Zsuzsanna G.

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(nee H.)

Budapest

Hungary

Interviewed by: Mihaly Andor

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Zsuzsanna G. is a wiry, active lady who lives in an apartment building from the 1990s. The apartment is decorated with modern furniture, complete with books in English and Hungarian and a computer. Zsuzsanna still works, directing her own business enterprise.

My family background

I know little about my great grandparents. My maternal grandmother, Laura Engel was an infant when her father died. I know that his name was Jozsef Engel and he worked in some larger estate in Gyoma [In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a number of settlements, mainly in the Alfold and Dunantul, got market town rights, as did Gyoma in 1830. The legal definition of free royal cities and market towns was absolved in 1870, and the majority of market towns were absorbed into the cities.] he was some kind of manager. His wife's maiden name was Kati Weisz, and shortly after my grandfather's death she got married again, to some Goldstein, I think, I don't know his Christian name. There were two children from the first marriage: Sandor Engel, born in 1870 and my grandmother, Laura, who was born in 1872. Then, from the marriage to the Goldstein person, Miksa, Gizella, Antonia and Szami [probably a family nickname for Samuel, the interview subject only knew him as Szami] were born.

On the paternal side, my grandfather David Kauders was already quite an old person when he had the wedding that our family issues from. As a widower, he married my grandmother, Franciska Steiner, whose father Salamon Steiner, likewise lived in Gyoma, and was a grain merchant. Apparently, he was well-to-do but then became poor.

Both families probably lived in very hard conditions. I can only assume this from what I heard as a child. My maternal grandmother lived with us, and though I wasn't quite nine years old when she died, I have many memories connected to her. Her siblings always came to her, because she was highly-esteemed in the family. And the conversation always went that 'But you didn't help when mother…' 'I helped but you didn't help then, when…' 'You didn't come then…' So conversation was made up of this kind of continual disdain, which revealed one thing clearly: that they had needed help.

The other thing that makes me think that my maternal grandparents were poor: the daughters were married off badly. Gizella and Antonia both married widowers. I don't think they had dowries. My aunt Giza lived in a very good marriage to Samuel Klein, who had two sons from his first marriage, Andor and Bela, and they had a daughter, Erzsi [Erzsebet = Elizabeth]. They were so poor that my Aunt Giza cut up bed linens, to sew shirts and dresses for the children. Samuel Klein was a factory worker in the Ujpest [An industrial suburb north of Pest] tanning factory of Wolfner [Wolfner Family] 1. His son Bela was also a factory worker there, and stayed a worker to the end of his life, by the end becoming a kind of shift boss. He survived the Holocaust, got married, had two children, but after my mother's death we lost contact with them. Andor was an junk dealer. He worked on Teleki Square. In 1944, he married a gypsy [Roma] girl, they had a son who became the most exceptional Jazz drummer in Hungary. We didn't get together with their family, only Andor came to visit until my mother's death. Erzsi Klein married Gyorgy Steiner, from whom she had a son. Then all of them, Giza, Erzsi and the little boy were executed in Auschwitz. The husband survived the work service [Forced labor] 2. He visited us for a while, then remarried, he even brought his wife over, then we never heard from them again.

Aunt Toni [Antonia], my other aunt, married Marton Singer, who was also a widower. It was a terrible marriage, they had no children. Antonia also died in Auschwitz.

I know a little more about my paternal grandparents. My paternal grandfather was born in 1854 in Gyula. I don't know what kind of education he received but he was a house painter, and a very talented painter. He didn't just paint the interiors of apartments, according to family legend: 'Mr. Kauders, please paint a bouquet of flowers over there.' 'Mr. Kauders, paint this over here and that over there.' Indeed, according to family legend, the huge fresco in the Gyula county courthouse was partially painted by my grandfather. I looked into it, they say the fresco's creator was Gusztav Veres, but it's commonly known that these Pest painters employed ghost-'painters' to do this work. And on one of the figures, allegedly, the characteristics of my grandfather can be found. My grandfather played cards. So he made a lot of money, yet still they lived in very great poverty, because he had six children [they had seven children, though one died in infancy], and little money made it home. My grandmother was understandably a housewife. When they came up to Pest, sometime around 1914, then my grandfather got a scene-painting position at the Hungarian Theatre [The Hungarian Theatre in Erzsebet Town was owned by Laszlo Beothy, and mainly performed dramas.] I don't really know why they came up to [Buda-] Pest, I've got a foggy notion that it was a period of great bustle, people came en masse from the countryside. I'd guess that they found better job opportunities in Pest, in the positions of those people called up as soldiers to go to war. The children had to be taught some trade, obviously there were more possibilities here.

The first child of my paternal grandparents, Aladar, was born in 1890 and became a house painter. Margit, who was born in 1893, became a bookbinder. Imre, who became a printer, was born in

1895. He studied with Imre Kner, and worked there in Gyoma. [Izidor Kner founded a printing house in Gyoma in 1895. His children (Imre, Endre, Erzsebet, Albert) made it a prestigious Hungarian workshop of the bookbinding arts. Kner Imre was five years older than the interview subject's uncle, so the possibility of their common schooling is not great, and probably family legend.] Meanwhile, there was Sandor who died, my father who was born in 1901, Andras in 1902 and Pali in 1904 or 1905. My father was sent to be a merchant assistant, because he was a very puny kid. My father was an apprentice, the merchant took him on to train him in the fashion merchant trade – he had no concurrent schooling. He worked in the shop, cleaned, took merchandise home, packed, he did everything, but they trained him to dress and groom himself like a merchant's assistant. Andras also became a merchant's assistant. Pali became a locksmith's apprentice. So you can see that Grandpa gave his kids to industry, put a trade in their hands. So after six grades, some trade. My father had no more schooling, and in the 1950s they even nagged him because of it.

Aladar's wife was called Mariska, they had two sons, Sandor and Gyuri. Sandor was born between 1920 and 1922, and took part in the Young Communist movement. He was known as Lexi, and he was killed. I don't know exactly how or when. Gyuri was the same age as my older sister, he died as a work serviceman [forced laborer]. I remember them from my childhood, but we didn't have a close relationship. Aladar survived the war, I don't know exactly where. His wife came home from Bergen-Belson and then they divorced. Aladar remarried.

Margit never got married, she lived with her mother, and she took care of her. Imre, the printer was my favorite uncle. He worked in the University Printing House, and that was such a prestigious thing in my childhood. Even before the war, he was a well-known person in the trade union movement, but after the war he remained a printer, didn't become an independent functionary, but to the end he was a dedicated left-wing person. His wife, Mariska was a peasant girl from Bugac, who wasn't Jewish, and with whom he lived in a very happy marriage. In 1944, his wife saved him like a lion. Uncle Imre was taken somewhere, not to the work service [forced labor] because he was already too old for that, but I don't know where, and Mariska went after him, got him out of there, and they went into hiding together. [There's no data on when this happened but mixed marriage was regulated from the beginning of 1945 like so: In the beginning of 1945, the Arrow Cross parliament authorized Christians married to Jews to divorce their spouse with no type of responsibilities. The law stipulated that Christians in mixed marriages with Jews who are not willing to divorce, fall under the jurisdiction of the anti-Jewish measures. There was no practical significance of this, because the Arrow Cross directors (including Ferenc Szalasi and his government) had already fled Budapest by this time, and their regulations had no real effect on the Jews of the capitol city.] Among all my father's siblings, they were the ones who had a very close, very intimate relationship until both of their deaths. They lived in Rakosszentmihaly, and it was the relation that gave my dogged love a home in the summers of my childhood. They didn't have children. They died in 1970. They're buried in the urn cemetery, it was a funeral of the [worker's] movement. It was quite horrible. It was the first communist funeral that I attended. He and his wife had looked out for my family until their deaths.

We met with the other two younger brothers, Andras and Pali pretty rarely. Andras and Pali got along better with each other. Andras was childless, his wife was called Sari [from Sarolta], both of them were killed in the war. I don't know under what exact circumstances. Pali likewise died during

the war. His wife was called Bozsi [from Erzsebet = Elizabeth]. They had two children, Tibi [from Tibor] who was the same age as me, and Agi [from Agota = Agatha] who was probably four years younger.

So that the reason there weren't close relations between the two groups of siblings is understandable, first I have to explain the formation of the maternal branch. I already mentioned that my great grandmother married twice, and bore children in both marriages. So besides my grandmother's brother, Sandor Engel there were four step siblings: Miksa, Gizella, Antonia and Szami Goldstein. There were no inequalities between the Goldstein and Engel siblings, it was a very fused-together family.

Sandor Engel married three times. In the beginning of the last [i.e. the 20th] century, he moved up to Ujpest. [this heavily industrial suburb north of Budapest was not part of the city at that time]. There was a son named Ervin who was a technician and worked to his dying day as a technical draftsman at Egyesult Izzo [Egyesult Izzolampa es Villamossagi Rt - The United Lightbulb and Electrical Co. was created by Bela Egger and brothers in 1896. In 1903, they worked out production methods for a Wolfram-filament, gas-filled light bulb, and in 1911 they began production. From 1912, they began using the Tungsram product name.]. In those days, that was a very big thing. Incidentally, Ervin was married, his wife was Ella Hoffman, and they had a son in 1931. Then Ella, her thirteen year old son and her seventy-four year old father were executed in Auschwitz. Ervin came back from work service, but didn't survive the war too long. He died of the grief in 1945.

Miksa Goldstein was a leather craftsman. He took a well-to-do girl as his wife in Jaszbereny. Her name was Fanni Donath and she was some relation to that Donath family one of whose members was that politician Ferenc Donath, and his son, Laszlo became a Protestant minister. They had two children, Ilonka and Laci [from Laszlo = Leslie], in 1911 and 1912. During the First World War, they went bankrupt and moved up to Ujpest. Laci Goldstein died as a work serviceman, Ilonka survived the Holocaust. She never had children. Her first husband died during the First World War, then she married again, to a widower from the country, whose wife and child never came back from deportation. Ilonka died in 1981, she's buried in a Jewish cemetery.

