Alice Kosa

Alice Kosa, (nee Molnar)
Sepsiszentgyorgy
Romania
Interviewer: Emoke Major
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I met Alice Kosa in autumn 2005. Her husband had died in 1988, since then she lived alone in her two-rooms flat in Sepsiszentgyorgy.

Her sole visitors are her grandson, who lives in Sepsiszentgyorgy, and Julianna Reismann [Editor's note: Centropa interviewed her as well], her 86-years-old lady-friend. One of the consequences of her advanced age – she is 96 years old –is that she is hard of hearing, moreover she has cataract on her both eyes, therefore she has a poor eyesight as well.

She can nearly see shades and contours, and all this increases her loneliness and isolation. She is extremely interested in everything happening in the outside world, mainly in the political situation of Hungary and Israel, but she likes to be well-versed in science, art, literature as well.

For this reason she used to read newspapers daily, even if it took her hours to go through an article. Unfortunately since summer 2006, because of her poor health she lives in the St. Elizabeth Home for Elderly People in Gyergyoszentmiklos, completely isolated from the outside world.

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- **My family background**

My father's father was Emanuel Marmorstein, I don't know what my grandmother's name was. They had a large bakery in Nagyborosnyo, they baked so many bread that they distributed them to villages too. Nagyborosnyo was considered a large village then, with its 1500 inhabitants.

[Editor's note: Nagyborosnyo, in Romanian Borosneu Mare, is 18 km far from Sepsiszentgyorgy to the east.]

It was a big village yet in the 1940s, well I don't know how many shops were there, but there were at least five or six groceries alone.

But villagers moved to cities during communism, because their lands were taken, so the village became poor, it went off, many Gypsies moved in the village, that's what people told me.

In 1916, when the Romanians *[the Romanian Army]*were coming in, Hungarians were fleeing. The Romanians came in with an intense hate, and they were very course, uneducated soldiers, it was dreadful. The Romanians *[soldiers]* beat a lot the few men who were at home – since, well, men were either soldiers, either in captivity or dead on the battlefield. It *[the beating]* was called 'the twenty-five', they struck 25 or 50 with a cudgel, depending on how they liked that person.

My grandfather's family fled too, and my grandfather died during escape – in 1916 – in Nagybacon *[Editor's note: Nagybacon, in Romanian Batanii Mari is 54 km far from Nagyborosnyo in north-west direction]* of a contagious disease, I suppose of Spanish flu.

[Editor's note: Spanish flu – the first large-scale pandemic of the 20thcentury, the Spanish flu had symptoms similar to the influenza's; it had 20-21 millions of victims between 1918-1919. For example in Hungary 44 thousand people died of this disease in October 1918.]

I know that he caught some infectious disease, which transformed into pneumonia as well. Grandma came back then from Nagybacon to Nagyborosnyo, they didn't stay there for long, only a few weeks, and everybody came home, who didn't leave for other country.

My father had a first cousin in Feldoboly *[Editor's note: Feldoboly, in Romanian Dobolii de Sus is 23 km far from Sepsiszentgyorgy, 5 km to south-east from Nagyborosnyo]*, they were cousins on the paternal side. That aunt of mine was called Gizella Marmorstein (she was the daughter of grandfather Marmorstein's brother).

They had two daughters: one of them was called Ella, the other Jolanka. They had a small shop, and they lived of that. They were selling everything, Feldoboly is a small village, it has let's say 300 inhabitants, so what people ordered, they provided it.

But they didn't stay for long in Feldoboly, because they found a shop, a pub and grocery for rent in Malnas, they rented it, and they lived their life in Malnas village after that.*[Editor's note: Malnas, in Romanian Malnas is 41 km far from Feldoboly, in north-east direction.]*

My father's younger brother was called Izso Molnar. His name originally was Marmorstein. There were two boys in the family, my father and his brother, and the two boys adopted the name Molnar. They magyarized their name when they were bachelors, unmarried, as soon as they became of age. *[Editor's note: This must have happened in the 1900s.]*

This was a kind of custom. That's why there are so many *[Jews with]* nice names. They adopted nice names. I don't know why they didn't like their *[old]* name. It was a German name, and if they lived in Hungary, why should they have had a German name, why shouldn't it be Hungarian?

Uncle Izso stayed in Pest as a young man, and married his first-degree cousin, Irma Steiner. They didn't care about the blood relationship, the blood composition wasn't known in deep, so they didn't have any objections to it.

The two mothers, the mother of the girl he married, and his mother were sisters. Uncle Izso was a clerk in Rakospalota – it's one of the suburbs of Pest – at the lamp factory. In 1912 they had two

daughters, Luci and Klara, twins, but not identical twins.

They moved home to Nagyborosnyo, their son, Gabor was born there. They had moderate means in Nagyborosnyo, so I invited them to stay in Brasso. Since there was a small pub near the grocery we were renting, where they cooked soup as well, and it became available.

knew that if it was handled by a straight, honest man, who didn't water down the beer, it could develop very well. I announced uncle Izso, they moved to Brasso, rented the pub, and it worked very well indeed. They were in Brasso during the war as well, uncle Izso and his wife too died there after the war, but I couldn't tell more precisely when. Klari too died in Brasso, she was married about two times.

Luci got married quite late, after World War II, to a Jewish boy from Nagyvarad, but their marriage lasted only for a few weeks. The autumn festivals were near, she told her husband that she would go home to her parents for the festivals, and she never went back. She left for Israel, she still lives there in the same town with her brother, Gabi *[Gabor]*.

One of my father's younger sisters was called Berta Marmorstein– she remained Marmorstein. Aunt Berta got married to a boy from Pest, they lived in Budapest. Their daughter is Aliz, who is still alive, thanks' God, she was born in 1913, she is 92 years old.

She got married to a catholic man, to Istvan Bogdan, but he didn't observe *[religion]*, because he was a great communist. He was a clerk in the Manfred Weiss Aircraft Factory *1* *2*, and there the workers were great communists anyway.

Their daughter, Eva Bogdan is a teacher of German and French language in Budapest, she was born there, and she lives there. She was married, she has two children, one of them is Peter, he's twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old now, he's engaged in music, that's all I know about him.

I used to be a great corresponding person, I enjoyed corresponding with nice, intelligent people. I corresponded with this cousin of mine too, though quite rarely, with Eva's mother, with my namesake *[Aliz Bogdan]*. And she wrote me once that after the final exams he *[Peter]* had gone to Szeged *[to study]*, because he was interested in music. I don't know what became of him.

This cousin of mine who was born in 1913, my namesake had an elder sister, Ibolya, who was a genius, she was a university teacher. Her husband – his first name was Tibor, I don't recall his family name –, though he was a Jew, he was awarded two times the Kossuth prize.

Tibike *[Tibor]* never took the Kossuth prize *[the money given with prize]*, he always said he would give it to the poor. Three months ago too, I heard *[on TV]*how they praised him, how unselfishly he gave everything to others, what a great teacher he was!

He used to be so wrapped up in his work, aunt Berta, my namesake's mother told me that she cooked several times at their house, and she was bringing soup to Tibike *[to his study room]*, he was only making a sign, he was wearing a hat, and it was written on that: 'No, thanks!'.

He put a slip there so that she didn't interrupt him. Tibike was very lean, he wasn't quite healthy in fact, he cooked potatoes for himself in salty water, and he ate that by himself.

They were both engaged in mathematics, that's how they fell in love with each other, when they were students. Tibike called Ibolya 'my golden flower'. They had a child, but it seems he wasn't vigorous, since he died when he was four or five months old. Tibike died at quite a young age.

Aunt Gizella too was one of my father's younger sisters, she got married to Nandor Friedenthal. They lived in Nagyborosnyo, then they bought a house in Brasso and moved there.

My father had two more younger sisters in Nagyborosnyo, who were old maids, one of them was called Margit Marmorstein, and Roza the other; after my mother died, my father lived with them *[in the family house]*, until Margit got married to Nandor Nussbaum *[in 1929]*.

My father's name was Albert Molnar, but Molnar was an adopted name. But my father's original name has a story. Since not Marmorstein was his name, but Steiner – complicated things, you see.

He told me that his mother had gone to Hungary *[to her sister]* to give birth, because she was from Hungary, well, she had come to Nagyborosnyo because of her marriage, she had come from far, from Budapest's surroundings.

Her elder sister was there, she didn't have any relatives here *[in Nagyborosnyo]*, and back then women gave birth at home, and so she, my father's mother went home to have her child born there, at her sister's.

My father was born there *[near Budapest]* in 1888, and it's a small town, well everybody knew everybody, the sister of my father's mother was called Mrs. Steiner, and the midwife reported him under the name Steiner. Thus my father's name originally was Steiner, and he was registered in Budapest.

My father did the army service when he was a young man, but 'thanks God' he had a hernia, so he had to do a kind of support service, he had some kind of job not requesting any qualification in Budapest.

The maiden name of my maternal grandmother was Franciska Feder, Fanni. Her first husband was a man called Sternbach, he was an elder man, he could have been her father. That's what my grandmother told me, that she didn't love Sternbach, though he was a very good person, but he was so old, and there was the handsome Klein, who was an optician, and she loved him.

However, Sternbach was wealthier, he had a prosperous restaurant, and her parents wanted her to get married to him.

What could a 14-15 years old girl do? She had to marry him. She hid even under the bed, when she saw Sternbach was coming, that's what she related. All this happened in Fogaras, but I don't know these more in detail; today's children inquire more their parents than we did at the beginning of the last century.

My grandmother had a son, Viliam, Vilmos from Sternbach, he left for France, and had a large tailor's shop in Paris.

Grandma's first husband died, then she married Klein, but they had a very bad married life. My grandmother told me that he had been a very handsome man, but he was as beautiful as a bad

and rude person, so their marriage lasted for a short time.

They had a daughter, but she died after a few months. She was 10 or 12 months old, when grandma had to go to Brasso for some reason – I don't know why, I didn't ask such things as a child – *[and she took the child too with her]*.

Grandma said that she had been such a beautiful child that people had stopped on the street in Brasso, and had admired her. But the little girl ran such a high temperature by the evening that she died soon. She was the eldest Klein daughter. Then a girl called Berta followed, then my mother.

In the first half of the last century it was a fashion that craftsmen went to Bucharest. Romania was underdeveloped, there wasn't anything, and craftsmen, whoever was capable, flocked to Romania from here *[from Transylvania]*.

Szatmari was a famous photographer, he went to Bucharest at that time *[at the beginning of the 20thcentury]*, and he made a big fortune there. If we find Romanians with Hungarian names, you can be sure that their great-grandparents went there from here, as Hungarians, because they could earn well.

They introduced this and that. People didn't buy shoes from the shop, they could do that, but most of them wanted to have shoes, which suited their feet perfectly. There were fashion magazines, so they could choose the model they liked, and they had that made.

That's how my grandmother got to Bucharest as well. She was already a widow *[a divorced woman]* – she divorced the handsome Klein she had got married to for the second time – when she left, but she was a great cook, and she had a small, homely, kosher eating-house in Bucharest, it went well. It wasn't a restaurant, just a small hash-house. But why *[and when]* did she come to Sepsiszentgyorgy, I don't know that.

My grandmother had three sisters here, in Sepsiszentgyorgy: Terez, Gizella and Cecilia, they were married women, I remember them as elderly aunties. Aunt Terez was called Terez Hartmann after her husband. Aunt Terez had a daughter, we called her aunt Pipi, I don't know what was her original name.

Aunt Pipi lived in Uzon *[Editor's note: Uzon, in Romanian Ozun is 11 km south from Sepsiszentgyorgy]*, well, Uzon passed for a good village, and her husband – a man called Halmos – worked there as a skilful tailor. They had two daughters and a son: Margit, Gizi, Bela. And they raised one more boy, Sanyika *[Sandor],* the son of aunt Pepi's sister, aunt Zseni. They *[this line of the family]* all died as well.

Aunt Terez had a son, Herman Hartmann, and she had one more daughter, Zseni, her husband was uncle Baruch. Aunt Zseni died with a difference of three weeks to my mother, she was also a young, 24 or 25 years old woman when she died *[in 1912]*. And she left a little boy orphan, Sanyika *[Sandor Baruch]*, he was raised by aunt Pepi.

Regina was the daughter of aunt Terez too, but a sister of my grandmother, Cecilia Kende adopted her. Regina Hartmann got married to Sandor Frank, he was from Szinervaralja, which is some 30

km far from Szatmarnemeti *[in Romanian Seini]*.

I don’t know how he met Regina Hartmann, but they met each other even from so far. Girls weren’t so free *[at that time, like today]*, because they were religious, and they didn’t have any occasion to meet stranger boys *[not even Jewish boys]*.

Boys didn’t have a chance either to meet *[girls]*. And so it was a custom that they found and introduced *[girls to the marrying boys]*. It wasn’t fashionable yet in my time, but in my grandmother’s time they *[wives]* were introduced, arranged.

In my time they *[girls*] could act more freely already. Uncle Sandor’s had a nice small-wares shop *[in Sepsiszentgyorgy]* – the shop itself still exists –, but when fascism came, I don’t know why, they gave it as a dowry to their daughter, and it ran under her name.

Regina Frank had a son, Erno Frank, who was born in 1910, he was a pharmacist, he was enrolled as a pharmacist *[during World War II]*. Erno had a wife – they were a young couple –, and they had a little son, they were deported. The little boy was 4 or 5 years old, he was such a sweet, oh, I could cry for months after I found out *[what happened to those deported]*, and that innocent boy too… *[was killed]*.

Regina Frank had a daughter too – she was born in 1912 –, Eugenia Frank, but everybody called her Agi. She was very pretty, one could even say she was beautiful, not so beautiful to be the beauty of Sepsiszentgyorgy, but pretty.

