Egon Lovith

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Egon Lovith, the 80-year-old Jewish sculptor from Kolozsvar, is a jovial gentleman, who stays in shape and takes care of himself. The beret cast aside is an essential part of his look, and his dress is youthful and tasteful. He lives alone in a spacey one-bedroom apartment. For the past couple of decades Egon and his wife Margo, who died in 1999, have been living there. Egon's room is like a homely gallery: the walls are decorated with his favorite and valuable paintings, and the lighting of the room is also like in a gallery, focused primarily on the paintings. On the shelves there are ceramic and bronze sculptures: among other things, Egon's bronze birds and black female torsos. His composition of Mexican terracotta (burnt ceramic) is also on the wall: approximately 20 beautifully colored enameled plates connected to each other by a string reflect the artist's inner harmony.

Family background

My paternal grandfather, whom I never met, was called Lovith. My grandparents lived in Simferopol, which is a seaport somewhere down south in Ukraine. I'm only speculating about my grandfather's financial circumstances because my father and I never talked about it since he was a very busy man. They must have been very well off before World War I, if they could afford to send their son to Switzerland to study to be a watchmaker. It seems that my father, Max Lovith, was a very qualified person. I don't know his exact qualifications but he had some degree beyond secondary school and he was also well read. At the time, the best watches were made in Switzerland and that's where my father studied for years. He learned his profession thoroughly since watches were his passion. He must have known German really well if he was studying in Switzerland. When World War I broke out and Russia entered the war, my father, as a Russian citizen, was called to return home. He put on his uniform and left for the front where he fought throughout the war and finally was brought to Transylvania as a prisoner of war of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was in a big group of Russian prisoners of war that were brought here, around Zilah, to work in Szurduk Forest. The prisoners were doing lumbering on the estate of Baron Jozsika.

My grandparents on my mother's side, the Pardesz family, had come from Lithuania. They came because Baron Jozsika, who was the estate owner of the great forest of Zilah, brought my grandfather as an expert in lumbering here around 1915. Whether the baron had gone to Lithuania after my grandfather personally or had only met him somewhere else, I don't know, but either way the baron did bring them here – I know this much from the family chronicle. The family settled there and even had a house. I don't know my grandfather's name because the last time I saw him I was three years old, before I was taken away to Mexico. When I returned he wasn't alive any longer. Perhaps I remember my grandmother showing me a picture of him: with tight pants and long thick knee socks, in heavy boots and in a warm jacket. He had a beard for sure but not a long hanging one. He was religious but not too religious, the family belonged to the Neologs 1. All the way, he remained on duty on the Baron's estate.

My grandmother was short and petite. When I met her she was chubby but later, before the deportation, in the times of misery, my poor grandmother lost her chubbiness. But she was so active all the way to the end. At the same time she demanded respect, but not in an authoritarian way rather in a maternal way. The whole family respected and obeyed her. In the family they used Polish and Russian expressions. They spoke German and Yiddish as well but mostly they used Hungarian.

Most of the siblings must have been born in Lithuania. My mother, Berta Pardesz, was the oldest, she was born in 1896. Jancsi was born after my mother around 1899. After him was Herman in 1903 and Jeno, who was born in 1905. The youngest, Edit, was born here in Transylvania in 1916. The Pardesz men were very strong, muscular and tall. They looked very northern: with pale skin, almost blond hair and blue eyes.

Jeno, the youngest Pardesz boy, was always interested in wandering in the forest. He loved nature and hiking. He didn't have any intellectual inspirations, he followed my grandfather around in his work in the forest. He was constantly in the forest, around the prisoners of war. It is likely that Jeno and my grandfather met my father together. Possibly, it was soon revealed that my father was also Jewish, and the Pardesz spoke Russian, too – because in the family they spoke Lithuanian and Russian – and most likely my grandfather invited my father to his house. Being a prisoner at the time one had much more freedom, and even if the prisoners weren't guarded they had nowhere to go. They could get a day off when they didn't have to work and they didn't have to stay at their settlement or barracks because they got permission to leave. It must have been my grandfather who managed to arrange that my father could spend Saturdays with us. My father must have become a regular visitor. That's how my parents met. My father wasn't tall but he was muscular and looked fit. Apart from his looks he was also an intelligent, educated and well-read Russian man with Swiss schooling.

When the war was over, and the prisoners were freed and could go back to Russia, my father stayed here, but I think he kept in touch with his family [in Simferopol] through letters. My father got married to my mother, Berta Pardesz. It was certainly a religious ceremony because they talked about the khasene, which means marriage ceremony in Yiddish and furthermore, they had to get married under the chuppah. After their marriage they lived with my mother's parents until they moved to Kolozsvar.

They came to Kolozsvar around 1920-1921 after the Trianon Peace Treaty 2 was concluded. Perhaps they bought a house and some of the family moved in, but my grandfather kept his job on the estate for a while and only came to Kolozsvar once in a while. Hungarian became the everyday language of the family. In Kolozsvar my grandfather opened a watch shop for my father in 1920, in Malom Street [today Baritiu Street, in the city center], but I don't think he actually bought the place. It was a scanty old place. There was a sign saying, 'Max Lovith reparatii ceasornicarie si bijuterie' [watch and jewelry repair]. My father probably didn't have any money at the time, but his Swiss education proved to be a goldmine. He was welcomed in my mother's family as family gain and my grandparents were always proud of Max, my father.

In Romania, by 1922, the fascist movement established itself among the students and there were already fascist protests. There was a terrible incident in 1923. It was a student protest, they were walking from the Hungarian theater to Malom Street. That part of Kolozsvar was already built up and there were lots of Jewish shops and Jewish signs. When the marching students, who were delighted to have won Transylvania back – this also belonged to the way of fascist thinking and extreme nationalists – saw the Jewish name on my father's sign they broke the shop window, got into the store and destroyed, plundered everything. They beat up my father so badly that he was brought to hospital. Once my father recovered, he decided that he wouldn't stay here but leave the country. There were expensive watches in the store, because in the old days only people with good watches got their watches fixed, they were pricey Doxas, Omegas and other such quality watches and the missing jewelry also counted as loss. The family collected everything they had left because they had to compensate the store's customers. Since my father was already a member of the family, my mother's family couldn't have demanded him to stay and work off the value of the compensations. So my father took whatever money was left, arranged to get his passport and a ship ticket for himself and then he left. I suspect that in his eyes, after living in Switzerland and Russia, Mexico wasn't the most attractive place and I think he probably wanted to go to New York, to America. Most likely he ran out of money and that's why he only got as far as Mexico. But I could be wrong and he could have talked to someone on the ship who might have spoken to him about the possible prospect of being a watchmaker in Mexico.

My father was a talented man: he succeeded to learn Spanish, and in poor circumstances, with little money, but with his knowledge he was able to open a store. I remember the store we found when we got there. He was renting it from somebody, it was a very modest dark long store room. Upstairs, at the end of his room there was a bed and there was also a gun hanging on the wall, which wasn't unusual in Mexico. That's where my father lived until we got there. Downstairs the store had a small window with blinds.

Personally, I don't remember any Jewish customers but there must have been someone my father talked to. It is a fact that he visited Trotsky 3, a well-known Russian-Jewish revolutionist refugee at the time, who was in opposition with the Bolshevik party line in Russia and had to escape from Stalin. Trotsky must have gone to Mexico sooner than my father. [Editor's note: Trotsky's expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1929 for 'anti-Soviet activities', took place much later than the emigration of Jeno's father.] Stalin ordered Trotsky to be killed and he was indeed assassinated. My father would have known the facts and probably was aware of the importance of Trotsky and he must have visited him because of the fact that he also had leftist beliefs. My father had to be anti-tsarist because it was by no means comfortable living in Russia when he was there.

Growing up in Mexico

I was born in 1923 when my father was already in Mexico. Two or three years later my father collected enough money so that he could send us ship tickets. I went to Mexico with my mother in 1926. My father was waiting for us with a rented furnished apartment. I remember it was a two-bedroom apartment without a bathroom. I don't think we lived in a place that had a bathroom throughout the entire time we were in Mexico. We bathed in a tub or in big bowls, where we poured the water on each other with our hands, that's how it was. We lived very modestly; we had somewhere where we could sleep and a table. We had electricity so there were some light bulbs that gave some dim light. Later we lived in an apartment and the whole house had to share the tap and in general we lived in places where a lot of other people lived as well.

When my father's business started going better we could afford to move into a better place. However, we never lived in a separate courtyard. I know that once we lived on Meave Street in an apartment that had two windows looking onto the street. It was a big thing since most of the houses were concrete apartments, the floors were arranged in a circle, with bars, and the doors and windows all opened inwards toward the big courtyard. There were huge yards where the tenants dealt with all of their issues as well as all celebrations and holidays. There was a celebration for children, when the entire house was staring at them [as they were performing something], and then they commented how the children performed. You could go through the floor and find every door open. You could smell what everyone was cooking all the time and you could also yell into the apartments saying, 'Senora como esta? Bien, gracias'. [How are you Madame? Well, thank you.] They talked back and forth and we always knew who lived well, who lived poorly, who lived under bad conditions, who had fights; there were no secrets. My mother didn't work, so together we, nicely dressed, we would wait for my father for lunch, or visit him at his store or go shopping. We only ate out in restaurants on Sundays.

My father met a wealthy Polish Jew in the capital, who had also emigrated to Mexico. His name was Elias Gopas, he was a skilful businessman and became so incredibly rich that he had cowherds on the border of the Mexican capital and he also owned a milk refinery. He produced butter and sour cream as well. This Polish man must have been a very talented fellow and he had Mexican Indians working for him. He took his watch to my father once; that's how they met and they kept in touch afterwards. We started to regularly visit them and I spent a lot of time at his place. It was unbelievable how much dairy we ate there. We could finally eat butter, which was rather rare in Mexico. The Gopas family was overweight; they loved to eat a lot.

Elias Gopas had two kids. I think they both had red hair, pale skin and weren't too tall. Elias himself was also a stocky, middle height person, and he always wore his shirt unbuttoned, breathed very heavily and walked powerfully. When there was a tub or a pile of dung had to be moved that the poor Indians were struggling with, Elias grabbed them firmly and moved them with incredible strength. They celebrated Sabbath and the holidays. While my father was alone in Mexico, the Gopas family invited him for Sabbath so he wouldn't be alone and he could keep his Jewish identity. On Sabbath I imagine they ate together and they would also discuss things about Jewish life and Russian–Polish relations. There were certainly heavy political discussions and they surely analyzed the whole situation of tsarist Russia.

Somehow word spread that there was a club for Hungarian emigrants in Mexico City, where this group of Hungarians would come together. They even asked for registration and a member's fee and then you could go for a drink and play cards, play bridge. It was in a very nice and clean restaurant, which was filled with Hungarian voices. The band was either taught or they learned it from somewhere but they played Hungarian gypsy music. My mother knew the songs really well and sometimes she would sing along with the band. One could even eat, the restaurant offered Hungarian-style dishes. The regular members were well fed with red cheeks. It was a big party with lots of food and drinks. It had a truly Hungarian vibrating atmosphere. Since my mother was missing Hungarian company it was mostly she, who went to the Hungarian club. After his work, my father went to the club after her and they came home together. They hardly took me with them, so most of the time I just sat at home and some Indian neighbors took care of me. The club also had a small Hungarian library and the members shared the books amongst each other. If I remember correctly my mother brought home Hungarian books and read them at home. The vermicelli incident was notorious in our family when little Egon was taken to the Hungarian club and asked for some vermicelli. [Editor's note: Sometimes Egon talks about himself in third person, as if he was looking at his early years as an outsider.] 'You order it,' my parents said to me, and than I just yelled, 'I need gypsy dumplings!' I knew the dish not as vermicelli but as gipsy dumplings. There was great laughter after my shouting – people were already a little tipsy – and the atmopshere was wonderful.

In the Hungarian club my parents met with a tailor couple, their name might have been Elekes, who didn't have any children. They had a very good tailor business and their own tailor's shop. We became really good friends with the Elekes and we would often go hiking together on Sundays and my family would bring food for brunch. Mrs. Elekes was a fine, sturdy woman.

While we were already living there, the time of the elections came. I know that my father put me onto his shoulders – which means that I must have been about five years old, so it must have been in 1928 – and we arrived to a big open square in Mexico City, the capital. There was an enormous crowd. The Indians came from the countryside; there were so many people in sombreros, supposedly one million people on the square. The result of the election was announced on speakers, but the microphone was so bad, we couldn't understand anything. Than came Alvaro, the president, a brown-skinned, gray-haired man with Native American origins, who announced that he had been elected. This was Mexico's first democratic election in which someone of Mexican-Indian origin was elected. Up until then the presidents were Spanish dictators. My father wasn't particularly tall so he couldn't really see much, so sitting on his shoulders I was telling him what was happening. Then all of a sudden I heard a gun or a pistol shot and I could see the new president falling to the ground. There was a huge mess, everybody took his pistol out and there was shooting everywhere. My dad and I could hardy get out in one piece. So, as a five-year-old kid I was already an eyewitness of an assassination. [Editor's note: In 1928 Obrego Alvaro's prime ministerial mandate expired but Alvaro, ignoring local political laws that prohibited reelection, reelected himself and won the election. However, a fanatic Catholic assassinated him.]

I remember the big campaign and how noisy it was when the first North American style shopping mall was built in Mexico City. It was a huge success, the mall was always packed but most of the people didn't shop, they only stared at the products. We went to check it out, too. The mall had three floors, and you paid for the products not on the floor where you got them, but they were sent

down to the ground floor on an assembly line, where they were also wrapped up.

My father bought an old Ford under the counter. When the three of us sat in the car we looked like the people in Stan and Bran films. My dad was very good at keeping the Ford in good condition, he even had to crank its handle. If I'm correct the tires of the car weren't even inflatable, they were still the solid tires. While my dad was still well he would take my mother and I for car rides and we drove around Mexico. We would drive as far as 70, 80 or 100 kilometers. We mostly explored the Aztec land. My father wanted to show us where and what he had done besides watch making in his first two years while he was waiting for my mother and I. Besides his passion for watches, my dad had a passion for archeology.

I was a peculiar child and my imagination far exceeded my actual knowledge. According to the family chronicle, as a young kid, I was already able to make a moveable donkey out of paper. I always drew and invented all kinds of things. My father thought I was an ordinary child, and he bought me tin soldiers and airplanes, but I got bored of them within a very short time. I wanted to play but not like most of the other kids did. I always just wanted to play whatever game I invented. I had a great imagination. Out of wax I made a diver. I always took more interest in my wax diver than in planes even if they could fly. I wasn't particularly into reading but then my father brought home Jules Verne books in Spanish. My father bought Spanish books but we still spoke Hungarian at home. I finished elementary school in Spanish, and I had five years at Saint Louis de Palestrina, the best Spanish Catholic middle school, where we only learned about the Middle Ages in our history classes.

My father became ill and it led to the complete financial break down of my family. He couldn't keep up with his work and in 1932, we moved out from downtown to past the suburbs. I took the tram and if I recall correctly, after the last tram stop it was another 25-30-minute walk to our house. Later on I traveled by myself. There were no canals and the water ran through ditches, just like in villages. At the station where I got off, at the beginning of the road people were selling lard and tortilla in a tent. Afterwards, there was just a big emptiness: yards, fields and after that a few modest houses. On the left side I saw two more decent houses with better vegetation, they must have belonged to Spanish families. Next to our house there were very modest Mexican-Indian clay houses. That is where we rented a house. An Indian rented his brick house to us while he lived near us in a wattle house. He did a lot of work around our house for us. By that time we had our own yard, just as if we were living in the countryside. We had a lockable gate and door, but anyone could easily jump the fence.