The smallest son, Szami Goldstein worked at the BESZKART [BESZKART] [3]. I think he was a guard in his last position, and like those kind of jobs, it was his retirement job. Though he was held in fantastically high esteem in the family. His wife was called Janka. They didn't have kids either, and they lived in Kelenfold [suburb in southern Buda]. Szami died in 1944, right on March 19th [19 March 1944] [4] and his funeral was in the Jewish cemetery in Obuda [Obuda] [5].

My grandmother married Mor Freiberger, who died in 1904 or 1905, and my grandmother was left a widow with three children. It was probably terribly difficult to secure a situation to satisfy her needs for the three kids. She took on all work. She went house to house sewing. When they quartered soldiers in Gyoma, she cooked for them. So she raised her kids by herself, Ilona, Ervin and Rozsa, and my mother. It shows what kind of expectations my grandmother had in how she schooled her children. Ilonka, the oldest girl studied to be a young lady of the post (sic), and she worked in Gyoma at the post office. Ervin studied to be an electrician. That was a very serious trade at the time, and an elegant trade, since it was such a new thing. The smallest, my mother, was sent to Civil [Civil School] [6] in Ujpest. Because in the meantime, when her siblings Sandor Engel and the Goldsteins also came up to Ujpest one after the other during the 1910s, she also

came up with her three children.

In Ujpest, without the siblings' approval, Grandma married a lawyer, also named Engel, who was likewise a widower, and he had a son, Kalman. The marriage didn't work out. There were emotional problems, Grandma had imagined things would be different. By my count, she could have been over forty, and she likely imagined the marriage would be a financial boon for both of them. So it didn't work, though my mother had a brotherly friendship with her stepbrother, Kalman. Kalman took her around with him among his circle of friends, and that's where mother got such ideas of civil lifestyles, which were very important to her for the rest of her life, her standards. And she guided our lives in that direction. I have to say, successfully, because in the end, both of her children became graduates.

My mother's two siblings died in 1919 in the Spanish Flu [Spanish Flu: the first big epidemic of the 20th century, took 20-21 million victims from 1918-1919. For example, in October of 1918, 44 thousand died of this disease in Hungary.] and grandma was devastated from that point on. Her life nearly ended from that time on. They died in the hospital. That's why me and my brother were born at home, because it was such an experience for my mother as a young girl, that someone who goes into the hospital, stays there and never comes out.

And here I come back to why there wasn't a close connection among the Kauders siblings. There was a lifestyle problem, a difference in living standards. Our life was that of the up and coming lower middle class, and my father was partner in this, he himself stuck out a bit from the family. We were taught foreign languages from the age of six. They sent us to gymnasium [high school, 4th to 12th grades]. With the exception of my father and Uncle Imre, the other Kauders siblings lived a day to day lifestyle. They took on Grandpa's card-playing easy-going lifestyle, and my grandma's lack of ambition that comes from poverty. They were very generous. My father told me that one of his uncles, when he got his first salary in hand, he took his little brother to the 'Vurstli' [The predecessor of the amusement park in the City Park was called the Vurstli and was put up around the beginning of the 1880s, with the same mass entertainment intentions of the English Park, started in the beginning of the 1900s.]

My two grandmothers were natural cousins to each other – I think Kati Weisz might have been the sister of Franciska Steiner's mother. So my parents were second cousins. And that's important, because my grandma Laura knew the Kauders family, and had formed a strong opinion of their lifestyle, the way they lived it. The other exception besides my father was Uncle Imre. So Imre's wife was a peasant girl, but for women especially, if they love their partners, they have a fantastic talent for getting along and fitting in. To the end of Aunt Mariska's life, she used foreign words incorrectly, but she paid attention to how her daughter-in-law, that is my mother, dresses, how she grooms herself, what she cooks, how she cleans, how she decorates the apartment, and she paid attention.

Mariska didn't convert, and it was never a question. Now I have to digress a bit to the family religion. My grandpa, David Kauders, paid absolutely no attention to religion. My father, as he told us, was in the third or fourth grade in a Jewish grammar [school] when the teacher smacked him, and he split with religion for the rest of his life. Except, naturally, for his death bed, when he asked a religious friend to write down the words to the father's blessing for him, because then it was important to him, that he bless his children. Concerning my mother, keep in mind that the Jews

from the Alfold were totally assimilated. So the Jew who stayed religious, did so in such a very neolog way [Neolog Jewry] 7, that is, they kept the high holidays, my grandma even lit candles on Friday evening, my mother also, but for example, they never kept the Sabbath. It never came up. There was school, you had to work. We didn't work on High Holidays, of course. The candle-lighting and dinner on Friday wore us out. The point I'd like to stress is that my family thought of itself as Jewish Hungarians. Hungarians of the Israelite religion. The stress was on the Hungarian. Starting with the fairy tales, folk songs, the culture that I soaked up from when I was tiny was Hungarian culture. There's a scene in the 'Sunshine' film [by Istvan Szabo] when the Jewish family are singing 'The Spring Wind Sows Rain" at the dinner table. That reminded me of how much we sang together during my entire childhood, and what we sang: folk songs, so-called 'Hungarian tunes', popular operetta songs.

My parents were married in 1924. They met when once they passed one another on the street and both of them looked back. According to my father's version, not just because mother liked him but he liked mother, too. According to my mother, she looked back because he looked like Imre whom she knew from Gyoma. Imre worked in Gyoma then, yet the family lived in Gyula. So that's how it's possible that she only knew Imre. My grandmother wasn't pleased about the marriage. She would have preferred some better party for her last remaining daughter.

Growing up

When I was born, we lived in Bakats Street, and I went to the Bakats Square grammar (school) for the first two grades. It was a community school [Both community and state schools got their financial funding for functioning from the central budget, but while the community school chairman was chosen by the community, the education director of state schools was chosen by the state school board of directors.] We moved into the VII. District [of Budapest], to Garay Street in 1936 and then I wound up in the Bethlen Square Jewish school. That only happened because when we moved there in May, they had enrolled me in Muranyi Street, in the local grammar [school] where I learned very ugly words in less than a minute, so that my parents immediately decided that this wasn't the atmosphere [for me]. Well, anyway, this was 'Chicago'. [Chicago: slang for a part of the VII. District of Budapest, named for the speed that it was built, as Chicago had been famous for at the time. After the war, it's name referred to the district's bad social conditions and general lack of safety.] The two years I spent in the Jewish grammar school gave me a big experience: compared to the religious classes we had had twice a week, here they had them everyday, many Hebrew classes, we read the Tora, translated Moses first book [Creation], had a separate class for learning songs; the youth religious service every Saturday had a very strong emotional effect, where the blonde rabbi who looked so pretty to me then, gave his speech directly to me. A person regretted in tears all of their childhood uselessness. What stuck with me from religion, feeds on those one or two years. The Friday night devotion of candle-lighting remained – the best students were deserving of this privilege. I even got the chance once, but there was a problem, I wasn't allowed to touch matches at home. On the first of September, I started going here, and my grandma had died already by January. It's a good feeling to think back on how happy it made her when I recited everything I'd learned everyday. The songs for the Friday evening service, all kinds of Hebrew holiday songs, or when I could say a prayer. Because she was still religious.

But in an interesting way, the effect of this school couldn't have been strong enough that there would be a conflict from the fact that at school Saturday was a holy day and at home it wasn't. Thinking back on it all, I see that I felt Jewish school was burden. Sunday morning, my older sister who was in high school at the time, could go to the movies with my daddy, I had to sit in school. It was guaranteed that I got a fever every Sunday. We had an amazingly clever and benevolent school principal, mister Pista Erdos, who regularly took my temperature on Sunday afternoons, then escorted me home with his 'pedallus'[janitor]. The pedallus took my book bag. There was one change. There had never been a seder evening at our house, so I arranged it that one of my mother's uncles – either Uncle Sandor or Uncle Szami – come over to hold a seder. Seders were completely traditional, the uncles who were called were well-practiced at it. We had everything: Haggadah, we read, we sang the Chad Gadiya, I said the mah nistanah, because I was the youngest. If Uncle Szami came, then his wife was there – they didn't have children, if Uncle Sandor came, he didn't have a wife at the time. I don't remember any other guests, everybody in the family was Jewish, anyway, except for my father – or rather, my maternal branch – everybody held their own seder with their own families. My mother had prepared everything beforehand, there was matzah balls, charoset, celery greens, horseradish, eggs. But she made them before, it didn't cause me any conflict. I have to add to that, that my parents were totally assimilated believers, and for example, after the fourth year of grammar school, it was never even considered that we be enrolled in the Jewish gymnasium.

We both went to the Prater Street Ilona Zrinyi [High School] which was a municipal gymnasium. To get a Jewish child enrolled in gymnasium in 1935, you had to get some seriously heavy 'protekcio' [slang - inside influence, sometimes favors from friends or simply paid for] on your side. A state school was out of the question, there wasn't enough money, and a social democrat[-ic Party] representative was able to get my older sister into a capitol city school. At the time, the rule was that those whose older sibling was already enrolled there, they were automatically accepted. So my parents didn't think about a Jewish school. My father got the 'protekcio'. He'd been a member of the Social Democratic Party since 1921 [MSZDP] 8. He wasn't that active as Uncle Imre. My mother wasn't as interested in the worker's movement, as much as being part of the 'middle-class', so she was capable of holding my father back a bit, and giving him more prosaic tasks.

Returning to religion, I have a very clear childhood memory of when we lived in Bakats Street. At the time, we went to the Pava Street synagogue for the fall holidays. I can see before my eyes, we went there with my mother and my grandmother. And it was the same. when we lived in Garay Street and went to the Bethlen Square synagogue. But just for the high holidays. Then, we would go, and we fasted and there was a holiday diet. My father never came with us. He took part in the seder evenings I arranged, but then the war, the work service dwindled that all away. After the war, it never came back. The war, the Holocaust totally broke my faith apart. Now I'm building it again from crumbs.

So my paternal family branch was not religious at all. The maternal branch was, although in that very assimilated Neolog way. Keeping the main customs was just a cultural thing, not religious. It was tradition, not faith in god. I had faith in god, but it wasn't a topic of discussion at our house. I loved my father to death, and all the way to my teenage years, which unfortunately, coincided precisely with my father's constant work service [forced labor], I saw my father as perfect. I despaired so for him, like a kitten. I adored him. So I never questioned anything in my father for a

second.

