take the biggest trees but the smaller ones, there were young guys there. One of the sergeants took notice: "You want to take a little twig, a little branch?" He put such a big beam on us that we did ourselves in. We got back at twelve that night. We layed down, but at dawn we had to get up again and fetch more trees. We also had to transplant sod. We extracted the sod, so that we also took five centimeters of earth. We had to cut them into squares, which the grass held together. We placed these in rows next to each other. The commander counted to see how much each person did per day. If we didn’t do our daily amount, he would start to 'pony' us, that is, after work he would exercise us. Run, push-ups, squat thrusts and the like. Our tongues would hang out after he drove us like that.

At the start of 1944, we went to Szeged to the battalion headquarters. We spent four months in Szeged. Three Jews, and a company of Christians. Soldiers guarded us. They chose people from the three companies, to take to the front. Sometimes they’d say, "Everybody starting from the letter 'k' goes". Those who were picked out went to Hodmezovasarhely and from there they were taken to the front. A couple months later they took another group like that. I was always left behind, but then there was hardly a full company left, so they filled up the ranks with younger people. And a company went here, and again another company wanted to go, but then they said that those who want to go, can go and those who want to stay, stay. I did everything to avoid going. As a matter of fact, it’s because we had a very decent commander, a captain. Everybody wanted to go with him. If you’re going to have to go anyway, then at least go with a decent man. They went and the poor fellows never came back. The captain would return with a role call of who died where.

In Szeged, we worked and had boarding. Four of us worked in a tailoring workshop. There was a holiday, I don’t remember which, probably Easter or whatever, and then they said they’d give us leave, but somebody has to stay to tailor, so not everyone could leave. A boy and I both wanted to go first, and we argued over it. I had a buddy who said it was impossible to decide, because we both wanted to go home. I was pleading that my mother was home alone. We drew straws and I won. I went home for a week, then came back. When I saw my mother for the last time, I couldn’t tear myself away from her. She held onto me so tight, I couldn’t get away from her. We never met again. We felt somewhere unconsciously, that this was the last time we’d see each other.

My mother was still at home at the start of 1944. I went home, before I got back, the other boy had already gone, so we missed each other. I got an order to appear before Master Sergeant Szilagyi. I

had to go back to Hodmezovasarhely. I didn’t really want to leave. I begged them not to take me. But no, I had to go. I continued fixing cast-off clothes. You have to know that the Master Sergeant was the world’s most evil scoundrel. An anti-Semite, and a horribly bad man. He wasn’t just evil with Jews, but with his family also, everybody. You could say he was a murderer. I didn’t want to go work for him. So I appeared before him. He really chewed me out. He called me all kinds of names and berated me. We started working there for this sergeant. He started to warm up to us. We were stationed in Hodmezovasarhely, but he lived in Szeged. Once he ordered me to take his bags out to the station. The others were already saying I was in his good books. If somebody asks me for something, I must be in their good books. I’ll just tell you that I once was sent to Szeged to shovel snow. We lived in terrible conditions and we were fed, but he didn’t let me go back to Hodmezovasarhely, where they might take me away. That was a really big thing for him to do. Well, how it happened was, I had to go to the commander’s for something. He sent me away to report to the lieutenant for something. He practiced with me for a half day on how to report and show respect, what and how to speak to him.

We tailors, shoemakers, carpenters worked for the Armored Division, and went wherever the battalion went. It was a military supply unit, which kept the equipment and uniforms in order. We sewed uniforms, and the shoemakers fixed boots. It’s enough to say that a traincar full of flour came for the Jews and the soldiers guarding us. The car arrived, and we had to carry the sacks up to the attic, and into the storage rooms. One time rice came, and we had to carry that up to an attic where there were no steps, just a ladder leaned against the wall. By the time we got that weight up those steps?! The sacks had no place to grab them, and the ladder was shaking under us. I picked up a sack of rice. It was terribly heavy, not like flour or corn. We had to carry them so the mouth of the sack was up, so the rice wouldn’t fall out the back, but I forgot about that during the heavy work. I pick one up, but the mouth was downward. As I went up the ladder, I could barely make it, my back almost broke, when the tied side of the sack opened and the rice fell out. Whoa, I was scared! The sergeant said to me, you stupid Jew, we told you to hold the sacks with the mouths up. He whipped my legs with a lash whip. He beat me because the rice fell out of the sack. His name was Janos Ebner. He was a vice-company commander. He fell into Russian captivity quickly. But he was lucky, and got into a good place. He knew Russian and they made him an interpreter. When they interrogated prisoners, he interpreted. I recognized him, and told the Russians how he had treated the Jews. They immediately took him out and separated him from the others. When they interrogated him, there was a Russian soldier standing next to him. He suddenly grabbed the soldier’s pistol and shot himself in the head.

One of the company commanders was an awkward, cock-eyed little insignificant man. We were in Szeged and I escaped one night. It was after curfew, we’d gone to bed, the roll call was read. Ten men were missing out of two hundred. He was so deaf, he didn’t even hear who was present and who wasn’t. My little brother came to Szeged to visit me, and laid down in my place. And he reported present a number of times. They mocked him.[the commander] When they were going to transfer him, we had a party, and then he told us what we had done to him. He knew about everything, that we went missing, and he didn’t do anything about it. It was decent of him.

So then we had to get ready to go to Bor 11. Bor was in Yugoslavia, and we heard a lot of bad things about it, I don’t have to tell you how we fell apart. We asked ourselves, "what is going to happen to us". It was bad news. They had only let us go home once from forced labor, at the

beginning of 1944. We kept in touch by letter. Only once I telegrammed home to I ask them to bring my clothes to Hodmezovasarhely. Bring my boots, and whatever. I knew that the group going to Bor left on Tuesday by boat. They took them by boat on the Tisza, then over to the Danube. Master Sergeant Szilagyi called me over to him, and of course, for the first time inspected how well I could show respect. A true scoundrel. He says to me, if the company starts to leave I should just sew something for him onto his uniform. Don't put any decorations on it, just sew the star onto it. That's when it hit me. That's how he arranged that I don't have to go with the company to Bor, just because I'm also, as he put it, 'a potato-munching Szabolcser'. I then had to telegram home again: don't bring me clothes.