She had shapely legs, and she was kind too. She was deported too with her parents, this family died out. Some people, acquaintances, who came home alive *[from deportations]*, they met Agi Frank and Erno Frank too after the liberation.

They argued repeatedly, not just one person, since I was inquiring too – well my grandmother was taken, I knew well she would get killed, she was 89 years old –, and everybody told me to have seen Agi and Erno, when the camps were liberated already. But they didn’t come home. Yet they disappeared.

Many fell sick, because after all that starvation they invaded the storehouse left there, which was full with canned food, and those starving people, who had got unused to food, shouldn’t have done that *[shouldn’t have eaten]*, and perhaps they died of that.

However, nobody came home from the Frank family, everybody died, it didn’t have so many members: Sandor Frank, Regina, Agi, Erno, his wife, and their little son. That’s how this family died out.

Aunt Gizella wanted to be an actress by all means, but her parents didn’t let her, and she got married to a merchant, who was selling at the market too, he brought out from his merchandise on Mondays. Aunt Giza was a very romantic person *[she had her head in the clouds]*, well I told you she wanted to become an actress. She watched every performance, it was breaking her heart.

And there was aunt Cila, Cecilia Kende, she had a small grocery, her own, in her house – since she had quite a big house in the Olt street –, so she had a door cut in the room which gave to the street, she had shelves made, and she was selling there.

But it was her who ran *[the shop]*, because her husband – Jozsef Kende – was a keen card-player, he left in the morning, and came home in the evening. But he was playing cards in the café, not at families.

In the morning practically only card-players were in the café, they ordered a coffee or two, because they stayed long *[and they played cards]*. It was terrible, one could hear that so many family heads *[didn't do anything else but played cards]*.

The husband of aunt Cila, who was playing cards from morning until night, was caught too in 1916 *[by the Romanian soldiers]*, though he didn't do anything at all, and when he got home, after one or two weeks, his face around his eyes was all blue, and he also said that they hit him 25 times. I don't remember whether he got 25, or two times 25. Aunt Cila and her husband didn't have any children, and they adopted Regina Hartmann.

Grandma had a younger sister in Szatmarnemeti, aunt Mari. She also finished four years of higher elementary school *[like grandmother]*, but she was a very religious woman.

[Editor's note: It is rather unlikely that Alice Kosa's grandmother born in 1855 would have attended higher elementary school: higher elementary schools (civil schools called 'polgari iskola') were established following the Law on Public Education of 1868.]

She got married to an Orthodox *[Jewish]* man, and she moved to Szatmarnemeti, the family of uncle Schonberger was from Szatmarnemeti. I suppose this must have been an arranged marriage as well, but she established a family there, in Szatmarnemeti.

They were millionaires, they were wholesaler haberdashers, meaning that they didn't sell for people, but only to merchants. They had six traveling agents. That's how it was back then, agents traveled all around the country, and they booked the orders in villages, towns, everywhere.

Aunt Mari's husband was called David Schonberger, they were Orthodox Jews, because aunt Mari wore a wig, and she was going to the Orthodox synagogue, and she had an Orthodox cook.

Only the housemaid was Christian, but the cook, who prepared food for them, was also Orthodox, she had to be. Aunt Mari had a son and two daughters. Her son was called Hendrik Schonberger, well he was the commander, the big bug *[the manager]* of the shop, he presented the goods, everything, because his parents were aged.

Her *[aunt Mari's]* elder daughter was called Rozsika Schonberger, and she had a much younger sister, there was a difference of age of ten years maybe *[between the sisters]*, that was Ilonka Schonberger. But they called her by her Jewish name, and her Jewish name was Haneli.

My maternal grandmother didn't have her hair cut *[when she was a young woman]*, she wasn't that religious to wear a wig. But she got cataract on her both eyes, so she took an oath that she would cut her hair, if her operation went well, and she would see.

The most famous ophthalmologist in Transylvania was a Saxon in Segesvar, doctor Depner – he came to my mind one of these days, because I also have a cataract on my eye, and I can't see almost anything – *[he operated grandma's eyes]*.

Her operation went well, and that's how it happened that finally, I don't know how old she was, because I was a child, but she cut her hair off indeed, and wore a wig after that. Grandma wore a long, black skirt, and she put on a black or dark-blue blouse, but she had a lace jabot, she put it there.

The jabot was made of thin lace, and they put it around the neck to decorate the blouse. My grandmother didn't wear a shawl, I suppose because the wig counted for shawl as well. But it *[the wig]*was made of *[real]*hair, it surely had the same color as her hair she had cut off, because she had cut it off at a young age, she got cataract on her eyes at quite a young age.

There were two women wearing wig in the whole town, only grandma and her younger sister. In Sepsiszentgyorgy my grandmother had three more sisters, one of them *[Cecilia Kende]*had her hair cut, because she had cancer.

She was praying God to help her, and she thought that if she cut her hair *[she would recover]*. But she died, she cut her hair in vain. Her hair was cut, and she died.

Only the two of them had their hair cut *[in Sepsiszentgyorgy]*, my grandmother because of her oath, that her operation was successful, and her sister, because she had cancer. Neologs don't cut their hair either, Neologs too don't wear wigs, only the Hasidim *3* and the Orthodox.

On Friday the usual things: grandma lighted candles, she recited a prayer over the candle, she baked the usual challah. She didn't bake bread, she bought it as far as I remember.

She prepared the meat after leaving it for one hour in water, then half an hour in salt. Blood is forbidden for Jews, meaning that they mustn't eat anything bloody, because the Jewish religion considers that blood is unclean.

[Editor's note: The procedure of koshering the meat was the following: the meat rinsed thoroughly was soaked into lukewarm water for half an hour, so that the salt would be able to drain out the blood.

Then they rinsed it again, removed the tendons and cut it; after that they salted it exhaustively with medium hard salt, and put it on an inclined surface so that the blood would flow out of it. The liver had to be broiled as well (like the meat which wasn't fresh, but resulted from a three days older slaughter). The meat had to be left like this for at least one hour, then it had to be rinsed three times.]

My grandmother was religious, she was going *[to the synagogue]*. She could read in Hebrew, the religion prescribed that one had to read from a prayer book and the Bible *[Torah]*, that was the prayer. Therefore all the children could read when they were little already.

[Editor's note: According to the Jewish teaching prayers shouldn't be recited from memory for not to commit errors.] She knew prayers by heart as well, I heard *[her praying]*.

Jews, even if they weren't religious, I think those too had a Star of David hung out on the entrance door. And I saw it at my grandmother's too, on the door, the packed Star of David was fixed with two small nails, it was packed in a small piece of leather I think *[one inch large, 10-15 cm long]*.

[Editor's note: The packed Star of David is supposed to have served as a mezuzah, perhaps it replaced the usual parchment. Presumably it would have been very difficult to purchase a real parchment made by a scribe.]

My grandmother told me that every Jew had one on his door, he entered *[the house]* after kissing the Star of David. Nothing could be seen *[from the outside]*, just a small package, with something in it. But I asked my grandmother, and she told me that the Star of David was painted on something. And if a Jewish person came, they kissed it.

Formerly Jews had servants, I don't even know a family who hadn't. Each family had one, because they used to say that food didn't matter. This was the slogan. That it could be acquired somehow. People didn't cook like they do today, in portions.

There was always left *[food]*, so one more always could *[eat]*of it. And poverty was so deep in villages, that they sent them *[girls]*at the age of 12-13-14 already to exist somehow. They were beggars, one couldn't imagine that, the villager woman was barefoot until she could, because if she bought a pair of shoes, she was happy to have something to put on Sundays and on holidays. Hungary was even called 'the country of three million beggars'.

Throughout, until Kadar came, until then *[this was Hungary's name]*, the truth is that people gave a sigh of relief just then. And now, as I follow the events, I think it might regain its former name. Grandma too always had a servant, a 14-15 years old girl, since she always had such young little servants.

Aunt Mari, her rich sister wouldn't have let her to lead a miserable life by no means. She sent her enough money, allowance monthly, so she and the little servant had a good life in that one room-and-kitchen flat.

She *[the servant]*was cleaning the house, she was doing the laundry, she was doing everything, except cooking – it was grandma who did the cooking. And they went together to the market, grandma bought *[what she needed]*, and the girl carried it home in her basket. And she *[grandma]* was happy, well, they were together. And grandma cooked delicious meals, they led a pleasant life together.

On Saturdays she didn't work, the servant didn't work either, they only ate, talked, she liked to go out in the park, when the weather was fine. She was getting a newspaper, the Szekely Nep *[Editor's note: Hungarian political weekly paper in Sepsiszentgyorgy, from November 1940 independent political daily paper]*, she always read that.

And my grandmother was interested in everything, even at an advanced age.

Well, not things like where God comes from*[she wasn't doubtful concerning religion, she accepted the Jewish traditions and teachings]*, but as simple as she was, she was interested in everything *[in worldly issues]*, politics too, everything. And she went for holidays to Szatmarnemeti each year to her sister. So that's how she lived tranquilly. She was reading, she was mending her clothes, if it still had a sense to do so, well if it got torn… She was an assiduous woman.

Well, my grandmother sewed her funeral clothe. The dead are not buried in casual clothes *[but in kittel]*. Even the less religious were buried according to the ancient Jewish belief. My grandmother told me that a Jewish woman had to sew everything with her hands, everything she was wearing from white linen, to the handkerchief, or – well, a woman wore apron in the kitchen – to the apron. And she had these indeed, she sewed them.

My mother had an elder half-brother, **Vilmos Sternbach**, from the first marriage of grandma, who left for Paris, and opened there a menswear shop. She had an elder sister too, **Berta Klein**. The French nuns had a convent and a school in Bucharest, and grandma sent both Berta and my mother to the French school, so that they would learn French.

She wanted the girls as well to go to Paris, so that their brother would do something of them, either they would earn *[work]*, either… *[get married]*.

So French language was indispensable, and that is why grandma sent them to the French misses, as she called them. Berta was the first to go to Paris *[she was the elder sister]*, and she got married there indeed, at a young age, she was 16 years old; she got married to a German boy, to Fritz Ernst Rohm.

He was head waiter in Paris, in a smart restaurant, but he was a learned man. And they met, Berta was beautiful, they got married. But from Paris they moved to Frankfurt am Main, so they lived in Germany. I never saw this uncle of mine.

My mother was called Regina Klein, she was born from my grandmother's second marriage *[in 1989]*. My mother too attended the school of the French misses in Bucharest, from the age of 10 until she got 14. After that she went to Paris as well to her brother, her sister was already there.

She stayed there for quite a long time, she spoke French perfectly. That's why I'm Alice. My mother was famous in the village for her beauty, it was always her who played the leading lady.

She left two violins *[after her death]*, because she learnt to play the violin. I don't remember my mother, but the villagers told me how beautiful she was, and she was playing the violin splendidly. And she could sing too, but I don't have a fine voice, I didn't inherit that. And my mother wrote poems too, she sent them to the women's magazine. *[Editor's note: We couldn't clear up which magazine Alice Kosa is talking about. Her mother died in 1912.]*

My father was a timber-merchant. He was that kind of timber-merchant, who bought the timber in the wood, but someone else managed it *[further]*, because he liked playing cards.

He signed the contracts over the timber – since he didn't buy the wood, just its product, the timber –, and he went to play cards. That's what my father did. He had an employee, a gardener, he was called Hajdar, and he managed everything.

They sawed up the wood, as it was required – they counted in cords then –, they transported it to the railway station and loaded it into freighters. Well, this Hajdar administered everything, he was measuring with others, everything. And my father ran away, he had a game of cards.

I don't know whether they played in money, I don't know either what kind of game they were playing, but I think they played with Hungarian cards. I wouldn't have dared to ask my father: 'Do

you play in money?' It was impossible.

There was a regular party in Nagyborosnyo, two reformed priests were in it, one the priest of Nagyborosnyo, the other from Kisborosnyo, and a butcher, who counted for a rich man in Nagyborosnyo.

But he didn't work either, because he had an elder brother, a full brother, a bachelor, who didn't get married, because he wasn't quite handsome, he lived with them, and managed the business of the butcher. So it was an everlasting party. The priest from Kisborosnyo, who was called Cegledi, was such a keen player, that it *[cards]*was a real obsession for him.

Though he was a priest. Once there was a festivity, which begun with a service – first the service should have been kept, then the festivity itself. People were already in the church in Kisborosnyo, and… There is no priest. The public is in the church, and the priest wasn't there. He was playing cards in Nagyborosnyo. When he realized this, he started to rush.

He ran into the church, and people chased him out from there. 'Just as you ran it, Father Reverend, you should run out from here forever.' He was kicked out immediately, well imagine that, the mass was in, and there wasn't any priest.

Such things occur rarely. I think the whole county was laughing on him after that. Finally Cegledi came to Sepsiszentgyorgy, and he became a doorman at the cinema, with his rank of priest. He didn't get a job elsewhere.

In Sepsiszentgyorgy, where the theatre is today, that building used to be a cinema. Only for six weeks every year *[were performances kept there]*, when actors came to Sepsiszentgyorgy. In Kolozsvar, in Pest, in big cities there were permanent theatres, but they didn't come to Sepsiszentgyorgy, to such places, they didn't go even to Kezdivasarhely.

But there were many strolling players, they wondered all around the country. And they organized six weeks long courses in Sepsiszentgyorgy as well in each year.

It went well, one could buy a subscription ticket, or if the public liked what they were going to perform, they concluded a contract for eight weeks. They performed good operettas – operettas by Imre Kalman, the 'Csardaskiralyno'

[The Riviera Girl, also known as The Gypsy Princess], 'Vig ozvegy' *[The Merry Widow]*, they performed these, I liked them a lot when I was a young girl – and comedies, because people liked those, but they always performed a drama as well.