We lived our ‘Jewishness’ like a person brushes one’s teeth. For example, in school religion classes were mandatory. We went to our classes, the Christian girls went to their own. We went to the Friday afternoon youth service, the Christian girls went to mass. It was part of a person’s lifestyle, that a person has a religion. There was nobody who didn’t have a religion. It was a system of habits, it was part of social acceptance. That part which says, ‘I’m a proper, respectable family’ and the part that says, ‘We belong to a religion and practice it to some degree.’ But this is never about faith.

In connection to anti-Semitism, I have one memory, from back in the Bakats Square grammar school. More precisely, not my own, but rather my older sister’s, well I only heard this much. She was in fourth grade, the class was about Ferenc Rakosi II., and miss teacher said, ‘You all see Klari Klauders, but she’s a Jew?’. It was the ‘but’. Then there were the times, like the school celebrations. Both of us were terribly good students, because they expected this from us, it never caused any difficulties. At the year end celebration I always recited the poem. They’d tried other children before, but then when it didn’t really work, then well, I said maybe I should after all. And the oldest childhood memory of mine. I didn’t go to school yet, Grandma took me down to Boraros Square (Petofi Bridge still hadn’t been built then), and then it was usual for the children to hide next to their mother’s or grandmother’s skirts. The braver ones went over to the other: ‘Little girl, do you want to come play?’ ‘Yes.’ Second question: ‘And what religion are you?’ ‘Israelite.’ ‘You killed the baby Jesus.’ Later in gymnasium – I was in the sixth grade in 1944 – there was a teacher woman, who came in with an Arrow Cross [Arrow Cross Party] 9 armband, she taught us economics. I was an ‘A’ student for this “Mrs. Sir Dr. Karoly S”[Husband’s title]. In her own classes, she sat the Jews and the non-Jews separately, but in our class for some reason she didn’t. When in April 1944 the school year ended sooner, and we went with our yellow stars to get our report cards, the Hungarian teacher woman, who wasn’t our homeroom teacher anyway, she came in, embraced us, kissed us and bid us farewell in tears. I knew there were kids in our class who were cheering for German victory, but there was never anything like that in class. Very interesting. Afterwards, when we went back after the war, my only classmate who didn’t believe in the death camps was there then. We got into a serious, hard debate then, that it’s not true, it can’t be true. So there wasn’t any discrimination. Quite a lot of Jewish kids went to that high school, because it wasn’t an elite school, it was the school for lower middle class.

The streetcar on Ullo Road was very good transportation for the Kispest, Lorinc [outer suburbs in southern pest] kids also, and there were local kids, too. It was that kind of community. Among my classmates’ parents, there was one Jewish lawyer, a doctor from Lorinc, a couple teachers and the rest has simple trades. The class was homogenous, though that’s also relative. When the German teacher woman in high school asked in the first class if any of us had studied German before, about five or six of us stood up, we were all Jews. One of the Jewish kids stood up because she’d only studied English. In our class of thirty-eight, there were about ten of us Jews. We mixed well with the class, made friends, but the most intimate, the trustworthy girlfriend was always Jewish. But there was no isolation in either the seating arrangement nor in invitations among each other. It’s true, in class we never spoke about the Jewish Laws or anything about the subject. There was an ‘eight’, with whom we continually got together, but more than half were not Jews. From the first day of gymnasium to the end, Dolly R. was my girlfriend. They herded us together in a classroom, and the

priests came in lines, took their own to the Veni Sancte service. It turns out that only the ‘other religious’ (that’s what they called us) stayed. Dolly looked at me and said: ‘You, are with me.’ That’s what happened. It was a selfless friendship, through fire or water, so much so that our parents would have forbidden us to meet, because of the ‘bad influence’ of the other. Dolly was a very pretty, clever little girl, her parents had divorced before she was born, she never knew her father, her mother really intimidated her. She was much more wild than I was. Her mother worked, there was less control, I followed cautiously. She was much more interested in boys and sooner, so she made room from when we were about 16-17 for Mariann S., who was a very ugly, very smart, a child of a truly intellectual family. Her father was a lawyer, with a very weak practice, they had no money, but they were well above me in standard of living, I learned a lot at their house about a different way of life, I smiled at her mother with grand poses. Her nickname was Muci, intellectual curiosity bound us together. She became a doctor, died a couple years ago of breast cancer. Dolly left in 1956, she lives in Florida now, she was here at home for a couple high school reunions, she’s still pretty, unfortunately life swept us apart.

In Bakats Street, we had a three-room apartment on the second floor in a huge corner house. The last apartment on the second floor corridor, was on the courtyard, half looked out on this courtyard, and half on the other, but it had a bathroom and a tiled stove. We lived with grandma. I had a very happy childhood. In that social strata, in which I grew up, the children didn’t have separate rooms. The bedroom was a big room, we slept in there with our parents. Grandma slept in the other room. There was a salon with a vitrine, a round table and chairs, where the guests could be seated. There weren’t any armchairs, and there wasn’t a piano, because we didn’t learn music, we learned languages. If I remember well, there wasn’t a separate dining room, we ate in the kitchen. In that apartment, there wasn’t a maid’s room. We didn’t have a lot of money, but we always lived well. Every week they bought a goose. My mother always said, that we’ll be able to make this last, we’re going to eat for a week. We usually ate it in three days, because if something tasted good to us, then my mother would tell us to have some more.

My parents adored each other and us. There was a terribly big love between us. And my childhood is full of the kind of memories where we’re together. Every Sunday we went on an excursion to the Buda hills. Mostly with friends. For me it seemed that every Sunday finished with me waking up on Monday. Because on the way back already, I would fall asleep on the streetcar, and from my father’s arms I wound up in the bed. We went on a boat trip to Visegrad with friends, and their children.

Friends came together in two ways. There are two families whose acquaintances are from the area, know each other since they were pushing baby carriages. Both are Jewish. Their mothers were expecting Gyuri Lantos and Bandi Herbst, then pushing them around, like my mother did Klari. Lajos Lantos was an official, from a well-situated family, they lived in the building next door. Gyuri, who was the same age as my siblings, died as a work serviceman. We never met the Lantoses again after the war. Sandor Herbst was a traveling merchant. I don’t know what he sold, but he had a well-situated family. They had only this one son. The father didn’t survive, the mother and son did, and the friendship with them remained to the end. It’s interesting that the connection was completely broken with those families who didn’t suffer equally from the war. Then the Herbst’s also moved to the VII. District. 1936 was a year when everybody moved. There was never a year again when every house had an ‘apartment for rent’ sign.

By the way, the reason we moved to Garay Street was because my father got work on Baross Square. He was a window dresser, and a passionate one at that, who was an artist in his work. Window dressers considered their work to be art. They organized competitions, gave out awards. When we looked at window displays during family walks, it wasn't just to see how much things cost. It was to see what the other window dressers were doing. In the 1930s, my father somehow arranged to get a German trade paper [subscription]. Part of it he saved for and part was contributed by those he worked for. He even went on a research trip. He travelled every year. He went to the German cities, and was in Paris and Vienna. He always got enough contributions from his employers that it worked out. But he made these trips from very little money. In his youth, he went to Paris and immediately ate a bunch of figs to upset his stomach, so that he wouldn't have any more [food] expenses. There were small companies in those days, and that meant that a window dresser had to visit ten places, because one shop had one or two windows which didn't have to be dressed so often. And at that time, the Baross Square Filleres Aruhaz [exact name Filleres Divathaz or the 'Penny Fashion house'] – now there's a hotel where it stood – they were looking for a head dresser. It was a very pretty department store with sixteen display windows. They had two stores (the bigger one on Baross Square, was rectangular shaped, one of them, the shorter side was on Rakoczi Road, the longer on Rottenbiller street, almost to the corner of Munkas Street. The smaller store was on Teleki Square. It was the 'Country Department Store': the owner built the store for a clientele like the country peasantry arriving at Keleti Station. He didn't allow mirrors to be placed in the store, so the badly dressed, barefoot customers wouldn't be ashamed of themselves. The name 'filleres'[Hungarian adjective: 'penny'] meant that the prices weren't written in pengo [the larger currency of the time] but in filler for example, '2599 filler'. In the snack bars, they sold a pair of hotdogs for ten filler, with mustard, a slice of bread and a small cup of soda water. The line of merchandise was appropriate to the intended clientele, the personnel were allowed to shop at reduced prices before opening once a week. The code for the wholesale price was the owner's son-in-law's name: Weil Oszkar – this gave you the ten numbers. It had a peculiar place in the competition of stores, today I'd call it a 'bovli' [approx: 'junk store'], but it went really well for them. Then, the owner left, never came back, the department store was mostly bombed anyway, I don't know anything about any renovations. My father got this job, and it was logical then for us to move as close as we could. That's how we ended up in 3 Garay Street.

The other level of friendship had to do with some kind of professional connection. Window dressers. My father lived closely with the window dressers in his trade union life. These were his friends. They were all Jews. Window dressing was a Jewish trade. There were hardly any window dressers who weren't Jewish. There were two bigger department stores in Pest, the Corvin and the Divatcsarnok, they didn't have Jewish head window dressers. But they were such gentlemen, compared to us they were honorable gentlemen. The rest of the window dressers running about were all Jews. I'm sure of that because, when we lived already on Garay Street, and the Jewish Laws came out – I think the second one – my father called together a friendly meeting about it. We had a very pretty apartment, with a huge [main] room and there were about thirty of them there, and they discussed how to get a 'Strohmann'[Strohmann System] 10. My parents were fighting people, which I inherited, thank god. So there was no giving up. If something happened, then they immediately looked for a way to defend themselves. Us kids were squeezed out into the front room, and we entertained ourselves by switching all the caps that were hanging up. So while I knew about what was happening, I never felt the whole time that it was tragic. Lately, I thought a lot about that, and I figured out that I was spiritually a child for a long time. What do I mean child?

Someone who is taken care of by others, whose problems are solved by others, who doesn't take responsibility for the things they do, and who could never come to harm because their parents, who love them, are right there. I lived like that all the way up to 1944. Everybody was willing to stand in line, and they reinforced that belief in me, that no harm could come to me.