That was our last home in Mexico, where my sister, Irenke, was born in 1932. She only learned speaking in Hungarian because we only spoke Hungarian at home. My sister knew only a little Spanish, she attended kindergarten for a quarter or half a year, and she knew only what she picked up from the Indian kids. However, the two of us would usually stay at home where we didn't have anyone to speak Spanish with. We had a scary dog; he looked like the famous Rin Tin Tin, the big German shepherd. His name was Lobo, which means wolf in Spanish. He was our guard. He could be trusted to safeguard my sister who would fall asleep and Lobo wouldn't leave her side. However, Lobo was a very aristocratic dog. I don't know where my parents got him from, but he couldn't stand either the bare-footed, nor uniformed people, he always barked at them. I was a bigger boy by then, but nevertheless, the neighbor Indian woman still looked after us. On the afternoons when I wasn't in school my dear little sister and I spent time at different neighbors, or we were staring at

things, had a chat. I was supposed to take care of my sister. Irenke was very attached to me, she was always by my side and we were very close. She was a very funny and sweet girl. She laughed at my figures each time I drew them in her presence. I learned my first funny drawing from a sailor: I drew a Chaplin figure from behind, so there was a wedge like an opening on his tailcoat and I had to push it out with a finger and everyone could see that it was his butt. My dear sister really enjoyed it and I still remember her laughter.

The only Jewish tradition we observed was that my mother and father lit a candle on Friday evening, but we didn't even have a kosher meal. There was no shochet so how could there be kosher meat? I saw my mother lit the candle, put a shawl on her head and that's how she prayed. From the time she lit the candle up until we finished eating dinner she had a shawl on her head. Once we were done eating she took the shawl off. My father put a hat on and I got something on my head as well; at first, it was a hanky and later on a hat. I think my father worked on Saturdays. If his business was going fine and we had enough for a living he didn't work on Saturdays. On Saturdays and on Sundays the family sat together. On Saturdays we had a bean dish. My parents tried to make cholent, but without an oven they had to agree with a neighbor Indian woman so they could leave the cholent there, in her oven. My mother prepared it and took it over to the Indian woman's on Friday because she had a clay oven. My parents prepared the cholent not with Mexican seasoning but with black peppers that they bought in the city. I'm not sure where they got parsley but the cholent had some in it because otherwise it wouldn't have tasted so good. In Mexico we didn't eat bread, only tortillas, which are corn flans. I know that a German customer of my father used to bring us Leberwurst, meat and liver paté that was probably made from pork. The German had a butcher's shop or he imported the meat from Europe, I'm not sure, but he always used to bring us pate. In general, we didn't eat pork, mostly because at the time it was difficult to get pork meat. In Mexico the national food on holidays was turkey. We lived on turkey and chicken meat.

On Saturdays, our Indian neighbor performed the so-called goy jobs, which meant the kind of work that Jews weren't allowed to perform. For instance, she would kill the chicken or the turkey and cook lunch if there was no cholent, and she would stay until she finished making lunch. My mother didn't do any of this. Even during weekdays it was the Indian woman who slaughtered the chickens and she also did our shopping. My mother would also shop once in a while but generally she wouldn't do it on Saturdays. My mother was a noble woman and she looked like one as well: she had a beautiful textile knee skirt, silk stockings and high-heeled shoes. Everybody knew she was Senora Max.

Good schools were only in the city. There was a peasant school in the suburbs where they paid a person to teach but my parents had me rather attend a school in the city. At the beginning I had to walk to school, and I had to get through the forest and through totally unknown swamp areas I had to go seven kilometers across desolate places. It was pretty hot and once when I was coming home from school, as a curious kid, I was bored and I started to wander off. There was an Eucalyptus forest and then little Egon decided to go into the forest to see something more interesting. There were ponds with duckweed, streams, frogs and all kinds of interesting things around and I got lost in there. Accidentally, I got to a swamp area where I immediately sunk in up to my knees. I tried hard to get out of the swamp but I just couldn't. I got really scared because it was already getting dark and I was supposed to be home by six or seven o'clock. So, I was struggling until I sunk in up

till my chest. I heard some voices, people were passing by nearby, so I screamed, yelled, shouted as loud as I could, but nobody heard me. I even cried but after a while I stopped and calmed down. The moon was rising and people came looking for me on the road and they were also shouting for me. It wasn't only my parents but also the neighbor Indians, and they had alerted the whole neighborhood. It was a great thing. There were about 20 people looking for me. It was possible that I screamed back to their yelling, for this I don't remember anymore, but probably that's how they found me.

At first, my parents wanted me to go to school on a donkey, but my mother didn't really want me to ride a donkey even though there were many others who did it. She was worried that I would fall off because the donkey didn't have a saddle. So, after all, they rented a horse for me. My father made a deal with an Indian man who rented his horse to me. It came with a saddle and stirrup. They put me on the horse with my books and notebooks and I sat in the saddle properly and that's how I used to go to school. My dad paid someone to feed the horse while I was in school or maybe he only paid for a spot for the horse and it had food [in a fodder-bag]. I don't know but the whole thing cost little money. We had a very good relationship with the native people. They called my father Senor Max. They must have thought we were Germans. They were much friendlier towards us Europeans, and in certain instances they would ask my father for his opinion because he was also very open and talkative with the Mexican people. He also helped them a lot, mostly he fixed their watches and gave them advice.

My parents hid my father's illness from us children. He must have had awful pain for he had a fatal ulcer. He put heat packs on his stomach to soothe his pain at nighttime when it got worse. He must have taken some painkillers so he could still work the next day. My father sold his shop in the city and he didn't take on as much work anymore and stayed at home longer. Then he fell ill and stayed in bed for nearly a year and never recovered. We lived off my father's savings and we even sold the little jewelry and few watches that my parents had. Throughout my dad's illness my mother had help. For some money, the neighbor Indian woman came over and spent time with my sister and I and sometimes cooked for us. It's possible that there were already clinics for the wealthy but I don't remember that. By the 1930s Mexico hadn't developed and built up enough to provide clinical treatments, but my mother still brought an old private doctor to my father from somewhere. However, it was too late. My father died of stomach cancer in 1934. After he passed away, the Gopas family helped my mother so my father could be buried, but I don't remember the funeral. There was a big cemetery somewhere in the suburbs of Mexico City, I don't know exactly where, but that's where they buried my father. The Hungarian couple with the tailor business probably also helped my mother out with the funeral. I know they decided with my mother to move back to Europe and we did come back together.

Going back to Romania

To be able to get ship tickets we had to sell all our remaining jewelry. But it wasn't enough so my mother had to get a job in order to get the rest of the money. As far as I know she worked in a fish processing company. I saw how she would come home and the first thing she did was take off all her clothes because they were really smelly. She washed them but when we could afford it the neighbor Indian woman did it. They washed my mother's clothes in lye and put them out so they would be dry by the next morning and my mother could wear fresh clothes to work every day. She insisted on that. Once the tailor couple was visiting and I don't remember their discussion with my

mother but it was very serious. And then one day my mother announced that we were going home. In the meantime my mother had kept in touch with people from back home through letters.

The ship was very crowded. The tailor couple had more money and they could get themselves a cabin. We slept outside on the covered part of the deck on sunbathing chairs. They were big and comfortable and we also got two blankets and when it was windy we had to get under them. We had the cheapest fare; my ticket was a half-prize because I was only 13 years old and my sister's was free since she was still so young.

We traveled for a long time. The ship was transporting goods as well as passengers and it wasn't exactly a luxury ship. It was called Iberia. We traveled on the ship for over a month. I remember the company's name: HALPAG, Hamburg-AmeriKa Linien-Packaktion Gesellschaft. It must have been an American-German cooperation. They were bringing Germans home because Hitler was calling the German emigrants back because the great German Empire was to be reborn. And many of them were coming; the cabins were full of Germans. Cuba was our first stop. We got off the ship in Havana, we still had some pocket change and my mother drank good black coffee. Afterwards, on the ship, she couldn't sleep all night.

In Mexico my mother stayed in touch with her siblings who lived in Kolozsvar and with Jancsi too, who emigrated to Spain around 1935. My mother and Jancsi kept in touch by mail even after my father died. Before we left we arranged to meet Jancsi in Spain and he gave us the name of a hotel to stay in. But after we arrived in Spain at the hotel we received Jancsi's message: 'Go home and I will come for Egon'. By then he must have left Spain for the United States. I don't know how we got back to the ship, but we did and after leaving Spain the ship docked at England and France before arriving in Hamburg, the final destination of the Hamburg-American line. We stayed in a cheap hotel. In Hamburg we found out that we had to go to Berlin because we held French passports and only the French embassy could allow us to travel further through Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary to Romania. While going to the embassy we saw a mass of people in front of a podium. We had no clue what was happening and my mother asked somebody in German who the speaker was. 'You don't know him?!' came the answer. 'No, because we've just come from America', said my mother. As an answer to that I remember the person said, 'That's Hitler, our leader'. Then we saw Hitler up on the podium where he was giving a speech. My mother might have heard of Hitler and probably even said something to me about him, but I forgot it. That's all I can remember about this incident. Later after we arrived back here to Kolozsvar I heard what my grandmother said about Hitler: 'Hitler ist unser Feind, Hitler is our enemy. My grandmother was very engaged in politics; she was a post-woman, with a sharp intellect, who was always informed about the news.

From the French embassy in Berlin we went straight to the train station. At the customs in Czechoslovakia we had to get off the train and they searched our bags. My mother had an exotic Aztec wicker basket full of presents. They taxed us for it so badly that we didn't have enough money to pay for it. My mother tried to sweet-talk them into reducing the tax. The custom officers were just playing for time to reduce it until the train was leaving and then still having the basket they just threw my sister and I onto the train and not having any other options my mother also got up with us. The officers just stood there with an ugly and evil grin: they succeeded to put us on. We left behind the basket full of things that we had brought all the way from Mexico. When we arrived back here, everyone was surprised, asking, 'You didn't bring anything back with you?' There was one vivid red-colored woven piece of clothing that remained for us, with a cut in its front, and it

wasn't a poncho but something else the Indians wear called sarafeh, but we left it on the train at the customs, because we were sitting on it.

We had a very nice welcome in Kolozsvar and the family was once again together. They were really upset about my father because everybody had loved him. My grandfather on my mother's side had passed away a couple of years before our arrival, but my parents knew about it from the letters. Once we arrived we heard that Jancsi was in the United States. Out of my mother's siblings, Jancsi is the only one I don't remember. He graduated from university and I think he was a chemist. But I never saw him again. First he went to Hungary, where he got married to a non-Jewish girl who we didn't know. From Hungary, the two of them emigrated to the United States, maybe to New York. As far as I know, they didn't have any children.

We arrived in Kolozsvar either in September or October. I was put into school right away. Out of my eight school years in Mexico, only six were recognized so I had to go back to the 2nd grade in public school. However, they decided to put me into the elementary school on Paris Street first, to learn Romanian. In that school I learned Romanian well and then I transferred to the 2nd grade at Angelescu Gymnasium. I didn't go to Christian religion classes because I was a declared Jew. It was possible to attend the Tarbut's 4 religion class but I never went.

Already in my first week at school I felt discriminated against. [Egon was the only Jewish student in class.] I'm a friendly person and initially, during our breaks, my classmates were fascinated with my Mexican background, which they discovered since I was wearing Mexican clothes: there were either buffaloes or Indians painted on my jumpers. To wear such clothing was very noticeable, but they all liked my Mexican outfits. On one day, these Romanian kids with whom I was on good terms, started asking me about my background and soon they found out that I wasn't Mexican but Jewish. Afterwards the kids whispered behind my back. By that time the fascist movement was already active with the Goga line [that is, sympathizing with the Goga-Cuza government] 5. I unsuspectingly went outside to the schoolyard and kept playing with my classmates when all of a sudden, in the back of the schoolyard that was surrounded by walls so that the director couldn't have seen anything, I was surrounded by a couple of kids. First they questioned my Mexican identity and they took their knives and pocket-knives out for me to show them how I could throw at a target to prove how Mexican I really was. I couldn't perform as well as they did so I got a few hits and kicks from them. 'This is not a Mexican' they said. But these were only a child's kicks, ones that were used in small fights. However, the hardest part came once the kids discussed that even though I had come from Mexico I was Jewish, moreover a Hungarian speaking Jew. After this things took a bad turn. The Legionary 6 spirit was already alive and in homes people were talking like, 'noi romanii..., patria noastră..., etc.' [we, Romanians..., our motherland]. When I went to the back of the schoolyard again, I was suddenly attacked by a bunch of kids – today I would call them thugs – and they knocked me down to the ground. They pushed me to the wall and while strangling me they said, 'Mai jidane, futu-i mama ta! Striga, traiasca Legiunea si Capitanul!' [You Jew, your mother's cunt! Shout, long live the Legionaries and the Captain!]' By then I knew they were referring to Horia Sima 7, the leader of the Legionaries. I was unwilling to obey. It's terrible how brutish my peers were, but I was not giving in, I defended myself. All this was happening in 1938.

My Romanian teacher, Octavian Siraru, was a very intelligent man who was a good friend and an admirer of Goga, the prime minister. While my Mexican identity held up I didn't have any problems with Mr. Siraru, but that wasn't true afterwards. Once we had the task to write something and,

being an enterprising but naïve child, I decided to write a four-to-six line poem in Romanian about Romania, expressing how in Romania the trees are blooming and the birds are singing and something else along those lines. Mr. Siraru felt so insulted that he lost his temper and he hit me in the face. He was shouting at me in a husky voice in front of the whole class asking where I got my courage to do such a thing. He said, 'Limba noastra curata …, vii tu, cine ti-a dat voie sa faci aceasta?' [Our pure language…, how dare you, who allowed you to do something like this?] There was nothing I could say to him because I didn't speak Romanian well enough yet.

At night I tried to come up with some ideas to earn myself some respect. In Mexico I learned what to do with a lasso. I knew how to make a snare so if it got around the bull's neck it would tighten with one pull. We had a special rope in the attic, which was made from the manila plant. It was a thick, beautiful, white rope. Our luggage, which we had to leave behind in Czechoslovakia, was tied together with this rope. After unpacking our baskets we held onto the ropes waiting to use them again but instead we found ourselves on the train with it, but with no luggage to tighten it around. A day after our arrival we were already using the rope in the attic to hang clothes because my grandmother loved it. I took the clothes off the rope and I tied it around my waist rodeo like and the next day in school I sat in the last row and took note of the most annoying kids in front of me. They were the loudest and kept saying, 'mai jidane, mai…' [You dirty Jew, you]. During class with my most gentle teacher, who was quietly writing on the blackboard completely ignoring the noisiness of the class, I spun the lasso around like a cowboy – I had two Hungarian kids next to me – I tossed it and caught two or three of the loud ones and I started tightening the rope. In the silence that followed there were only choked voices. The teacher looked up not understanding what was happening and then he saw us. I was expelled from school and it was a big scandal. But I also made a name for myself much later, when I grew older, I met a student who had been there in Anghelescu school at the same time and he said to me, 'Do you remember when you came with the lasso and caught those three …?' Since then, no one at school tried to hurt me again although those three were in a huff with me for a while. I wasn't allowed back to school for two weeks but after that my mother begged them to allow me to return.

At home they were upset about the anti-Jewish remarks. For us it was like the crucifixion of Christ and we said, 'Forgive them Lord because they don't know what they are doing'. My family's attitude to our Jewish identity was as to a reality that had to be dealt with. We were ready to deal with it but we weren't the kind of Jewish people who had a lot of patience.

Our family lived in an apartment on Szechenyi Square: my grandmother my mother, my aunt, my sister, two of my uncles and myself. This was a particularly cheap apartment house, one room and a kitchen. The four women stayed in the room and us three men slept in the kitchen. From the street the house seemed tall but to get to our kitchen we had to go downstairs. The kitchen was dark, small but longish and had a low ceiling. We slept there, next to each other in awful circumstances, in such a way, that we had to throw ourselves from the bed-post to the head of the bed. It was by no means like I could get off the bed and there were my shoes. No, the shoes always remained at the end of the bed. This was a serious thing. There was also a water pipe in the kitchen because after all it was a downtown apartment. In the room we burned wood for heating. We had a stove of black tin and its oven stuck out. Our yard, which was totally dark, wasn't far from the Szamos River. Next to us lived an observant Jew with payes who had a child. But he never let his child come and play with us because we were treyfs [non-kosher]. Otherwise he didn't

consider us real Jews since we were usually bareheaded except during meals on Sabbath and when we went to the synagogue.