There were thirty of us, who didn't go, who were entrusted with something to do. Well, then they came back saying, two people were missing from the transport. They took two more, but then five more went missing. I was really scared that my time was soon up. He ordered the other [tailor] boy and I to take inventory of everything in our quarters, while the company is withdrawing. "Determine how many windows are broken, what are the damages." When the battalion had gone, there were only seven of us. Of the seven five were rich enough, to pay off the good Lord [sic], not to take them. Us two tailors, me and my friend, who later settled in Australia, who didn't pay off anybody, because we didn't have a penny. It turned out later, that Szilagyi had a lieutenant captain-in-command, who was an even bigger scoundrel than he was. But in the house where he lived, there also lived a divorced Jewish woman, and the lieutenant had fallen in love with her. He fell totally under her influence, and even became friends with a Jew. The company withdrew under his command, and because of his Jewish girlfriend, they had it relatively good, despite the fact that they were sent to Bor. All the way up to the time that he was discharged because of it. In his place, came a lieutenant named Daranyi. He was such a murderer, that after the war, he was executed.

The Russians broke through in Hodmezovasarhely. Between it and Szeged, there's a bridge. They took us across the bridge, on which bombs were hanging, we barely made it across when they blew up the Szeged Tiszabridge at Algyo. Then we went to a village, Sandorfalva. While we were there, they took us to dig trenches here and there. I don't even know which villages we worked in, we were even in Szabadka [Subotica, Yugoslavia].

They took us to Kormend[Austrian border town] toward the end of 1944. There were a lot of Schwabians [ethnic Germans in Hungary] living there, with swastikas hanging off the houses. They were Volksbund. They took us to a two-story house, stripped us, and we had to sign a paper saying we were healthy, and there was nothing wrong with us. When we came downstairs, there were soldiers with bayonetted rifles on the steps. As we came down, they beat us, bing-bang, all the way down to the ground floor. I was beaten, but was also lucky. They didn't hit my head, only my shoulder, and fortunately, at least it wasn't broken.

It was the winter of 1944. It snowed, and there wasn't a roof on the building. They locked us into a place. There wasn't a roof and we almost froze. Then they took us to Kormend, to an underground bunker. There was a stable above us, and we had to go deep underground. You had the feeling you were entering a mausoleum. It was a mausoleum. It was full of Jewish boys. The guards tried to convince us to give them our luggage. The clothes, the good ones, we should give to the poor boys, because they'll take them anyway. "Prayerbooks you should throw away", they said. "Hide them so nobody finds them". Someone among us, found their younger brother's name carved in the wall. The guards wanted to take our money, too. They said, they'd be good to us, if we give them all our

money. They were all villians. They only wanted money. There was a lot of despair.

So first they took us from Kormend to Austria by train. We got off at a station. A train came from the other direction and brought us all kinds of good food and gave it to us. They were German soldiers, those Hitler Youth. Twelve year olds, but all carrying guns. They heckled the Hungarians, a pox on them, but great that they brought us, they've got great things waiting for us to do. Yes, but they took us off the train at a station where there were loads of Jews all together – here was a row, and another here, and head high, so many. They were all dead. Then we fell apart, we thought we were dead. They took us to work in a little village called Eberau, near the border. Technical troops watched us, not military SS. In Eberau, the Jews built tank and armor traps. So if the Russians come with tanks, they'll meet a big wall, and won't be able to pass. The residents weren't bad. They cooked for us there. We went for dinner, or some slop to eat. Then I hear a quiet thin voice say, "Is there by chance any person here named Feri Schwartz?".

He was an unfortunate, fragile little religious Jew, who was always praying. The poor guy was sitting in a ditch, I remember. He had come back from Bor. We were together in the forced labor, only he was taken to Bor, and I wasn't. He was a young man from Szeged, Gyuri [Gyorgy] Reiter was his name, a lawyer. I also remember when he saw me he started crying. He said, "you, Feri, were always lucky, you didn't have to come to Bor". And he also said, "if I'm with you, I'm sure to survive". Later he got lice. He was itching everywhere, and covered in bites. He scratched himself to pieces, he itched so badly. We were housed in a school, where Germans came. A one-armed German officer was in charge. They told us the sick would be taken to a place where Jewish doctors would take care of them. We were happy for them. Some among us were already getting weak, they couldn't handle the rigors. They were taken the next day. My buddy reported in sick. Some guys going to work had seen, from a distance, that they were making the sick dig their own graves, then shooting them in the head.

All of a sudden, they blew the warning siren, that we had to pack immediately. They took us to the road leading West, thousands of people, but they didn't take us on the highway. We left the village, then had to strike out up a mountainside. We went across this mountain for a day, and got down the other side, so we wouldn't have to go through other villages. It seems they didn't want us to be seen there. And they drove us, they killed them. When they took us towards the west, there was a camp. They wanted to bring us there. But the camp was temporary, they'd killed everybody there. By the time we arrived, the camp was empty. So then we went the whole way through the villages after all. There were SS-workers everywhere, they pushed us forward, further. Those who had taken us to the lager, suddenly just disappeared. At this time, the Germans were fleeing, they left in their horrible tanks, they were in trouble. They [the other prisoners] waited for the Russians to arrive. Many thought that the Russians liked the Jews. But they were taken prisoner.

We moved on. We slept in forests. We ate dead horses, anything digestible. We reported in at a lager on the road, in Libenau, next to Graz. We said we were Hungarians, and had come as work relief, and we'd like to work. We didn't give away that we were Jews. The SS commander there – thank God – forbid us to work. He said Hungarians were not allowed to enter because there were typhoid-infected Jews inside. He sent us further on. We were very happy, because we had made it past the most dangerous point. We saw from outside that the boys inside were those who we'd left earlier. So we moved on, more precisely we were driven on. There were killers in every village who, to our luck, didn't stop us, just let us pass.