My father's best friend was Laszlo Lautenburg, likewise a window dresser. We were on very good terms, they lived close. We went on excursions together, the two families regularly gathered. They had two sons, Bandi and Ervin. Bandi was born in 1926, Ervin in 1932. Bandi didn't survive the work service [forced labor], the others survived the war but we lost contact with them. We had no contact with anyone whose family survived the war without loss. It was not at all intentional, it just happened this way. But in fact this is just concerning the children. In the families, where mother and son survived, the father died, we still had contact with them.

Then for example, there was a shoemaker in Raday street who wasn't Jewish. My parents really liked him, and went to him. He was also a person from the movement. But it's interesting, that he didn't take part when we spent our common free time, or went on excursions. Only Jewish families came to then.

Aside from excursions, we went to the cinema a lot. We saw all the Hungarian films. If you go to the Film museum [Orokmozgo cinemateque] and watch the Hungarian films from that time, you can see that even little kids could watch them. Only the family went to the cinema, us four. Then, plus when we lived in Bakats Street, on Sunday mornings my father walked with us to the City Park, and back on foot. Nothing to drink, no pretzels, there was none of that stuff. 'Learn, my son, to discipline yourself. Once he put us in a hansom cab on the way home.

I don't remember any childhood conflicts with my parents. I was a good kid in the sense that my conscience could be influenced. If I didn't get an 'A' in school, my mother said, 'Zsuzsikam, your father will be so sad.' And then I sobbed. Later I found out, that my father wasn't interested at all. All he was interested in, was that I was brave, and I dared to climb everything, and dared to sit on a horse. Until I was about thirteen, I was an expressly good kid. Then I started puberty, and as much as you could contradict your parents, I contradicted them and that lasted a long time. Others had already grown up, when I was still an adolescent spirit. My poor father just became a work serviceman [forced labor] then. The greatest compliment I could say about my parents is that they could stand my horrible teenage period, when I had my own opinion about everything that I could opposed them about. Not only that they could bear it, but well, I became like that in their surroundings. That stayed with me, that one of the most important things in life is my sovereignty, a kind of 'uncompromisingness'. I got smacked one time in my whole childhood. I was going to the Bethlen Square Jewish school, there wasn't school on Saturday, and one Saturday I was playing with my classmates at our house. And all of a sudden my mother came in the room, and slapped me. What happened was that my mother went out shopping and didn't take a key. She thought that I'm at home so she'll ring the bell. We were playing so, that I didn't hear her. She yelled from the street, rang the bell, the neighbors stomped, we didn't hear. My mother's only thought was that we were all dead. She had to call a locksmith. So a huge event like that had to happen for her to smack me. Punctuality, reliability, stamina were so self-evident. I learned from my mother that you have to help the elderly. But I didn't learn it from what she said, but from what she did. It was an environment in which a person couldn't be anything else. If I promised something once, that I would be at home at this time or that, then I was at home. Of course, I did a lot of things on the sly,

like reading books that weren't allowed, but looking back on them today, those were such innocent things.

In those days my father had a social circle who really loved – what they called at the time – 'mulatni' [Hungarian: having fun]. They went with their friends to small pubs. We were still in Bakats Street, and there was a little pub in Liliom Street, probably called the 'Liliom'. Mother went with them to have fun. My father couldn't dance, didn't drink, didn't smoke but he was a 'mokamester' [Hungarian: life of the party, master of ceremonies]. That he didn't play cards was natural, because my grandmother made her children vow never to take cards in their hands. He was a born 'mokamester', who radiated joviality. He was a terribly popular person in the group. My grandmother disapproved of this kind of fun. Her puritanicalism was in that. Aside from that, she was extremely intelligent – she read a lot, but only what was extremely conservative. It's likely she never knew love, the loving joy of a being in a marriage, the kind of love my parents had, and that's why these kinds of life's pleasures were untouchable to her.

My parents loved to travel. In 1935, the two of them went together to Vienna by boat. Then in 1937, they took us too, along with a pair of friends, a married couple, Laszlo Lautenburg and his wife. They paid for a several week tour in Vienna and Czechoslovakia. The only thing that I can recall from Vienna is that Klari dropped her salami sandwich in front of the Maria Theresia statue, and they grumbled at her because of it. I remember a lot from the Czech part of the trip. We were in Prague where we paid for a city tour. To this day I remember the explanations [of the sites]. We were in Zlin, in Bata town, and there we saw the college dormitory, and how the kids were housed there, and how contemporary the whole thing was, we saw how the police wore antelope shoes, and you could walk on the grass. [Zlin: a town in southern Moravia was the Bat'a company headquarters. Tomas Bata (1876-1932), a 'poor cobbler's son who became a big businessman', founded a shoemaking studio here, which developed into Europe's biggest, modern shoe factory outfitted for mass-production. The company also began producing bicycle and automobile tires from the 1930s on.] In the next two years, we spent two weeks in Postyen in a 'Panzio' [Hungarian: 'bed and breakfast']. After that there was no more traveling. Then later, when they could allow themselves to, my parents travelled quite a lot.

There was no summer vacation. Our vacation was that my sister and I got season passes to the Szecsenyi beach [on the city park lake] I was about 12-13 years old when they let me go by myself. I learned to swim from the age of eight in the Rudas swimming pool. Neither my mother, nor my father knew how to swim, but they took me at the age of eight to the Rudas for swimming lessons. Neither of my parents could speak any other language, but I was learning German at the age of six. The same for my older sister. These were the kind of people my parents were. They never taught us to ride a bicycle because my mother fell off a bicycle in her childhood, and she didn't want her children to have such a bad experience. Same thing with ice skating. So we got a pass, we lived in Garay Street, from there we went on foot, all along Istvan Street where there was a bookstore, one half of which sold new books, the other half was a borrowing library. We had a pass for that, too. Every morning we each took out a book, we went to the beach, swam, sunbathed, goofed around, read the book, then on the way home, we handed it in. We read half of the world's literature every summer this way on the Szechenyi beach.

My older sister started language learning by attending a German kindergarten. Then when I became six years old we got our language teacher. The reason behind this was that in 1934, the

young Jewish girls came from Vienna to look for work, and they knew nothing in the world, they only spoke German. One of these young girls, Rosa Schiller came over to us for very little money. She was with us three times a week, three hours at a time. We walked out to the Gellert Hill, and all the way she only spoke German to us. So that was an uncommon occurrence, the kind of possibility my parents could pay for. That lasted two years, and in 1936, when we moved to Garay Street, then I went to a 'tante' [German: 'aunt'- a form of respect used to address teachers and tutors] in Bethlen Street for two more years, so until gymnasium. I don't remember how many times a week I went to the tante. She held a language class, and didn't leave any kind of deep impression on me. Then in gymnasium we had regular German classes.

My mother was at home the whole time, she was a housewife. We could live from a window dresser's pay so that we always had a maid. In the Filleres Department Store, my father earned good money, his salary was 560 pengos. Our rent, when we took that out was 100 pengo a month, which the new owner raised to 110 a month. Why did a family like this have a maid? Because at that time, house work was heavy physical work. Nothing was automated. The iron was heavy, it was a coal [heated] iron. Washing was heavy physical work, then there was cleaning, washing up, heating, bringing the kindling up, taking out the ashes. It was quite natural in that society that a family had a maid. This didn't mean that the lady was a useless, red-nailed Madame, but that they worked together. My mother did the shopping and cooking.

I can thank my mother that I find kitchen work a cheerful thing. It was a pleasure to work with her, she was never a kitchen martyr. Beside her you soaked up that it is a great thing to put good food out for a family. I don't remember, if there was a maid living in the Bakats Street apartment, but there was one in the Garay Street apartment. Her name was Margit. In the huge kitchen there was a foldable bed. At night she opened it, and slept there. We never went into the kitchen at night.

The relationship between the maid and the family was a loving one. Us kids called her Aunt Margit. Once my mother realized that she was always sad. Well, she got it out of her that the reason for her sadness is that she has an illicit child– in today's words: born out of wedlock – a five year old girl. So my mother immediately arranged to bring her up [to the city], so she should live with us. The child lived in the kitchen for a short time, because then it turned out that the child has a father too, and they're in love, they're just poor, and they don't have a place to live together. Then my mother arranged for them to get the vice-custodianship for the building and the apartment that goes with it. From then on they lived there, but Margit continued to come over to work for us. She was the one who looked after what little jewelry or valuables my mother had left during the Arrow Cross period. The biggest thing they did was in 1944 when the Ujpest Jews were already in the ghetto. [In May of 1944, there were about 14,000 Jewish residents of Ujpest. 'In the middle of May, they were given a special order to move into the yellow star houses, from six in the morning to eleven that night they weren't allowed to leave these houses.' Towards the end of May, they, along with residents of other areas in Pest, were taken to the Budakalasz Brick Factory, from where they began to be deported on the trip towards Auschwitz between July 6th and 8th.] She went to the ghetto at my mother's request, and tried to get year and a half old son Pisti [from Istvan = Stephen] of Erzsi [Erzsebet Steiner nee Klein] out, by [saying] that the mother can't flee if she's got a baby in her arms, but without a child she's got a chance. They didn't give her the child. The four grandparents said that their only joy was the little child. Then all of them were executed in Auschwitz. As for Margit, this was an unthinkably huge risk, but she took it. Then her husband died

in the war, and for a while after the war we kept in contact.

The Garay Street apartment was on the first floor [one above the ground floor], two huge rooms to the street. One about six by five meters [305 sq.ft.], that was the bedroom, all four of us slept there. The other was eight by six meters [520 sq.ft.], plus that one had an alcove. There was a bathroom, toilet, huge kitchen and a huge foyer. You could have called that a hall, if the entrance door didn't open into it. Wood paneling all around and built in cabinets. We ate there. The bigger room was the salon, we were very proud of it. Grandma lived in the alcove. She lived almost a year after we moved there. There was a maid's room also, which had a door that opened on the stairwell and another opened on the kitchen. A renter lived in the maid's room. This maid's room renter had a huge role in things later, they saved my father, they hid him. The whole apartment was of a high standard, beautiful stuccos on the ceiling. The owner of the building lived next door to us, incidentally. They were also a Jewish married couple, and at some point, he'd built it so the whole first floor facing the street was altogether. It was directly on Rottenbiller Street, so it wasn't part of 'Chicago'. And on the other side of Rottenbiller Street was the Filleres Department Store.