We had been in Kolozsvar for a year, my sister was already four years old, when at the janitor's next door they had a pig killing. All doors were open towards the yard, the big block of apartments above us, and everything was happening right in front of us. The pig was getting killed in the back of the house, where there was a bendy way to the cellar, from where you could also descend to the bank of the Szamos River. Of course we kids participated in the whole 'gala' because I was really interested since I had never seen a pig being roasted, or pork being eaten. And my five-year-old dear sister really desired some pork so she went up and said, 'If I weren't a gentle girl then I would ask you for some pork'. By then the pig was getting carved up left and right; the sausages were being made, the other attendants were standing behind. A small child didn't have the understanding that eating pork wasn't kosher and that she shouldn't have any pork, and my grandmother just accepted that my sister tasted the pork.

In our crowded apartment we didn't really have the opportunity to observe Sabbath. First of all, there was no real table and there wasn't enough room for all of us to sit. We could only have all of us together when the women hadn't yet gone to sleep. About four times a week we had some kind of bean dish for the main course; we ate smashed beans, soup and pickled cabbage. On Sabbath we didn't cook. Cholent was prepared on Friday and it was covered with paper. We always took it to Hilmann, the baker. We had to pay him in advance and he only took the cholent if we had paid him before and then he gave us a number that he also put on the cholent and that's how we could ask for it later.

The candle lighting on Friday evening was absolutely mandatory. We had our fine old silver candlesticks and they always had candles in them. No matter how poor we were we would always have candle lighting. I wasn't a synagogue goer, I only went on the high holidays when my mother and grandmother took me (but I am circumcised). The women wore scarves only on holidays. Otherwise they didn't wear scarves, I remember that my grandmother would often loaf round with her white hair open, not wearing a scarf. But for the men it was mandatory to wear hats on holidays. On Sabbath, the cholent would be brought back from the baker, though it wasn't any of us who brought it back, but some Christian child. The money for his service was on the table already on Friday morning. When the child brought the cholent on Sabbath, it was still hot and the paper was brownish from being well burned. It was at home before my uncles got back from the synagogue. On Sabbath I went out to the yard and I used to draw on a piece of paper. I remember that after my uncles Jeno and Hari got home from the synagogue, they had lunch but after being home for a little while they got bored so they left to visit their friends. But my grandmother insisted that on Sabbath they didn't go to any public places, parties or to play cards.

I don't remember women going to the mikveh but I do remember that the men used to go to the steam bath on Sundays. In Kolozsvar, on Szechenyi Square there was a steam bath, separately for men and women. [Editor's note: Egon Lovith is referring to Jozsef Selig's steam bath named Cristal, which operated in the same period as the mikveh.] Before we could get into the hot tub, where we would sit quietly, we had to wash ourselves with soap. After the hot bath we went into the cold tub, where there was a terrible frolicking. This is where Hari and Jeno took me. I met many secular Jews there. The mikveh wasn't far from there on the bank of the Szamos River but I have never been there.

While the family lived together we observed seder and there were separate Pesach utensils. The men of the family, Hari and Jeno, were reading and saying out loud whatever they were supposed to and I, 13-14-year-old Egon, had to the role of asking [the mah nishtanah]. We put Irenke, my sister, to sleep because she got sleepy early. Then came the whole story that I had to recite, I was the victim who had to be doing the asking. Besides that, they also hid a piece of matzah for me – it was usually Hari who did it – which I had to find. But I found it because the apartment was tiny and they didn't hide it on top of the wardrobe, instead they slid it under the tablecloth or put it in the drawer. I remember I asked for a lot of drawing supplies, paint, colored pencils, papers and canvas as a reward.

During the week the two men, Hari and Jeno, usually ate in town and they didn't eat kosher. I know initially they were hesitant to eat bacon and such but later on they even asked me to bring some treyf to the house. By then I was already working in the shoe store next to the food stands and from my tips and the money I earned I bought some food, a little sausage and bacon that I took home. My grandmother wasn't too fond of this.

At home they treated me like an artist and they let me work. I painted on my own sheets because I didn't have money for canvas. The wall of the house was full of my paintings and the paintings were hung with pushpins because I didn't have money for frames. I was already working on human figures and I drew my grandmother's portrait. I drew mostly graphics using pressed charcoal. Those days it was already possible to buy good quality paper in places like the famous Lepage bookstore. [Editor's note: The Lajos Lepage bookstore and stationer's was the predecessor of today's university bookstore, on the southwestern side of the main square, whose owner-director was Dr. Ferenc Dobo]. You could get periodicals. L'impression was a beautiful periodical and I studied modern French painting from that magazine. I used to peek into the store and sometimes they had some older issues of the magazines and they would give them to me for free. I drew a lot and at school in Kolozsvar they knew that I was a 'Mexican painter'.

I was registered at Hashomer Hatzair 8, but I was never a convinced Zionist and neither was my family. The Zionist movement was already in progress in 1937-1938 and it continued into the Hungarian era 9. The center of the organization was at the end of Horea Street, today's Einstein Street. In the basement there was a big room where we gathered. There were big dance parties, singing and perhaps even Hebrew language classes. Unfortunately, I've never learned Hebrew because I never had time to study since I was painting or drawing instead. I took some pictures to the center and hung them on the walls and people really appreciated them. I also drew at the center for them. An awful lot of Jews, who are in very high positions in Israel today, used to go there. I myself used to go there because there one would find the most liberal secular Jewish youngsters, and not the religious ones. But I stopped going when the center turned too militaristic for me.

There was a Jewish emigration wave in Romania in 1939-1940. Back then people went to Israel by ship. Eventually Hashomer Hatzair as an organization closed down [following 1947 when most of its members left for Israel] because the Zionists were taught to take the first opportunity to move to Israel. But I didn't want to emigrate to Israel because I knew straight away that I had obligations. I set myself the task of being the breadwinner of the family since there were mostly women left in my family: my grandmother, my aunt, my mother and my sister. My aunt Edit was just about to get married and only Hari had some miserable earnings. My family was also against moving to Israel.

Mostly the family wanted to reestablish itself because my father's death had been a devastating loss. My mother was a beautiful woman, like the models you see in French magazines, but she didn't want to remarry even though she was getting proposals from wealthy Jewish men. But the men lacked style and were so smelly that my mother disliked them all.

At the end of 1938 there was a qualifying examination at the Institutul Regele Carol al II. [Editor's note: King Charles II Institute was the successor of the Franz Joseph University in the interwar period; today it is called Babes-Bolyai University.] I was told that without a qualifying examination I wouldn't be able to find a job. The exam was necessary for any non-specialized jobs and for specialized jobs besides this exam, it was also required to prove one's vocational schooling. The qualifying examination was available for anybody but in reality it was a hidden form of numerus clausus in Romania 10. It wasn't stated that a person of a given ethnic background wasn't allowed to work, but they rather said that the person needed to prove he was qualified. At the examination there were tests that had nothing to do with anything. First there was the medical examination; blood tests, throat, teeth and other check-ups. I was a skinny but strong kid. I remember a bunch of intelligence tests: there were math problems and logic problem sets. I was excellent at the observation and logic tests. They gave some sort of tricky pictures and I had to complete them. They showed the original complete pictures for a moment and I had to remember what the details were. There was also another test where they showed me a picture for a short time and then took it away and afterwards gave me a piece of paper and I had to complete whatever parts of the original picture were missing. For instance I saw a bear walking in the snow but the footprints were missing. And there were other things missing as well that I had to finish. I must have gotten a high score for noticing so many missing details.

The end result wasn't given immediately and it read as follows, 'Decision: after the examination of the youngster's abilities the committee concluded that he is qualified for gardening and basket weaving'. So, I was allowed to weave baskets and do the gardening. It is absolutely certain that they didn't give qualification based on the intelligence scores. I found myself among a bunch of underclass kids – I, who belonged to the intelligentsia with my Mexican schooling, language proficiency, and good upbringing. It's evident that the scores were determined in favor of the Romanian kids while the non-Romanians were denied the possibility of better jobs. My qualification exam results didn't guarantee a job for me. I had to go to a company and ask for my spot. My mother got really upset when the result of my qualification exam arrived.

In 1939, still under the Romanian era, during the reign of Carol II 11, when I finished high school I had to look for work to earn some money because my family couldn't afford to pay for my higher education. I had to look for a job and the possibilities were sad. I worked for a plumber carrying his bag and I dug holes. Then I was hired at the shoe store of Ignac Farkas as an errand boy. This was the most elegant and most famous shoe store, the Herbach Dermata's retail store, where we sold Dermata shoes exclusively. Ignac Farkas was the co-owner of Dermata. [Editor's note: Dr. Mozes Farkas and Jozsef Farkas' Dermata leather and shoe factory was one of Kolozsvar's most known and leading leather ventures and was the predecessor of today's Clujana shoe factory.] My immediate boss, Mr. Glantz, was extremely reserved. He always smelled and along with his sweat he was an ugly aristocratic Jew. There was also a Hungarian chief bookkeeper woman who was always busy putting on make-up. Among the shop assistants there was a Romanian, a Hungarian and the five others were Jewish. Besides this, there were two janitors in the store, two simple

Hungarians who were very nice and I got along well with both of them. They kept the store keys and they had to be at the store and open it by six o'clock in the morning when I got there.

My task was to keep the store clean. Originally sweeping the walkway and getting rid of any rubbish were the tasks of the two Hungarian janitors but eventually it became my job. They left all the dirty work for me. I had to clean up all the rubbish left by the person who arranged the store window and got rid off the rubbish that the customers left. I also had to carry shoeboxes, at times eight to ten at once, up and down from the basement because that is where they stored the shoes. My most difficult task was that every single evening at seven o'clock, after I cleaned up and the store closed, I had to deliver the shoes that the customers ordered to their homes on that day, since our store was an elite place, only the wealthy shopped there. Then I got the shoeboxes, which were tied around together or I had to tie them myself and the addresses were on them. I also got a note telling me to whom I had to deliver the shoes. I walked about six to seven kilometers with the shoeboxes. In general I had to deliver to two customers an evening and three if they lived close to one another. Once I arrived at the given address, I rang the bell and they were expecting me, because they had said before when they wanted me to go there. I gave the shoes to the customers, and some did, others didn't give me a tip for the delivery. They went to the store afterwards to pay for the shoes. Once I was done with the deliveries I had to go down to the train station because that's where I lived. Needless to say, wealthy people didn't live close to the station, and the poor people who did wouldn't order a shoe delivery.

I had a conflict with a baroness once. She couldn't make up her mind in the store, so eight to ten pairs of shoes had to be delivered to her house, somewhere on Gyulai Pal Street. It was quite late in the evening, around 8 or 9pm, by the time I got there. It was a pretty villa with a garden, and they were having dinner in the terrace. Upon my arrival I rang the bell and somebody opened the gate and told me to come back once more because the baroness wasn't going to see me right then. I would have had to take all the shoes home and I didn't want to do go through all the filthy, smelly and dark streets. Then someone spoke up from the terrace and told me to wait. I stood next to the gate because there was nowhere to sit down. I caught them at the beginning of their meal and while they ate their dinner, drank their wine and tea, I stood by the gate in the cold, with ten pairs of shoes for an hour and a half. I was pretty annoyed because it was late already and this was my last errand.

Finally, when everyone had left the table, the baroness signaled that I could come in. She tried on all the shoes and decided to keep three or four so I was left with five pairs. By that time I was really fed up because I couldn't stand the indignity of the way I was treated; how they made me wait by the gate, as a miserable servant, and wouldn't even give me a chair to sit on. After all, based on my upbringing, I considered myself a gentleman. Then the baroness took some money out and gave it to me like it was a pittance. I looked at the amount and it was as much as I made in three days if not in a whole week. But I was a self-respecting 'gentle' boy – that's what I said when I was young, if I didn't like or want something – I thanked her and said, 'I don't accept tips'. 'What?' was all she could say. I said goodbye, it's true that not very humbly, not very nicely, and not backwards, but turned my back on her and went out the gate. I took the remaining shoeboxes home. At home I told everyone that I didn't accept the tip the baroness had offered. The family agreed with me with mixed feelings; they wouldn't have minded if I had had some money in my hands so we could have bought some bread. Pride costs money, damn it.

Perhaps on the same night or early the next morning, the baroness talked to Mr. Glantz, because when he came to the store around 8 or 9am on the next day, he ordered me into his office immediately. He said to me, 'Listen to me, I know your family origins, I know you have been to Mexico, etc., but I will fire you without your foot touching the store's ground ever again! You have no right to insult a customer, you have to swallow whatever a customer says and you can think whatever you want but you can't show it.' I didn't ask Mr. Glantz why or anything, I just waited in silence for him to be done. I wasn't fired right away but I was as soon as the next numerus clausus was enacted and the number of Jewish employees had to be reduced at least by one or two. That was in 1939.

There were two large transportation companies in Kolozsvar, one of them having a nice Jewish name, perhaps Goldstein, and the other one was the Union. I got a job at the Union, which was by the train station. My uncle Hari worked there as chief bookkeeper because he had graduated from the school of economics. The owner was a Jewish man. They hired me as a transport worker. I had to carry 28-30-kilo wooden boxes, on foot, on my shoulders, to the post office, send it and take the receipt back to the Union. It was a short trip from the station to the post office, but carrying such heavy boxes wasn't an easy and comfortable thing and I wasn't fit enough to do that. I was silently doing my job and bore the pain of my shoulders, so everybody at home felt so sorry for me, that they almost cried, when they saw me, their child, what I looked like. But there was nothing to help the situation with, because that was the job.

Soon my mother talked to uncle Hari and I was transferred to a big horse carriage to be an assistant transport worker, although they didn't really want me there because I was too skinny. They knew that they had to lift and carry things over 100 kilos and two men had to be able to carry a piano. In the end Mozsi, a Hungarian man, was the only person who was willing to work with me. I heard what people said to him, 'You got the Jew for yourself, you will suffer the consequences.' But this was just cocky talk and there was no anti-Semitism at the Union. Mozsi taught me well how to grip and lift things skillfully. Our carriage had two horses and we had to carry mostly coal, wheat, and packages, things that came on the train. I only stayed at the Union for a couple of months because the company reduced the number of Jewish employees and mostly kept the stronger men. After that came the Hungarian era.

During the War

My family wasn't too happy and was calmly skeptical about Horthy's 12 entry. They saw in them the returning Hungarian gentry class. We weren't at all expecting that our situation would improve just because the Hungarians said 'Sweet Transylvania, we are here again…'. Some Jews were hoping that they would get back the positions that they had lost under the Romanians.

In my family it was mostly my grandmother who was engaged in politics. We didn't have a radio, therefore I had to bring a Hungarian newspaper, the Jo Estet [Good Evening], for my grandmother along with the bread and milk. The paper didn't have any specific Jewish content and was a politically mixed paper, mostly for the Hungarian middle class. It had a cultural section with theater and cinema commentaries and even book reviews. The paper also had political articles and my grandmother always analyzed and commented on them. These articles were the forerunner of the coming changes. The Hungarian papers were careful of what they wrote about. Everything I knew I heard from the adults in my family. It was Hari, my grandmother, mother and Jeno who discussed

these things. I only listened to them but I wasn't involved in politics and cared only for art. I wasn't really interested in any of the things they talked about.