[Editor's note: Emmerich (Imre) Kalman (Siofok, 1882 – Paris, 1953) – composer, finished the Fasori Evangelikus Gimnazium (The 'Fasori' Lutheran Gymnasium) in Budapest, enrolled at the Budapest Academy of Music at the age of 15, then studied law at the University of Budapest.

He was the editor of the musical column of the 'Pesti Naplo' for 5 years. His first great success was the 'Tatarjaras' (The Gay Hussars, 1908), it was staged in Vienna as well, which was the capital of operetta in those times.

At the age of 25 he moved to Vienna, he became an operetta composer of Vienna. During the first decades of the 20thcentury The Gay Hussars was performed in New York, Moscow, London, Rome, and this was the first Hungarian operetta to be staged in France. His most famous operetta is the 'Csardaskiralyno' (The Riviera Girl, also known as The Gypsy Princess, Vienna, 1915).

Following the Anschluss he moved to Paris, then to America. After the war he returned to Europe, and in 1953 he was awarded with the Cross of the French Legion of Honor for his artistic activity.

He died in Paris, according to his will he was buried in Vienna. The 'Vig ozvegy' (The Merry Widow) was composed by Franz Lehar. Franz Lehar (Komarom, 1870 – Bad Ischl, Austria, 1948) – composer, conductor. He began his composer activity with operettas. His first operetta was presented in Vienna, in 1902 (Wiener Frauen), which was a world-wide success. He lived most of his life in the Austrian capital, between 1926-1938 he lived in Berlin.

After the war he moved to Zurich, and returned to Austria only a short time before his death. He is one of the greatest operetta composers from the beginning of the 20thcentury (The Tinker, The Merry Widow, The Count of Luxemburg, Gypsy Love, Eva, The Land of Smiles etc.).
Source: Hungarian Biographical Encyclopedia].

- **Growing up**

I, Alice Kosa Molnar was born on 16thMay 1909. My mother was 20 years old when I was born, my father was 21. Within three years my mother had two more children. My parents didn't have a peaceful life, because my father's younger sister, aunt Gizella, as there is always a boss among children, who gives orders, well, this sister of him was like that.

Though my father was two or three years older. I read one of my mother's letters, it was left at my grandmother, where she *[my mother]*wrote *[to my father]*: 'You listen to your black hearted sister.'

My paternal grandparents built a large house, with a shop in front, and a big bakery next to the house. And my father was giving money there, so that his parents built whatever they wanted to.

My mother had a grudge against him for giving his earnings, when they already had two children. And that fat aunt Gizella, who later adopted Annuska, was stirring up my father, at least the letter said that she had told my father: 'You can get as many wives as you like, but parents you don't *[they are irreplaceable]*, and you ought to help them.' Well, it's nice to help one's parents, but not on the children's account.

My mother died when she was 23. A nice family, as one might call it, disintegrated within hours. We lived in a village, in Nagyborosnyo, and my mother came in with the three children *[to Sepsiszentgyorgy, to grandma]*and with the domestic – of course we had a domestic, as there were three children.

And she died in two or three days. She must have had appendicitis, because they dissected her, and she was full of pus inside, I suppose they couldn't discover it then. I met many people during my long life, whose parents died in a similar way. Well, appendicitis wasn't known, and due to poultices it turned into peritonitis.

She left behind three little children. When she died, I was 3 years old, my brother one and a half and my sister six months old. But I recall clearly some things from the age of three: a Christmas, that there was a Christmas tree on the table, and a chocolate roll big like this, it must have been of chocolate, because it was covered with silver, and I liked that.

And what I still remember, and I could cry of it even now, and I was crying for years, though I was only three years old, when my mother died, I remember clearly that an auntie was holding my hand at the grave, she asked me something bent down to me, I only remember that I told her: 'She will come home by the evening.'

I suppose she must have told me: 'Your mother is gone.' I might have answered to this: 'She will come home by the evening.' I tell you as it was, this sentence haunted me for years, and if it came to my mind, I cried, that I had been waiting for her to come in the evening, that...

I was sent to my maternal grandmother *[to Franciska Feder]*, my brother to the other grandmother, and my aunt, the younger sister of my father *[aunt Iza]*, who didn't have any children, took my sister. This is my childhood. My grandmother lived of moderated means, but my father paid my grandmother for my clothing, so my father provided for all the three children. He never married again.

My maternal grandmother lived here in Sepsiszentgyorgy, the other grandmother, at whom my brother was, in Nagyborosnyo, and my aunt in Nagyborosnyo too.

But my brother lived at my grandmother *[from Nagyborosnyo]* just for a very short time, because some people came to us and said: 'Aunt Fanni, you ought to bring here that child! How was that child taken care of with her mother? And there are those two girls – the two daughters of my paternal grandmother –, those two lazy girls, and the boy is dirty all the time.

Don't let it be so.' And indeed, my poor *[maternal]*grandmother went to Nagyborosnyo, and she told me that she had scolded them *[my aunts]*for finding that one and a half years old child so untidy. So she undertook him too. She was a very clever woman. It seems that I inherited from my grandmother, that I was always concerned about earning something more for my family.

Well, my grandmother was the same. She was engaged in many things, I don't remember quite precisely, I know that she was selling sweets, she bought delicious sweets, and she put it in a glass chest on a table – its top, its side, everything was made of glass, only that thing holding it was made of timber – in front of the entrance door. But I told you, my father gave *[money]*anyway.

My brother, Andras Molnar, Bandika was born on 12thFebruary 1911. He attended four years of gymnasium at Sepsiszentgyorgy, after that, since he was orphan, he went to Szatmarnemeti to the sister of our maternal grandmother, who had a wholesale business, to learn that.

He registered at the school of commerce and finished it, but he attended the evening classes, and he helped at the shop during the day. They were trading only with wholesalers, they packed in rolls what people needed, so that's what he did.

His marriage was a recommended one. Her wife, Piroska Schwartz had a popular shop in Gyergyoszentmiklos *[after the marriage Andras was managing it]*. They had a son born

prematurely, at 5 months, but he died after the birth.

The poor baby, he lived, he breathed for a short time, but he died. He *[my brother]*had to do forced labor with yellow armlet on his clothe *[during World War II]*, they were taken to a village in the surroundings of Gyergyoszentmiklos.

His wife was deported, but she got home alive. Bandika finished a three-months course in Bucharest *[after World War II]*, after that he became chief accountant in Csikszereda. In Ceausescu's time there were blocked cities.

[Blocked means that it was impossible or possible only on particular case to move to the main cities like Brasso, Marosvasarhely, Kolozsvar] 4.

This meant that he brought the balance sheet from Csikszereda to Marosvasarhely. He didn't like Csikszereda, he wanted to leave from there at all costs. They moved to Sepsiszentgyorgy, they bought a three-room flat.

Their daughter, Agnes was born already in Sepsiszentgyorgy in 1947. Agnes established a family in Pozsony. She was spending the summer holidays at her mother's sister, and there was the son of an acquaintance from the concentration camp too, this Czech Jewish boy.

They got acquainted with each other, and this acquaintance finally resulted in marriage. My brother died here *[in Sepsiszentgyorgy]* in 1986, he is buried in the Jewish cemetery. After his death his wife, Piroska left for Pozsony, to her daughter, she died there.

My sister, Annus was born in 1912. She finished primary school in Nagyborosnyo. But in Nagyborosnyo the school had only six grades *[so it was a primary school]*, and after that she finished four years of higher elementary school here in Sepsiszentgyorgy, in the Miko *[Szekely Miko Colleague]*, and she stayed at grandma.

[Editor's note: The 'Miko' was a gymnasium, according to our information there wasn't any higher elementary school within the institution. Thus either she finished four years in the gymnasium, either she didn't attend the Miko.]

My sister got married in 1932, my brother-in-law is called Feri Citrom, Ferenc. They lived in Brasso, then *[after World War II]* they asked for permit to go *[to emigrate]*to Israel. Everybody who wanted to go was allowed to leave.

And Jews were running from Romania. Just a very few stayed. Well, just Sepsiszentgyorgy had more than 300 Jewish inhabitants. They gave *[passports]*to everybody, to Jews who wanted to leave forever, well, everything was left to them *[to the Romanian state]*, each of them had a house, you couldn't find a Jew who didn't have one. And on top of it all, it was a demand that it *[the house]*had to be renovated completely.

The Romanian state accepted the gift only if it was perfectly arranged, everything painted, doors and windows, the floor, everything. Here my brother-in-law was a tradesman, but in Israel – since he didn't speak Hebrew – he was the aid of a butcher from Romania, he was carving the meat. My sister died in February 1999 in Israel.

I had a Jewish name – Szuri –, as one had to have. But nobody ever called me Szuri, I don't know what I would have done. A child likes what he gets used to. The family called me Alica, called me Aliszka, but nobody called me Szuri.

The community *[in Sepsiszentgyorgy]* was the simplest one, a status quo community 5. I heard on TV that this religion *[religious trend]*doesn't exist anymore *[in the surroundings]*, because it has no followers. It has almost no followers.

In Brasso, when we were living there, both Neologs and Orthodox lived. Here in Sepsiszentgyorgy Jews from the whole county weren't religious at all. My father couldn't even read in Jewish *[Hebrew]* . None of his siblings could speak Jewish.

They learnt how to pray, but I think they didn't know what it meant. I attended the cheder as well. That's how they called the kindergarten, Jewish children attended the kindergarten at the age of two already. I was going to the kindergarten as well.

Even if they were irreligious, they still sent the children to the kindergarten. In villages they didn't even have this *[cheder]*, though many Jews lived in the villages too. Well, only in Nagyborosnyo there were five or six Jewish groceries.

Just a few observed them *[the commandments]*in a religious way. A few elder persons – my grandmother and about two other persons – had the poultry cut by the shochet, because they said that was the religious way. All the other*[Jews]*ate pork, observed nothing. Then there were Jewish families, who had the poultry, the goose cut by the shochet, but they also ate pork.

This was a kind of ritual, the shochet. He cut the poultry, and there was sand, they always had sand brought, and he threw it there *[the killed animal]*, so that all its blood would flow out until the last drop.

Because they considered blood to be unclean. I think in villages there weren't families who had the poultry cut *[by the shochet]*. There wasn't any shochet in the villages, and they cut the animals themselves. And it's not kosher anymore, well, they *[religious Jews]* considered it treyf.

There was a beautiful synagogue in Sepsiszentgyorgy, in the Csiki street. In the same area where the synagogue was, lived the cantor, the shochet, there was the prayer house, and in front, on the square in front of the synagogue a large and beautiful house of culture was built.

[After World War II] The few Jews who returned were managed *[guided]*from Nagyvarad, most of them too left directly for Israel – it wasn't Israel then, well, who wanted to emigrate to Palestine –, and thus there were just a very few Jews in Sepsiszentgyorgy.

The synagogue was demolished in the 1940s, I think the state required it to be demolished. And nothing was built there, the lot still exists. The *[Jewish]* house of culture is still there, as far as I know the state uses it.

The public library of Sepsiszentgyorgy was installed there for a few years – I was often going there –, after that they gave it to Jehovah's Witnesses, and I don't know what is in there now.

I didn’t go to the synagogue in Sepsiszentgyorgy, only on high days, I went there a little on autumn holidays, for one hour or two. I had to go then, my grandmother told me to do so. The cantor had two sons, they were children yet, 12-13 years old, but they could sing so beautifully, they had wonderful voices, they could even have become opera singers. And I went there also to listen *[to them]*.

There was a rabbi in Sepsiszentgyorgy, he was carried off as well. He was a young, modern rabbi, who committed suicide in the concentration camp. Those who came home told us that he put his hand on the electric wire, and he killed himself with the electricity. He was a handsome and clever young man, around 28-30 years old, he wasn’t even married.

There was a mikveh, but in my childhood only people of my grandmother’s age went to the mikveh, later it was wound up too. I suppose only a few went there regularly. People like my grandmother, if they had taken an oath, but young people didn’t. And finally it was wound up, I don’t know precisely when, because I never went there.

My grandmother spent three-four months each year at her sister, in Szatmarnemeti. She always went there in the summer, when the school year was over; well, she had to be there when we had lessons, as I grew up at hers. And in the meantime I was in Nagyborosnyo, I spent the summers there, those three months. But sometimes they invited me as well *[to Szatmarnemeti]*.

My relatives from Szatmarnemeti were Orthodox, but it was a huge step towards modernity comparing to Hasidim. They took me to the Orthodox synagogue to see it. The Orthodox had a proper, very beautiful, large synagogue, I was there too, it was similar to the Neologs’ synagogue, but there wasn’t an organ.

[Editor’s note: The wises established four basic prohibitions concerning the Sabbath, one of these relates to work: one has to abstain from any kind of work on Sabbath; the pressing of the keys of the organ is also work, so it’s forbidden. Thus the Orthodox Judaism considers that the presence of an organ in a synagogue is scandalous, in turn it is a symbol of reforms for Neologs.

*(In Hungary the first synagogue where an organ was built in 1845 was the synagogue in Nagykanizsa.)]*It was a synagogue as it should be, it had a gallery, women were on the first floor, and in front of them a large plate was placed, like a riddle, so women could watch out over men through the holes, but a man wanted to in vain, he couldn’t see through those small dense holes. And they took me to the Hasidim as well. The Hasidim didn’t even have a proper synagogue.

Their synagogue consisted of two rooms only, two halls opening to each other, and a thick curtain between them. Women could see in shadows through the curtain that people, beings were moving over there, they *[men and women]*couldn’t see each other, they were separated by a curtain. *[Editor’s note: In some Orthodox synagogues the gallery of women was also separated by a curtain.]*

And Haneli – that’s how they called Ilonka *[Ilona Schonberger, one of the daughters of the maternal grandmother’s sister who lived in Szatmarnemeti]*by her Jewish name – said: ‘Now I’m going to take you to a Hasid wedding.’ And they related me the story as well.