One of the Germans was a commander, some assigned commander. Not SS, they'd just conscripted him, and put him with the Jews. You could talk to him. He told us the situation was dangerous. He let us know that he didn't know what will become of us. He also told us not to go to him, because if they see him talking to us, they'll immediately transfer him, and we'll get a killer instead. We did our best to avoid him. That commander had some kind of plant, furniture factory in Hitzendorf, fifteen kilometers from his house. A boy from Mako knew where this village was, where the commander lived. When we arrived in Hitzendorf, this Hungarian soldier went to him, looked for him, and told him we were here. The Arrow Cross there, that is, the SS harassed him about where his Jews are. They put you with the Jews – they told him – so where are the Jews? Well, I don't know what he told them, what lie he said. He put us in his factory. We slept in the plant, but didn't work, there wasn't anything to do. But he took us to work from there, and the SS from Graz would come and ask "who are they?". He didn't tell them we were Jews. "They say they're work relief from Hungary, very good workers and good German friends." So the SS would leave.

But the Germans were already falling apart. I saw some German soldiers playing around when another armed gang appeared, and they shot them. At the end, the situation was completely chaotic, they were escaping in any direction, it didn't matter which. I was liberated, and neither the Germans, nor the English appeared, but we saw the Russians leaving. They never came into the factory, we never went out. We dragged on that way, there were about eighty of us. When it happened, then all the leaders, mayors – who knows what status these officials had – came from the surrounding villages to this wood factory. They thought that if they were with the Jews, nothing bad could happen to them. Thanks to that, the Russians took them and the Jews prisoner. They didn't look at who was Jewish, who wasn't. We were so happy, nothing mattered, "Come on over!". And then we were liberated, we were in the factory for about ten days.

The Russians robbed us of everything they could. They took my boots off my feet. I had a friend with me, who recently died in Szeged. He had a watch. We thought we could sell it to the Russians, and buy train tickets to go home. But in the chaos, when the Russians saw the watch, they automatically just took it. We didn't care about anything anymore. Just let somebody come, and let this be over.

I'll tell you how we got home. It wasn't simple. In May of 1945, fifteen of us started for home. We had to go through Graz. We met Russian infantry. They were such simple people. They surrounded us, stuck us in with the other prisoners, and they wanted to take us in. There were a few Jews among the Ruskies [derogatory term for the Russians in Hungarian], one of which was an officer, though he was Jewish. And a high-ranking one. We went over to him. We explained that we are Jews, and the Russians want to take us prisoner. In that crowd, who knew who was Jewish or not, and then again who cared. The Jewish officer came over, took sixteen of us, and put us in a schoolhouse. He told us not to leave here because we'll be taken, and never get back home. While we stood there, waiting, we got very hungry, and decided to leave anyway. That's when the Russian accepted us, and we got out to the train station. There were French, English, German and all [nationality of] Jews there. They gathered everybody, and took us to the station in Graz, because the railway had been blown up earlier, and we had to put it back together. The Russians themselves even worked there, like workhorses. When we fixed the platforms, a train came and everyone got on. The Yugoslavs, the Czechs, the Poles were let go. When they found out we were Hungarian Jews they took us prisoner. They gave us a piece of bread. Eat, then let's go. They took

us into Graz, the Russians made us carry a piano, so they could ship it home by train to Russia.

At night, at the station, when the railway was fixed, which had to be fixed, a train came. Whoever could, jumped on it. They said the train was going to Szombathely. But we couldn't tell anyone we were Hungarian Jews then either, because they would have taken us prisoner. We went past a lager. It spread out as far as you could see, full of prisoners. If they dump us in there with all them, nobody will get us out! We got across the Hungarian border. On every traincar, there was a Czech or Serbian flag. We stuck a Jewish star on ours – we had no idea of how anti-Semitic the Russians were, too. The residents told us not to leave because the Russians will take us to peel potatoes, don't go home. The Russians were already in Hungary, so the war must be over. The Russians deluged the country, there were so many of them. So we got on a train, and arrived at Keleti Station [Eastern Railway Station] that night. It wasn't possible to leave, because of the curfew. The city was full of Russians everywhere, so we slept on our rags, and waited for morning. One of us always stood guard, so the Russians wouldn't kill us. In the morning, I went home to the workshop, and the Koszoru street apartment, where we had been renting. But I didn't find anyone there. I didn't know much about the family. I had seen how they took the Jews to Hodmezovasarhely, but I didn't know more than that. I think my older sister had written a letter [in 1944], that she knew nothing about our mother. By the time I answered her letter, they had already taken her to the ghetto in Mateszalka, then to Beregszasz with the two little children. I went back to my hometown, to Ilk, because my little brother Bela was living there before forced labor. I found Bela in Ilk. They told him that I had been executed somewhere. We were very happy to see each other alive. A few people didn't give back what they stole from the house. There were one or two, who were decent enough to give me back my clothes. These people, if they'd come from Pest, always slept at our house and always brought a fat goose. They were benevolent people. I went with Bela to Pest. We got together a sack of bacon, and sold it in Pest. I didn't have a dirty penny. My brother Bela and I set about getting some work. I remember, we had one pair of trousers between us.