My mother was working for Ufarom pharmaceutical factory at the time – she had to work with vials and medications – where lots of Hungarians were working, too. [Editor's note: The interviewer refers to Dr. Vilmos Stern's Ufarom Egger pharmaceutical factory.] Among the workers there was no problem about being Jewish. Leftist thinking was already prevalent among them. My mother became really close to them. They worked in the factory under very unhealthy conditions and their hours were very long so they organized a strike and my mother also participated. But the strike was broken up and my mother and all those who participated were fired.

Afterwards my mother tried to get another job and she got a position at a shoe or a clothing retail company. She was hired to go from house to house to collect money from the people who bought things on credit. My poor mother was so tired that later on I had to do her job on Sundays so she would have at least one day to stay home, cook and tidy up the house. I went from house to house with the slips but I didn't make good impression, didn't have the talent of an agent or a way of sweet-talking people, so they gave me little money. My poor mother took a look at the money I had collected and told me that the boss of the company would be dissatisfied. It became a terrible thing because soon after that people stopped paying any money even to my mother; she was turned down at every house. Since my mother couldn't meet the company's expectations she got fired from there, too. This was her last job that I can remember.

During the Hungarian era Jeno fell in love with a Hungarian nurse. The woman was extremely cheerful and funny. It looked like they were going to get married but my grandmother forbade Jeno to marry a goy woman. And Jeno depended on my grandmother.

Edit, my mother's younger sister, was a little shy. She was a petite but intelligent and well-mannered girl and my grandmother was her protector. She went to secondary school and later became a bookkeeper for a Jewish man who owned a firewood business in Malom Street. We still lived on Szechenyi Square when Edit fell in love with Karoly Bilman, who we called Samu. I don't know where they met. He came from a wealthier and more educated Jewish family. I think his family owned a glasswork factory or business in Medgyes. His parents had sent Samu to Vienna to study music at the Conservatory and he became a violinist or pianist with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Samu was an educated, well-read man and he was also a decent painter. He had polio and he could only walk with two canes.

One time, in 1941-1942, I was coming home and there was big panic when I arrived. Edit had attempted suicide [but she didn't die] because my grandmother declared that she wouldn't allow her daughter to marry a retarded person. But after all Edit managed to get her way and they were married by the time we lived by the train station. [In the meantime, Egon's family moved to another apartment.] Some kind of relative of Samu let them use his house, which was on a street parallel to Horea Street, for the wedding. They prepared the food for the wedding there and arranged one room where they made the chuppah and where the rabbi came. I was there when they had to stomp the glass and then came the eating. It could be that they were singing Jewish songs, I don't know because I left pretty early, I wasn't really interested in it. Most of the guests were Samu's, my family had only invited a few guests. It wasn't a large wedding.

The glasswork business of Samu's family continued to work in Medgyes. Samu did the bookkeeping or the administrative things, I don't know. He was a very talented man and he took on a lot of things. Samu and Edit moved into an apartment next to us. Samu wasn't a shy man and didn't have any inhibitions and he loved women. He loved my paintings and of course was the happiest when I gave my best works to him. My best paintings and drawings were in their apartment. But for me it was impressive that with such intelligence and an educated background he thought highly of my paintings. Samu also observed Sabbath.

The last apartment we lived in was by the train station, it was slightly bigger than the apartment we had lived in before. That time Hari wasn't married yet but only Jeno and Edit lived with us. There was a kitchen, a bigger room and a smaller room in the back. Unfortunately, we didn't have a toilet inside the house and we had to go out into the yard because the latrine was near the house opposite. In the bigger room on a double bed slept my grandmother, my mother and Irenke slept between them. I slept right by the double bed on a sofa that had coil springs sticking out of it. Jeno slept on a bed in the kitchen and Edit – as a lady waiting to get married – had the small room for herself. Her room was the 'white room' with a white dresser and white furniture. We couldn't use the white room but when Edit left the apartment I went in there to have a quiet place to draw. My grandmother always knew it but she never said anything.

At that time I met a lady who worked at the blood clinic. I asked her to pose for a nude picture. My grandmother was the only one at home – my mother was at work, Irenke was at school and Jeno was also gone somewhere – so I took her into the white room through the window. After I was finished with the drawings I hid them so Edit wouldn't see them when she came home. During that night, all of a sudden, my little plump grandmother got off her bed and I heard her calling me in Yiddish, 'Are you asleep little Egon?' I don't know why she was talking to me in Yiddish but I understood it. 'Move over a little', she said to me. My grandmother lay down next to me and then continued whispering: 'You think your grandmother is such an old-fashioned, stupid old woman?' It was two or three o'clock in the morning and I didn't know what kind of talk we were having. I was 18-19 years old, suddenly I didn't know what my grandmother was referring to. She said to me, 'I went into Edit's room and I looked at those drawings and they are beautiful! You are so great, but, by the way, why are you bringing women in through the window?' She knew that, too. 'Bring her in through the door, I have some coffee, I will offer that to her, that drawing of her is very nice.' My grandmother was proud of her grandson even though she was religious deep in her heart. She wanted to let me know that I shouldn't go into secrecy, and that she would help me continue my drawing career, which was a big thing since I was drawing naked bottoms. The women in my life, my grandmother and my mother, were sensational and I'm still moved whenever I think of them.

Both my mother and my grandmother used a lot of Yiddish words. They switched the words from Yiddish to Hungarian and the other way round and that's how they communicated. One of them would say, 'Bertuska, zist du es oykh?' Then they continued in Hungarian, 'See, look at what he did!' They were talking about Jeno when he left something carelessly on his bed. They were both well read. In general they both read one book each and then talked about them. In those days they read a lot of Dostoevsky [13].

In the early years of the 1940s when the Hungarians were already in possession of Transylvania, the Jews were expelled from higher educational institutions in Hungary. Among those expelled were two or three well-known artists who teamed up and opened a private school in Pest. They

came to Transylvania to recruit some talented Jewish students but they couldn't offer any scholarships. People knew me in Jewish circles and they told the recruiters that there was a guy named Lovith who was a talented painter. I showed them my work and won their number one award. But the problem was that I would have had to pay my way through school or find a Jewish person who would have sponsored at least my first year. They told me, 'If you are talented and do well in your first year we will arrange for the rest of your school years.' I went to see the Jewish owner of a big petroleum company, Mr. Adler, who had big tanks of petroleum that were kept past the train station. He told me to bring him some of my work. I took my best five to six works to him but it wasn't enough and he made me bring him about 30 pieces: small sculptures and pictures. I left everything with him and when I went back to get his written approval for my financial support he said to me, 'Look, I can see you have talent but I'm not going to take on your financial burdens. You are a breadwinner. What if I support you for a year and then you go away for 4 or 5 years to be a poor artist? Would you leave your family starve to death? You won't even be able to support yourself.' He didn't give me money. So, that determined that I wouldn't go to Budapest.

The students of Zsidlic [Tarbut Jewish Lyceum] 14 knew me, and they knew that I drew and by that time I already had sculptures, too. So, one day, one of the assistants of Mark Antal 15 [former director] asked me to go and see him – because he didn't find any other sculptor at the time – and he asked me to sculpt the death-mask of Mark Antal whose burial was the following day. I think I had previously met Mark Antal when I was looking for recommendations for the private university in Pest and I went to see him. He told me that if I couldn't get a letter of recommendation from anybody else he would write me one, or something like that. Anyway, so I took some plaster to take the contours of Antal's face so I could cast the mask. He was quite overweight and with his puffy face, his distinct chin and his strong cheekbones he resembled a Roman Senator. He had his eyes closed. I smeared petroleum wax all over his face and I plugged his ears and his nose with cotton balls so the plaster wouldn't get into them. I wasn't really happy to perform this on a dead body but I didn't have a choice. I made a slip-cover from clay and put it on his neck and that's how I finished the mask. At home I cast and dried the mask and polished it with a small amount of yellow paint, which gave the mask a deathly white appearance. The most difficult part was that I didn't have any experience, but somehow I managed to do the job. I gave the death mask to the assistant and I don't know where they put it up but a lot of people who went to the Jewish Lyceum used to mention it to me.

I succeeded to get to Globusz, which was owned by two repugnant Jews. One of them was a woman who wore thick glasses and the other one was an unfriendly old man who hardly received your greetings. They had four machines that had very heavy arms. We had to put plastic into a metal frame and melt it with the heat of electricity. Then it had to be taken out of the frame very carefully, still burning hot, so it wouldn't break because they deducted the broken pieces from your earnings. You had to do a perfect job, every mistake cost money. There were three Hungarian boys on the other three machines and I was the only Jew. They were strong, muscular guys who were used to heavy physical work. I couldn't keep up with them and there was always a difference in our payments. The director kept telling me: 'Why don't you perform better and do as well as the rest of them?' 'I try my best', I said, 'but I just cannot do it.' 'It's not the best for my business that you perform so poorly' – and I got a veiled warning. They didn't fire me because I really tried hard.

Before they took me away to forced labor, my uncle Jancsi still wrote to the family from America and he even sent a fountain-pen and five dollars to Edit. I didn't have any personal contact with him. I only knew him from pictures and I remember how, on the last picture of him, I saw an already americanized, big, gray-haired, overweight, well-dressed, man. He never came back and only kept in touch with Edith after Hari disappeared during the war. After that I don't know what happened, I didn't even hear when he passed away.

Hari got married in the 1940s but he had moved out even earlier. He married a Hungarian Jewish girl but I don't remember her name. I never met her. He didn't keep in touch with us. Later he had a child. Out of my family, Hari was the first to go to forced labor in Ukraine. Some people who were with Hari told me that he was at a site sweeping for mines and after that we've never heard from him again. According to someone else, he broke his leg and, due to bad circumstances, he died of some infection or he was shot. Hari's wife stayed here in Kolozsvar with their child but I don't know what happened to them.

From 1936 up until forced labor I lived with Jeno. Jeno only had elementary schooling. He didn't get married for a long time. He was a happy bohemian guy. He was going to be a watchmaker; my dad even gave him a certificate saying he prepared Jeno for the profession. All the watchmakers knew Jeno but he became bored with watch making even though he was great at it. He worked at different watch making stores for some time but he was fired from many of them. Then he went to hard physical work, which damaged the sensibility of his hands, so that he would never pick up watches again. Jeno was taken away before I was and he was in forced labor in Hungary all the way until 1944. He spent some time in Budapest, but it's difficult to say where he had to work and dig. He was also a cook as part of his forced labor and then he came home.

[Egon was called up in 1944 to Nagybanya but he doesn't know exactly what his family's situation was at the time of his deportation, he only knows what he has heard from other people.] The most I know is that my mother, my grandmother and my little sister were taken to the brick factory. The three of them stayed together while they were allowed, this I heard from some woman, and they were even taken away together in cattle cars. I met this woman around 1950, who told me that she had worked with my mother in Ufarom. She told me how awful it had been, about 100 people crowded in a single wagon without food or water. My grandmother was dead already when they pulled her out of the wagon. When they arrived in Auschwitz some Jews who were taking the newcomers' luggage away said to them, 'Do you see that chimney? You will come out with that smoke in half an hour.' Next my mother and Irenke got in front of Mengele and he immediately sent Irenke to the side, away from my mother. [Editor's note: It's only an assumption that Mengele selected the people himself.] So, my mother already knew that Irenke was going to be killed. 'And so she just stepped out' – the woman tells me – 'your mother held your sister's hands and they walked into death together. I don't know more. I survived and if your mother had stayed with me perhaps she would have survived, too. She was 40 years old in good health, we would have made it.'

I was first called up in 1942 to a so-called auxiliary preparation [instead of the levente –Hungarian military youth training], but I only had to go once a week. We had to assemble in the barracks. There they read the names and then we had to march with our tools, with shovels, to the worksite. The yellow armband was made mandatory. Early on they gave us a Hungarian army hat and I even saluted but the officers protested against it and our hats were taken away. When we were outside

the city we had to sing particular songs but I didn't open my mouth. They took us to the Hoja [near Kolozsvar] to build a ski-run and to deforest. At the time, the lake in the main park of Kolozsvar was drained and we were ordered to clean the bottom of it. They were long working days. After we finished we had to go back to the barracks and we were relieved from there to go home. That's what I was doing until I was taken away in February 1944.

When I got my order to forced labor in 1944, I had one favor to ask from the owner of Globusz. I asked him very nicely – I didn't refer to my Jewish background – to give me my salary in advance because I had to leave behind my mother, my grandmother and my sister whom I had been supporting, bringing them their daily portion of bread and a liter of milk. I said that when I came back I would work it off. There was no way he would give me the money. When I came back the two owners were still around, they had stayed and weren't deported, I don't know how they did it. They came up to me straight away and patted me on the shoulder, 'It's so great you're alive, we are restarting our business and we thought you would come back'. But I said to them, 'For you I won't go back to work, I've had enough of you'.

Edit became pregnant but I was already taken to forced labor by that time. Edit was exempted from deportation because she went to give birth at the Jewish hospital on Szechenyi Square. It was thanks to Samu, he got her there, because he was able to come and go freely. The Christians in the hospital were hiding Edit. They took her down to the basement where she gave birth to Lea in 1944. They weren't keen on releasing Edit from hospital; she stayed there with her child for a long time. Samu played his cards well, he wasn't in the ghetto at all, and he wasn't deported because he could prove with some kind of documents that he was of German origin [which was not true]. He had Austrian education and spoke German really well and so he made people believe he had come from Vienna and he wouldn't let anyone in on the secret that he had gone to Vienna from here in the first place. They had their second baby, Judit, in 1945.

I was called up to forced labor in 1944 into the 110/63 army brigade in Nagybanya. In Kolozsvar we all still had our backpacks and we were marching in our civil clothes but only some people had boots. I didn't have boots only paper-soled shoes that I got from the Jewish Association before we left, but my feet were hanging out of the shoes. We were in our own clothes but there were also some rich Jewish kids amongst us who were wearing their best clothes; nice textile pants, big boots, down jackets, and some of them even had extra boots with them. Their faces were so puffy from being overweight that their eyes were protruding. They sat down to eat their food but they wouldn't have shared it with the others. I didn't even ask for it, just out of pride. This is telling how great the class difference was even among us Jews. My feet were aching terribly marching on those stony roads and somebody next to me, who saw that my feet were hanging out of my shoes, said, 'Hey, give Egon those good boots!' But they didn't.

Going towards Nagybanya we marched up some incredibly steep roads, walking down hills to streams and back up again. During the first night the authorities came to inspect us: get in line, sit down, open your luggage. The first thing they took was our money and our watches and we were left without a penny. The second time they took the nicer clothes. They didn't take anything from me since my buttock looked out my pants, they were so worn out. The third time they took the boots as well. The guy who asked for the boots for me said, 'See bugger, he didn't want to give away his spare boots and now he doesn't have any at all'.

From Nagybanya I got to Baja, I don't know how far it is from Budapest. We had to dig trenches and anti-aircraft shelters. In Baja we were considerably free. On Sundays they let us go swimming in one of the streams of the Danube River. We were there all day and only came back for lunch. We lived in uninhabited barracks in very poor conditions and we also lived in stables into which we had to jump from the attic. Hungarian soldiers guarded us in the barracks. The soldiers stabbed people, who didn't move fast enough, with their bayonets. I got stabbed once, too.

After that I was transferred to Torokbalint where a soldier picked me to go up to Budapest with him to get a package from the purchasing center. These soldiers used to be simple peasants, workers, and they weren't as brutal as the Arrow Cross 16 men. We took the train to Budapest. We fulfilled our assignment but for some reason we had to stay overnight and the soldier said to me, 'I'm going to leave you here and I'll come for you in the morning and we will go back. Where will you be?' He addressed me formally, not informally. I went out into the street. I was somewhere around Kiraly Street. I started wandering around, I wanted to see the city and it was then, when the Horthy declaration 17 was announced. I think the radio announced something about Hungary laying down its arms. Within 24 hours the Arrow Cross Party and Szalasi 18 took over the whole country. I was out on the street not having a clue about any of this. I still thought that Miki [Miklos] Horthy was in charge and I was just about to go back to spend the night with the Jewish family, where I was supposed to sleep. Then came a Hungarian who said to me, 'You are a forced laborer – I was wearing the armband – 'take that band off! You are Jewish, aren't you? Get the hell out of here, Szalasi is in power!' I had never been to Budapest before so I completely got myself lost in the situation.