The building itself had four stories, without an elevator, characteristic of VII. District buildings, with a street façade, two apartments per floor, three on the highest floor. On the back side there were three apartments per floor, with those kind of common toilets next to the stairs on the highest floor. The majority of residents weren't Jewish, that's why it didn't become a star house [Yellow star houses] 11. Relations with the other residents were friendly. One of courteous greetings. There weren't any special get-togethers, nor mixing. There was only one family who we knew were Arrow Cross. This doesn't mean Arrow Cross armbands, just their sympathies. But for example, they didn't report us, didn't make things uncomfortable during the Arrow Cross period. It's characteristic of the residents that after 1945 they came over to us to complain how hard life is, how little there is of everything. I can still hear when they said 'what a beautiful idea the Arrow Cross was, too bad it couldn't be realized'. There was a lonely woman named Olga Fuhrer, who manufactured cosmetic articles, and really loved us very, very much. Later we found out that she hid many people during the Arrow Cross period. But after 1945, she immediately started to pity the persecuted Arrow Cross. She didn't have political reasons, just humanitarian ones.

We had theater passes from the age of ten. There were youth performances, for which you could buy tickets in school. That was a completely great thing. We sat in the cheapest seats, but we were always there. Half the time in the National Theater, the other half in the City Theatre [The Erkel Theater started in this building later (1951)]. So you had this one, the school one. Then there was the so-called Folk art Institute pass. That was for the National Theater. We had one of those, too. Then there was the Vajda Janos Company [from the end of the 1930s, it was a functioning literary circle, the last bastion of liberal, civil literature. They also published books.] on 49 Erzsebet Ringroad, on the corner of Kiraly Street, which held exceptionally high quality literature programs on Sunday mornings. That was in 49 Erzsebet Ringroad, on the first floor [- one above the ground floor] in a large, long hall with a podium. After 1945, it became the seventh district MKP [Hungarian Communist Party] headquarters, and there were no more performances. But until then, on Sunday mornings there were performance evenings – True, they were in the mornings – with the best performing artists. For me, the peak was Oszkar Ascher [1897-1965; performing artist, innovator of the early style of poetry recitation], his performances were thematic, about Villon, Ady [Ady, Endre (1877-1919)] 12, French poetry, English or German literature, etc. The audience were high school

kids, university age kids, I'd say the young Jewish intellectuals and their incumbents. I heard some of Brecht's 'Three-penny Opera' here, the song 'The Lover of Pirates', the chansons and prose, too. Names like: Eva Demjen, Katalin Ilosvay. We went to those, too.

During the war

You have to constantly remember that there was a war on during this time, from 1939. You know, Hungary wasn't immediately in the war, but it was hanging over our heads. My older sister was taken out of gymnasium in 1939 at the age of fourteen, to learn a trade, because there was trouble coming. They put her into the Rakoczi Square higher trade school [Trade schools] 13, and she learned to be a seamstress. In 1942, they didn't take me out since the war [seemed like it] had to be over soon. That was the thinking of a Jewish family. Meanwhile, my father was called perpetually called up [to the forced labor battalions]. There were [anti-] Jewish Laws, we had to get a Strohmann. The greatest question was what we were going to live from, but during all this they [her parents] financed us unerringly, if only with a trifling sum, to cultivate our minds. They didn't consider it entertainment.

At the beginning, we went to the theater with our parents, then later just the two of us [daughters] went. Meanwhile, boys started to appear in my sister's life. She would have liked to follow the spirit of the times, that my sister would be chaperoned [sic – 'gardiroztak': In the times before the war, young girls would only be allowed to go out socializing, to public events, etc. with a chaperone – her mother or a so-called 'gardedam'. A couple decades earlier, in the beginning of the 20th Century, girls from middle class family backgrounds often wouldn't have been allowed in the street alone.] But my mother couldn't do that, so they sent me with her. So, I was my older sister's chaperone. We went to the [Ferenc Liszt] Music Academy, and the Vigado for concerts. I was so bored I counted the seats. But in the end I can be very thankful for that. Although somehow that clearly defines a lot about our value system, about what you could ignore and what you couldn't. And I think that's what is precisely the interesting thing: the intellectuality of a very everyday, lower-middle class Jewish family.

We didn't feel like an oppressed minority because of our clothes. While we could afford it, a seamstress sewed our clothes, and as youngsters, grandma did. It was a big deal to clothe us. Later, our mother signed up for a sewing-tailoring course, and with unbreakable enthusiasm tailored and sketched, and sewed for us. There was a small fabric shop there in Garay Street, whose owner was very close with my mother. Once, she nearly bought a [whole] bolt of gingham. There was a sewing machine from my grandmother's time. I think that looking back now, what she sewed wasn't of too exacting quality, but for a youngster, if you put a bedpan on your head, it looks great. There were uniforms in school, there you couldn't feel bad about your clothes, and anyway there wasn't any one better-off class. But there was always one or two things. In the window dresser profession, you would have merchant friends. Like I remember that in 1943, my sister and I each got a pretty coat. Uncle Laci Lautenberg worked at Herczeg and Fodor as a window dresser, and got them at employee prices. There was always something like that.

Meanwhile, of course, world history was happening, and at home we talked about everything. From the first Jewish Laws [Jewish Laws in Hungary] 14 to the coming war, Hitler's rise to power, Mussolini, Gyula Gombos [Gombos, Gyula (1886-1936)] 15, everything was talked about, and my age didn't matter. Like when it came up about whether we should emigrate or not. Us, as children

had a full right to vote, and I, the zealous Hungarian national sympathizer objected to the most, but my parents would have been hard pressed to do it themselves. But we looked at the map thoroughly, and New Zealand looked the most enticing, but we didn't have any connections to anywhere in the world. Our only acquaintance was the owner of the Filleres Department Store, Erno Ungar, a rich, clever and good man who had gone to America while there was still time. My father turned to him for a letter of sponsorship, which arrived at the end of 1945. By then, though we thought we didn't have any need for it. So we followed what was happening in the world with total precision.

The constantly called my father up for work service [forced labor]. I can't recall the exact date of his first conscription, probably in 1940. At the time they said, three months, and they took him to Diosjeno. Somehow, we lived through that, that it has to be this way because they'd called up the so-called 'age group exception'. My father was born in 1901, and aside from them, there were three other age groups who were not called in to be soldiers right at the end of the war because of the peace treaty. And the general term for that was the 'age group exception'. Later, when we were already in the war, work service became more regular and longer. Thank god, they didn't take him to the Ukraine, he was very lucky indeed that he spent the longest time, around eight months, in Esztergom-Tabor, whose commander, Karoly Gidofalvy Kis was well-known as a decent man. Naturally, it was hard work, pick-axing and humiliation, but not like there, where they let the Jutasi training wreak havoc [Jutasi training: Between the First and Second World Wars, only those in the Hungarian National Guard who finished officer school on the Jutas wastes were allowed to 'sub-officers' (this rank was later called 'vice officer'). The four-year course (in 'hadaprod' school), became a two-year course in 1934 (but could be finished in one-year of intensive crash training).] So we had a lot to be thankful for, in the sense that we had this kind of opportunity: My mother sent [him] a telegram that 'Father is dead. Come home for the funeral.' For that you had to go into the congregation [center], and get a death certificate, say, for Samuel Stern. Nobody bothered you with what relation he is to you, he could be your step father or anybody. And then they gave him permission to leave. This, by the way, is how we made friends for life with somebody who was a work serviceman there with Father. You could visit and mother met this person's wife on the train, who we called Aunt Ella. The whole family was significant to me, because it was the only religious Jewish family I got to know in my life. They were Neologs, but they kept the religion.

I don't know exactly what they did in the work service, only that they pick-axed. But my father told us that at one place they slept on the ground, and mice or frogs were jumping on his face. So these were horrible trials, the whole thing had the character of some kind of boy scout camp. It's very difficult to explain why it had this feeling, afterwards. They gathered these forty year old men, who wanted to live, who had lived a good part of their lives, whose goal was to someday get past this and go home. Whose families supported them spiritually, cared for them and took everything they could to them, boots or gloves. The boarding conditions were terrible there, and our situation wasn't rosy either.

The Jewry somehow accepted that they deserved some kind of punishment. I heard this kind of grumbling from my mother, that those Jewish ladies with a 'button', who just sit in the coffee houses, could do something about all this. This 'lady with a button' comes from the button-shaped diamond earrings they had in their ears, so from the English word. That was the expression, the 'buttonos' Jewish ladies. I consider it tragic-comical that we accepted this as if we deserved some

punishment, some worse fate, because our life is so much better. It's very strange, I can't explain why it was, probably our minds were manipulated that way for decades. And my mother even had this hostile feeling toward wealthy Jews.

So there were departures, he was home for a couple months, and we tried our hardest to live like we were living in a normal world. On exactly, March 19, 1944, they buried my mother's uncle, Szami Goldstein, in the Jewish cemetery in Obuda. It was a beautiful sunny day, I was there with my mother. And after the funeral, we came back on Becsi Road, and a lot of German soldiers on motorcycles roared passed us. We went home, not on foot, by trolleybus. That was the first trolley-bus in Budapest. The others were all started on Stalin's birthday. We got home, my father and Klari deathly pale, informed us in a tragic tone that the Germans had invaded us. [German Occupation of Hungary] 16. The horror of it was enormous. My father was at home when during the occupation, when the regulation for wearing the yellow star came out, but when we had to move to the [yellow] star houses he wasn't at home, so sometime between the two [regulations] he was called up again. He wound up in Ratonyara in Transylvania.