Our sisters, Eva and Berta didn't return. Berta died with her two children in the concentration camp, in Auschwitz, but her husband Samuel came back from forced labor. As I understand it, he was sent to the Russian front but somehow fought his way home. He went out to Israel in 1957, where he remarried and had four children with his new wife. That's all of their story, I don't know anything more about them. Erno and Jeno were called up to workservice in Esztergom in 1942. From there, they went to Vac, then Budapest. They were taken away to Austria from there. Jeno was spiritually the stronger one, and Erno was thankful to him that he survived the forced labor. They were liberated in Mauthausen. Erno would have died for sure without Jeno. When he had to, he carried Erno on his back, stole food for him, and kept his spirits up. I know this because Erno succeeded in struggling home. Jeno was shot in Austria by a drunken Russian soldier. My older brother wasn't the only victim. Erno died without a descendant. We bid farewell to my little brother Bela five years ago. His two sons are still living. I said the kaddish for a year for him, and since then I'm going to synagogue again. My mother was taken from home to Auschwitz. She never returned. But nobody from our village returned except us. Except for my two brothers, and two cousins also survived. My two older cousins went back to the village, to Ilk, and lived there until 1956, when the villagers threatened their lives. They started abusing them, which had only been a rare thing earlier on. One went to Canada, the other to Israel in December of 1956, while it was possible to leave the country.

We were in our twenties, and hadn't been able to work yet, when they took us into forced labor. We had just begun our careers, and we had to go to forced labor. When I realized that one of my older brothers and my younger brother were still alive, we thought we should start something together. Erno and Bela and I started working in Pest. Jeno had been a well-known tailor in the area before the war. If I went somewhere, I would say I'm Jeno's brother, and I'd get credit everywhere, anything. That's how we struggled through, I'm not saying we got rich, but we did a lot, and whatever we had to, all the way to the end.

The workshop was a tailor shop on Baross street, where my brother and I, together with Erno continued working. I never became political. I didn't join the Party, despite the fact that the Communists liberated us. There were party meetings, but I never participated, because I was working with my two brothers. Erno had a small business license. I was registered as an employee of his. Two or three years after the war, between 1947 and 1949, they searched our place. They said we were bourgeois, really, and they wanted to take our courtyard. They wanted to nationalize our house, but we were able to sue for it back. So they came in, and they wanted to occupy the apartment, and everything. They claimed we were rich. In the workshop, they were making a big deal out of what kind of beautiful shoes we had on. Imagine how beautiful shoes are on a person's feet, if he's naked!

In my twenties, I had been there for four years. Then it seemed like such a tiny event, and I had forgotten what I'd learned. But the kind of work I did and where, wasn't really a problem. We were our own bosses, and didn't have to make concessions to a higher-up. But because we were self-employed, and Jews, and private people, they put such a tax on us that we couldn't make a living, nor earn even one percent of what they took in taxes. That's how they wanted to force us into the union. If I had joined the union they would have relieved the taxes. They even said, join the union and then we'll drop them. You see, we had to face them down because we didn't want to join. In those little factories, there were little workers, but they weren't truly tradesmen. But if there was a party member among them, he was made the boss. Unfortunately, my little brother Bela had to go work for them, because the danger of them nationalizing our place was threatening. The poor guy found work in the 'Majus 1 Ruhagyar' [May 1st Clothes Factory], and was very bitter about working. He had to work at night, and two or three shifts. He went in at ten in the evening, came home in the morning, like somebody who was drunk. "Join the party, we'll make you a boss, immediately", they told him. He couldn't do it, not even for the couple of pennies more. He just worked in the factory the whole time.

We slackened off on religious things from when we got back. The problem wasn't how we were going to keep our religion, but rather, what are we were going to eat tomorrow, and what rags I could put on. I came home in shorts, and I didn't have anything. I took a little work when I got home, and started to shape up. I had no scissors, to cut the pants with. There was high inflation then. There was a time when there were millions [bank notes in the millions]. My blinds broke in the workshop, I called a workman, the millions weren't enough for the job. I couldn't get used to it. On the border, when I was on my way home, I got a thousand pengo [Hungarian currency at the time], I thought I was a millionaire. You know what I got for a thousand pengo? By the time I got to Pest [Budapest], the inflation was so bad, it wasn't worth anything.

The Horthy regime ended. The Communists never talked about anti-Semitism. During the Communist period, not one word was said about what happened to the Jews. They didn't talk about

it, but the Rakosi people [Rakosi regime] 12 were big scoundrels too. Gero and the other Jews [Rakosi, Gero and many of the communist leaders in Hungary were of Jewish origin.], they just didn't notice that they were Jews, too. Still we were always scared that they might re-locate us. There was a time when they told us, my wife and I, to move out of our home. We moved quickly, because if they'd found us there, they would have taken us in, too. That was life. Those who came home, a lot of them were put out of their homes, and relocated. But during Communism there was never a word about what they did with the Jews. Today, a lot of them deny it. They say: it wasn't true.

I never liked Party members, nor the whole party thing. Many who came home in 1945, didn't find any family waiting. Well, the most natural thing was to get pulled toward the AVO [AVH] 13. They went to the Communists, not the Arrow Cross Party. They couldn't understand, that for us it doesn't matter what comes next, just let this [the persecutions] go away. I had a friend, Tibi, who said he lived off the Party, so he could get these killers back. He screwed a lot out them of their jobs. He lived for it.

When Israel was forming, I'd say that was among one of the greatest pleasures I've had. First the election [UN vote]. We didn't sleep nights, we were up, waiting for the results. I could get [Radio] Israel and [Radio] Free Europe 14 in Hungarian. In the Hungarian news, the Arabs always won. [In 1967, the Soviet Union together with Soviet controlled Eastern Europe broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Earlier the Soviets were also in favor of the creation and support of the Jewish state with the hope to incorporate it into the communist world. Mr. Szamosi most probably refers to the post 1967 period when the Hungarian media was openly hostile towards Israel.] So then we heard about how rotten it was that they [the Israelis] were holding a million Egyptian soldiers prisoner, didn't give them water. Luckily Nasser died. They shot his successor, Sadat because he made peace with Israel and visited Jerusalem. In 1946, a Palestinian killed the king of Jordan. How is it possible that a new generation grew up, and then another, and they still want to squeeze Israel out of there? They even took from what Hitler said about the Jews. If there had been no Holocaust, Israel would not have been born. The Holocaust contributed a big part in the birth of Israel. They wouldn't have voted for it in the U.N. [suppose the Holocaust had not happened].