I arrived at a square where tanks surrounded us. I got scared and ran off. By nightfall, when I couldn't stand any longer the uncertainty of trying to figure out my escape, I arrived at the bank of the Danube. There were big houses by the river and I saw a few marked Jewish houses [yellow star houses] 19 but they were already empty. I found an open window and if I remember correctly I climbed inside. There was nobody in the house, so I hid there. I could even get to the second floor. I was there all night. I spent a day there, but by the second day I became very hungry. I had a few forints – because the soldier gave me some money, with which I was supposed to buy food for myself – and so I looked out the window and I saw that there was a food store on the other side of the street. Once in a while I could see a customer coming or going. I decided to go over and buy something. Of course the mark of the armband was visible and my cloths were ragged. I asked for some crackers or scones and left.

I went back to the house and looked around and when I thought that nobody would see me, I jumped in through the window. It was a spacious three-bedroom furnished apartment, I had a good view over the bank of the Danube. While I was munching I looked out the window down to the street and I saw that the owner of the food store with his white apron– a suspicious, informer-type looking man – was pointing to the window I was at. I knew my hiding was over, I had been spotted. I got up and went upstairs until I found an open attic door, so I could go up to the attic. In my fear that they were coming after me, I was hiding there for a while. And, indeed, they came after me. They were looking for me and I climbed out onto the roof. It was fall and it was hell chilly. I hid behind the furthest chimney, which wasn't easy to get to, but I already had some experience. When I was with the transportation company we also had to go up to the attics many times. I heard voices and I heard doors slamming and they came out onto the roof, then they disappeared. I

stayed in the attic all night because I was too afraid to go down and I was extremely cold. I ate the last crackers and kept shivering. The next day I decided to leave the house. When it was already getting dark, I went downstairs, and in a moment I stepped out to the street. I started walking again but I got back to the same square I had escaped from in front of the tigers [German military tank serial]. But this time I was captured by policemen.

It was obvious that I was a forced laborer. I was arrested immediately but they didn't handcuff me, instead they put me into a closed car. I had no time to estimate how many and what kind of people were in there. They crammed a lot of us 'unidentified people' into the car. Most of us who were caught were people who had escaped from forced labor. They took us straight to the Maria Terezia barracks. I had nothing they could take away from me since I was so poor. They hardly gave us anything to eat.

From there I was taken to the internment camp in Kistarcsa where I was put with political prisoners because that was where Jews and Hungarian communists were brought. The camp was pretty strictly run but there was solidarity among the prisoners, the communists especially held together. There was somewhat of a feeling that the communists were organizing a plan, discussing what to do once the war was over. They were really hoping that the Soviet Union would come into this region. I can't tell how long we were there; one, two, or three weeks or for a whole month. They didn't let us outside into the open air. We were locked into the prison for the entire time. As the days went by, they threw in some kitchen waste for us so we wouldn't starve to death. It was a big problem if we had to pee because we couldn't just go outside. They gathered a group of people and then the guards took us outside. After a few weeks they organized those who had remained from the 110/63 Torokbalint brigade and they made us march all the way to the Hungarian border. At night they always drove us into a brick factory. We walked for about three or four days until we reached the border and then they took us over to the Austrian side where the train was already waiting for us and we were put into the wagons.

We arrived in Turkheim in Germany. It was nighttime and there was barking, great clamor, screaming, shouting, not much light and a pine forest right by us. We were on foot. We passed a concentration camp. 'Raus, raus, schnell!' [Out, out, fast] and I got some hits and kicks. The concentration camp seemed to be empty and we didn't see any prisoners. It turned out to be a new concentration camp. I still remember the smell of resin. The barracks only had a roof slightly above the ground and we had to go down under because they were made in the ground. In each one of them was a miserably small stove and a small window on the ground level from where the only light came in. They weren't big barracks. The beds, that were planks of wood, were lined up along the two sides of the barracks. I think about 30 of us were on one side and there were 50 or 60 of us altogether in one barrack. Altogether there were about 200-240 of us, forced laborers, in the camp. The guards had their barracks there as well. The Germans appointed Greek Jewish prisoners as our guards and they beat us really badly, treated us very roughly. In the camp there was also a big kitchen, the Revier – the first aid place – and the offices. There was a barrack where the Germans only collected clothing. I think there were about eight to ten barracks altogether. The camp was the labor subcamp of the Dachau concentration camp. At first, there were only men but later they also brought women.

They took us to a factory, to big bunkers where they were making Fau 1 and Fau 2 airplanes. There was an infernal row and enormous darkness, light could hardly be seen. We were tiny people in

there, who had to bring big sandstones and other building materials back and forth. We didn't want to hide or only pretend to be working because it was so ice-cold that we would have rather worked than be so cold. In the factory we were under German guard and we had to work wearing our armbands. Even though I was lanky, I was a resourceful and tough guy. Having to work hard and lugging things at home had made me more resistant, I was holding up pretty well. Soon the factory was closed down and we were transported to Dachau.

Dachau was an awful place and they had a crematorium as well. In those awful circumstances in the dirt, because of unhealed wounds, I got typhus but I didn't tell anybody. I didn't want to reveal my sickness because no one knew what happened to sick people. It was a horrible seven-kilometer march to the work site, in the snow, in wooden-soled shoes, and being worn out. We had to walk 7 km back to the camp again in the dark. If the snow caught somebody's wooden soled shoes he twisted his ankle and fell down to the ground screaming. The next thing we heard was the firing of bullets; the person was shot down. We didn't even have time to see who it was because the guards were driving us on, 'Los! Los!' I was trying to walk as fast as I could because whoever got behind had something bad happen to him. I was a fit guy and marched at a good pace but I was getting so dizzy from my illness that I bumped into the first officer guard. This was a tragic mistake because he turned around right away and hit my mouth with the butt of his gun so that all my teeth fell out. Since then I have dentures. I felt something salty and warm in my mouth and I thought I was going to pass out. Later I found out that this officer was a Dutch fascist who had joined the SS.

One time when we came back to Dachau we were really lucky. The Fuehrer of the Turkheim concentration camp, where we were stationed before, knew that the war was coming to an end; the Allies were constantly bombing everything, and he wanted to have a chance after the war so he was very protective of his laborers. This Fuehrer took us back to his camp. If I compare it to Dachau I would say that we lived a normal life in Turkheim and they didn't beat us there. When we had to line up for food they only screamed at us or pushed us or said something rude. I don't even know if there was a high voltage gate around the camp. The soldiers who guarded us were not SS soldiers, they were Wehrmacht guards. The camp had a tailor and a shoe workshop and German soldiers came to ask us to do something for them and they even gave us some cigarettes.

When I got back to Turkheim I had to admit immediately that I had typhus. They took me into the Revier [the barrack of the sick] where there were some sort of doctors, but there was no disinfectant. Within a short time I got a fever and they could do nothing about it. In the meantime, a death barrack was put up for prisoners with typhus. It was surrounded with cables and the guards had their spotlight on us. We couldn't move and we didn't receive any treatment. We even had our own latrine dug right next to our barrack. At first there were many, 20 to 30 of us, and we got some food and the guards checked on us but later nobody came to see us and we stopped getting food, too. Only two of us survived, Sandor Schwartz, a talented young businessman from Kolozsvar, and I. We felt a constant weakness, and couldn't really perceive what was happening around us. After a while it became very peaceful and we heard cannon fire coming towards the camp.

The guards weren't there anymore and perhaps the light was out as well. There was a slightly uneasy silence in the concentration camp and we didn't see the others so we decided to escape. We were very run-down but at least we were over our illness. We knew that we were caged in by wires. We decided to dig ourselves out below the wires, and that's how we escaped because, naturally, we couldn't have just walked out through the gates. It was a little foggy and there were

some clouds in the sky. We crawled by the garbage – because they collected the garbage and leftovers from the kitchen there – until we felt that the ground was softer. We tried to figure out whether the wires were electrically charged but we thought they were just plain wires because there were usually tunnels between the electric ones. We scraped out a hole and crawled through. The forest was about 15-20 kilometers away from us and we wanted to get there in one run, when the spotlights weren't on that part. There was a muddy village road. We got up and started running. We ran into the forest but we were so tired that we just fell down there and were gasping on the ground. But we had to get up straight away and walked all night. I think it was my idea to suggest that we continued separately because we only had one chance to escape if we remained together, but two if we separated. Sandor agreed and then we departed. It was extremely cold and dark in the Bavarian forest. This was at the end of April.

There was a small town with pretty houses on the other side of the forest. I was too scared to start my way; where was I going to go? Right then I spotted a big covered furniture transporting truck. It looked dodgy because it had a broken axle. The truck had straw hanging out of the back, one door open and seemed empty. I was terribly weakened and my first thought was to climb into the back of the truck and sleep. Suddenly, I heard a voice behind me, saying 'Jude'. The voice belonged to a German. I saw a man in black uniform of about 40 and I thought I was done for. Then he said to me 'Schnell, schnell, komm!' [Quick, quick, come]. It hadn't clicked with me when I heard 'Komm'. In such a situation they would usually push me while saying, 'Go', and we would keep on marching.

The German and me set off. When I stared at his back with the black uniform, I started wondering, why I was at his back, and him in front of me. The guards were always at the back so they couldn't be attacked from the back. But I had no strength to run away with my clogs, he would have caught me easily. 'Schnell, schnell!', and the man was saying something else to me in German. He turned out to be a railway worker in his black uniform. He took me to his place on some back paths. His house was a little further away from the village. We entered through the garden. A woman came out and said immediately: 'Nein, nein! Du bist verrueckt!' [,No, no! You are completely crazy' – She was referring to Egon coming from a concentration camp]. 'I know, shut up!' He took my clothes off and threw the clothes out of the window into the garden. Meanwhile, the woman brought some warm soapy water, they made me lay down, naked as I was, and washed me. I don't know more because then I lost consciousness.

I don't know how long I had slept for but I woke up from the dawning light and realized that I was in a basement. I felt very hot. It turned out they put me in some kind of bed and they put an eiderdown blanket on me. They came down and took me upstairs to the kitchen, they tidied me up again, and gave me some clothes. I immediately got a latte and some bread, they started to feed me. I slept in the basement and once in a while they would come and wake me up and bring me up to the kitchen. Once, while I was up in the kitchen, we heard somebody banging on the door. They looked out: the German soldiers were retreating and they just wanted to come in to get warm. There was no time for the master of the house to hide me so we agreed that I was going to be an Italian prisoner whom they had let in. The Germans came inside with their guns, as they were. There was a great discussion. I told them something like, 'Ich bin Italiener, io sono italiano.' They also tried to talk to me in Italian but they couldn't. But they weren't too curious to find out more about me either and they were in pretty bad shape themselves; thin, with beards. Soon they left.

After a while the neighbors accepted that I was there and others also received into their houses some concentration camp fugitives; this wasn't anything unusual. I spent two weeks there. I went to the small town to see what the situation was like and it was a big mess there. French prisoners who had also been freed from the concentration camp, went in to the city and broke into all the stores and shops. One of them saw me just standing and staring at them, and said, 'Viens avec nous!' [Come with us]. It turned out they had broken into a shoe store, too and plundered it. It was full of Dermata shoes and boots from Kolozsvar. They grabbed about twelve pairs of shoes and put them on my shoulders and I thought I was going to collapse. And I took all the shoes back to the German's house and gave him all of them. One of the French people saw that I needed some clothes too, and there were also some Romanian fabrics – brand new with the trademark of a famous Romanian textile manufacturer – and he ripped off about 3 meters and put it on my shoulders, too.

We didn't leave the town until the Americans arrived. Afterwards I went back to Turckheim to the camp. The barracks of the German soldiers and prisoners were empty. I only realized then that while we, men, had been in Dachau, the camp had got female workers, but by the time the Fuehrer brought us back, the women had been taken away somewhere else. However, some of them escaped and came back to Turckheim. Margo, my future wife, was one of the women who had escaped and came back. The women who came back slept somewhere in the barracks. There was some food left in the kitchen; some potatoes and such, and the women were trying to make themselves something to eat. I met Margo when I saw smoke coming out of the kitchen and I went to see it. I saw two girls and an old man making some food in a great cauldron. I went in and yelled at them, 'Don't you know the war is over? Leave this place right now!' Margo explained to me in a few words that the Germans had wanted to take them away but they escaped, and they were hungry and rather cooked something than leave. Later I found out that these two girls could have gone to the town and their hunger wasn't the only reason they stayed in the camp. After a few sentences I knew that they were cooking for 20-27 ill people.

Margo had undergone a horrible treatment in Ravensbruck: they sterilized her. The women were stripped naked and their hair was shaved. When it was Margo's turn she went up to the barber but the SS woman suddenly told the barber, 'Nein, dieser nicht die Haare schneiden!', don't shave the hair off this one. Margo later told me, 'I was almost on my knees begging her to cut my hair because I couldn't stand to have lice. The SS woman couldn't be convinced. [She probably didn't let Margo's hair be cut because she wanted it so badly.] Margo stood in line and went to the shower. After being liberated it was a great surprise to see Margo with long thick black hair among all the women who had short hair. I didn't see it at first when I saw Margo in the kitchen because she was wearing a kerchief. But all of a sudden she took the kerchief off and shook her head and all her long black hair fell down. 'Oh my Lord, why do you have so much hair? What happened?' and so she told me.

The former male laborers also started to return to the camp. Sandor came back from somewhere, too, and he told me that he had been taken in by a German as well. We stayed in the SS barracks and at night we even had some blankets. If I'm right we stayed in Turkheim for another three weeks. By then the guys had got together – there were some guys from Maramaros who were all very handy – and we supported the girls and did all kinds of things. The Americans didn't pay attention to us, they kept moving forward since the war wasn't over yet.

In exchange for some cigarettes I managed to get engagement rings and we got engaged in front of everybody. People arranged a separate little bungalow for us by the forest. It was beautifully painted white and I decorated it with figures of Indians. Margo and I lived there together and everybody looked at us as a married couple. We even put together some sort of a bed. There was a small Mexican guy in the American army and we found out about each other; we both spoke Spanish. He really liked the painted walls of my house and whenever he had time he came to visit me. He saw that I didn't have any proper clothes and he was the first person to buy me a green T-shirt and brought me underwear, hankies and things like that.

After the War

In May the Americans gave us certificates for free movement, put us on trucks and transported us to Feldafing. They didn't separate me from Margo. We were in quarantine for over two months. Of course, they fed us and gave us some clothes that they got in the German barracks. We also got a blanket each. Margo and I got a place in the attic of the barrack, which was very dusty, and we didn't even have straw. The attic had a very low ceiling and it was really hot since it was already summer. We were allowed to go to Munich for a day where we could walk around but we had to come back at night. Once, when I had got some money, I asked a German to take me to the city and I bought some paint. Then we were told that Auschwitz had been liberated and we had to get a pass from the Russians because if we were going to Hungary we needed something to prove where we came from. The Americans gave us deportation IDs – I think it was an ID with a picture – that we could go home with.

We came home on cattle-trucks, we had nothing besides the few things we had got from that Mexican soldier. Coming home was very adventurous. We came upon a group from Maramaros, about ten to twelve people who, besides being filthy, fought and beat each other. There were about 20 of us in one wagon. There was no straw in the wagon so we put blankets on the floor and slept on the luggage. We stopped in certain cities and at a few places people gave us some warm food. They pulled our train off the main track where they gave us some water and let us wash. We were in constant conflict with the personnel at the train station because when they put water in the engine, we would jump off and climb into the water barrels and let the cold water on us because it was so hot and dry in the wagons that we almost went mad. The train brought us all the way to Budapest.