Well, the yellow star came, the school year ended, limitations on going out, we were ordered into the star house. My mother and I looked at lots of apartments, but couldn't find one place, until somebody from the building across the street, from 4 Garay Street, which was a star house, told my mother that they recognized my mother from sight and they'd offer us a room. We moved there. It was horrible. We had to throw everything together, and make an inventory of what we could bring with us, and it was a very short list. We took our beds and our personal things over. Cabinets, table, armchairs, no, but well the apartment there had furnishings. Even before that we had to hand in our radios, carpets as gifts from the Hungarian people to the Germans. [From April 1944, Jews could not be in possession of radio sets. (This was preceded by the obligatory submission of telephones) From April 7, Jewish travel was restricted, use of personal automobiles, motorcycles was forbidden, they could no longer travel by rail, taxi, or boat or public transportation. After the institution of the star houses, Jews were banned from leaving them were brought in: from the end of June 1944, these houses could only left during restricted hours.] One advantage of the star house, was that in this apartment we met two young women, who worked in the Bethlen Square relief hospital. This relief hospital was established, because they took the building away from the Jewish Charity Hospital [This Chevra Kadisa Charity Hospital, its' building houses the Hospital of the National Neurological Surgery Institute today.] on Amerikai Road, and it was moved to the Bethlen Square Jewish school building. It was created with the purpose of treating Jews sick from the Kistarcsa Internment Camp 17 there. So it was a guarded building, there were armed guards. These two young women were nursing assistants, and in May of 1944, they took me and my sister there to work. [Braham: 'The modern, well-equipped Szabolcs Street Jewish hospital was taken by the Germans in May 1944. After this the Jewish Council established two relief hospitals, one in the Wesselenyi Street Jewish Community School building, and the other on Bethlen Square, in a part of the OMZSA headquarters building. Since these hospitals were outside the ghetto, they could be used only with a special permit. They called the hospitals International Red Cross Central Relief Hospitals to protect them from the Arrow Cross. Within the ghetto there were smaller assistance units, which were also called Red Cross hospitals, but the Arrow Cross attacks couldn't take control of those outside the ghetto nor inside the ghetto. (For example, the Arrow Cross attacked on December 28, and for 24 hours held the Bethlen Square hospital under terror, then left taking 28 patients hostage with them. The hostages were later killed.)] This was

important, because we didn't know anything and were afraid of everything. There was always some new news. That they're not taking ladies away, just girls. Quickly everybody had to get married in name. They only take those away who don't have work. Those who work, don't go. Once they even said they aren't taking those who get converted to Christianity. So that a priest even came to the air-raid cellar below the building, to give classes. That's how I know the New Testament so well. Not one of us wanted to Catholicize [sic], but it was interesting and we had the time for it.

So I got into the hospital at age sixteen, as the kind of a child whose only obligation to that point had been to study well. At home, the most I ever did was dry the already washed dishes. I wound up in a forty-bed ward, where there were sacks of hay and cots. The school gym had been converted. I ended up with the kind of nurse, who sat down to teach me what a hospital is and how to work. I experienced so unbelievably much benevolence in the hospital. My work was a difficult as it possibly could be, I hauled cauldrons, distributed food, collected dishes, washed them, emptied bedpans. But there was an atmosphere to the whole thing, a totally positive atmosphere. People were good to each other. Like sometime in July the nurse called me over, that the gentleman doctor L. needs to go to Elemer Street to look at patients, I should go with him, and take the blood pressure meter. I thought to myself, is the gentleman doctor's hand going to break if he carries it? But I didn't dare talk back, I took it. It later turned out that she sent me because an old man was dying in the ward, and they wanted to preserve me from when a person dies. In the middle of 1944. In the middle of the bombings and everything. It was important that I shouldn't see somebody die.

In any case, it was very lively in the hospital, there were a lot of young people, nurses, doctors. Escaped work servicemen were appearing constantly so that soon the temple building was also filled up. Food was ever scarcer, it had to be shared in more directions, but in the middle of all that, we really had a good time.

It was still summer, probably the end of July, suddenly the hospital is full of small kids. It turned out that on Columbus Street there was some kind of transit house. [Columbus Street Refugee camp] 18 , there they collected the small kids and brought them over to the hospital saying that if we had any time, take care of them. They were such lost, lonely children. I started tending one terribly sweet, two year old little boy, and I took him home. When he saw my mother, he ran over to her with open arms, 'Mommy!'. That was it. Everything was taken care of. His name was Sanyi Freund, we found out later, that his parents were refugees from Szatmarnemeti. They had a little girl too, my mother's friend took her in. What happened was the parents gave up their kids so they could flee. A couple days before the Arrow Cross takeover, the parents appeared, they found us, and took the children saying that somehow they were going to try to get to Palestine. I hope they got to Palestine, I never heard about them again.

We were in the hospital on September 17th when my mother walked in with stone dust in her hair and clothes. She came to see if the hospital was bombed, because they'd bombed us out of 4 Garay Street. A bomb went straight through the apartment we lived in and blew up in the cellar. You couldn't walk the streets during an air raid. If they'd seen my mother, they would have shot her without warning. But she absolutely had to know what had happened to us. We rushed home in our nurses clothes, and immediately somebody stopped me: 'You're a nurse, identify this corpse.' So I got what they'd tried to preserve me from in the hospital. It was repulsive.

After the bombing, we moved to 76 Rakoczi Road, which was a corner house. To this point whoever could escape, did, so it was relatively easy to find a room in the star house. This house had two gates, one on Rakoczi Road, the other opened on Szovetseg Street. That's where [news of] the Horthy Proclamation [Horthy Proclamation] 19 reached us, which we were very glad for. We had already taken the star down from the house, when Szalasi came, and suddenly we look up and see they're massing people together in front of the house, and taking the Jews away. We decided then in one second that we were going to escape through the other gate. In that one dress we had on, without a star of course, we took Mother by each arm. I remember I was saying constantly, 'Mother, act like your child is telling you a delightful story. Don't go out with that despairing face.' We went to Hernad Street to my uncle the printer's Christian friend to ask whether he could help us or not. His wife told us in tears that they couldn't take us in. What do we do? There was still Bethlen Square. We went to the hospital, where naturally they took us in. They took my mother on as a assistant nurse. Where was there room? Well, in the contagious ward. Later the hospital got so full, that they covered a little windowless closet space with blankets, and we slept there on the blankets.

By the way, I acquired some kind of a tough skin. It was a very contradictory period. I couldn't imagine the whole time that something bad could happen to us. My gymnasium [high school] report card disappeared in the bombed out apartment. What did I do in October of 1944? I wandered into the gymnasium [high school], where school had already started but I wasn't allowed to go. 'Would you be so kind as to give me another report card.' While I waited for them to make it, nobody would talk to me, just the custodian's wife who pushed the oily sawdust there. I don't know what they could have thought about me, what I was expecting, from having my school report card in order.

Somehow the atmosphere was such that, for example, the bombings barely interested us. Once I went with another girl to the roof during an air raid, so we could see something. It was an incredible cultural life. In the evenings we sat in the large pretty stairwell on the steps, we sang, sometime someone recited a poem.

In the beginning of November, the order came for Jewish women born between 1904 and 1928 have to report in. [On October 22nd, posters appeared on the streets of Budapest which said 'all Jewish men from the age of 16 to 60, as well as all Jewish women from the age of 18 to 40 must report for 'sorozas' [roll call]'. By October 26th, nearly 35,000 Jews, among them 10, 000 women were mobilized. They were quickly arranged in work service companies, and were sent to ditch digging or the construction of defensive fortifications in the south and southeast perimeter countryside of the capitol'.] My since my mother was from 1904, and I was from 1928. And then my mother said, that they're not going to force her. We didn't go. And nobody reported us, because when we went into the hospital, we disappeared in front of the eyes of those who would have. There were many raids on the hospital, but we were in the contagious ward, and neither the Germans nor the Arrow Cross really wanted to go in there. Once they took fifty men away. This was supposedly a deal, that they would take fifty men and they would leave the hospital alone. There were a lot of us there. In the end, my older sister got typhus on Christmas eve. She slept on the upper bunk of a windowless room, with a typhus patient below her, that's probably how she got it, and my mother stood on a chair and held her hand, and nursed her. She recovered.

In the beginning of January 1945, my father suddenly appeared in the hospital. Up to then we knew nothing about him. I already mentioned that in the maid's room, which had a double entrance on the stairwell and from the kitchen there was a entrance, from nearly the first minute lived a renter, a woman named Anna L. who worked in a 24 hour news and tobacco stand nearby. She was a very strait, soldierly, masculine-looking woman. She loved us, and this was mutual. When we went into the star house, an Arrow Cross couple moved into our apartment, but Anna stayed in the maid's room. As soon as the retreat started, my father escaped. He skipped out about the same way as Laszlo Tabi with the bucket. [Refers to the humorist Laszlo Tabi's sketch in which he describes that he escaped from the work service with two buckets, and if they asked him for ID, he said he was just going to the well for water.] He got a small hand car somewhere, on top of that was an old stove, as if he were taking it to a blacksmith, and he came to Pest. His clothes were quite acceptable as a worker's clothes, and he even grew a mustache. He tried to find some place in Pest. I don't know where he talked to Anna, probably at the tobacco stand, it suffices to say that Anna hid him in her room. He lived for about three months there and they never noticed. He wasn't even allowed to go piss in the day time. Then in January, he couldn't stand it any longer, and he went to the hospital. And there, we were all liberated together on the 14th of January [Liberation of Budapest]20.

After the war

My father had lost a terrible amount of weight, because from 1937 or 1938 he'd had a stomach ulcer. It followed him everywhere, that he had to diet, he had to be careful. And he did that all the way to the year 1944, then after the liberation he collapsed. He wound up in the MABI hospital [MABI – Private Employee Insurance Institute. Today the Peterfy Street hospital].

Life started over, we didn't have a thing in the world, not food, not lights, and still we were unbelievably happy. From the first minute, we went everywhere. At the end of January, the Hungarian theater had a big recruiting meeting, and it was a huge experience, because our favorite actors Tamas Major, Hilda Gobbi, Zoltan Varkonyi performed [Tamas Major (1910-1986): Actor, director, theatre director. He had a defining role before the war in the creation of the National Theatre's youth performances. Director of the National Theater (1945-1962), then was head director (1962-1978), and a member of the Katona Jozsef Theater from 1982; Hilda Gobbi (1913-1988): Actress who spent the longest part of her career in the National Theatre as well. Zoltan Varkonyi (1912-1979) – actor, director, theater director. The main director of the Vig Theatre (from 1961), then director of the theatre (1971-1979). Previously had been a member of the National Theater, the Madach Theater, as well as the Muvesz Theater. His name is connected to the screen adaptations of many classic Hungarian novels.] We looked for friends, and they looked for us. When my father first went home to the apartment, he told the Arrow Cross couple to leave because the owner came home. They immediately disappeared. Then my father and I brought home the beds one at a time from Rakoczi Road. Life started.