My wife's father, Sandor Miklos, took this name in 1930. Before that his name was Weisz. He worked in the Ganz Mavag [major firm of heavy industry in Budapest] as head accountant, but in 1920 they fired him because he was Jewish . He couldn't find a position, so he started a canning business. With my wife's mother, Antonia Rakosi, they produced cabbage-cucumber-squash preserves and lived from that. At the beginning of the war, they lived in a star house 15. My father-in-law hid in the cellar. My mother-in-law had Aryan [sic - falsified] documents. There were really poor people living in this house. Before the war, they'd come over to my wife's place, my mother-in-law would give them free pickled vegetables. How many of those were Arrow Cross 16 sympathizers! Constables lived in the school across the street. They wore police clothes and deported the Jews of Pest, and took the Jews away to work. And these constables came over, they had their wash done here, got manicures and everything, because they exploited the Jewish house, and could get everything cheaply. They even said they'd take my wife away, so there would be one more pillow for them. The Jews weren't allowed to open their windows. The neighbors reported my wife for having her windows open.

My father-in-law was taken with the Jewish men on November 15, 1944. They took them to the area around Ferihegy, to Szentimre, to shoot them in the head. But he was lucky. He had been delivering goods to the butcher shops. Around Christmas, he'd always given the butcher boys cologne – and some present, pickles – so they might package their meat better. One of the butchers was also a high-ranking Arrow Cross, and he took my father-in-law off to the side. That's how he got away. The rest were taken to Kiserdo [little forest] and shot to death. They organized mass-murders there, but I never heard anything about it, or that somebody had found mass graves. My father-in-law hid in the forest till the end of the war.

I met my wife, Gabriella Miklos, who was born in Budapest in 1928, in May of 1945, not long after we'd returned home. I had a relative in a neighboring house. Since I was totally alone, I went to see her, and as I was on the way up, I met her. That's how we met. We were already engaged when her father died, and were married one or two months later. Our marriage was just a civil one, we didn't make a big thing of it. We didn't have a religious ceremony, because we would have had to wait until the mourning period was over. It wasn't proper, and we were too scared, also.

It was unconditionally important that my wife be Jewish. First we had a girl, but she died at birth. Our second daughter, Zsuzsi was born in 1955 in Pest. She went here to the Dugonics street elementary school. There wasn't any Jewish instruction, but she heard about religious things at home. In spite of the fact, that we didn't keep too religious a household. Sometimes we'd light candles for the Sabbath, but not too often. We mostly celebrated just the bigger holidays, instead. We didn't keep a kosher house, and still don't. I went to temple during Pesach, the tent holiday[sic-Sukkot] and Yom Kippur. During Pesach, for example, I bought matzah, but we ate bread, too. We deliberately didn't have Christmas, we were at least that Jewish.

Our house looks the same as it did then. It was always two and a half bedrooms. We had to rearrange it, so there wouldn't be a third bedroom, because then there was another problem, they'd nationalize it. Some order came out, that for a certain amount of residents only a certain number of rooms could be in the family name. Those who had apartments bigger than the ordinance, moved to smaller apartments. My mother-in-law still lived with us then. The house here in the eighth district [of Budapest] was hers. A detached house with a courtyard. After the war, we worked a lot. We saved everything we could. Then later things got going, and I could even buy a car. But that was a lot later, I bought a Wartburg [East German brand] in 1965-66. There wasn't a choice then; you could choose between a Wartburg or a Trabant [another brand of the same company]. At that time, you didn't just have the money and go buy it – you paid for it, then waited for years until your name came up on the list. After that, we took the car out for excursions. We saw almost every part of this country. Wherever you could go, we went. Gasoline wasn't expensive, three forints a liter. We even took a trip to the beach 200 kilometers away. Then we went to Vienna – when you were allowed to go out once every three years – and then to the West. We got fifty dollars [hard currency allotment], and we went to France. [The rest of the money had to be illegally smuggled out of Hungary.] We've traveled through France three times. But aside from that, we've been to Italy, and a little in Yugoslavia.

I had a constant relationship with my French cousin. My father's sister, Amalia had a son, Jozsef who settled in France in 1928. France was in a terrible state after the war, and this cousin Rudi [Jozsef's son] and his younger sister were just children, one was sixteen , the other thirteen. Their father sent them here in 1947 for three months, and we fostered them here. Rudi lives in Lyon. He

visits us once a year, and we visited him three times. We write letters every week. Sometimes, we even call.

Once we went to Israel in 1990. As soon as the connections opened up more [1989 Political Changes in Hungary] 17, we went. Our relatives live there, my cousin's son. He was a small boy when he left, we were young, too. We couldn't make contact with the Israelis for a while. It wasn't recommended to write to Israel. People were busy with defense. Mirjam's family in Israel told us that it was very hard for them to get to the country. They could only get there illegally through Vienna then Italy. They arrived in 1948, when the U.N. voted for independence. In the beginning, they loaded the ships in the Haifa harbor. They didn't get anything for it, just enough to eat. They lived near Latrun, where the Arabs were always shelling. We've been writing since 1990, but up to then we had no contact.

At the time, I thought about it, that we should make aliyah, but my wife's father died in 1949. Her mother was alone, and we didn't want to leave her by herself. When we brought the subject up, my mother-in-law was distraught that we might leave her alone. Long after, I understand her better than at the time. The same thing happened when this book came out, or some ad, that said you could go to America, or emigrate to Canada. Zsuzsi, our daughter had finished school. She had already married Gabor. And Zsuzsi read about this grant program, and she had everything. College graduate, multi-lingual, she was the right age, and she had two children. She fit perfectly, and when she would just start to talk about it, how good it would be to apply, I literally got sick.