The wedding was nearing, but they *[the bride and the groom]*didn't see each other yet. And they told me that the men, the fathers were negotiating about what the bride, respectively the groom would add as a dowry. The two fathers were negotiating as if it was an object. But they had never seen each other. They were a very young couple, the boy was virgin as well, the Hasid boy with his big payes. At the wedding they had a kippah above their head too.

The kippah was installed in the yard where the synagogue was. And the guests were there too. I don't remember in what language the ceremony was conducted, in Yiddish or in Hebrew, maybe in both languages, but maybe in Hebrew.

Two women led someone wearing a thick veil under the kippah, and they brought there the boy, he broke the glass. They *[the grooms]*break a glass by stepping on it, so that they would live happily for as many years, as many splinters result.

Men tried to crush it as much as they could, to have many splinters. Then Haneli told me that they would go home, and the boy would take down that dense thing from the girl's head, and they would see each other only then. We don't know how this marriage ended. But Haneli told me stories, for example about a bride who had jumped out from the entresol, when she had seen the groom, she had found him so repugnant.

Things like this happened indeed. Well, these Hasidim were extremely religious, they preserved their 5,000 years old *[customs]*. They wore the same fur hat and kaftan summer and winter, as our ancestors did.

[Editor's note: The specific Hasid attire developed from the Polish noble dressing of the 18thcentury.]

And they were dangling their payes. Orthodox too had a payes, but they put it up *[behind their ears]*. Well, Orthodox were religious as well, but not in the same manner as *[Hasidim]*.

We *[I and my little brother]*went to the Jewish kindergarten in Sepsiszentgyorgy, I know that. But I attended the Hungarian kindergarten too, it was compulsory. I liked the Hungarian kindergarten better, because there were more toys, we played more in the normal state kindergarten.

And I remember less the Jewish kindergarten, I don't know how things were there. And we attended the Jewish school *[cheder]*as well, while we were in the four primary grades. I could read *[in Hebrew]*, but I forgot.

We were two naughty children, my grandmother told me that my brother and I were fighting, and the poor woman couldn't bear it.

So my grandmother arranged *[so that we went to school together]*. I was six years old in May *[1915]*, and I was enrolled to the first degree, and my brother wasn't even five, but she said: 'If you fight, he will go too *[to the school]*.' And she enrolled him so that we wouldn't only wrangle. And I don't know how, but they accepted him. Thus we weren't in the same class, but in parallel classes, he in a boys' class, because girls and boys had separate classes.

Oh, but in the first form we learnt to count until twenty. We made – we had to, the teacher told us to – twenty little sticks of twigs *[we used them for counting]*, and we were writing on the board with

slate-pencils.

This was the whole great science, that we learnt to count until twenty, and one or two block letters, capital letters, and one or two words, like horse. That's what I remember. I don't recall all this well, it was too long time ago to remember it precisely.

But I finished there only one grade of primary school, because my grandmother sent me back to the convent in the first grade, because she wasn't satisfied with the things they had taught me here.

It was also my grandmother who wanted me to learn to play the piano – she was so ambitious, she would have liked to do everything –, so she sent me to the nuns, to the catholic school. And there one of the nuns taught me to play the piano. But she taught me in vain, if I didn't have a piano.

So I finished four years in the convent, only the primary school. *[Editor's note: In those times one could go to a secondary school (civil school, first grade of gymnasium etc.) only after finishing four years of primary school. Those who didn't study further, had to finish the fifth and sixth grade of elementary school.]*

The convent had only six grades, those who didn't want to go to a gymnasium after finishing the fourth grade – well, poor children too attended the convent –, finished only five or six grades.

Because those went to work already, a kid who finished six grades, was ten or twelve years old, became a gooseherd, so in those times the parents had the little girls and boys work. That's how things were, poverty was deep.

I finished four years of gymnasium in the Miko, I finished the fourth grade of gymnasium in 1924. *[Editor's note: The 'Miko' started its activity in 1859 under the name Szekely Tanoda, by launching the first year of gymnasium, as a German school. In 1870 count Imre Miko (who was called in 1876 the Szechenyi of Transylvania) requested Gusztav Zofahl, a building engineer to project one of the wings at the count's own expenses (it was accomplished in 1877).*

Later, thanks to Imre Miko's foundation of 60 thousand crowns and to some state aid, in 1892 the second wing was built according to the projects of Ignac Alpar. The school was named Szekely Miko Tanoda (Szekler Miko School), and in September 1892 it was opened as a gymnasium of eight forms; the first final examination was organized in summer 1893.

In the first quarter of the 20thcentury girls could attend the school as well, but girls and boys were set apart by a fence.]

And then there was a two-years reformed school of commerce in Brasso, and I attended it, I finished my studies in 1926. I don't believe there are any former classmates left in Brasso. I don't think they would live for so long.

I would have preferred to go to Kolozsvar, to the Jewish gymnasium, and then to become a doctor. I would have liked to become a doctor by all means – though I wouldn't have been capable for it –, I don't know why my father sent me yet to Brasso, to the two-year commercial school.

[Editor's note: In Kolozsvar a Jewish high school for boys and girls was functioning from 1920; the teaching language was first the Hebrew, then the Romanian, but due to financial difficulties in 1927 the school was abolished, though the number of its students was around 700.]

Though I finished this two-year commercial school in Brasso, I didn't start to work, it wasn't fashionable back then *[for women to work]*. And women could hardly get a job in offices. I didn't try hard either. I lived at my grandmother's for a while, until 1929, when my father rented a nice big house in Nagyborosnyo, he wanted me to go there.

Because he had two old maid sisters, and they lived together *[until 1929]*. But one of my old *[maid]* aunts got married, and so my father wanted to live separately.

Well, I went there in 1929, but my husband started to court me already, so I don't know precisely, I stayed with my father for about two years, because on 25thDecember 1930 I got married, and I moved to Sepsiszentgyorgy, my husband was from here. My father died at a young age, when he was fifty-five years old *[in 1943, in Nagyborosnyo]*.

My husband was born on 12thFebruary 1905. He and his father had the same name, Jeno Kosa. The old man *[my husband's father]* was well-to-do, he had a tannery. But it went well, because the villagers liked to wear boots and brogue made to order. I wasn't well up with leather, but people told me they were producing very good, soft leather.

His *[my husband's]* mother was raised as a Hungarian, but she came from a Romanian orthodox family. Their mother died while giving birth, and my mother-in-law was taken by a Romanian aunt, whose husband was a wealthy man called Karoly Zoldi, well I don't know if he was a landowner, but he was an educated man, they took her *[raised or adopted her]* when she was three or even smaller.

Since Karoly Zoldi was a Hungarian man, his Romanian wife became reformed as well, so my mother-in-law observed the reformed religion too, and emotionally as well…

She knew she was of Romanian origin, but she was angry when someone mentioned it. Originally her name was Virag Pulugor. But my husband told me that she must had been called Florica, but those who had taken and raised her, called her Virag *[Editor's note: 'Virag' is the Hungarian equivalent for 'Florica', meaning flower.]*I don't know why, her name was Virag Pulugor, but everybody called her anyway aunt Zsuzsika.

My husband had three elder brothers and two younger sisters. One of his brothers was killed during World War I, so I didn't get to know him. His second brother, Arpad *[Kosa]*was working as a tanner with his father.

His third brother, Laszlo *[Kosa]*finished four years of higher elementary school, after that he was sent to a grocery as an apprentice – he worked as an apprentice from the age of fifteen –, so that he would learn trading. Back then one had to work as an apprentice in a shop.

And at the beginning an apprentice had to do everything: cleaning, carrying water, everything, until he started to sell too, then he became an assistant. And there were many Hangya cooperatives, he was appointed the president of the Hangya Cooperative of Kokos.

My husband and I were almost neighbors, and my husband, as a boy visited many times a family, who were my relatives *[the Frank family]*. The boy and the girl of that family were my second-degree relatives, but they were younger than him, even so Jeno, my *[future]*husband went there to spend time.

I was attending the commercial school in Brasso, and my sister, while she went to school here *[in Sepsiszentgyorgy]*, she stayed at grandma. And my poor sister, she was a very coquettish girl.

And when I came home for Christmas holidays, I heard that Jeno was courting my sister. I was very upset that a grown-up man was interested in such a young girl. Well, she was still young, twelve or thirteen years old – but she was more developed than me – and he was around twenty. So I took him for an unreliable person, and I couldn't stand him because of my sister, I didn't fancy him, and since I behaved towards him accordingly, he didn't fancy me either.

He noticed I couldn't stand him. This Frank family was raising an orphan girl, they took a great advantage of her. One night, at twilight, I don't know why, but I went to this family. Nobody was at home, just this adopted girl.

And I entered, because I liked talking to her, I was also sorry for her, because she was orphan, and she was so exploited. And as we were talking, once somebody is knocking at the door, and who came? Mister Kosa. I don't know how this idea came to my mind, I thought I would be nice, let's see what would happen.

I tell you honestly, just for fun. And I received him very nicely. He was telling me stories, finally I don't know how we came to this, but I wrote something on a paper, and he wrote me back *[we were corresponding]*. We were sticking them to each other. How did this develop, from a joke, that finally *[we got married]*… it's unbelievable. This happened in 1929, and we got married on 25thDecember 1930.

My husband, this Jeno Kosa was very disobedient as a student. He had a marvelous voice, but he didn't attend *[singing]*lessons regularly, and his form-master told him to be punctual. Jeno said: 'I won't go.' 'Yes, you will.' 'No, I won't.'

Or this one happened with his gym teacher: he had to kneel down, that was the practice about, but he was wearing new trousers, and he didn't kneel down. And there was one more scandal – he must have been in the eleventh grade *[that is he was in the seventh form of the eight years gymnasium]* –, but it came out such a big scandal, that his form-master was pounding the teacher's desk, and Jeno his desk.

So they called his father to the school, and told him: 'Uncle Kosa, it's the end of the year, we won't expel him at the end of the year, but from next year you ought to take him away even from the town, he can't have his final exams here.' Next time his father enrolled him to the catholic gymnasium in Kezdivasarhely.

But he had brains, so he had good results, and he got a scholarship to Hungary, to study medicine. Not only him, but five students were given scholarship *[from that school]*.

So, his parents were happy, well, his father was a craftsman, but a wealthy tanner with a good reputation. And he was happy. Once somebody is opening the entrance, I don't know precisely if after half-a-year, but he came home. 'Why did you come home? Do you have vacations?' 'No, I just don't like the medical profession, I won't go back. I want to become a lawyer.'

The old man said: 'I won't raise a scoundrel. Because every lawyer is a swindler, a thief, I won't raise an infamous man.' His father was such a character, though he finished four years of higher elementary school as well. 'Well, said the old man, if I won't pay you to become a lawyer, you come and work in the tannery.' And he had to carry water.

Because as he told me, a lot of water was needed for tanning, and two of them carried water on their shoulders, in a big bucket. So finally the right shoulder of my husband bulged out a little *[because of carrying water]*. So, he started to court me. My father asked him. 'But what would you rely on when getting married? On the fact that you carry water for your father? It's out of question.'

My father's brother *[Laszlo Kosa]*was the leader of the Hangya Cooperative in Kokos *[Kokos, in Romanian Chichis is 11 km south from Sepsiszentgyorgy]*, he was a learned merchant, my husband only had his final exams, he wasn't a trained merchant. The old man said that he would encumber his estate with mortgage, he would take out money from the bank, and they should open a shop, 'Kosa Brothers', a grocery. And they opened a grocery.

We organized an engagement ceremony one year before the marriage, it was a little greater *[than our wedding]*, but not much. I was bride for a long time, well Jeno had to acquire an employment, otherwise my father wouldn't *[have given his consent]*.

The engagement was kept in our apartment, we rented a nice apartment with my father in 1929, when I went home. My husband's close relatives came too: his parents, his sibling – his two brothers and their wives, then Rozsika and her husband. But we didn't invite the first-degree cousins. And these *[relatives]*of mine *[were there]*, who were in Nagyborosnyo *[my father's sisters, my sister]*.

We didn't have a religious wedding. I told Jeno that I wouldn't quit my religion, even if I wasn't observing it, I wouldn't quit it. I don't believe in it more, so why should I? Jeno and I walked up to the parish hall of Nagyborosnyo, and I said whoever would be there, would be the witness.

So an engineer became the witness, he worked in Brasso, at the sugarworks as an engineer, and he had just come home, and a farmer. That's on my marriage certificate. They were in front of the parish hall, the farmer was talking to the engineer, and we asked them to be the witnesses. My two aunts prepared a good, tasty lunch, cakes, all kinds of things, but just for the family. My husband's parents weren't there *[for lunch]*.

After the wedding we lived in Sepsiszentgyorgy, as the grocery he and his brother opened was there. And he didn't want me to work. The shop was in the Csiki street, where the bookshop is today, next to the corner. 'Kosa Brothers'.

But his brother was five years older, and he was the shopkeeper. Now, what happened? It occurred that my husband didn't learn this professions, he was just measuring. But the money too was taken in by his brother – they noted what people took home *[and paid for later]*–, he purchased the

goods, he managed the money.

It didn't go, it didn't go *[the business for us]*. I couldn't accept it, I told Jeno: I can't stand that Laci is taking the money, and you are serving. What if I need a pair of stockings, should I ask money from Laci? I tell you I can't bear this, we have to do something. I didn't like this at all.