The train was staying in Budapest for 15-16 hours. I told Margo we should find out who was still alive in her family and then we would come back and go to Kolozsvar and then she could decide where we would settle. Back then Margo and I hadn't decided where we were going to live. As soon as we stepped off the train there came a small officer with soutache decoration and golden buttons on his black uniform. I was wearing SS trousers and Wehrmacht boots just like a Hungarian soldier during the war. The officer said to me, 'You are under arrest because you are wearing clothes that are government property, you must follow me!' Immediately about 14 people, with whom I had come on the train from Turkheim and from other German places, gathered around and I said to them, 'Look at Miki Horthy's soldier. He wants to arrest me because he says I'm wearing the property of the Hungarian government.' For that the people started to get pissed off and looked at the little officer with such threatening eyes that he got scared. He jumped onto a tram and shouted from there, 'All of you are under arrest!' Then I said to Margo, 'Well my dear, nothing has changed here in the mentality. I'm coming from a concentration camp and yet they still want to take me

away. They are still thinking in terms of the numerus clausus. Let’s see who is alive in your family and go to Kolozsvar afterwards.’

Margo was originally from Debrecen, born in 1925 into a proletarian family. Her mother was a poor and very religious woman and judging from a photo, she was very pretty. Her father died in Margo’s childhood of lung disease and the family slid into destitution. Margo had two brothers and the younger of them, Sanyi, was taken to a concentration camp and never came back. Her older brother, Erno, became a shoemaker in Budapest. He never got married. He was so clever that he was wandering around in Budapest during the deportations in a Hungarian army uniform and thus wasn’t deported. I ended up meeting him in Israel much later. Margo also had two sisters: Rozsi, the elder, and Evi, the youngest child in the family.

The widowed woman put her two younger daughters into a Jewish boarding school for girls in Budapest. Margo was ten to twelve years old by then and Evi was five or six, and they were living there until the time of the deportation. Wealthy Jewish women ran the Jewish boarding school for girls and they gave everything to the girls. The girls all had to dress up nicely and had high heels. It was like a Swiss boarding school except that the girls received vocational education. Rozsi wasn’t an educated woman. She was a washwoman going from house to house and later on she worked in a hotel. She married a Jewish man who managed a transportation business with horse carriages but who was so religious that he wore tzitzit. Rozsi was also very religious but she wasn’t happy with her husband. They had two children. Rozsi and her mother were deported to Austria. Her mother got sick and died there. Rozsi came back to Budapest.

Margo and I went to see who of her family had survived the war. [They visited Margo’s aunt with whom Margo had been living straight before the deportation. At the time, Margo had still not seen, but she knew Evi was alive because the girls from the boarding school didn’t get deported and Evi lived there during the war.] We went to see the director of the school and we also met the girls Margo had been with. It was a very nice building. The rooms were very nice and tidy and they weren’t like in most other institutionalized places. In the dining hall my jaw dropped when I saw that they were not sitting on benches like birds but there were tables with four chairs at each. I know that blessing the food was mandatory before the meals. The girls set the table and also collected the plates and took them back to the kitchen. Otherwise the boarding school had personnel who did the laundry and the ironing but the girls still had to learn these tasks. There was a dressmaking shop where the girls had their own sewing machines. That’s where Margo learned to sew. I also saw a room with a stage and a piano and they also learned to sing. They had a choir that performed, they even had a little synagogue and performed there. Margo was a soloist in the choir. There was also a gym. In the boarding school they observed the Jewish holidays but they were, after all, a progressive institution. They didn’t work on Saturdays. The girls must have also walked around because there was a beautiful garden and there was even a gardener. They could also take books out of the library. The institution had a bank account and girls received tram and opera passes. I believe that they got allowances until they left the boarding school.

Margo had five years of high school. They studied Hebrew at the boarding school because they had to be able to read the prayers. She also spoke English. She completed the apprentice school [she learned to become a seamstress] and became an apprentice at an elite men’s underwear store in Budapest. If they had their own income the girls could still stay in the boarding school if they were only apprentices. After the age of 14 there were only two girls to a room. Margo lived there

spending her apprentice years there until she was 16 when she moved in with one of her wealthy aunts. Her aunt came from Margo's mother's side and she used to be poor, too, but she was lucky to get married to a rich man, who was the director of a company. So, Margo moved into a tiled four-bedroom apartment with central heating. But she definitely had to help out.

Margo didn't stay in Hungary, we came to Kolozsvar straight away. We came back in September 1945, and our friends, who had been in other concentration camps, I don't know where, had been waiting for us. Margo came here when she was 20. Everybody loved her. Because I was married to her, all doors opened for me. [People were nicer to Egon because of Margo's friendly personality.] She wasn't a talkative person but when she spoke, she spoke wisely. She didn't laugh out loud a lot but she always had a smile on her face. Margo was comfortable among my friends and liked the places I went to.

By the time I came back from the deportation Jeno had been back from forced labor, too and he was working. He got hired by the Armatura factory, which was a metal appliance factory. As a skilled man, Jeno was hired quickly and worked in the storage department; he didn't need any vocational schooling there. Since he loved to travel, he took the buyer position, and a lot of times he even paid the bus fares out of his own pocket. He came with the parcels, bringing the products, and he also organized their transportation. Back then he traveled on the train between Kolozsvar and Bucharest all the time because the factory sent him as part of a delegation. Although Jeno had a terrible limp because he had bone tuberculosis and his operation failed, at times he still walked as much as 40 kilometers [during his buying trips].

At the end of the 1950s, it happened that Jeno, I don't exactly remember where or how, got into some financial difficulties. Then somebody said he knew an older Jewish woman and people convinced Jeno to marry her because she had money. She wasn't doing any work because she was living off her money and jewelry. Jeno didn't have a choice so he married Szeren. Jeno was over sixty years old when he got married and he was already on pension. Szeren was a wasted, gloomy old spinster who was also reserved and not at all friendly. Jeno, on the other hand, was a good-humored and funny guy, who also loved huge meals and was getting pretty fat. He was very generous and one of his bad habits was that whenever he had some money he would buy something expensive. This led to constant conflict because Szeren was very tight with money while Jeno liked living freely. They didn't get divorced because it wasn't a custom among Jews. I remember, Margo and I visited them in their apartment, in Hajnal [in Romanian Zorilor] district, where they lived. Whenever we went there, we were always upset because we couldn't even chat. Szeren didn't even sit down and then Jeno started to get pissed off as he saw red and told Szeren angrily, 'Put something on the table.' She envied us every bite we ate. Jeno wasn't tight with money at all even though he didn't always make money. When he was out he was always greatly jovial, but he had pretty lay-about craftsmen friends.

When he was approaching 90, Jeno became very ill and had terrible pains even though we kept taking him to hospital. His wife wasn't any comfort to him, they had a bad relationship. One night I got a phone call from Jeno's neighbor saying that my uncle had committed suicide, he had jumped from the ninth floor. [This was in 1995 when Jeno was 90 years old. He was buried in the Neolog Jewish cemetery.]

After we arrived in Kolozsvar, as all people who had been deported, we were given a room in the Peter-Pal villa 20. Once, out of the blue, the police showed up and wanted to take Margo away, to expel her from the country. Therefore, we had to get married officially right away. We got married in November. In Kolozsvar nobody wanted to conduct the ceremony because my sweetheart was a Hungarian citizen. My friends arranged a legal marriage for us in Hidalmas [a small place nearby, where administrative things could be done more easily]. We got married there.

The room where we lived was empty and as small as a maid's room. There were about 10-15 of us, with the other deported boys, living in the villa. They got us a big old sofa and even brought it up into the room and we slept on it for ten years. I hammered two big nails into the wall and that's where we hung our clothes, and that was all of our furniture. For a while we ate in the Peter-Pal villa because a Jewish organization set up a canteen there. The organization was called Comitetul Deportat Evreiesc, Committee of Deported Jews and was run by secular Jewish lawyers, doctors and architects. These democratic Jews, headed by Hillel Kohn, seized the villa as Jewish property during the post-war requisition. I sculpted the first DJYO monument, a plaster relief of a group of people carrying a flag, which was later cast into bronze. It was put in the yard of the Peter-Pal villa where people who had been deported lived straight after the war. But after the nationalization 21, when the state rented out the flats for tenants, they finally pulled the relief down because they didn't like it. Many people asked me what happened to it, but I don't know what happened to it after it was taken down. Perhaps there is a picture of it somewhere.

The DJYO – Demokrata Zsido Ifjak Szovetsege, Democratic Jewish Youth Organization – was a completely separate organization. A couple of younger guys organized it, who had previously come back from Buchenwald. One of them was Dr. Hersko, who later Romanianized his name to Petru Muresan. He became a party activist and later worked in the Ministry. Vilmos Schwartz, a dentist, was also a member of the DJYO. Emil Lobl, another organizer, was an architect, became a professor at the Polytechnic University and changed his name to Szava. He got in an ideological conflict with Docsi, another DJYO leader, who was a doctor. Andor Havas was also in the leadership and supported Docsi. Then there was Lajko Rot, who remained a communist and became the director of the Romanian department of the local radio. I got into conflict with him because I disagreed with him over the fact that it was forbidden to marry a person with kulak 22 background. I was the secretary of the DJYO for a while. The DJYO collaborated with the Jewish Committee. The Jewish community had nothing to do with these organizations.

The main program of the DJYO, similarly to the communists, was to stay in the country and build up our homes. There was an educational purpose to teach people a profession. Most of the DJYO members who returned after the war didn't have any parents left and they lived in an apprentice hostel that was founded by the Democratic Jewish Association. [Editor's note: The Democratic Jewish Association was a Jewish institution, founded after the war that helped the returning Jewish youth.] We directed lots of kids into work in factories, we held them together. We were in opposition with the Zionist organizations, for instance the Gordonia 23, which were for emigration. The Gordonia was made up mostly of middle class kids. They accepted vocational training from us, but still they had a separate organization and promoted emigration to the end.

We disagreed within my family as well when Evi, Margo's sister, became a Zionist. While we were still living in the Peter-Pal villa she came to see us and told us to emigrate to Israel. She was really upset and angry to hear that I didn't want to emigrate and that I wouldn't let Margo either. We had

been married already and I said, ‘We are going to stay here for a while’. After that Evi never wanted to talk to me again and we departed on bad terms and she never wrote from Israel where she emigrated to with her brother. I personally didn’t want to leave Romania because I had just started my artistic career and at the time was thinking of going to art college. Back then I had no clue about what Israel was like and later, after I had been to Israel, I could honestly say Israel just wasn’t for me. I didn’t really want to go and work there or get drafted into the Israeli army.

We visited the wealthy Jews in Kolozsvar to get some donations and we usually succeeded in acquiring a nice sum. In general, we tried to get them to support the cause of orphaned Jewish children, to donate some money to the apprentice hostel, and we also needed some money to organize and expand the DJYO. Out of our young members, many became representative agents and they visited different towns to set up DJYO offices, for instance in Nagyvarad, Nagybanya and Maramarossziget.

We held a DJYO ball nearly every year. We held the party in the big hall of the side building of the National Museum on Kiraly Street. These were all charity parties with the purpose of collecting donations for the orphans who lived in the apprentice hostel and for other collective projects. Margo took part in the organization of the parties as well. We thought out the schedule and program of the party with the other DJYO boys and Margo sewed the dresses for the show. I did the sets and props. The program had funny parts, sort of burlesques. I remember we put on a performance about a concentration camp story because many of us brought concentration camp clothes back and we were lying on the stage like half dead people. Then one of us said, ‘Oh, no, I can feel that my leg is rotting…’. There were also some scenes when we mocked capitalism. We invited singers and actors and they performed in satires or in comedies. Gyorgy Harag, the Jewish actor, also came to act from the theater of Kolozsvar, because he was already sympathizing with us, the DJYO.

In 1948 the members of the DJYO accepted the formation of Israel very calmly and coldly. The Buchenwald group – Docsi, Dr. Hersko, Lajko – was a passionate illegal communist bunch, they were all very nice, honest and deeply moral people. They were much more reluctant to go to Israel than the Zionists. The fermentation at the DJYO started when it came to light that some of the members wanted to emigrate to Israel, which was against the beliefs of the older, communist generation. Today this is crystal clear, but unfortunately back then I didn’t understand so clearly what was happening. It was just natural for me that I didn’t want to leave this place. Whoever was enrolled in higher education didn’t move. People from modest Jewish families, from poor backgrounds and the young poor proletarian youth left quickly for Israel. In the times of the nationalization, when the government started to confiscate people’s property, those who had money and fortune realized the situation and left the country – and the DJYO.

Some of the educated and middle class Jewish people left and later on the religious Jews also gradually decided to leave. For instance, there were two brothers in the Fritsch family: the older one, Marton Fritsch, was a passionate communist, he was also one of the leaders of the DJYO and later joined the Securitate 24. His younger brother was an officer in the army where he came to oppose the communist attitude and eventually emigrated to Israel. In the end there was a solid stratum of Jewish people who stayed: the workers who had learned their vocation here. After 1945 the DJYO operated for three or four years. Subsequently, it became the Jewish Party that later merged with the UTC [Young Communist Party]. Obviously many members left and their positions

changed as well. Many people became party activists.

I had a theory after the war that workers had to play a different role with a more serious voice. Communism was in opposition to the system that had taken us away to concentration camps. The communists said they had a vision of the future. So, we believed them and did what they wanted us to do, and after a while we adopted their thinking. For a while I supported their ideas – I joined the party – until I realized that the proletariat itself as a leading class cannot be possible.

Margo and I hung out with DJYO guys. The DJYO people – and people who had some previous education from the Jewish Lyceum – went to university. The rest of us went to vocational training courses for workers where we could do two years of training in one. For instance, Margo went to evening classes for two years while she was a seamstress. That's how her five years of Hungarian high school education was accepted because in Romania they didn't accept any schooling other than Romanian.

I attended a course at the art school in 1947. It was kind of a party-organized class where some painters set up a workshop and taught us. I was there for a year and I even received a certificate. When I was accepted to the Hungarian Institute of Arts in 1948, I was put into the second year because they accepted my previous year from the art school. The institute had a mainly Hungarian management and at the time Zoltan Kovacs was the rector. In the morning I was an art student, and in the afternoon I was a high school student. I hadn't finished high school and needed to graduate because before that I couldn't have graduated from the Institute of Art. In 1949, they introduced dual language education, Romanian and Hungarian, the institute became the Ion Andreescu Institute of Art and Aurel Ciupe its rector. Then the institute got a building with an exhibition space in the Central Park.

There were a lot of Hungarians who were gradually laid off from important positions. There were some excellent sculpting teachers at the institute, for instance Szervaciusz, who was mainly teaching painting techniques: carving, casting and things like that, but he never made it any further than lecturer. My art history teacher was a Jewish man, Nandor Balaska, who grew up in Hungarian culture and later emigrated to the West. There were subjects that were taught in both Hungarian and Romanian, so the teachers were required to speak both. I became an assistant teacher in anatomy in 1950 and was registered in the teaching staff. I was a student in the morning and an assistant teacher in the afternoon. I graduated from the institute in sculpture in 1953 but I stayed in the institute and climbed up the 'academic ladder'. As soon as I graduated I became an assistant, seven years from then a lecturer and finally a university professor. I was teaching the main courses – drawing, sculpting, and composition.