I didn't have a lot of friends. The friends I had were Jews. But they died early and young. I was with one of them, Miklos Kadar, in the forced labor, but he also died. Another boy I was with there, is still living. He built a very big carrier in Australia. Sanyi was a tailor and lived from that. In the beginning, he was poor but then he got rich. Even though he didn't have more than two years of secondary school, he made these investments which made him rich. He invested, bought houses and sold them. He told me about it when he was here. I got a phone call from him, that I should look him up in the hotel on the island [Margit island in the Danube, between Buda and Pest], because he brought me something. He gave me 50 or 100 dollars. In fact, when Zsuzsi got married he sent 50 dollars. He was a very clever man. As a tailor, he was exceptionally clever. Besides that, he was so physically strong that in forced labor, he could have wrestled and thrown to the ground any of the Hungarian soldiers. In the division, only two tailors remained alive. Me and him. There was a tiremaking workshop there, where they made car tires. You had to lift it with one hand; of the 400 Hungarian soldiers, nobody could lift it except him. Once two killer constables, took him away just as we were leaving the Jewish temple. When they let him out, we couldn't recognize him from his face. They beat him so badly, that we only recognized his voice. And all he said was be glad it wasn't any of you, because you wouldn't have survived it. And he was right, we really wouldn't have survived that.

Our daughter, Zsuzsi, attended the College of Foreign Trade. She learned two languages. She has an advanced accreditation in Russian and English. Zsuzsi married a Jew. Her husband, Gabor Gemesi finished college. He studied vehicle electricity [in Hungary, auto mechanics are seperated into three vocations. One for body work, one for engine work, and one for electricity]. He works here in the courtyard, he opened a workshop here. He's a tradesman and an entrepreneur. Zsuzsi usually comes to temple [synagogue] with me. It's the most natural thing for her to come to temple with us, despite the fact that we didn't really teach her religion. She heard us talk about this and

that at home, but we never explicitly taught her religion. She must have heard something from my older and younger brothers. It was also natural for her to marry a Jew. Zsuzsi has also been to England. One of her colleagues emigrated, and she went to visit them for three weeks. When she was in England, Zsuzsi encountered problems, because her hosts were very religious. She had to learn that you wash meat and milk dishes seperately. Later the bank [where she works] sent her again, at their expense, for three months. The bank paid for her training.

We have two grandchildren. Eszter is seventeen, while Robi is eighteen years old. They attend the Lauder Javne School [Jewish school]. They're good students and good kids. Religion is a big part of their lives. Robi is always hiding in Moses' five books. He won two Bible competitions, and even went to Israel for a competition. Only once, we didn't let him go. We didn't want him to go because there was bombing going on. The relatives there even wrote that it would be better if he didn't go then. He went once, and the other time, he didn't. He always placed in the Judaism competitions, first or second. Of course, he brought every prize home from school, that he could. He really likes religion. Now he's counting the letters in the Tora. He bought a book, "The Biblical Code". He's always busy with that.

When Communism fell in 1989, that did not touch us really. I had already retired by 1980, though I did work afterwards. If socialism hadn't failed, then we'd be much farther along. And I dare say, that Hungarians are good workers. There was never a better time in my life than that time. You could vacation for pennies. My wife worked as a typist and shorthand secretary in the Ministry of Finance. It wasn't a lot of status, but it was good work and sufficient money came out of it. We went on vacation with our relatives from France for a summer. With the four relatives and the four of us, we still only paid pennies. We could sit down in elegant places numerous times. So, life was good for a worker. After 1956 [revolution] 18, they even left us, the self-employed, alone. After 1956, you didn't have to be afraid if you were a private businessman or self-employed. After 1956, the situation changed. It was a pretty good life. These people are lying about everything, which wasn't true then.

I go to Nagyfuvaros street to pray. If I don't show up, they call here and ask where I am. Unfortunately, it's primarily the elderly who go there. There is the occasional young person. Back then, Tamas Raj was our rabbi, a dynamic but not a zealous man. He started up really dealing with the kids and young people in the area. I pay a tax to the religious community, ten or fifteen thousand forints, but I don't use the services. What I give, I give to the temple. Back then, in the village, everybody went to temple. It was an exceptional event, if someone didn't. Due to the war, that's relaxed a bit. Poverty also plays in this. It wasn't considered valorous in Communism to be a Jew. To write to Israelis was outright dangerous. You could only send a letter indirectly, that's how the communists discriminated against Jews. Now at least, you are free to talk.

Today, I go to temple almost everyday, but that's only been since my older brother died five years ago. I said the kaddish for him for an entire year. There are Jews from the Carpathian Basin at this temple. I know that they're religious Jews and temple-going Jews, they are even prayer leaders. But when they come out of the temple, they get on the tram and go home [meaning Saturday] That's the situation. My sister-in-law comes from a very religious family. She lights candles on Friday. Now I light candles, that is, my wife Gabi [Gabriella] does. But that's due to the grandchildren. My grandchild was very little, barely five or six years old, when I started going to temple again, and my grandchild came with me.

Reparations got me terribly agitated. I always told my wife, they can leave me alone, I don't want them, I don't want to profit from that. I just received a half million [forints, about six months average salary] because of my parents. There's no way I'll buy myself even another crumb with that! It gets me so upset. And now that I'm older, even more so. I gave it to the children, instead.

GLOSSARY

1 Anti-Jewish laws in Hungary

Following similar legislation in Nazi Germany, Hungary enacted three Jewish laws in 1938, 1939 and 1941. The first law restricted the number of Jews in industrial and commercial enterprises, banks and in certain occupations, such as legal, medical and engineering professions, and journalism to 20 percent of the total number. This law defined Jews on the basis of their religion, so those who converted before the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, as well as those who fought in World War I, and their widows and orphans were exempted from the law. The second Jewish law introduced further restrictions, limiting the number of Jews in the above fields to 6 percent, prohibiting the employment of Jews completely in certain professions such as high school and university teaching, civil and municipal services, etc. It also forbade Jews to buy or sell land and so forth. This law already defined Jews on more racial grounds in that it regarded baptized children that had at least one non-converted Jewish parent as Jewish. The third Jewish law prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and defined anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent as Jewish.