The merchants opened a huge groceries warehouse in Brasso, to have a Hungarian one. Well, the Saxons all had their own large shops, and the Hungarian grocers from Brasso and Haromszek decided to open a large depot in Brasso.

Well, I found out they were looking for a chief stock clerk. But I didn't know whether my husband was suitable for this, though we were married for four years already. I didn't know, I didn't know him in this respect. I had no idea that he wouldn't be able to learn it.

He came home, we were talking, I say: 'You submit an application immediately, you will apply for this job.' He did so. I will never forget that when he applied for it, it was a nice weather, we were taking a walk in the evening. And he was crying.

For what was going to happen. He felt it for sure, but I didn't know his abilities. I didn't know him. I couldn't get to know him in four years. He says: 'Now we quit the shop, the secure, and what if the other won't work?'

I answered: 'No problem if it won't work, we are young, we will get out of it.' That's what happened, we had to get out. Within two years he received his notice. I didn't despair. It never came to my mind how courageous I was, but now, after all this, that I'm alone, I inquire myself if I would dare to do those things I did back then.

In Brasso the rents were extremely high, well they *[the owners]*lived of that. We rented an apartment with two rooms and a bathroom, but not a first class one. It was very nice, but one could access only the kitchen from the hall, and *[from there]*you got into the rooms.

And it gave onto the yard *[not on the street]*. And still, we paid two thousand two hundred lei for it. So, we had this big debt *[rent]*. I was looking for other apartment. Accidentally I met an acquaintance from Malnas, he says: 'How are you?' I told him that we didn't have a job, that was it.

He says: 'Hey, there is a very good shop in Bikszad, rent it.' *[Editor's note: Sepsibukszad, in Romanian Bixad is 31 km far from Sepsiszentgyorgy.]*I said I would take a look. There are several houses in the railway station area in Bikszad, just as it used to be.

One of them was a house with entresol, down there was a shop and a pub. They wanted to sell the shop, because the manager got married and moved to Kolozsvar. I took a look, alone, well, my husband did what I wanted him to do. Because my husband admitted without words that he didn't understand business. That's why he lost it *[his job]*. He didn't know what to do as a stock clerk. *[We rented the shop, and moved to Bikszad.]*

Since we stayed near the railway station, it was a very good shop. Because I made of that shop a well going one. Half of our shop was with brandy *[a pub]*, but in the other part one could find everything. I introduced all kinds of things, because I was a skillful trader.

Though I didn't learn it. I was selling everything, not only what I had taken over from the former manager. I had more than three hundred woodmen from the surroundings of Barot, they were cutting the trees in the woods, they came on Saturdays for bacon, curds, things like this. These woodmen bought the food in advance for one week. I liked the workers very much, and they liked me too, because I purchased everything they said.

'Madam, bring me this. For me that. I need a saw.' And I said: 'What should I look at *[a saw]*to buy a good one?' And they showed me how to sound it, how to listen to it. I went shopping, my husband couldn't have gone, he didn't even know the goods.

Me either, but I learnt it, he didn't, because he wasn't interested in it. Formerly the wholesalers had traveling agents, who offered the goods. The wholesaler produced *[distributed]*, let's say spices, so his traveling agent called on the traders in villages and everywhere, he was offering the shopkeepers what they had, what they needed. And the shopkeeper told him to send hundred kilograms of sugar, send him this and that.

For example a traveling agent was frequenting us too, from Brasso, from the hardware shop. I was ordering everything, I was selling everything I knew a worker would buy: shirts made for workers, dark-colored shirts, two types of alarm-clocks, sandals, boots, saws, small and big storm-lanterns. It was a very good shop.

One could have become rich of that. I paid only a rent, the owner lived in Malnas. But the apartment was large, because I even had two rooms I could let out.

That's all very well, but the child had to go to school. In Bikszad one has to cross a sort of forest to go up to the village from the railway station – we lived next to the railway station, you know. And stupid me – biased motherly love – I said I wouldn't send him to school there.

First I won't send him to a village school, second I won't let him go to school through that wood, because in the morning it's not even getting light. I said I would send him to Brasso. I traveled to Brasso, but they didn't accept him in the Saxon school, because there was a law, which said that one should attend his own national school, or the state one [6]. Well, they didn't accept him, so I enrolled him in the reformed primary school.

An acquaintance recommended me the Lutheran priest, that he would receive the child. One had to pay him well, generously. And indeed, I went there, they received me with kindness, they had a son of his age and two elder sons.

But not even after one month I was going there to see if the child had got accustomed to it. I found him in bed. And the wife of the priest says that the child had temperature, and she called for a doctor. 'Now, I said, I'm packing up and taking him home.' I felt pity for him, because he was laying alone, nobody watched over him. I paid two thousand lei monthly. But as I said, he was there only for one month, I paid for one month.

I took him home, the next day his temperature went up more. And then – it's really unbelievable, but I swear on my daughter's memory that I'm telling the truth – I told my husband: 'I'll pack up, and I will go to Brasso to live there. That's it.' First I took the child there, that night, when he got temperature again. I took him to Brasso, to the sanatorium, some kind of Saxon nuns worked there.

We were both there, me and the child.

And I said, now I'm going to move away. I wound up within three weeks. I had ducks, hens, because the ground was flat. There was a streamlet just in front of the house, and the ducks were paddling in that, but when they wanted to eat, they were so cute, they came to the door of the shop, and 'quack-quack-quack'.

My clients were laughing on how sweet they were. There were about six steps, because this house was built on a slope, and when my husband started to walk down the stairs, the ducks were coming up. I sold it to a Romanian, I wound up, and moved to Brasso. I rented out this apartment, it was in a very good condition, it gave to the yard, number ten in the Kozep street, a storied house.

This Kozep street opens from the first part of the Hosszu street, but the number ten is just in the fore-part, the fourth or fifth house. But I liked it a lot, because it had several levels. Downstairs there were rooms, the ground floor, you went further, then you walked up the stairs, but it was still the ground floor.

What *[the grocery]*we rented was a good shop, but it was in the Forras street, quite far from our apartment. I could have had a better one – I realized later that the shop I didn't want to rent would have been better, busier –, but I didn't rent it, because one had to go down four steps to the shop.

I didn't like that one had to go down. In the shop I rented there were six steps upwards. It was a grocery, there weren't shirt or things like that, it was a grocery. I was with the child, and I was quite far from the shop, my husband was there.

Oh, but my husband was such a shopkeeper, alas!, I didn't know that until I realized it. Once my husband had to do one-month military service, and it was only then that I found out what kind of merchant he was. He was that kind of shopkeeper, that he ordered the flour, poured it *[in the storage vessel]*, and when it was sold out, he gave a phone call only then to order *[more]*.

When I took over the shop, I was checking that we didn't have this, we didn't have that. I realized only then that he thought he should order when he was out of stock. When he came home I told him: 'What's this, my dear? You are selling, and you always must have one more portion at hand. In the case of flour, two more sacks of it.' He wasn't a good shopkeeper, oh no.

My husband would have been great in one thing: he had a beautiful, marvelous voice, he had an absolute, secure ear for music. This was his only talent, he could have been prominent with that, famous and well-known. If he became a singer, if we lived in Hungary, he would have run rings around all of them *[every singer]*.

One couldn't even compare him with Janos Kosa. *[Editor's note: Janos Kosa (Gergyoszarhegy, 1937) – singer, actor, humorist, presenter of several television shows.*

Since 1960 he is a pop singer.] In Sepsiszentgyorgy my husband was solo singer in the choir of the weaving mill – it was a mixed choir –, the conductor of the choir visited us when he wanted to teach a new song, saying 'Jeno, please sing it for me.'

We were selling all kind of spices *[in the grocery]*, like today, and very delicious candies. I haven't eaten such a good halva since then. Because the Turks, the Bulgarians were settling down here in

those times, and they introduced the real halva.

One can't compare it with the halva they are selling nowadays. It's not made from that kind of olive. The halva was pressed using sesame seed. It didn't crumble like today's halva, one could slice it up. It was so delicious! Turks came in, they brought the Comb Honey, very delicious sweets.

When we were children, we liked Comb Honey, and some other Turkish sweet, I forgot its name. The Comb Honey was chopped with a small hatchet, oh, it was so good.

Well, this was their specialty, Turks eat a lot of sweets, because their religion prohibits them to drink wine. Not only wine, they are not allowed to drink any kind of alcoholic drink. It is a great sin, a very big sin, even today. Therefore they invented and prepared all kind of extremely delicious sweets.

One could buy many things in the grocery, just like today. The instant coffee, maybe that's new. But instead of that we prepared Turkish coffee all the time. That coffee had to be boiled, it was called Turkish coffee. And we had a special Turkish coffee maker, long, narrow.

We held it above the burner, and when it became foamy, we took it away, let it for a while to settle. This was the fashion. Not the instant, but the Turkish coffee. That was what people liked. I was drinking it too, its foam mainly.

Jams were made only by the confectioner, formerly one could buy it only from the confectioner's shop, not like today, that one can find it in a grocery as well. But everybody *[prepared jam at home]*, people didn't consider a good housewife the person they knew she was buying jam from the shop. One who lived alone perhaps. I started with the gooseberry, and I conserved from everything. I would have been ashamed not to. Everybody had her larder full.

Cucumber, everything. We didn't buy things during winter from the shop. That's why one needed to have a larder, and it would have been a shame if that was empty. We even bought the flour too for winter, in autumn, at once.

It was a shame to go to buy flour in January. It was purchased, I took out the flour, the sugar, beans, peas, lentils, everything from the larder. If we knew one was poor *[and that's why she didn't have]*, we felt sorry for her. But if we knew she should have filled up her larder, it was a shame. That woman was a superficial, negligent housewife.

This story of mine doesn't belong to the religious Jewish stories at all. When I got married, I told my husband that I wouldn't *[quit]* my religion. Even if I wasn't observing it, but I wouldn't quit it. I don't believe in that one more, so why should I? At the age of sixteen I was reading Hegel already.

I was already searching for why. So why should I change religion, if I'm doubtful. But however, I wanted to stick *[to my religion]*, I was born in it, my grandmother lived in this, I didn't want to offend her with things like that. I told my husband: 'I won't convert to your religion, but if we will have children, they will be reformed.' I observed my religion in the sense that for example I observed autumn festivals and Christmas *[Chanukkah]*.

I observed autumn festivals due to the fact that my father's sisters lived in Nagyborosnyo. I had a relative in Feldoboly too, one of my father's first-degree cousins with her family. Feldoboly is a

small village, I think it's three kilometers far from Nagyborosnyo. For autumn holidays they came *[to Nagyborosnyo]* to my aunt.

The owner of the local distillery had a large apartment, he was Jewish, and he always offered a room for the autumn festivals, for Yom Kippur and for those two days of so called Christmas *[Chanukkah]*. [*Ed. Note*: *Chanukkah is an eight day festival, but it does not belong to the high festivals.*

It's a half-holiday, working is allowed.] Jews came to Nagyborosnyo from other villages too, from Rety as well, because there was only this room, arranged like a synagogue *[prayer house]*, only for this two-days holiday [Chanukkah], and for the day when they fast, on Yom Kippur, it was occupied only for these three days.

They put in benches, chairs, where people would sit down. In one part only women, in the other men. I don't know whether it was separated with a curtain, I don't remember. And the distillery owner was religious, he was from the surroundings of Zilah, he could pray very well, and he knew the religion very well. And he led the service, and my aunt, aunt Gizella, who adopted my sister, told *[me]*that I was welcome, if I wanted to celebrate the holiday, I could go if I wanted to.

Well, I didn't convert, I kept my religion, and I went there with Alpar – my son was two years old –, I observed these two days. In order to fast, I didn't need to go to Nagyborosnyo to observe that, I could fast at home too, I mean at Yom Kippur.

So I always went there for two days, for Christmas holidays, I spent there these two days. We were dressed more nicely, in our best clothes, that was all, people were praying, I know that the prayer was recited in Hebrew, and they delivered a speech, and people wished each other all the best.

[*Ed. note: Most probable that Ms Kosa thought of the Rosh Hashanah rather than to Chanukkah.*]And we ate good meals at my aunts', because Jews liked to cook tasty things.

At Passover I bought the matzah, my husband and Alpar, my son liked it as well. But it *[Pesach]* didn't mean for me what it meant for grandma, who had her own separate *[Pesach*] dishes, she used those only during those eight days, then she didn't use them during the rest of the year. Not like this, but I bought the matzah.

I even prepared kneydl, which had to be put in the meat soup. Why shouldn't I prepare it? It's good. And my husband liked it too. But I didn't observe *[Pesach]*in a religious way, no. Well, I bought the matzah, I prepared kneydl, but not because it was holiday. The next day I would eat a different soup, a pasta soup. This is Passover, that's what I kept *[from the tradition]*, but it's not observing.

- **During the war**

It occurred then that the Iron Guard came. In 1938 we had a very well going shop in Bikszad. In 1938 one could feel the presence of the Iron Guard in Romania. They were everywhere, they set foot in everywhere. The Iron Guard started to rule, and one could hear many rumors about Hitler's deeds. Formerly Austria, Hungary was one. But in 1919 they parted, Austria became independent. And it wanted to stay independent, but Hitler wanted to annex it to himself *[to Germany]*.

This was called Anschluss. We heard about Hitler everywhere, he marched in here, he marched in there, one heard something each day. And people liked us, we were very honest, not like most of the merchants. And the actuary liked us as well, though he was Romanian. And once he came to the shop, and told me: 'Madam, the Iron Guard will take the power, you should convert, you should quit *[the Jewish religion]*, because Jews will have a hard life.