The Hungarian events of 1956 played an important role in the life of the institute. Many students were affected by the events. Students who were on holiday in Hungary at the time brought back the sense of freedom. The Hungarian students in Kolozsvar reacted to it. Students of Babes-Bolyai University organized actions, even called a secret meeting. The students didn't like the political directions of the education and they wanted to get rid of Marxism or any ideological teaching. They wanted to keep only the core classes: natural sciences and art-related subjects and to have these two to be the main lines. I was the secretary of the primary party unit but at the time I was seriously ill with tuberculosis and lay in bed at home. I remember the party secretary instructed me to get up at any cost, because there was a secret meeting. By the time I got there, the meeting

was already over; the Securitate surrounded the place with black cars and caught all the leaders. Among them were Vid Tarnavan, a Hungarian guy, and Imre Balazs, who is still a well-known painter in Hungary. They were convicted for organizing illegal collective actions and sentenced to prison for a year and a half or for two years. I tried to get them out of the hands of the Securitate. I said I would guarantee that these people were only trying to help the education of the institute due to the Hungarian events. They told me not to get involved because it was none of my business. The teaching staff of the institute didn't take up a position.

In 1957 I made a lot of sculptures with peasant themes, for instance the 907. That's what it was called, 907. [Editor's note: The name is referring to 1907, commemorating a Romanian peasant rebellion of that year.] In Mexico I grew up among Indians and I saw what working in the fields was like. The problem was that I made peasants who looked thin just like the field workers in Mexico. One of my sculptor colleges from the sculpture department, without telling me, wrote a very negative article in Fratia [Brotherhood], a local Romanian newspaper: 'Lovith makes fun of Romanian peasants. Lovith's peasant figure rather resembles a mosquito.' He wrote that because the peasants were thin and they were under hardship. I created four bony peasants under a tree, with crows up on the tree, waiting for these peasants to die because their death was inevitable. They were made out of plaster and I was supposed to cast them. In my anger I only left one piece and broke into pieces all the others. Many people told me I was crazy when I said, 'I'm sick of this, I will not use a subject like this ever again'. My remedy came when in 2002 the Kolozsvar Art Museum asked me to give them my one remaining peasant sculpture, which I hadn't broken. I took the sculpture to the museum myself by car.

During the time of Gheorghiu Dej 25, in the 1950s, I made a two and a half meter sculpture in the memory of the deported people: three figures – extremely bony people. I portrayed their moment of liberation but it wasn't received too well in the Ministry. The Museum of Bucharest bought it but a few years later they contacted me to let me know that the sculpture was in very bad shape. I told them I would go up to Bucharest and repair it but they never got back to me and my sculpture disappeared.

When the Ion Andreescu Institute of Arts was formed, the Uniunea Artistilor Plastici [Union of Fine Arts] was already operating and I had been a member since my student years. The Uniunea Artistilor Plastici in Kolozsvar was modeled after the Union in Bucharest. Ciupe and his friends established it. [Aurel Ciupe was the director of the Institute of Fine Arts in Kolozsvar.] There's still an office above the university bookstore, where we used to meet. At the time they knew I was looking for an atelier that I could use after I was done with my studies. My professor, Irinescu, got an atelier, which I have today, but he went back, I think to Bucharest, and in 1953 he offered the atelier to me. The atelier is in the downtown area. There was only a water pipe and a light bulb in the room. Once I got the atelier I installed the gas and with a lot of money I made it into a real atelier.

Within the Union there was an organization named Fondul Plastic [Foundation of Fine Arts] that focused on the finances of the Union and also organized exhibitions. I became the president of the Fondul Plastic in the 1970s. Besides teaching at the institute I was also the president. There were always more Hungarians among those who organized the exhibitions, placed the works. There were differences in where we put certain artists' works at the art shows, for instance Antal Fulop's works were always put behind the door and the main space was reserved for Ciupe's works.

From one day to the next I found out that I would no longer receive my 2,000 lei salary for being the president of the Fondul Plastic. I remained president but I didn't get paid anymore. The secretary of the Fondul Plastic had a 1,800 lei salary. His salary, along with the agents', and the transport workers' were not terminated, only the president was cut off. I didn't get any money for my work and there were no services rendered when I did extra work preparing the exhibitions. That was such impudence, but I continued my work patiently. I couldn't have quit because up until then everybody had told me how wonderful an artist I was so I stayed. But it didn't matter because I remained on track as an artist. They introduced a discriminatory system where they decided on people's salaries based on their profile. People with the professions of mathematics and chemistry became category A, the most important category. All the art institutes were either B or C; I don't even know which one exactly; whatever the salary was lower.

For a short time we lived in the Peter-Pal villa and when Edit and Samu moved out from the apartment on Majalis street, Margo and I moved in there. It was a miserable one-bedroom apartment. Right next to us there was a three-bedroom apartment and our place probably used to be part of it and they must have built a kitchen into it so they could rent it out. The landlord was a rich man; he owned a metal works and he also owned some property. Our room was unbearably cold until we leased an iron stove from Margo's salary [who worked as a seamstress at the Victoria Factory.] We also had a terribly dark and damp cellar where we kept our logs and coal. I used to bring the logs up from there with candlelight all the time. It was very cozy and warm after that, and we really enjoyed ourselves in that narrow apartment. There was a big window that looked onto the street. There was no such thing as a pantry or a fridge. We didn't have a bathroom only a tap of cold water in the kitchen and that's where we had to bathe. We had a wooden trough that we bathed in. We poured water on each other with cups. We didn't have a toilet either. There was a toilet in the yard but the water always froze in it during the winter. Nevertheless, we lived happily and finally we had our own room, which was an extraordinary thing for us. We had to pay the same rent as Edit and Samu had paid before us.

I found out that it was a Hungarian gypsy named Jeri who had stolen our furniture from our old apartment. I went with the guys from the DJYO and we were so frightening that we beat it out of him that after the deportation – before the house was bombed – he went in and took the furniture. He returned the furniture and we even got a written record of it. I took a big wardrobe and a table with a mirror home. Unfortunately, the flat was so narrow we could hardly fit them in. There was already the big sofa that we had got previously and a rickety table with one chair in the kitchen. There couldn't have been two chairs because there wasn't enough space. I started to paint there and that's where I did my first self-portrait. Samu left me a lot of dried paint and brushes when they moved out.

Within a short time they took away the furniture that I had just got back. Samu took the furniture away because they moved into a two-bedroom apartment and needed it. The furniture belonged to our family, therefore it belonged to Edit as well. So, we were left with the sofa and had nails in the wall where we hung our clothes.

After World War II, Samu, Edit's husband, opened a glass and porcelain business in Kolozsvar with his father. Samu had this business, which supported his family. Edit stayed with their two children and looked after the apartment. That's where Samu died in the 1960s, in the time of Gheorghiu Dej, and afterwards Edit and the two girls emigrated to Israel. The two girls were probably 17-18

years old, were already married to two Jewish boys from Moldova and they emigrated together. They settled in Tel Aviv. Edit settled in Holon and I don't remember what or where she worked. She didn't know anybody when she arrived but as an immigrant she received a furnished one-bedroom apartment. Later she married a Hungarian Jewish man who had been living there for quite some time and owned a house. He sold lemonade. Later, when we were in Israel, we spent very little time with him but he was very friendly. During his last years, Edit helped out with the purchasing and selling of ice cream and fruits. Lia learned to play the piano, became a musician and now teaches music at home in Tel Aviv. Judit studied something more modern, some computer thing.

The workers received housing from their factory. I have horrible memories of this period because we weren't able to get a decent apartment. Our first home on Majalis Street was torn down in the 1950s and they built the new student palace [the House of University Students], on Beke [in Romanian Pacii] Square. Everybody who lived in the house that was to be demolished got some kind of housing, everybody except us. They all got it because they had children. After a lot of effort we finally got a worthless apartment in Andrei Muresanu district. It was further out from the last bus stop and we wouldn't even have had a kitchen. In 1956 I was suffering from tuberculosis and it took me a long time to recover. I really didn't want to move into that apartment and eventually we got a different one-bedroom apartment on Mocok Avenue [in Romanian Motilor Avenue, close to the city center]. We could enter from a common yard. There was only gas installed in the house so there was no water in our apartment. We bought a bucket and we used it to bring water in from outside and that's how we took care of washing. There was no bathroom, we bathed in a washtub. The horrible thing was that we didn't have a toilet. We had to go through the yard to knock on the neighbor's door, they opened their door for us and we used their toilet. The walls of the bathroom were made of plywood and so the smallest noise could be heard. Once we were done we had to thank them and then we left and the neighbor locked the door behind us. Margo and I were so uncomfortable with this that we would rather run to the main square where we used the public toilet. It was awful and we were embarrassed to use a bowl for peeing because we didn't even have anywhere to empty it. We lived in this place for four or five years. There was a communal toilet near my atelier and it saved us many times.

We couldn't cook in this apartment so we always ate out for lunch. For a long time we ate at the Jewish kosher canteen on Union Street. During the 1960s we ate at the canteen of the Victoria Factory, where Margo worked as a seamstress. This was a co-operative factory where a lot of our Jewish acquaintances worked.

We were begging to get a two-bedroom apartment in the first buildings that were built on Union Street. They didn't give it to us, only to others, who had children. We found out soon, that without children we would hardly get an apartment. Block apartments were considered luxurious. I wanted to sign up for one and I was standing in line to see an acquaintance of mine – a party secretary, a Hungarian man whom I knew from the UTC – who saw me after eleven hours of waiting in the cold hallway and said to me in confidence, 'My friend, come, tell me what I can help you with'. I told him that not only had our old home been demolished, but we also were unable to get a new one. Then he said to me, 'My friend, there's really nothing I can do about that', and left without saying goodbye.

The husband of our Jewish friend, Sara Szekely, – who had good relations – arranged that we received a one-bedroom block apartment in the 1970s. There was no kitchen, the room only had a

kitchenette by the sink, where we could cook. We had a bathroom but it only had a shower and a toilet. We lived there for a long time because it was suitable for us. But then somebody claimed the apartment. [Somebody needed the apartment and Egon and Margo had to move out.]

Once again, somebody said something on our behalf and we were given a different apartment in Einstein Street, where some Jews had lived but moved out. It was towards the train station behind Hora Street. It was a two-bedroom apartment with an attic, a cellar, and a laundry room but since it was next to big buildings our short house was completely dark. There was a tiny run-down apartment in front where an awful gypsy family was living with a bunch of kids – at least five –and there was a dying Jewish person living separately in another room. We lived there for a long time. For me it was quintessential to have quietness and peace to be able to work, but there was none of it in that place so we decided to leave.

The place where I live now used to be a Securitate house. Before that, the house had belonged to two Jewish sisters – at some point, probably a larger family had lived here. Whoever had moved in here last built the upstairs addition to the house. [Egon lives on the ground floor.]

During the 1980s, it was horrible to deal with food stamps, standing in line and having financial difficulties. The sugar cubes that we eat so indifferently today were a treasure at the time. I love to spread a lot of butter on my bread but the tiny piece of butter we could obtain once a month didn't allow me to do that back then. For meat we had to stand in lines for hours. Margo and I already felt that Romanian socialism had failed and things were only getting worse.

During the 1980s, I didn't have any positions other than teaching, which I had come to really enjoy. At the end of the 1980s, the Institute of Fine Arts was laying its employees off. There was a meeting at which it didn't seem that they would fire anybody. They suggested that I take over the sculpture department. I'm usually a patient person but I really lost my temper because I had previously heard that the position they suggested me to take wasn't going to be paid for but was going to have voluntary status. It didn't affect my salary for teaching but I would have needed to manage the sculpture department for free. The same work that somebody had previously been paid for doing, I was going to have to do for nothing. In the end I took the position even though I didn't benefit from it at all. I retired from the institute in 1991. I wasn't even 70 years old and because of this my pension is very low.

Before 1989 Margo and I felt that the situation was unbearable. For the entire time, even though I was a member of the Party, I kept my Jewish identity as well. [Although Egon is not religious, he considers his Jewish identity important as a way to relate to the world.] After fascism and socialism, communism seemed the right choice for me but it slowly became a burden because I'm in the category of people that benefited little by communism. Even though communism provided me work and the opportunity to advocate communist doctrines, to be honest, it affected me very negatively overall. They promoted that the goal of the communist system was to achieve a higher state of humanity, where people wouldn't be exploited and where people would be paid fairly for their contribution to the state. However, in the case of the Loviths, the fact that we had come from the concentration camp and had absolutely nothing didn't bother the communists. Moreover, we were put in a discriminatory category, which hardly provided any living arrangements for us. Not having children we were always on the bottom of the list to get anything, even though it was the concentration camp that made us unable to have children in the first place. This was a big

grievance for us and we felt that there was no reparation even when, years later, we were given a few dollars of indemnity.

I had exhibitions under Ceausescu 26 but I only had Mexican themes. I created a mode of expression that they couldn't lay blame on. I usually made cast bronze sculptures but I also had some burnt terracotta. Terra cotta, burnt soil, means ceramic sculpture. In 1953, because of my tuberculosis, I had to stop sculpting and stone carving for a while and I decided to experiment with ceramics. I hadn't had a significant experience with ceramics but specialists set up a kiln in my atelier where I could experiment with the hot glazes. I tried to make the chromatics, the coloring to be diverse and to give each of the pieces its own rhythm. During the Ceausescu period, they became very popular and desired items mainly because they were very cheap. My ceramics became known and kids came from schools to buy them for Women's Day or for teachers. I had orders for 20-50 pieces at times. I also made compositions of ceramics that could be hung on the walls. My ceramic sculptures are all glazed, I made functional and partly functional ceramic things, for example, pitchers and ashtrays. I also made 'useless' ceramics: whistling jugs and ornaments. In a way, ceramics helped me financially all the time. I was inspired by Mexican art; the Mexicans had wonderful ceramics. People liked my works, they were selling like hot cakes.

My first visit to Israel was under Ceausescu in 1989. I went by myself, they let me out without my wife but I didn't have too much money. [Editor's note: It was a standard procedure in the Ceausescu era that family members were not allowed to leave the county together because of fear that they would not return.] After 1989 [following the Romanian Revolution of 1989] 27, Margo and I could leave together, traveling together was no longer a problem. After 1990, the standard of living didn't get much better here, but at least we no longer depended on food stamps. Margo and I tried to get things done which we couldn't afford to do previously. We renovated and fixed our bathroom because everything in it was leaking.

When they started to be more organized at the Jewish community I was called in to it a number of times. I turned to Jewish subjects in my paintings, which had been impossible to do before because I could have never exhibited them. At the state art exhibitions they didn't accept any Jewish or biblical subject matter so after 1989 it was a great relief to be able to paint what I thought. It was then that I decided to have only individual exhibitions. Initially in my work I focused on Jewish typology: portraits, praying Jewish figures, and then mainly biblical subjects. I started reading the Bible again and it became a Jewish history book for me, which is depicted in a particular way in my paintings.

I painted a Holocaust sequence and did most of the paintings for it in 1987. The sequence was a reflection of my inner motive. The subject had developed in my perception and I felt I could express it in a personal way. In 1996, when the Holocaust sequence was completed, I was debating what to do with it. With all the necessary recommendations, much money, clearing through customs, in the form of museum patrimonial I took 33 Holocaust works to Israel because the previous year, the director of Yad Vashem Museum was in Kolozsvar and I had met him. He probably came to visit the Jewish community and he knew Oliver Lusztig – who was an army general who had come back from Dachau and was a member of the DJYO. Lusztig brought the director of Yad Vashem to my atelier and made some arrangements in this matter. When the director came and saw my paintings he told me that the paintings had to be taken to Israel. I got all the official permits and I took the paintings to Israel but by the time I arrived in the Yad Vashem 28, the director, I don't remember

his name, had been laid off. He told me there was nothing he could do and then I told him that I was stuck there with my wife and so he said to me, ‘Call me in two days’. For the time being we stayed at my aunt Edit’s. The new director wasn’t interested in talking to me and just didn’t care. Two days later I talked to the former director who said to me, ‘There have been some changes and the museum cannot display your entire collection but the committee agreed to receive five of your paintings.’ I didn’t leave any paintings there; I had no intention of negotiating with them.