2 Military in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

From the Compromise of 1867, the armies of the Empire (Kaiser und Kundlich Armee - the Imperial And Royal Army), were subordinated to the common Minstry of War. The two parts of the country had separate armies: Austria had the Landwehr (Imperial Army) and Hungary had the National Guard (Hungarian Royal National Guard). Many political conflicts arose during this period of 'dualism', concerning mutual payment and control of these armies, even to the degree that officers were required to command in the language of the majority of his troops.

3 Italian front, 1915-1918

Also known as Isonzo front. Isonzo (Soca) is an alpine river today in Slovenia, which ran parallel with the pre-World War I Austro-Hungarian and Italian border. During World War I, Italy was primarily interested in capturing the ethnic Italian parts of Austria-Hungary (Triest, Fiume, Istria and some of the islands) as well as the Adriatic litoral. The Italian army tried to enter Austria-Hungary via the Isonzo river, but the Austro-Hungarian army was dug in alongside the river. After 18 months of continous fighting without any territorial gain, the Austro-Hungarian army finally suceeded to enter Italian territory in October 1917.

4 Civil school

This type of school was created in 1868. Originally it was intended to be a secondary school, but in its finally established format, it did not provide a secondary level education with graduation (maturity examination). Pupils attended it for four years after finishing elementary school. As

opposed to classical secondary school, the emphasis in the civil school was on modern and practical subjects (e.g. modern languages, accounting, economics). While the secondary school prepared children to enter university, the civil school provided its graduates with the type of knowledge which helped them find a job in offices, banks, as clerks, accountants, secretaries, or to manage their own business or shop.

5 Horthy, Miklos (1868-1957)

Regent of Hungary from 1920 to 1944. Relying on the conservative plutocrats and the great landowners and Christian middle classes, he maintained a right-wing regime in interwar Hungary. In foreign policy, he tried to attain the revision of the Trianon Peace Treaty - on the basis of which two thirds of Hungary's territory was seceded after WWI – which led to Hungary entering WWII as an ally of Germany and Italy. When the Germans occupied Hungary in March 1944, Horthy was forced to appoint as Prime Minister the former ambassador of Hungary in Berlin, who organized the deportations of Hungarian Jews. On 15th October 1944 Horthy announced on the radio that he would ask the Allied Powers for truce. The leader of the extreme right-wing fascist Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szalasi, supported by the German army, took over power. Horthy was detained in Germany and was later liberated by American troops. He moved to Portugal in 1949 and died there in 1957.

6 Trianon Peace Treaty

Trianon is a palace in Versailles where, as part of the Paris Peace Conference, the peace treaty was signed with Hungary on 4th June 1920. It was the official end of World War I for the countries concerned. The Trianon Peace Treaty validated the annexation of huge parts of pre-war Hungary by the states of Austria (the province of Burgenland) and Romania (Transylvania, and parts of Eastern Hungary). The northern part of pre-war Hungary was attached to the newly created Czechoslovak state (Slovakia and Subcarpathia) while Croatia-Slavonia as well as parts of Southern Hungary (Voivodina, Baranja, Medjumurje and Prekmurje) were to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (later Yugoslavia). Hungary lost 67.3 percent of its pre-war territory, including huge areas populated mostly or mainly by Hungarians, and 58.4 percent of its population. As a result approximately one third of the Hungarians became an - often oppressed - ethnic minority in some of the predominantly hostile neighboring countries. Trianon became the major point of reference of interwar nationalistic and anti-Semitic Hungarian regimes.

7 Neolog Jewry

Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was meant 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 created their own national community network. The Neologs were the modernizers, and they opposed the Orthodox on various questions.

8 Labor Battalion

Under the 1939 II. Law 230, those deemed unfit for military service were required to complete 'public interest forced labor'. After the implementation of the second anti-Jewish law within the

military, the military arranged 'special work battalions' for those Jews, who were not called up for armed service. With the entry into northern Transylvania (August 1940), those of Jewish origin who had begun, and were now finishing, their military service were directed to the work battalions. The 2870/1941 HM order unified the arrangement, saying that the Jews are to fulfill military obligations in the support units of the national guard. In the summer of 1942, thousands of Jews were recruited to labor battalions with the Hungarian troops going to the Soviet front. Some 50,000 in labor battalions went with the Second Hungarian Army to the Eastern Front – of these, only 6-7000 returned.

9 Hungarian occupation of Subcarpathia

On March 10th 1939, the Hungarian ministerial council decided to reoccupy the parts of the Subcarpathian basin which remained in Czechoslovakian hands after the First Vienna Decision. The majority of the territories residents were Ruthenians. At the same time, the German army invaded the Czech and Moravian territories, Czechoslovia dissolved, and the remaining territories became a German puppet-state called the Slovak Republic.

10 Constable

A member of the Hungarian Royal Constabulary, responsible for keeping order in rural areas, this was a militarily organized national police, subordinated to both, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence. The body was created in 1881 to replace the previously eliminated county and estate gendarmarie (pandours), with the legal authority to insure the security of cities. Constabularies were deployed at every county seat and mining area. The municipal cities generally had their own law enforcement bodies – the police. The constables had the right to cross into police jurisdiction during the course of special investigations. Preservatory governing structure didn’t conform (the outmoded principles working in the strict hierarchy) to the social and economic changes happening in the country. Conflicts with working-class and agrarian movements, and national organisations turned more and more into outright bloody transgressions. Residents only saw the constabulary as an apparatus for consolidation of conservative power. After putting down the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Christian establishment in the formidable and anti-Semitically biased forces came across a coercive force able to check the growing social movements caused by the unresolved land question. Aside from this, at the time of elections – since villages had public voting – they actively took steps against the opposition candidates and supporters. In 1944, the Constabulary directed the collection of rural Jews into ghettos and their deportation. After the suspension of deportations (June 6, 1944), the arrow cross sympathetic interior apparatus Constabulary forces were called to Budapest to attempt a coup. The body was disbanded in 1945, and the new democratic police took over.