You see what's going on.' I don't know now if the king *[King Carol II]* 7 fled already– since well, he fled with a Jewish woman *[Editor's note: Alice Kosa refers here to Elena Lupescu, nee Magda Wolf (1895-1977), who was the daughter of Nicolas Grunberg, a Jewish pharmacist, and the official mistress of the Romanian king.*

In 1940, when the king had to resign, they fled together to Portugal; in 1947 they got married in Rio de Janeiro.]–, I wouldn't swear on it, but it seems to me he had already escaped from the Iron Guard. I think the persecution had already started in Germany.

'Please do convert.' I say: 'Alright, you know this better.' He says: 'You need to do nothing, you don't even have to come, I will issue it and have it signed…' that I requested officially to quit my religion and to take on the reformed religion. He resolved it indeed, he brought it to me and said: 'You ought to go to the priest from Malnas and report him as well.'

The grandfather of Laszlo Tokes, the bishop was the priest in Malnas. But he was higher, his rank was one level up to a priest. So I went to Malnas, and I told him how things had happened, he said alright, he acknowledged it *[the certificate]*, but I should be attending *[lessons of religion]*, to learn the laws *[of the Church]*, to learn the catechism. *[Editor's note: The Heidelberg Catechism is the reformed creed in the form of questions followed by answers.]*

Well I didn't go, I would have had to travel a lot. I said alright. He recognized it, I had an official certificate that I was converted, that was it. I didn't care *[about attending lessons of religion]*, I didn't go. But I had no idea how fascism would be, if the Iron Guard prevailed in Romania.

We lived there *[in Brasso]*only for two years, and in 1940 we came back to Sepsiszentgyorgy. My husband, since they had a shop with his brother for a short time, knew the tradesmen.

During the Romanian rule the Hungarian gentlemen had shops. In the Romanian era they didn't have employments, because they considered themselves gentries, and they didn't want to become unimportant clerks, they rather opened shops. So, when in 1940 the Hungarian era begun *89*, they all became noble judges, main county heads and deputy county heads.

[Editor's note: The noble judge was the head of a processus (district), the territorial subunit of a comitatus (county) formed between the 16th and 18thcentury. In each processus one main noble judge and several deputy noble judges were elected (Law no. XLII of 1870); each deputy noble judge administered one circuit (in turn the processus was divided into circuits), the main noble judge had his own circuit.

They communicated the county decrees towards the villages, and controlled their enforcement. They had an important role in jurisdiction and administration (taxation, mobilization, publicsecurity etc.; in case of insignificant civil suits and contraventions they ruled as an autonomous forum).

The function was abolished in 1950, when the county system was reorganized.] For example there was a grocery called Barabas & Sipos, in 1940 Sipos became noble judge, and Barabas became deputy county head. And my husband got a job through them. He was a clerk in the deputy county head's office, in the noble judge's office.

Of course they didn't put him in a high position, but in a less significant one. I know that his salary was hundred and fifty pengo. Well, we brought some lei with us *[from Brasso, which still belonged to Romania]*– half of it was gone later, because they stole it –, and we brought with us everything from the grocery, all the spices left.

I always sympathized with Hungarians, my society consisted of Hungarians, and I support Hungarians even today, in all matters. Jews had many good deeds for Hungary. Because they *[Hungarians]*didn't have any industry, anything. In Pest there were German newspapers, German theatre, not to talk about Jews only.

Because Swabians came in, and a part of Buda, and a part of Pest was definitely Swabian. That's why there are so many Hungarians with German names. And Kolozsvar was more Hungarian, much more Hungarian *[than Budapest]*.

There was the *[Hungarian]* theatre, there were *[Hungarian]*newspapers, and later Budapest had two. And during the Hungarian era many people turned back suddenly *[into Germans]*, from 1940.

They didn't speak German anymore, because they were second or third degree descendants, but because Germany was so triumphal, that it crushed countries within days time, many among Swabians, mainly young people, *'Heil Hitler'*, they learnt that at once.

In Sepsiszentgyorgy we lived in the Kozfurdo street – it *[the house]* is still there –, because Romanians left, and we rented a nice, one-storied apartment – it used to be nice at least –, surrounded by a garden, and a large field in front. It had three rooms, kitchen and bathroom.

It belonged to a Romanian family, the Romanian man had a Hungarian wife, but she felt to be more Romanian than her husband. Well, and they left *[in 1940]*. Romanians left from Sepsiszentgyorgy, maybe one or two had the courage to stay.

Because Szeklers were bad, they smashed everyone's window, they *[Romanians]*didn't dare to go out. The Romanian entrusted somebody – a Hungarian man –, we paid the rent through him. And we lived there.

My brother went to Pest *[for a visit]* with his wife – I still have first-degree cousins there –, and he brought me a needle for invisible mending. I still have it. But it's not so simple to have only a hook, but it has a little spring. Well, I set down and learnt how to mend stockings.

I could do it so rapidly, almost like the machine. *[Editor's note: Stockings could be repaired not only with a needle, but also with a mechanic invisible mending machine.]* My hands got so used to it.

Thus I earned more than my husband, because stockings were a problem, it wasn't that simple that I go to the shop *[and buy]*. Sometimes you could find, sometimes you couldn't. I had a lot of work, I always went to bed at half past one in the night. Because during the day I had to cook, I had to do cleaning. And I had three rooms, I let out one, I was mending, we felt want for nothing.

They accepted this *[conversion]* paper, because the law said that for those who lived in a mixed marriage, and the Jewish spouse converted, they *[the anti-Jewish laws]* *10* didn't apply to.

[Editor's note: The validity of anti-Jewish laws was extended to Northern Transylvania in March 1941, when following the Second Vienna Dictate it was re-annexed to Hungary. Under the terms of the second anti-Jewish law those persons could be exempted for example, who converted before July 31st1919.]

They accepted it in Horthy's time *11*, but after Horthy Szalasi *12* came. Now, Szalasi wouldn't have accepted anything, because he recruited even fifteen, sixteen, eighteen-years-old kids, and they shot Jews into the Danube *13*. Well, they escorted even the world-champion fencer to the Danube, and shot him into it, because he was a Jew. *[Editor's note: Alice Kosa surely refers here to Attila Petschauer.*

Attila Petschauer (1904-1943) – fencer, journalist. He was member of the champion Olympic fencing team in 1928 in Amsterdam and in 1932 in Los Angeles. In 1928 he won second place, in 1932 fifth place in individual sabre competition, in European championships he acquired first, second and third place several times in individual competition; as a member of the National Fencing Club he was a representative player 17 times between 1928 and 1931.

After his withdrawal he was an editor at the 'Az Est'. In 1942 he was called for work service, he died in Davidovka. (According to Karoly Karpati, the cadre ordered him to undress, climb a tree and crow like a cock. In the meantime they sprayed him with water.

The water froze to his body, and soon after he died.)] Fortunately Szalasi didn't get here yet, to Sepsiszentgyorgy, to this part, war was going on. Here in 1944, a little before – one month or two or three months before – Horthy resigned, Romanians and Russians entered already. They marched in already. They were on the Orko.

[Editor's note: The 957 m high Cenk Peak rises in the Cenk Mountain, on the southeastern part of Brasso.]

My maternal grandmother, the poor, she was alone after I left *[in 1929]*. Just as she was, she had to go out of the house in 1944, when they took her, they deported her, and sealed up the door. And what she had in the house, her few things, letters and everything, was left there sealed up.

That's why I don't have any photos of her. In Sepsiszentgyorgy the yellow star *14* had to be worn, but this was already in 1944, soon after they were all taken away. I didn't have to wear the yellow star, because I was exempted.

There was another rule for example, that Jewish families – all of them had a servant – weren't allowed to hire young Christian employee, only old persons. *[Editor's note: Under the terms of the ant-Jewish laws in Hungary neither young, nor old Christians could be hired in Jewish households.]*

Those were terrible times. Terrible. How can people change! I was living here, in Sepsiszentgyorgy too, from the age of three! And there were some among my former schoolmates, who pretended not to see me, in order to avoid that I talked to them on the street, that I compromised them by talking *[to them]*.

There were such people. There were persons who had asked me this and that in the school, then this world came, and I saw she was pretending that she didn't see me.

So I evaded them on purpose, I didn't approach anybody, well, I knew I would condemn them. I wouldn't talk to any of them on the street, because people would have felt offended. That's how things were. People incline towards evil so easily, much more easily than toward good things. One can not teach them good so easily, to be good, to give a clothe from yours, no. But the evil, that one yes.

One day Jewish men were taken to the field to work. And they shouted aloud: 'In front the Gypsies, Jews only after them!' And well, there were tradesmen *[among those Jews]*, and even if he was a craftsman, he was a better one, the Jewry of Sepsiszentgyorgy was quite wealthy.

Next to me was staying the first-degree cousin of Jeno, and a well-known farmer. The husband of Jeno's cousin was a very good upholsterer, they were well-off, they were reformed, but they had many Jewish clients too.

He knew well these Jewish men who were taken, and he saw how they carried their food, and he felt sorry for them, and he said there, staying in the back: 'Poor Jews!' Oh, hearing this was enough for that 180 cm tall farmer: 'What did you say! Watch out, I don't want to hear that once again, 'cause you might get there as well!' There were such times. They changed so fast, before this fascist era it didn't occur to them to be anti-Semitic.

Everybody changed, lop and top! There were very few exceptions. There were, but just a few. A great education was needed for that. But they could convince people even with a great education. But what could they use to convince people, so that they wanted to kill every Jew, until the last one!?

And they did many things on purpose, in order to punish, to taunt, to mock *[Jews]*. For example when Miklos Horthy's son, Istvan Horty crashed *[Editor's note: Istvan Horthy lost control over his Heja aircraft on 20thAugust 1942, during his flight meant for farewell sortie, and he crashed.*

His death evokes many guessing even today, but most of the experts think that the cause of the accident was the difficult handling of the aircraft and Istvan Horthy's lack of experience (http://www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/bibl/mil/ww2/who/horthy_istvan.html)], then a formerly good acquaintance – I don't know what his occupation was, but I know he was an educated man – went to the house of Sandor Frank *[the husband of Regina Hartmann (the daughter of Terez Hartmann, nee Feder)]*, and he rang, because he wanted to put a mourning-band on his coat, and he asked him to give him. 'Well – he *[uncle Frank]*says –, the shop is closed.'

'No problem if it's closed, but please give me, because that black band has to be put on, the Deputy Regent died.' – because that was Istvan, Horthy's son, Horthy had him elected, so that he would have been his successor.

So uncle Frank went out, cut a piece of the black ribbon, and gave it to him. 'And how much does it cost?' Well, I'm not sure, fifty bani *[the coin for lei]* or one leu, the standard low price. Well, the next day an article was published in the 'Szekely Nep': 'Sandor Frank, making use of the tragic death of our Deputy Regent, stood out to his shop, and sold mourning-bands to the passers-by.'

The ‘Szekely Nep’ was the newspaper of Sepsiszentgyorgy, it was a daily, not a weekly paper. It had a good editorial staff. Once a sarcastic article came out in the ‘Szekely Nep’, we were so glad, we laughed. An article praised the Szekler people, but it included somehow as if it praised the fascists, it was that kind of article.

That they were like this and that, that they were so smart and so on, so an anonymous person wrote a very commendatory article about the Szekler people, because he signed it – I repeated so many times, that I still know it –, he signed it as ‘Kotari Sipkos Akos’.

Well, the newspaper published the article, and one more came out, which praised Kotari Sipkos Akos, saying that a foreigner sent the article, and how well he knew the Szekler people.

And after one week Kotari Sipkos Akos spoke, saying that they should read *[his name]* backwards, and they would find out who he was. Reading it from the back it was: ‘Soka sok pisi ratok’ *[literally meaning: ‘much pee on you for a long time’]*. This was Kotari Sipkos Akos. Somebody made fun of it. But first they praised so much Sipkos Akos, then he revealed himself.

When they gathered the Jews in the town, my poor grandmother was eighty-nine years old, and she had to go *[to the concentration camp]*. Where the tuberculosis section of the clinic was in Ceausescu’s time – I don’t know what is there now –, they rounded up Jews there.

Once I wanted to bring a little food to my grandmother, while she was here in Sepsiszentgyorgy. I agreed with a Christian acquaintance, Ilonka Bogdan, whose husband was Jewish, that we would try to send there packages.

Ilonka’s husband was doing work service somewhere; when here they gathered the Jews, she wanted *[to bring food]*to her mother-in-law, she was an elder woman. I don’t know anymore what I cooked, something with honey to make it nutritious, that’s what I packed and wanted to bring there. There was a second lieutenant in the yard, because five-six-seven-years-old children were out in the yard and playing.

I said let’s try and ask *[the lieutenant]*to let us give it. He took the packages, and said he would give them to the children. Indeed, he opened the packages right there, and shared them out among the children. We were glad of that too, but however, we both would have liked that the person received it *[to whom we brought it]*.

Especially me, well, should my eighty-nine years old grandmother die of hunger? They were in Sepsiszentgyorgy for a very short time, I couldn’t tell precisely, one week or two weeks, then they took them away, we heard that they took them to Szaszregen, then to Germany *[first to Auschwitz]* , and I never saw my grandmother again.

- **After the war**

And this is a different story. My husband got an employment, and he was handsome, I must admit that. Hundred seventy-seven centimeters, not too tall, but tall enough. And there he fell in love with a girl, who was fifteen years younger than him.

He was going back to the office in the after-noon saying that he had to work overtime; he always went here and there. He was a solo singer at the men's choir *[of Sepsiszentgyorgy]*, and the choir was invited here and there, they even took a trip to the Saint Anna lake, he always went, but alone *[without me]*.

And that's how things were going on. Back then the promenade was fashionable in every town. I wanted to take a walk on the esplanade, he was busy, so we went the two of us, me and the kid. People knew me already.

In 1943 I was still young, though I had some grey hair, but people told me, 'that's nice'. Once there was some official holiday, which began with a service, and people went to the church.