What was wonderful about the whole story was that we met the husband of one of Margo’s relatives, who owned a laundry business at the airport – a lovely man, who emigrated during the Ceausescu era – and he made us stay in Israel for eight or nine months in a furnished four-room apartment decorated with paintings. That’s when I met Ervin Salamon, an excellent painter. I also visited Adolf Adler, who was a very good painter as well. We lived very comfortably in our four-bedroom apartment in Israel, we had a television, an air-conditioner. The husband of Margo’s relative even gave us money, about 400 shekels, and said, ‘I won’t let you take these paintings back! You are going to start working; buy some paint, I opened an account for you.’ He always quarreled with me for not buying more things. Margo and I really lived at ease. We were there for about eight months and they took us to various cities. I had one of the rooms for myself, where I painted, displayed my works and invited other artists. I constantly had visitors. One of the very important Jewish newspapers in Tel Aviv, which was published in Hungarian, did a story on me.

I didn’t stay in Israel in the 1990s because I had already started my art career in Kolozsvar and I had my atelier here. I also can’t stand the climate and the chaotic situation of Israel, I couldn’t adapt to it. I belong here, people know who I am and my works and my fame are working for me now. All my statues are here, here are many Hungarian and Romanian Jews who bought my works, so I’m doing fine here.

Later I negotiated with a museum in a small Hungarian town, but I cannot recall its name. They told me they wanted to transform an old, run-down synagogue into a monument for the deported and they were interested in my paintings, and I had to give them a price. We negotiated for a long time in the 1990s and finally they bought and took my Holocaust collection to Hungary with great enthusiasm. From the ministry in Budapest I got the confirmation that the museum had received my collection. [In 1997 Egon had an exhibition in the Synagogue Museum in Kisvarda-Sarospatak, Hungary.]

After having my paintings exhibited in Hungary, the Germans also became interested and wanted to exhibit my work. It was an ordinary business deal and the German weren’t particularly welcoming towards me. They needed my paintings because there was no other Holocaust painter who had a similar subject matter. [Egon refers to the fact that in his own paintings, in contrast to most other paintings that deal with the disturbing search for the ‘whys’ of the Holocaust, Egon’s paintings represent his personal memories expressed by a suggestive conciseness and quiet refrain.] My Holocaust collection was exhibited in the Museum of Dachau in 1997, and it is very important to me because my paintings were displayed at the very same place where all my sufferings had taken place. I depicted my own personal stories, the stories of the concentration camps: that somebody doesn’t even have the strength to eat, that somebody is cowering with an empty plate, there are three dark shadows throwing a baby into a deep trench; these images are in my Holocaust series.

Margo died in 1999. I was left alone after 54 years of marriage. I completely stopped sculpting, working became difficult for me and I even gave some of my tools away. So, it's only drawing and painting that's left for me to do. Many people look up to me and respect me for having done so many things. Somebody told me once, 'How can a sculptor also paint, be a graphic designer, cast ceramics, and also work with metal?' The only comment I had on his question was, 'What can I do, I'm a belated Renaissance man?!'

After Margo's death I had a single exhibition in the town museum in Banffy Palace in Kolozsvar. Most of my sculptures were exhibited, all of the newer ones and one or two of the older ones that we brought up from the cellar. The sculptures were displayed in three or four rooms. The two directors personally took care of the arrangement and organization of the exhibit and it turned out to be an excellent one. I also attracted a lot of new fans: museum employees and graduating seniors from university. The exhibit was on for a month during which time seven different television stations promoted it. There were also a lot of newspaper articles about it, almost every newspaper ran a story on it. A local Romanian journalist in Adevarul de Cluj [Truth of Kolozsvar] newspaper wrote, 'Lovith mai mult ca everu' [Lovith is more than Jewish]. The Romanian papers expressed positive surprise and enthusiasm about my works. The Hungarian papers analyzed the exhibition on a deeper level, exploring my art thoroughly.

In 2002 Gabriela Rostas, an editor of Antena 1 television network, wrote a book on me, which was structured in a question-answer format. It also had a little literary value and it more or less summed up my life. The title of the book is Lumea intr-un cartof, The World in a Potato, with Romanian and English text.

In the same year, two or three months after the book was published, I received an award. One of the leaders of the Jewish community visited me with a delegation from Bucharest – I think his name is Dorin Dorel and he is a well-known Romanian writer but he also published in Jewish papers – and he brought me the award. Marton Izsak and I received the award at the same time. They invited both of us to Bucharest but neither of us went. He was 90 years old and I was 80. So, they had to come to us. The ceremony was at 8pm in Marosvasarhely and two hours later they came here to Kolozsvar. This was the first time I participated in an event like this; they say a few words about what an excellent artist the person is. The award is engraved with the words 'for his life achievement'. 'This is the personal award of the Union of Romanian Jewish Communities. It is an award of excellence and speciality for the sculptor Egon Lovith for all his contributions, Dr. Nicolae Cajan and Aurel Iulian attorney.'

In my opinion I have a very good relationship with the Jewish community. It's a very promising thing that the current president, Gabor Goldner, has plans for me. He wants me to donate my works with Jewish subjects – among them my Bible sequence, so all together about 50-60 large paintings – and they will display them in the new building of the university's Department of Judaism. The name of the exhibit would be either Lovith Collection or Lovith Gallery.

I always acknowledged my Jewish identity even in the times when it wasn't a comfortable thing to do. For me being Jewish is my existence, but I'm not a self-asserting Jew, and I also lack the Hebrew and the Talmud Torah knowledge which would strengthen my Jewish identity. My declared Jewish identity has evolved into pictures, and I'm able to create an image that is worth as much as expression through literature. I no longer carve stones and cast bronze because I don't have any

assistants but I still draw and right now I’m doing graphics. Lately my drawings have been received so well that it’s given me a drive to keep on painting.

Glossary

1 Neolog Jewry
Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was supposed to discuss several issues on which the opinion of the traditionalists and the modernizers differed and which aimed at uniting Hungarian Jews, Hungarian Jewry was officially split into two (later three) communities, which all built up their own national community network. The Neologs were the modernizers, who opposed the Orthodox on various questions.

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

3 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940)
Russian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, an outstanding figure of the communist movement and a theorist of Marxism. Trotsky participated in the social-democratic movement from 1894 and supported the idea of the unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks from 1906. In 1905 he developed the idea of the ‘permanent revolution’. He was one of the leaders of the October Revolution and a founder of the Red Army. He widely applied repressive measures to support the discipline and ‘bring everything into revolutionary order’ at the front and the home front. The intense struggle with Stalin for the leadership ended with Trotsky's defeat. In 1924 his views were declared petty-bourgeois deviation. In 1927 he was expelled from the Communist Party, and exiled to Kazakhstan, and in 1929 abroad. He lived in Turkey, Norway and then Mexico. He excoriated Stalin's regime as a bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian power. He was murdered in Mexico by an agent of Soviet special services on Stalin’s order.

4 Tarbut schools
Elementary, secondary and technical schools maintained by the Hebrew educational and cultural organization called Tarbut. Most Eastern European countries had such schools between the two world wars but there were especially many in Poland. The language of instruction was Hebrew and

the education was Zionist oriented.

5 Goga-Cuza government

Anti-Jewish and chauvinist government established in 1937, led by Octavian Goga, poet and Romanian nationalist, and Alexandru C. Cuza, professor of the University of Iasi, and well known for its radical anti-Semitic view. Goga and Cuza were the leaders of the National Christian Party, an extremist right-wing organization founded in 1935. After the elections of 1937 the Romanian king, Carol II, appointed the National Christian Party to form a minority government. The Goga-Cuza government had radically limited the rights of the Jewish population during their short rule; they barred Jews from the civil service and army and forbade them to buy property and practice certain professions. In February 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.

6 Legionary

Member of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as the Legionary Movement, founded in 1927 by C. Z. Codreanu. This extremist, nationalist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic movement aimed at excluding those whose views on political and racial matters were different from theirs. The Legion was organized in so-called nests, and it practiced mystical rituals, which were regarded as the way to a national spiritual regeneration by the members of the movement. These rituals were based on Romanian folklore and historical traditions. The Legionaries founded the Iron Guard as a terror organization, which carried out terrorist activities and political murders. The political twin of the Legionary Movement was the Totul pentru Tara (Everything for the Fatherland) that represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals, peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

7 Sima, Horia (1907-1993)

Leader of the Legionary Movement from 1938. In September 1940 he became vice-president in the National Legionary government led by Ion Antonescu. In January 1941, following a coup d'état, with the help of Hitler, Antonescu assumed total control and unleashed persecution on the Legionary Movement. In 1944, when Romania turned to the Allies, Horia Sima became a political refugee. He continued to be the leader of the movement from exile and set up a Romanian government with headquarters in Vienna in the fall of 1944. After World War II, he fled to Spain. He was sentenced to death in absentio in 1946 by the Romanian people's tribunal.

8 Hashomer Hatzair

'The Young Watchman'; A Zionist-socialist pioneering movement founded in Eastern Europe, Hashomer Hatzair trained youth for kibbutz life and set up kibbutzim in Palestine. During World War II, members were sent to Nazi-occupied areas and became leaders in Jewish resistance groups. After the war, Hashomer Hatzair was active in 'illegal' immigration to Palestine.

9 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, Partium, 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 19th March 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 9th March 1945 when the Romanian administration was reintroduced in all the Western territories lost in 1940 - as a reward for the fact that Romania formed the first communist-led government in the region.

10 Numerus clausus in Romania

In 1934 a law was passed, according to which 80 % of the employees in any firm had to be Romanians by ethnic origin. This established a numerus clausus in private firms, although it did not only concerned Jews but also Hungarians and other Romanian citizens of non-Romanian ethnic origin. In 1935 the Christian Lawyers' Association was founded with the aim of revoking the licenses of Jewish lawyers who were already members of the bar and did not accept new registrations. The creation of this association gave an impetus to anti-Semitic professional associations all over Romania. At universities the academic authorities supported the numerus clausus program, introducing entrance examinations, and by 1935/36 this led to a considerable decrease in the number of Jewish students. The leading Romanian banks began to reject requests for credits from Jewish banks and industrial and commercial firms, and Jewish enterprises were burdened with heavy taxes. Many Jewish merchants and industrialists had to sell their firms at a loss when they became unprofitable under these oppressive measures.

11 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.

12 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 15th October 1944 Horthy announced on the radio that he would ask the Allied Powers for truce. The leader of the extreme right-wing fascist Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szalasi, supported by the German army, took over power. Horthy was detained in Germany and was later liberated by American troops. He moved to Portugal in 1949 and died there in 1957.

13 Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881)
Russian novelist, journalist and short-story writer whose psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel. His novels anticipated many of the ideas of Nietzsche and Freud. Dostoevsky's novels contain many autobiographical elements, but ultimately they deal with moral and philosophical issues. He presented interacting characters with contrasting views or ideas about freedom of choice, socialism, atheisms, good and evil, happiness and so forth.

14 Tarbut Jewish Lyceum
Jewish high school founded in Kolozsvar/Cluj in 1920 and operating until 1927. The school was reopened in 1940. The staff consisted of Jewish teachers and professors who had lost their jobs in 1940 as a result of the anti-Jewish laws. Students of the school recalled that for some time in the beginning the teachers held university style lectures instead of regular secondary school classes. They did not have regular tests to give them grades as was common in ordinary high schools; and they addressed the students with the formal you as was customary at university. Many teachers and students of the school perished in Auschwitz during the Holocaust. The Jewish lyceum was closed in 1948 as a result of the nationalization of denominational schools.

15 Mark, Antal (1880-1942)
Mathematics teacher and director of the Tarbut Jewish Lyceum, a Jewish high school for boys and girls in Kolozsvar/Cluj, from 1920 and 1927. In 1940 he convinced the Hungarian Minister of Education to approve the reopening of the Jewish Lyceum, and he was its director until his death.

16 Arrow Cross Party
The most extreme of the Hungarian fascist movements in the mid-1930s. The party consisted of several groups, though the name is now commonly associated with the faction organized by Ferenc Szalasi and Kalman Hubay in 1938. Following the Nazi pattern, the party promised not only the establishment of a fascist-type system including social reforms, but also the 'solution of the Jewish

question’. The party's uniform consisted of a green shirt and a badge with a set of crossed arrows, a Hungarian version of the swastika, on it. On 15th October 1944, when governor Horthy announced Hungary's withdrawal from the war, the Arrow Cross seized power with military help from the Germans. The Arrow Cross government ordered general mobilization and enforced a regime of terror which, though directed chiefly against the Jews, also inflicted heavy suffering upon the Hungarians. It was responsible for the deportation and death of tens of thousands of Jews. After the Soviet army liberated the whole of Hungary by early April 1945, Szalasi and his Arrow Cross ministers were brought to trial and executed.

17 Horthy declaration

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

18 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 in March 1944, he made a coup d’etat on 15th October 1944 and introduced a fascist terror in the country. After World War II, he was sentenced to death and executed.

19 Yellow star houses

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

20 Peter-Pal villa

House in Kolozsvar/Cluj, where the Gestapo set up its headquarters in April 1944 during the German occupation of the city. The house was later nationalized by the communists. After 1989 the villa was transformed into an apartment building.

21 Nationalization in Romania

The nationalization of industry and natural resources in Romania was laid down by the law of 11th June 1948. It was correlated with the forced collectivization of agriculture and the introduction of planned economy.

22 Kulak

Between 1949-1959 peasants in Romania, who had 10-50 hectares of land were called kulaks,

those who owned more than 50 exploiters. Their land was confiscated. They were either expelled from their houses and deported to the Baragan Steppes and the Danube Delta, where they had to work under inhuman conditions, or they were discriminated in every possible way (by forcing them to pay impossibly high taxes, preventing their children from entering higher education, etc.).

23 Gordonia

Pioneering Zionist youth movement founded in Galicia at the end of 1923. It became a world movement, which meticulously maintained its unique character as a Jewish, Zionist, and Erez Israel-oriented movement.

24 Securitate (in Romanian

DGSP - Directia generala a Securitatii Poporului): General Board of the People's Security. Its structure was established in 1948 with direct participation of Soviet advisors named by the NKVD. The primary purpose was to 'defend all democratic accomplishments and to ensure the security of the Romanian Popular Republic against plots of both domestic and foreign enemies'. Its leader was Pantelimon Bondarenko, later known as Gheorghe Pintilie, a former NKVD agent. It carried out the arrests, physical torture and brutal imprisonment of people who became undesirable for the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, and also kept the life of ordinary civilians under strict observation.

25 Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe (1901-1965)

Leader of the Romanian Communist Party between 1952 and 1965. Originally an electrician and railway worker, he was imprisoned in 1933 and became the underground leader of all imprisoned communists. He was prime minister between 1952-55 and first secretary of the Communist Party between 1945-1953 and from 1955 until his death. In his later years, he led a policy that drifted away from the directive in Moscow, keeping the Stalinist system untouched by the Krushchevian reforms.

26 Ceausescu, Nicolae (1918-1989)

Communist head of Romania between 1965 and 1989. He followed a policy of nationalism and non-intervention into the internal affairs of other countries. The internal political, economic and social situation was marked by the cult of his personality, as well as by terror, institutionalized by the Securitate, the Romanian political police. The Ceausescu regime was marked by disastrous economic schemes and became increasingly repressive and corrupt. There were frequent food shortages, lack of electricity and heating, which made everyday life unbearable. In December 1989 a popular uprising, joined by the army, led to the arrest and execution of both Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, who had been deputy Prime Minister since 1980.

27 Romanian Revolution of 1989

In December 1989, a revolt in Romania deposed the communist dictator Ceausescu. Anti-government violence started in Timisoara and spread to other cities. When army units joined the uprising, Ceausescu fled, but he was captured and executed on 25th December along with his wife.

A provisional government was established, with Ion Iliescu, a former Communist Party official, as president. In the elections of May 1990 Iliescu won the presidency and his party, the Democratic National Salvation Front, obtained an overwhelming majority in the legislature.

28 Yad Vashem

This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and ‘the Righteous Among the Nations’, non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their ‘compassion, courage and morality’.