Klari married Sandor B. in 1947, whom she'd met at a student ball during the war. Sandor was born into a religious Neolog Jewish middle class family in 1922. His father was an agent, his mother a housewife. Sandor had a sister one year older than him, who survived the war with her husband and little daughter who was born in 1943. The girl became an accountant, married a number of times, and has no children. It made no difference that Sandor graduated as an 'A' student, he

couldn’t go to university [anti-Jewish laws forbade it]. He learned a trade, worked in a factory, then became a work serviceman [forced labor]. Then in 1945, they accepted him at university, and he became an engineer. Klari graduated later in the Hungarian English department of the College of Humanities, and taught until she retired. Sandor died in 1980. They had a son who emigrated to Australia. Klari left to live with them in 1992 and lives there ever since.

At the beginning of 1945, high school started again, and I continued in the seventh grade of gymnasium. We didn’t lose a year, because those who started back in school in September of 1944 didn’t really go that often: there were coal shortages, then came the siege [of Budapest], then right away there wasn’t any heating, or electricity, so we continued together with them.

And now comes the thing that even now, sixty years later I can’t find an answer for: we didn’t talk about what happened. Not with each other, not with other Jews. Two Jewish girls from our class were lost there. We didn’t talk about it. One girl came back from deportation. And we didn’t ask her anything, and she didn’t tell us anything. We know she came back from being deported because she was bald and her face was covered in spots. It was more like that we didn’t even dare to go talk to her. My girlfriend and I just hung on each other’s necks saying, ‘You survived, that so great!’ – and we didn’t tell each other what happened.

Something else happened in 1945. We Magyarized our name from Kauders to ‘H-‘. To this day, it is still difficult for me to say that I’m Jewish. I could never go back to the religion. Not because I was afraid, indeed, I even escorted my mother to temple. In 1949, when I was already working, a colleague of mine good-naturedly told me that I shouldn’t go to temple because it’s incompatible with party membership. And when I told my mother that, she said, ‘look at his stinking Jew, he must have also been there in the synagogue, otherwise where else would he have known that you were there?’ Still in 1948 I had a bad feeling when I got on a tram with a friend on Saturday [the Sabbath] to go somewhere. But I had already lost my faith by then. I lost my faith in degrees as we found out what had happened to our Ujpest relatives, that Ervin Engel had been consumed with grief.

I graduated in 1946, and I went to the Hungarian-English department in the college of Humanities. I had studied English earlier, but I didn’t know it really well. There was a very big social life at the university, politics first entered my life then. I joined the Communist Party in 1947. My father and my older sister had already joined in 1945. I didn’t really like the College of Humanities. I was really good in Hungarian literature, I could say that I was the teacher’s favorite, and for years I got used to her explaining things in class, practically just to me. Then I sat in classes in the university, and I felt that it was flat and didn’t say anything. Pretty soon it turned out I wasn’t going to classes as much as I was going to the corner coffeeshop for a single [espresso].

Then I decided, that I wanted to make money instead, and I left university. I’d gone for two years, but I didn’t take the basic examination which was mandatory at the end of the second year. From the entire class, at least among the party members, only Gyuri Litvan took it, who was a very enthusiastic and diligent boy. [Gyorgy Litvan, historian: Joined the party opposition beside Imre Nagy in 1955. He became famous at the Party meeting in Angyalfold on March 23, 1956 for publicly demanding the removal of Matyas Rakosi. He was imprisoned after 1956, and given amnesty in 1962.]

I was already working in January of 1949. And then came a period when I saw something here. I went here to work at the time, when I saw something here I took it, something there then I took that but meanwhile I got it a third job. I thought about it later, and for a long time I thought that it was only about an over-extended teenage period. But no. I realized that this was the Holocaust. It knocked me, like a pendulum [demolition ball], the kind they demolish houses with, out of the well-defined life, well-circumscribed around the Holocaust. I didn't know where I was. It took me a long time before I figured it out. But then I found my place, I chose a great trade, and with a grown-up mind I graduated from the Economics University. I was always good in languages, so I had a successful professional life. I look back a my life and see it was successful. I earned, and earned, I left what wasn't good behind, I dare to decide, I dared to change.

I got married in 1951. We met at work. He wasn't Jewish, but that didn't cause any problems. All my Jewish girlfriends married non-Jewish boys. Not because, like a lot of people say, that we didn't want to be Jewish. We didn't convert, we didn't deny our Jewish past, but we thought that we should be just like anybody else, the non-Jews. In any case, one of the decisive motivations of my life is equality, that there shouldn't be second-class in any sphere, and a lot of people apparently lived this way. I didn't even bother with it. At work I had no idea who was Jewish and who wasn't for decades. My circle of friends was like this, that half were Jewish, and half weren't. My husband came from a working class family. He got his law degree while we were married. He also did it at night school. Their family didn't mind that he married a Jewish girl. It wasn't an especially close family. His father was no longer living, it didn't matter to his mother. The relative who really loved him, accepted me. And there wasn't any opposition in my family either. Anyway, my husband looked more Jewish than I did, so much so that he would get comments at work like, 'because us Jews, you understand…' and he never corrected anyone. He considered it exceptionally important to assume responsibility for [having] his wife. We had two children, both have diplomas. One of the children has a Jewish spouse and one doesn't. My children are great, both live in good marriages, the most important thing being that I have five grandchildren, with whom I have an extremely good relationships.

In the 1950s, we lived quite poorly, but somehow we didn't feel it. We were young. We filled our free time with family programs, attended the theater a lot, and the symphony. In the 1960s, we wound up in a continuously better financial situation, we regularly went to the Theater, the cinema, we read the 'Nagyvilag'[The Big World], the 'Kortars'[Contemporary], the 'Uj Iras' [New Writing], and 'Elet es Irodalom' [Life and Literature]. Our society of friends mainly came from work acquaintences. It was not at all important who was Jewish and who wasn't.

In the meantime, we finished university at night school. We helped each other a lot. There was a big cultural difference between my husband and I, because since he didn't get so much out of his family as I did mine, but he was an outstanding talent, had a brilliant mind, he took in everything. He only knew one language, German, but he spoke it quite well. Not like I did, but he made himself understood, he could watch films [in German]. And he was very endearing, enormously helpful person.

I don't want to talk in anymore detail about my life after 1945. What I think I had to say, that is, that I became a Party member in an extremely naïve and idealistic way. I took everything deathly serious. I believed that the Soviet soldiers came to Hungary to save me. My husband was much smarter than me, he enlightened me to so many things, like how the glorious Soviet groups stood

around just before Warsaw, what kind of games are going on and about everything. He saw very clearly, so clearly that there was a time in his life when he was on the verge of depression whenever he thought about how bad it is like this. While I took this as correctable situation, then he saw clearly that it wasn't, and it bothered him that we're doing something that is futile. Of course, he listened to Free Europe [Radio Free Europe] 21 and the Voice of America. I didn't because I didn't like the tone of the announcer's voice. In retrospect, this causes a big problem for me: I know that I did a lot of good in my workplace, in the field of 'cadre development' [In socialist firms HRO people were always on the lookout for people who were worthy of becoming communist cadres, these people were then sent to various specialized and political courses to be properly educated especially politically.], on questions of promotion, and still I was the servant or administrator of something that turned out to be bad. True, I didn't know, and if I could have known, then I would have quickly closed my eyes and ears. My mother was the only one, who never believed anything. My father and I did. My mother didn't believe the Rajk trial [Rajk Trial] 22, and never got taken in by anything.

We were all happy about the establishment of the Israeli state. This didn't even bother my communism, because the Soviet Union even voted for it. But the thought of emigrating never came up. The 1967 war [Six-day war] 23 was terrible. There was a party decision at that time that Israel should be judged as an aggressor. The party decision pertained to us. Both of us protected ourselves from having to make a statement about it anywhere. I don't consider it an heroic thing, but my husband for example was invited to hold party meetings all over the place. He was a very dynamic, very talented person with a good stage presence. In those times, he didn't accept anything [any speaking engagements]. He told everyone, that he doesn't have time. It wasn't an intelligent thing in those days to provoke the Party discipline. But both of us were cheering for Israel with all our hearts. My husband and Uncle Imre had an argument about it. That is, Uncle Imre argued with my husband before the '67 war, Uncle Imre had a high opinion of Nasser, my husband said he would like to kill all the Jews into the Red Sea. At the time, you couldn't tell that it would really happen, but my husband saw things very clearly. The same thing for the 1973 war [Yom Kippur War] 24, and also, when Hungary broke diplomatic relations with Israel.

I was in Israel for the first time in 1995. We have no relatives, my sister and I went as tourists. I got a list of Israeli hotels, sat on the telephone, wrote faxes, and we took a completely independently arranged tour.

GLOSSARY

1 Wolfner Family

Gyula Wolfner (1814-1889) a creator of the Hungarian leather industry migrated to Hungary from Bohemia with his brothers. He founded a tannery and leather processing manufacture in Újpest in 1841, which he developed into a factory with his younger brother, Lajos (1824-1912). After his death Lajos improved it further. He received the title of baron in 1904. His son Baron Gyula Wolfner (1868-1944) followed in his footsteps and expanded the factory into a large-scale industrial plant. Gyula was a well-known art collector, too. His brother, Baron Tivadar Wolfner (1864-1929), co-owner in the leather works, was a founding, and later board member of the Manufacturers' Association as well as a leading member of the Chamber of Trade and Industry of Budapest. He was elected deputy to the Parliament with a liberal party program in 1896.

2 Forced Labor
Under the 1939 II. Law 230, those deemed unfit for military service were required to complete 'public interest work service'. 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.