I heard these things, his women colleagues told me what mister Kosa was doing, and I thought I would go and see what he was doing. I stood at the gate of the reformed church, and *[I thought I would]*watch him. And I see that one of them comes out, then the other one.

And as they arrived next to me, my husband didn't even stop, he walked further, and I grabbed Ilonka, and I said: 'Now we go and ask mister Kosa, which one of us he wants. Because I would leave, but I have to find this out.' That's how it happened. Because he walked away, but he didn't leave completely. We went to the park, and I asked: 'Do you love Ilonka?'

He says: 'I do.' 'So, you don't love me.' 'It's not true, I love you too.' I say: 'It won't work, both of us. It's not good either for Ilonka, either for me.' 'Well, alright then, we'll see.' He says: 'I'll come back in a minute.' He leaves. I don't know how long it takes, one hour maybe, he comes back, he says: 'I settled this.' He enrolled as a volunteer soldier.

He reported himself in 1943 for the first time. And I was trembling that I was left alone with the kid in this fascist world, and he left on the front-line. But luckily I could mend invisibly. Let's say he was honest in this matter, he couldn't help it that he fell in love, but he didn't want to leave me anyway. That's how I interpreted his first leave. As if he wanted to leave, they would have separated a Hungarian man from a wife of Jewish origin within twenty-four hours, most willingly.

I don't know if I still have the letter he wrote me from there, that I was the only one whom he could always trust. And I kept that letter. I praise myself again, but I was so firm, it was me who ruled everything in our life, his father gave us only the first, to open a shop, after that everything, everything... believe me, the family life rested upon my shoulders.

He felt that he wouldn't be able to make his living, if he preferred to carry water. His father didn't want him to become a lawyer, he didn't want to study medicine, because he had a dread of it, he hated medicine, and he rather accepted to carry pailfuls of water for the tannery.

He couldn't create anything for himself, but in the evening they went to drink. They were hard drinkers, because they made a vow, my husband and his friends not to drink water.

He left for the second time in September 1944, he enrolled in the Hungarian army again. He liked very much to put on his second lieutenant dress, because it suited him well. But this time it was me who sent him. Because I was afraid that Romanians would qualify him as a 'fascist', because he reported voluntarily *[in 1943, in the Hungarian army]*.

At the beginning everybody fled, only a few persons left, a few women, then they were coming back. But when Russians came in, and Romanians came in, they left, they were afraid. Because they were rounding up *[Hungarian]*men, and they took them near Brasso, there was a place where they gathered women, men, and took them to Russia. Most of them died, mainly men.

*[Editor's note: 'The number of civilian Hungarians and Germans from Hungary fallen under Soviet captivity was around 200-250 thousand persons. The total number of Hungarians in Soviet captivity, including soldiers, civilians carried off from the Subcarpathians, Northern Transylvania and Upper Hungary was more than 600 thousand persons; at least 200 thousand of them never returned from the Soviet concentration camps.' Source: http://or-zse.hu/resp/ronatamas-holocaust2006.htm]*I sent away my husband the second time.

I told him: 'You must go away. Listen to me, we have one option here. You reported yourself voluntarily to the fascists, they won't ask you whether you went there for emotional reasons, because you didn't want to divorce me. The first thing they would do will be to arrest you – I said –, it won't be of much use for me. It's much worse.

Thus I can hope that we would meet again, but if they take you away, it's sure you won't get home alive. So it has no reason that you stay. Go away, so that I have hopes!' Oh my dear God, I was so right! I always said that I had a presentiment of evil.

I must make a low bow to myself, because I assumed to send him to the front-line, to the unknown – I have no letters – with one child and a future one, because I was four months pregnant. And I was left here with nothing, with absolutely nothing, with one and a half child. He didn't resist me, though he knew we would be left without bread and butter.

He was wounded on the Cenk *[near Brasso]*, in September 1944. He got wounded by shrapnels, so his back and shoulder was full of splinters. And he had on his head too. They put him on train wounded, I knew nothing of him until he came home, after one and a half year.

He was wounded here, they transported him with the medical train, he was in a hospital somewhere, and when he recovered, he got to Csempeszkopacs *[Editor's note: It was a small village in Vas county, 20 km far from Szombathely]*.

My husband was in Csempeszkopacs for a while with the army, until they brought him to Germany, I suppose to the front-line, because the Americans captured him. He was imprisoned in Germany. He had luck there in the sense that the Americans provided him with cigarettes. And I had made him *[previously]* quit smoking, because he had woken up in the night, he had been used to smoke a cigarette even in the night.

And he had been so grateful that I had made him quit, and he could have bought so many things *[from the price of the cigarettes]*. But I knew nothing of all this. I had news of him only a little before *[that he got home]*, a man wrote me a letter from Szekelyudvarhely, saying that 'Don't worry, because Jeno is fine, we were together in captivity, and he *[will come home]*very soon.' I got this letter from Szekelyudvarhely in February 1946, and in March my husband came home.

He took home a photo, he is so smiling, it's worth to see it. He always had that photo on him, he was so conceited that he kept on showing the photo. He brought home one photo, but one would

not enter to the photographer to make just one photo, the photographer makes three anyway. The neighbor was there too, and he told me that my husband was quartered at a young woman. Well, if she was young, then for sure he left one photo there.

My husband disapproved, didn't want to let me work. Alright, he didn't feel like letting me work, but I invented all sort of things, because he couldn't have supported the family from his salary. In the meantime the family got a fourth member, and we couldn't have lived on his salary of a thousand and four hundred lei. I invented all kind of things. I prepared chocolate, I filled slices with delicious Dobostorta cream, and I was selling home-made chocolate, cakes, with a modest interest, to say so.

I sold one piece of chocolate for one lei, and the cake too. And in the meantime I mended invisibly until midnight, I earned more than my husband. Because I couldn't bear it, I needed it *[the money]* … And we had two children. Then I was teaching German *[at home]*, sometimes I even had nine students *[during one academic year]*.

I took on a job late, I worked for six years and eight months only. It has a story too – life consists of these minor stories. Since I wasn't ugly at all, my husband didn't want to let me go to work by no means. He cheated me, but he couldn't stand that I would cheat him. But I never had something like this in my mind.

Juditka *[Alice Kosa's daughter]*was a kindergartener. In this street, very close to us lived a pretty, divorced woman – she was also called Aliz, Aliz Farkas – with a five-years-old little girl, Ildiko, who came to play with Juditka. That five-years-old girl became an actress later, she was called Ildiko Fulop. Juditka liked little dolls, I bought her a lot, she was five, but she cut holes in old rags, and put them on *[the dolls as skirts]*.

And around three o'clock someone is opening the door, my husband was coming home. And the little girl says: 'Uncle Kosa is coming.' I was staring open-mouthed. I say: 'So dear, do you know well uncle Kosa? How do you know him?' 'He usually visits us.' Ah, that's it, here in the neighborhood, and uncle Kosa frequents that house. Well, let's see to do something, because one may never know.

I'm getting old. I earned well, because I was mending invisibly, I was selling home-made chocolate, my sister sent me from Brasso coffee, everything I could sell. So I didn't feel the want for anything, but it wasn't a secure ground. I needed a secure ground. Alright then, if he goes there, then I would go to an office. And I found a job, against his will, because I said myself, what would happen if time passed and he left me? I have to do something.

So I reported to the employment agency, and that's how I got a job from 1stAugust 1952. I was the chief accountant of the county headquarters of the Agricola. I had ten branch offices, ten villages had agricultural engineers, they all fell under my responsibility. I liked accounting very much, and that was what I had learnt, it's true that I forgot everything.

But I learnt again very fast, and the Agricola had a much simpler accounting system than if I were chief accountant in a factory. Maybe I wouldn't have taken on a job in a factory, but this was a small *[enterprise]*, I had ten points *[villages]*, I could do it properly.

In 1958 I fell ill, I had temperature for three months constantly, even the doctors didn't know for a long time what my problem was.

Then they figured it out: heart valve stenosis. I became a second-degree disabled due to my heart, they pointed out at that time already that my heart was of two and a half inches on the left side, three and a half on the right side, the blood-pressure was over two hundred.

And look at me, in 2005 I'm still alive. And my dear child isn't. My heart is still big. Two years ago I went to a very kind, young Romanian doctor with my grandchild, I told her that I was still alive after so many years, because I didn't take the medicine *[doctors prescribed me]*.

I retired on 1stApril 1959, I had six years and eight months, that's the period I worked. I had a low pension, I retired with seven hundred fourteen lei pension. In 1988 my husband died, I live alone for seventeen years.

My son was born in 1931. I read the 'Poganyok' *[Pagans]*from Ferenc Herczeg when I was sixteen. *[Editor's note: Ferenc Herczeg (1863-1954) – writer, journalist. From 1891 he was member of the editorial staff of the 'Budapesti Hirlap' edited by Jeno Rakosi, in 1894 he launched the literary weekly paper called 'Uj Idok', and edited it until 1944, in 1903 he was founder and editor of the paper called 'Az Ujsag'.*

From 1896 he was parliamentary representative for two cycles, he was a follower of Istvan Tisza's politics. In 1911 they launched together the political paper called 'Magyar Figyelo'. From 1927 he was member of the Upper House. After 1919 he got actively involved in irredentist, revisionist movements, from 1929 he was the president of the Revisionist League.

*His novels idealize mainly the gentry society of that age. His historical novels were popular. (Source: Magyar Eletrajzi Lexikon / Hungarian Biographical Encyclopedia)]*And in the 'Poganyok' the Pecheneg prince was called Alpar, due to the book I took a liking for the beautiful Pecheneg prince, and I said if I was to have a son, his name would be Alpar. That's how it happened.

I had a son, and I gave him the name Alpar. But nobody ever heard the name Alpar in the county. The priest says: 'Dear, you want to call him Alpar, but that's not a name, that's a plain. Alpar is the name of a plain where only wars occurred.'

I say: 'It doesn't matter, I will give him this name, because a Pecheneg prince was called like that. Please register it.' He *[Alpar Kosa]*was a good goalkeeper at the beginning. He was a goalkeeper for a while in Sepsiszentgyorgy, within the class B. In Marosvasarhely the team was of class A, and somebody saw Alpar playing, and convinced him to go to Marosvasarhely. That's how he got to Marosvasarhely, as they accepted him as a goalkeeper.

His first wife was called Magda Puiu, they had a son, Alpar, who is in Germany. Alparka spent several summers at me, and I taught him too the Esperanto language. I say: 'I can't stand that you're just playing from morning to night.

You should learn something.' He learnt it *[Esperanto]*readily. My son had from his second marriage *[around 1977]* his daughter, Iringo and his other son, Zsombor. They also live in Germany. My son left for Germany on 19thDecember 1989, his wife, Emese a few months later. They didn't stay

there for long, they came back to Marosvasarhely, then my son was a referee, mainly for class C teams, in villages. He divorced his second wife too.

My **Judit**ka was born in 1945. Juditka too liked languages very much, I thought she would study languages. But she took to mathematics, and so only engineering… And she could have chosen a profession, a university, which was close. We didn't have the financial means – though she had a scholarship too. And that's why she had to choose something which was in Brasso, she finished timber engineering.

She finished her studies in 1968, and I told her: 'If there are jobs in Marosvasarhely – since they put out a notice-board with the jobs –, I advice you to choose Marosvasarhely, to be in the same town with Alpar, your brother.

'Cause you see, your father is forty years older, I'm ill with my heart – well, I was always burying myself, I thought I had a short time to live, well, my feet and arms swollen, full with water, my face was filled with water many times –, my life is uncertain, and you shouldn't be left alone.' That's how it happened indeed.

There were three places in Marosvasarhely, and she got one of them, in the furniture factory. She had to do practice in the factory for three years, it was compulsory. During the time she was accomplishing those three years of practice, they were looking for teachers for the timber engineering high school of Marosvasarhely, for the evening classes. And they called on Juditka as well in the factory, if she wouldn't like to teach in the evening classes – those who attend evening classes.

Well of course, she had such a low salary, she had one thousand and two or three hundred lei salary, she accepted. And people became attached to Juditka in the school, and they asked her if she didn't want to go there as a teacher, when the three years would be over. Oh, gladly, with pleasure. She was happy. She felt much more like *[being a teacher]*, of course.

She didn't have to get up so early, I don't know if they went to work at six or seven, and one had to stay in the factory until three or two. And after three years she accepted the full-time teacher job. In the meantime she started to learn pedagogy, because she was an engineer, but she needed a teacher's qualification too in order to teach. She enrolled and passed exams.

It was settled when she had to go, she was in Bucharest several times, maybe in Brasso too, because she passed her exams there. So her qualification was engineer and teacher. She had two diplomas. Juditka's husband was called Jozsef Dezsi. They had two sons.

My elder grandson is called Jozsef Ivan Dezsi. He is so angry because of this name, Ivan… He was born in 1972. Jozsika is married, they live in Sepsiszentgyorgy. My grandson installed everything for me *[in my apartment]*: water-meter, gas meter, heating. Besides I note each Friday what I need for one week.

He buys me all that, and I cook of it. And he always gives me small gifts. Chocolate or halva or… My grandson's wife lived with her parents on the first floor, me, on the second *[that's how they met]*. They are married for about eight years, I think.

He has a small boy, he's three and a half years old, his name is also Jozsef. His wife wanted to call him Milan, because she had read Milan Fust, and my daughter-in-law liked it so much, that she said her son would be Milan.

But Jozsika didn't want it to be the first name, and he reported Jozsef, the little boy is the third Jozsef. But his second name is Milan. She was so upset, I told her, you shouldn't be upset, because the child would be called as you call him.