11 Bor

The copper mines of Bor, Yugoslavia were one of the most important resources for the German war industry, supplying them with 50 percent of their copper. After the capitulation of Yugoslavia, the Germans requested Hungarian forced labor battalions from the Hungarian government to use in the mines. In July of 1943, transportation of the Hungarian Jewish labor battalions to Bor began, and by September of 1944, more than 6000 people had been sent for ‘obligatory forced labor’. When the Germans left, they force marched the prisoners to Germany, executing the majority of

them along the way.

12 Rakosi regime

Matyas Rakosi was a Stalinist Hungarian leader of Jewish origin between 1948-1956. He introduced a complete communist terror, established a Stalinist type cult for himself and was responsible for the show trials of the early 1950s. After the Revolution of 1956, he went to the Soviet Union, where he died in 1971.

13 AVO and AVH

In 1945, the Political Security Department was created under the jurisdiction of the Budapest Police Headquarters, and directed by Gabor Peter. Its' aim was the arrest and prosecution of war criminals. In October of 1946, the Hungarian State Police put this organization under direct authority of the interior minister, under the name – State Defense Department (AVO). Although the AVO's official purpose was primarily the defense of the democratic state order, and to investigate war crimes and crimes against the people, as well as the collection and recording of foreign and national information concerning state security, from the time of its inception it collected information about leading coalition party politicians, tapped the telephones of the political opponents of the communists, ...etc. With the decree of September 10, 1948, the powers of the Interior Ministry broadened, and the AVO came under its' direct subordination – a new significant step towards the organization's self-regulation. At this time, command of the State Border, Commerce and Air Traffic Control, as well as the National Central Authority for Control of Foreigners (KEOKH) was put under the sphere of authority of the AVH, thus also empowering them with control of the granting of passports. The AVH (State Defense Authority) was created organisationally dependent on the Interior Ministry on December 28, 1949, and was directly subordinate to the Ministry council. Military prevention and the National Guard were melded into the new organization. In a move to secure complete control, the AVH was organized in a strict hierarchical order, covering the entire area of the country with a network of agents and subordinate units. In actuality, Matyas Rakosi and those in the innermost circle of Party leaders were in direct control and authority over the provision of it. The sitting ministry council of July 17, 1953, ordered the repeal of the AVH as a independent organ, and its fusion into the Interior Ministry. The decision didn't become public, and because of it's secrecy caused various misunderstandings, even within the state apparatus. Also attributable to this confusion, was the fact that though the AVH was really, formally stripped of its independent power, it remained in continuous use within the ranks of state defense, and put the state defense departments up against the Interior Ministry units. This could explain the fact that on October 28, 1956, in the radio broadcast of Imre Nagy, he promised to disband that State Defense Authority, which was still in place during his time as Prime Minister, though it had been eliminated three years earlier.

14 Radio Free Europe

The radio station was set up by the National Committee for a Free Europe, an American organization, funded by Congress through the CIA, in 1950 with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features from Munich to countries behind the Iron Curtain. The programs were produced by Central and Eastern European emigrant editors, journalists and moderators. 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 communist countries behind the Iron Curtain and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

15 Yellow star houses

The system of exclusively Jewish houses which acted as a form of hostage taking was introduced by the Hungarian authorities in June 1944 in Budapest. The authorities believed that if they concentrated all the Jews of Budapest in the ghetto, the Allies would not attack it, but if they placed such houses all over Budapest, especially near important public buildings it was a kind of guarantee. Jews were only allowed to leave such houses for two hours a day to buy supplies and such.

16 Arrow Cross Party

The most extreme of the Hungarian fascist movements in the mid-1930s. The party consisted of several groups, though the name is now commonly associated with the faction organized by Ferenc Szalasi and Kalman Hubay in 1938. Following the Nazi pattern, the party promised not only the establishment of a fascist-type system including social reforms, but also the ‘solution of the Jewish question’. The party’s uniform consisted of a green shirt and a badge with a set of crossed arrows, a Hungarian version of the swastika, on it. On 15th October 1944, when Governor Horthy announced Hungary’s withdrawal from the war, the Arrow Cross seized power with military help from the Germans. The Arrow Cross government ordered general mobilization and enforced a regime of terror which, though directed chiefly against the Jews, also inflicted heavy suffering on the Hungarians. It was responsible for the deportation and death of tens of thousands of Jews. After the Soviet army liberated the whole of Hungary by early April 1945, Szalasi and his Arrow Cross ministers were brought to trial and executed.

17 1989 Political changes

A description, rather than name for the surprising events following the summer of 1989, when Hungarian border guards began allowing East German families vacationing in Hungary to cross into Austria, and escape to the West. After the symbolic reburial of Imre Nagy, the Hungarian parliament quietly announced its rejection of communism and transformation to a social democracy. The confused internal struggle among Soviet satellite nations which ensued, eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the reorganization of Eastern Europe. The Soviets peacefully withdrew their military in 1990.

18 1956

It designates the Revolution, which started on 23rd October 1956 against Soviet rule and the communists in Hungary. It was started by student and worker demonstrations in Budapest and began with the destruction of Stalin’s gigantic statue. Moderate communist leader Imre Nagy was appointed as prime minister and he promised reform and democratization. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops which had been stationed in Hungary since the end of World War II, but they returned after Nagy’s declaration that Hungary would pull out of the Warsaw Pact to pursue a

policy of neutrality. The Soviet army put an end to the uprising on the 4th of November, and mass repression and arrests began. About 200,000 Hungarians fled from the country. Nagy and a number of his supporters were executed. Until 1989 and the fall of the communist regime, the Revolution of 1956 was officially considered a counter-revolution.