3 BESZKART (Transport Co
of the Capital City of Budapest): Public transport service company of the Hungarian capital, founded in 1922. Its vehicles were painted yellow and white and bore the crest of Budapest on their sides. It also incorporated the cogwheel railway and the funicular. Trolley bus service began in 1933. By the beginning of the 1940s it had more than 2,000 vehicles, of which 80 percent were destroyed or damaged during WWII. The company was terminated at the end of 1949.

4 19 March 1944
Hungary was occupied by the German forces on this day. Nazi Germany decided to take this step because it considered the reluctance of the Hungarian government to carry out the ‘final solution of the Jewish question’ and deport the Jewish population of Hungary to concentration camps as evidence of Hungary’s determination to join forces with the Western Allies. By the time of the German occupation, close to 63,000 Jews (8 percent of the Jewish population) had already fallen victim to the persecution. On the German side special responsibility for Jewish affairs was assigned to Edmund Veesenmayer, the newly appointed minister and Reich plenipotentiary, and to Otto Winkelmann, higher SS and police leader and Himmler’s representative in Hungary.

5 Obuda
separate town until 1876 when Obuda, Buda and Pest united under the name of Budapest. Obuda had one of the largest Jewish communities in the country as early as the 18th century. This community was formally constituted as a congregation predating even that of the Jews in Pest. The Obuda community had a functioning Talmud Torah, a private commercial school, a kindergarten, and charitable societies.

6 Civil school
(Sometimes called middle 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.

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 MSZDP (Hungarian Social Democratic Party)

Established in 1890 as a non-parlamentary party during the dualistic era, it fought for general and private voting and for the rights of the working class. In October, 1918 it took part in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the cabinets that followed. In March, 1919 the unified MSZDP and MKP (Hungarian Commmunist Party) proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic. After the revolution's failure, the party was reorganized. Its leaders entered into a bargain with PM Bethlen in 1921, according to which the free operation of the party and the trade unions was assured, while the party renounced the organization of state employees, railway and agricultural workers, political strikes and republican propaganda, among others. In the elections of 1922, the MSZDP became the second largest party of the opposition in Parliament, but later lost much of its support as a consequence of the welfare institutions initiated by the Hungarian governments in the 1930s. After the German occupation of Hungary in 1944, the party was banned and its leaders arrested, forcing the party into illegitimacy. In the postwar elections, it regained the second highest number of votes. As a member of the Left Bloc, created by the Communists, it took part in dissolving the Smallholders' Party. At the same time, the MKP was directed by Moscow to absorb the MSZDP: in 1948 the name of the two united parties became the 'Hungarian Workers' Party' (MDP). After the creation of a single-party dictatorship, social democrat leaders were removed. The party was reestablished under the leadership of Anna Kéthly in 1956 and participated in the cabinet of Imre Nagy.

9 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 October 15, 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.

10 Strohmann System

Sometimes called the Aladar system – Jewish business owners were forced to take on Christian partners in their companies, giving them a stake in the business. Sometimes Christians would take on this role out of friendship and not for profits. This system came into being because of the Second anti-Jewish Law passed in 1939, which strongly restricted the economic options of Jewish entrepreneurs. In accordance with this law, a number of Jewish business licenses were revoked and no new licenses were issued. The Strohmann system insured a degree of survival for some Jewish businesses for varying lengths of time.

11 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.

12 Ady, Endre (1877-1919)

One of the most important Hungarian poets, who played a key role in renewing 20th century Hungarian poetry. He was a leading poet of the Nyugat [West], the most important Hungarian literary and critical journal in the first half of the 20th century. In his poems and articles he urged the transformation of feudal Hungary into a modern bourgeois democracy, a revolution of the peasants and an end to unlawfulness and deprivation. Having realized that the bourgeoisie was weak and unprepared for such changes, he later turned toward the proletariat. An intense struggle arose around his poetry between the conservative feudal camp and the followers of social and literary reforms.

13 Trade Schools

1) Primary trade education - The 1868 law of compulsory school attendance also included apprentices up to the age of 15. The Industrial Law of 1884 required employers to have their apprentices attend school, and towns with a certain number of apprentices had to set up apprentices schools; 2) Specialized trade schools - The focus of education was industrial (workshop) practice, the duration of education was 3 years (of 11 month terms). The teachers were engineers, secondary school teachers, art teachers and foremen; 3) Secondary trade education - Industrial secondary schools admitted students after 8 years of study plus 12 months of practice in the chosen field. (The first opened in Kassa in 1872.) The duration of education was 3 years with 44 class hours per week on subjects of general knowledge, professional theoretical studies and manual practice in the workshop, with compulsory labor in the relevant field during the holiday period; 4) Trade schools for women - Their aim was organized education in needle-craft of women who finished the lower 4 classes of secondary education. The duration of education was 1 or 2 years depending on the chosen area of specialization. Education was chiefly practical. The final

certificate was a labor-book in the studied craft, which together with a year of practice entitled the bearer to a trade license.

14 Jewish Laws in Hungary

The first of these anti-Jewish laws was passed in 1938, restricting the number of Jews in liberal professions, administration, and in commercial and industrial enterprises to 20 percent. The second anti-Jewish Law, passed in 1939, defined the term “Jew” on racial grounds, and came to include some 100,000 Christians (apostates or their children). It also reduced the number of Jews in economic activity, fixing it at 6 percent. Jews were not allowed to be editors, chief-editors, theater-directors, artistic leaders or stage directors. The Numerus Clausus was introduced again, prohibiting Jews from public jobs and restricting their political rights. As a result of these laws, 250,000 Hungarian Jews were locked out of their sources of livelihood. The third anti-Jewish Law, passed in 1941, defined the term “Jew” on more radical racial principles. Based on the Nuremberg laws, it prohibited inter-racial marriage. In 1941, the Anti-Jewish Laws were extended to North-Transylvania. A year later, the Israelite religion was deleted from the official religions subsidized by the state. After the German occupation in 1944, a series of decrees was passed: all Jews were required to relinquish any telephone or radio in their possession to the authorities; all Jews were required to wear a yellow star; and non-Jews could not be employed in Jewish households. From April 1944 Jewish property was confiscated, Jews were barred from all intellectual jobs and employment by any financial institutions, and Jewish shops were closed down.

15 Gombos, Gyula (1886-1936)

Politician, military officer. From 1920, he was an MP. In 1923, he founded his own party called the Racial Defense Party. He was Prime Minister of Hungary from 1932-1936. He pursued racial protectionist, anti-Semitic politics in the 1920s, but became more moderate at the end of the 1920s and rejoined the moderate right government party. As Prime Minister, he launched a program called the Gombos National Work plan to deal with the repercussions of the 1929 economic world crisis. His political views were closer to Italian fascism and Mussolini’s politics, than Hitler’s German political program. He tried to build up diplomatic relations with Italy in order to achieve the revisitation of the Trianon Peace Treaty (on the basis of which Hungary was forced to forfeit two-thirds of its prewar territory.) At home, he started preparations for an extreme right-wing transition in politics. In the 1935 parliamentary election, his followers, the so-called ‘extreme right-wing center’ gained a majority in parliament.

16 German Occupation of Hungary

German Invasion of Hungary: Hitler found out about Prime Minister Miklos Kallay’s and Governor Miklos Horthy’s attempts to make peace with the west, and by the end of 1943 worked out the plans, code-named ‘Margarethe I. and II.’, for the German invasion of Hungary. In early March 1944, Hitler, fearing a possible Anglo-American occupation of Hungary, gave orders to German forces to march into the country. On March 18th, he met Horthy in Klessheim, Austria and tried to convince him to accept the German steps, and for the signing of a declaration in which the Hungarians would call for the occupation by German troops. Horthy was not willing to do this, but promised he would stay in his position and would name a German puppet government in place of Kallay’s. On 19th March, the Germans occupied Hungary without resistance. The ex-ambassador to

Berlin, Dome Sztojay, became new prime minister, who – though nominally responsible to Horthy – in fact, reconciled his politics with Edmund Veesenmayer, the newly arrived delegate of the Reich.

17 Kistarcsa Internment Camp

This internment camp served as the place of imprisonment for those held for political reasons before the German occupation. After the occupation of Hungary by the German army on March 19th 1944, 1500-2000 Jews were transported here. Most of these Jews were then deported to Auschwitz.

18 Columbus Street Asylum

Fleeing Jews, mainly from the countryside, were gathered in the back wing and the yard of the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb on Columbus Street. There they waited for emigration passes, pending the outcome of negotiations between Zionist leaders and the SS, in the Zuglo District (Budapest). Only one group of emigrants left the asylum in June, 1944. First they were transported to Bergen-Belsen, but later allowed to emigrate to Switzerland upon the order of Himmler (see also Kasztner-train). By the time of the Arrow Cross takeover, several thousand people were crowded into here. The elderly were transferred to the ghetto while those of working age were transported to Bergen-Belsen.

19 Horthy declaration

On October 15, 1944, the governor of Hungary, Miklos Horthy, announced on the radio that he would ask for a truce with the Allied Powers. The leader of the Arrow Cross party, Ferenc Szalasi, supported by the German army, which had already invaded Hungary in March 1944, took over power.

20 Liberation of Budapest

By the Christmas of 1944, Soviet troops closed the blockade around the Hungarian capital, which had been transformed into a fortress (Budapest Festung) with approx. 45,000 German and 50,000 Hungarian soldiers stationed inside. After a 14-week siege the city fell to the Soviets. Both parts of the capital (Buda on the West and Pest on the East), especially areas near the banks of the Danube, were heavily damaged or destroyed. The retreating Germans blew up every bridge spanning the Danube, as well as Buda Castle.

21 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.

22 Rajk trial

Laszlo Rajk, Hungarian communist politician, Minister of the Interior (1946-48) and Foreign Minister (1948-49), was arrested on false charges in 1949 in the purges initiated by Stalin's anti-Tito campaign. He was accused of crimes against the state and treason (of having been a secret agent in the 1930s), sentenced to death and executed. His show trial was given much publicity throughout the Soviet block. In March 1956 he was officially rehabilitated.

23 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on June 5, 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

24 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on October 6, 1973 and ended on October 22 on the Syrian front and on October 26 on the Egyptian front.