Szabolcs *[the younger grandson]* is thirty years old *[he was born in 1975]*. He has just finished the timber engineering faculty in Brasso, before that he finished a technical school. He already got a job in Marosvasarhely, in a furniture factory.

It was destined for me to loose my child on my birthday. I was born on 16thMay, and Juditka died on 17thMay, in 1999. That's what fate gave me at the age of ninety. The 16thMay fell on Sunday in 1999. She used to call me every Sunday at noon, and we talked.

On this day the phone wouldn't ring. But my daughter forbade them to let me know she was ill. I didn't know anything, I was waiting for her phone-call here, alone, astonished. Something is wrong for sure. But I wouldn't have thought that she was dying. And my son-in-law, Jozsika, my grandson and Alpar, my son came after the funeral. And I open the door, and I thought they wanted to make a joke. I was looking for Juditka.

I liked languages very much. I was engaged in seven languages counting my mother-tongue too: Hungarian, Romanian, Latin, German, French, then I attended English and Esperanto courses, but I learnt more privately than on courses.

One of my students' father came and told me: 'Will you tell me how many languages you speak?' I say: 'I will tell you how many languages I was engaged in. Counting my native language I studied seven languages. In school, in courses. How many do I speak? None.' I don't speak any. Now I can really say that I'm searching for words. That's also why I speak slowly. But no wonder, my husband died seventeen years ago, and since then I live alone.

I have no one to talk to, I can talk only to myself. And often I can't recall so simple, every-day words. But then, after a few hours or the next day, without thinking of it, I even forgot that the previous day I didn't recall it, I'm doing something, and all of a sudden: Elvis Presley – I didn't remember this name either one day. The mind is magnificent, really magnificent.

I learnt German only in school. But the German language is very similar to the Yiddish language. It's distorted, but it's similar. And it was interesting, that my grandmother talked to her sisters – they were four in Sepsiszentgyorgy – in Yiddish, so that I and my brother wouldn't understand.

I suppose Yiddish was even their mother-tongue, because they always turned their speech into that. But it's so interesting, what is language? If you live in it, if you hear it day by day, without being taught, somehow you understand it automatically.

Without being taught, we didn't speak Yiddish, but we understood everything they were saying. We heard it daily either from one or the other, and we understood everything. I learnt German in school, but since I understood Yiddish already, I learnt German easily.

[After my retirement] I studied Esperanto, I attended two courses of English. But I attended tailoring course as well. We didn't quite learn to tailor, but we were drawing on paper. The teacher was a man, he took the measures, and he drew on the board, we in our copy-book with a pencil, one square was one centimeter, that was the base. I still have that copy-book.

- **Glossary:**

1 Weiss, Manfred (1857-1922): Industrialist, businessman. His grandfather, Baruch Weiss, a pipe-maker, moved to Budapest in the early 19th century. His son, Adolf was a founding member of the First Steam Mill of Budapest Co. After finishing the Academy of Commerce, Manfred, Adolf's son, worked in Hamburg.

Upon his return home he opened a canning factory with his brother. In 1884 he married, and through his father-in-law he swiftly became the main provisions supplier of the K.u.K. Army.

They broadened the scope of manufacture with the production of ammunition and cartridge-cases. Owing to an accident in 1890, the factory had to be moved to Csepel (an island at Budapest). He was the largest purveyor of the K.u.K. Army during WWI and was promoted in title to baron in 1896 for his services rendered.

2 Csepel Works: enterprise group of heavy industries. Its base was the factory founded by Manfred Weiss and his brother, Bertold in 1882, which produced canned food at the beginning, then started to manufacture ammunition and cartridge-cases. The factory was moved to Csepel in 1892.

In 1895-96 (the owner was only Manfred Weiss by then) the metallurgical plant, the foundry and the brass mill, in 1911-12 the steel mill, the iron foundry and the presser were set into operation. By the end of the 1910s tool production is launched.

During the 1920s the range of products was enlarged (household equipments, agricultural machines). In 1928 the Manfred Weiss Aircraft and Motorworks Co. was established, during the 1930s the production of bicycles, motorcycles and sewing machines was started.

In 1935 the aluminum smeltery was put into operation. During the military preparations program announced in 1938 the factory was given orders for tanks and jeeps. From 1946 the factory was managed by the state, and in 1948 it was nationalized.

Between 1950 and 1956 it had the name 'Rakosi Matyas Vas- es Femmuvek' (Matyas Rakosi Iron and Metalworks), between 1956 and 1963 'Csepel Vas- es Femmuvek Troszt' (Csepel Iron and Metalworks Trust), between 1967-1983 'Csepel Muvek' (Csepel Works).

After abolishing the trust-type organization, the 'Csepel Muvek Ipari Kozpont' (Csepel Works Industrial Centre) was established. (Based on the Magyar Nagylexion / Great Hungarian Encyclopedia)

3 Hasidism (Hasidic): Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18thcentury that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every deed and word.

The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York , London , Israel and Antwerp.

4 Restrictions on free movement in Romania: Beginning in 1952 the composition of the urban population underwent considerable changes.The workers of the newly created enterprises, who were usually brought in from entirely different regions of the country, but, in any case, from the countryside, had to be accommodated.

In order to solve the problem, the Militia increased the number of people deported due to political reasons, making place for the workers.Starting in 1952, the law only allowed removal on the basis of a permit issued by the authorities.

The Militia checked any movement between towns, and traveling was allowed only if it was work-related or for reasons of health, and one had to produce the required certificates.If someone traveled from a village to a town, they had to report at the militia station where and how long they would stay there.

The traveling restrictions were suspended in the early 1960s, but the restrictions for removal remained in force.

By the early 1970s, however, due to the massive deployments, the rural population had dropped dramatically, and therefore the dispositions adopted in the 1970s drastically restricted removal to the towns (1976), and obliged the intellectuals living in the towns but working in the villages to move there. It also prohibited the children from the villages to enroll in city schools.

In addition, movement between towns was also restricted:According to a law adopted in 1978, citizens were only allowed to receive treatment from the physician of the district their home address pertained to.It is also important to mention that the right to free movement was not guaranteed by the Constitution adopted in 1965.

5 Status quo communities: After the Universal Israelite Congress of 1868-69, Hungarian Jewry split into two major institutionally sectarian groups, orthodox and neolog.

However, some communities rejected the split, and maintaining the millennial unified Jewish position, refused to join either of the groups. In reference to the situation before the congress, they took the name 'status quo ante'. In actuality, they represented a different point of view from the end of 1871, though a national organization only formed in 1928.

In 1896, 76 primary and 171 secondary communities avowed these beliefs, and between the wars, 3.9% of Hungarians of Jewish religion lived in status quo communities. In 1944, 14,289 people (2.7%) belonged to 38 status quo communities. The status quo ante communities institutionally revived in 2004.

6 Romanian educational policy between the two World Wars: One of the main directions of the Romanian educational policy in the period between the two World Wars was the dissimilation of

Transylvanian Jews. Romanian was declared the only language of state education (1928/Monitorul Oficial nr. 105).

In special cases (in cities where national minorities made up the majority of the inhabitants) the establishment of sections in the language of minorities was allowed. The ecclesiastical schools had no right anymore to accept the enrollment of students belonging to other religions.

Hebrew and Romanian became the only permissible languages of Jewish high school education starting in 1925 (1925/Monitorul Oficial 283,36). The university system allowed the access of Jews until 1938, but the violent actions of the Iron Guard made their attendance technically impossible.

7 King Carol II (1893-1953): King of Romania from 1930 to 1940. During his reign he tried to influence the course of Romanian political life, first through the manipulation of the rival Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party and anti-Semitic factions.

In 1938 King Carol established a royal dictatorship. He suspended the Constitution of 1923 and introduced a new constitution that concentrated all legislative and executive powers in his hands, gave him total control over the judicial system and the press, and introduced a one-party system.

A contest between the king and the fascist Iron Guard ensued, with assassinations and massacres on both sides. Under Soviet and Hungarian pressure, Carol had to surrender parts of Romania to foreign rule in 1940 (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, the Cadrilater to Bulgaria and Northern Transylvania to Hungary). He was abdicated in favor of his son, Michael, and he fled abroad. He died in Portugal.

8 Hungarian era (1940-1944): The expression Hungarian era refers to the period between 30 August 1940 - 15 October 1944 in Transylvania. As a result of the Trianon peace treaties in 1920 the eastern part of Hungary (Maramures, Crisana, Banat, Transylvania) was annexed to Romania.

Two million inhabitants of Hungarian nationality came under Romanian rule. In the summer of 1940, under pressure from Berlin and Rome, the Romanian government agreed to return Northern Transylvania, where the majority of the Hungarians lived, to Hungary.

The anti-Jewish laws introduced in 1938 and 1939 in Hungary were also applied in Northern Transylvania. Following the German occupation of Hungary on 19thMarch 1944, Jews from Northern Transylvania were deported to and killed in concentration camps along with Jews from all over Hungary except for Budapest.

Northern Transylvania belonged to Hungary until the fall of 1944, when the Soviet troops entered and introduced a regime of military administration that sustained local autonomy. The military administration ended on 9thMarch 1945 when the Romanian administration was reintroduced in all the Western territories lost in 1940.

9 Second Vienna Dictate: The Romanian and Hungarian governments carried on negotiations about the territorial partition of Transylvania in August 1940. Due to their conflict of interests, the negotiations turned out to be fruitless. In order to avoid violent conflict a German-Italian court of arbitration was set up, following Hitler's directives, which was also accepted by the parties.

The verdict was pronounced on 30thAugust 1940 in Vienna: Hungary got back a territory of 43,000 km² with 2,5 million inhabitants.

This territory (Northern Transylvania, Seklerland) was populated mainly by Hungarians (52% according to the Hungarian census and 38% according to the Romanian one) but at the same time more than 1 million Romanians got under the authority of Hungary.

Although Romania had 19 days for capitulation, the Hungarian troops entered Transylvania on 5thSeptember. The verdict was disapproved by several Western European countries and the US; the UK considered it a forced dictate and refused to recognize its validity.

10 Anti-Jewish laws in Hungary: Following similar legislation in Nazi Germany, Hungary enacted three Jewish laws in 1938, 1939 and 1941. The first law restricted the number of Jews in industrial and commercial enterprises, banks and in certain occupations, such as legal, medical and engineering professions, and journalism to 20% of the total number.

This law defined Jews on the basis of their religion, so those who converted before the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, as well as those who fought in World War I, and their widows and orphans were exempted from the law.

The second Jewish law introduced further restrictions, limiting the number of Jews in the above fields to 6 percent, prohibiting the employment of Jews completely in certain professions such as high school and university teaching, civil and municipal services, etc. It also forbade Jews to buy or sell land and so forth.

This law already defined Jews on more racial grounds in that it regarded baptized children that had at least one non-converted Jewish parent as Jewish. The third Jewish law prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and defined anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent as Jewish.

11 Horthy, Miklos (1868-1957): Regent of Hungary from 1920 to 1944. Relying on the conservative plutocrats and the great landowners and Christian middle classes, he maintained a right-wing regime in interwar Hungary.

In foreign policy he tried to attain the revision of the Trianon peace treaty - on the basis of which two thirds of Hungary’s territory were seceded after WWI – which led to Hungary entering WWII as an ally of Germany and Italy.

When the Germans occupied Hungary in March 1944, Horthy was forced to appoint as Prime Minister the former ambassador of Hungary in Berlin, who organized the deportations of Hungarian Jews. On 15thOctober 1944 Horthy announced on the radio that he would ask the Allied Powers for truce.

The leader of the extreme right-wing fascist Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szalasi, supported by the German army, took over power. Horthy was detained in Germany and was later liberated by American troops. He moved to Portugal in 1949 and died there in 1957.

12 Szalasi, Ferenc(1897-1946): The leader of the extreme right Arrow-Cross movement, the movement of the Hungarian fascists. The various fascist parties united in the Arrow-Cross Party

under his leadership in 1940. Helped by the Germans who had occupied Hungary on 19thMarch 1944, he launched a coup d'etat on 15thOctober 1944 and introduced a fascist terror in the country. After World War II, he was sentenced to death by the Hungarian People's Court and executed.

13 Banks of the Danube:In the winter of 1944/45, after the Arrow-Cross, the Hungarian fascists, came to power, Arrow-Cross commandos combed through the protected houses of Ujlipotvaros, a bourgeois part of Budapest, collected the Jews, brought them to the bank of the Danube and shot them into the river.

14 Yellow star in Hungary: In a decree introduced on 31stMarch 1944 the Sztojay government obliged all persons older than 6 years qualified as Jews, according to the relevant laws, to wear, starting from 5thApril, "outside the house" a 10x10 cm, canary yellow colored star made of textile, silk or velvet, sewed onto the left side of their clothes.

The government of Dome Sztojay, appointed due to the German invasion, emitted dozens of decrees aiming at the separation, isolation and despoilment of the Jewish population, all this preparing and facilitating deportation. These decrees prohibited persons qualified as Jews from owning and using telephones, radios, cars, and from changing domicile.

They prohibited the employment of non-Jewish persons in households qualified as Jewish, ordered the dismissal of public employees qualified as Jews, and introduced many other restrictions and prohibitions. The obligation to wear a yellow star aimed at the visible distinction of persons qualified as Jews, and made possible from the beginning abuses by the police and gendarmes.

A few categories were exempted from this obligation: World War I invalids and awarded veterans, respectively following the pressure of the Christian Church priests, the widows and orphans of awarded World War I heroes, World War II orphans and widows, converted Jews married to a Christian and foreigners. (Randolph L. Braham: A nepirtas politikaja, A holokauszt Magyarorszagon / The Politics of Genocide, The Holocaust in Hungary, Budapest, Uj Mandatum, 2003, p. 89–90.)